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PARK VALLEY, UTAH'S SHIVAREE TRADITION:

A RITE OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

by

Rosa Lee Thornley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

American Studies  
(Folklore)

Approved:

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2013

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## ABSTRACT

Park Valley, Utah's Shivaree Tradition: A Rite of Social Acceptance

by

Rosa Thornley, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2013

Major Professor: Evelyn I. Funda  
Department: English (Folklore)

The marriage custom of charivari/shivaree evolved from a punitive form of social control in Europe and Great Britain, to a raucous American celebration that welcomed newlyweds into a community. The isolated ranching community of Park Valley, Utah performed their own unique version of shivaree. This investigation of their ritualized tradition began with a review of the cultural landscape combined with the contemporary rural society that forms a community-clan who descends from six pioneer families. The existing community outlived mining and railroad towns that originally populated the area. The surviving Mormon culture is reflected in the value and belief structure of its people and, therefore, their social activities. This context built a foundation for interpreting the function of the community's shivarees. Twenty-five primary interviews provided seven case studies, which structured the argument that their impromptu performances went beyond just offering a hand of welcome; their shivarees, performed after the formal marriage festivities, functioned as a complex rite of passage. Ritualized traditions like kidnapping the bride and groom, wearing crazy get-ups, and breaking bread together

codified the relationships that bound their society together. In all cases, at least one member of the newly married couple was an insider of the community – they belonged to the community clan. The impromptu performance was organized using local resources as the newlyweds were moved from the sacred to secular sphere, creating a liminal period where social norms were tested, before the final rite of passage. Park Valley shivarees transitioned them into their new social position as contributing members of this insular society; it was an informal rite of acceptance.

(166 pages)

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

## Park Valley, Utah's Shivaree Tradition: A Rite of Social Acceptance

Rosa Lee Thornley

This investigation of the ritualized tradition of shivaree found in the isolated ranching community of Park Valley, Utah presents a unique version of the practice. The marriage custom of charivari/shivaree evolved from a punitive form of social control in Europe and Great Britain, to a raucous American celebration that welcomed newlyweds into a community. The cultural landscape combined with the contemporary rural society sets the backdrop to argue that Park Valley's impromptu performances went beyond just offering a hand of welcome; their shivarees, performed after the formal marriage festivities, functioned as a complex rite of social acceptance.

The analysis of twenty-five primary interviews offers a distinctive view of a rural American community-clan who descended from six pioneer families and how they interact with each other. The shivaree they performed offers a new function built from other historical examples found in Europe and America.

## DEDICATION

For my family:

Grandpa Rud Palmer, who maintained a love for the Park Valley landscape and lifestyle, and cultivated an attitude of respect for the same in his descendants.

The community-clan of Park Valley, who embrace each other as a true family – most specifically those who validated my project; Uncle Lynn Palmer,

Aunt Junelle Palmer Lind, and Shelly Kunzler.

Todd for continuous encouragement through the hundreds of miles on the road

and participation in hours of interviews;

our kids, who embraced my obsession for the project;

and Dad, the storyteller who prompted the idea.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My journey through graduate school began when I met Dr. Evelyn Funda who introduced me to the American Studies/Folklore program. She remained by my side as a teacher, mentor, and the chairwoman of my thesis committee. The countless hours of brainstorming and revising each chapter together often produced laughter, productive stress, and a few happy tears that created a friendship that took me down new, unexplored paths to produce this work.

Dr. John Allen, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, entered my academic life as an instructor in rural sociology, and later returned to graciously contribute his encouragement and expertise in that discipline as another member of my committee.

Members of the folklore faculty at Utah State University moved my project to a higher level. Dr. Steven Siporin gently nudged me to recognize and accept a unique opportunity to investigate the topic of shivaree when it presented itself. Dr. Lisa Gabbert handpicked literature for a directed study, and helped me view shivaree through the lens of carnival and festival. Lynn McNeill offered her support as the folklore member of my thesis committee, and recognized esoteric and exoteric factors that needed to be investigated. Dr. Jeannie Thomas helped build the basic foundation for me to enter the program.

Randy Williams, Fife Folklore Archives Curator and oral history specialist, offered me experiences to record and interview through the Ranch Family Documentation Project. She also provided me with previously unpublished, recorded, and



transcribed interviews of members of the Park Valley community that added breadth and depth to my own interviews.

The Department of Women and Gender Studies granted funds to purchase recording and transcription equipment.

Colleagues and fellow students kept their ears to the ground and shared obscure entries in literature, listservs, and their own family histories about shivarees. They showed interest and excitement with each new development. Bonnie Moore did all of this and more; she helped me prepare for interviews, served as a cheerleader, spent numerous hours reading drafts, offered support by attending my defense, and celebrated when we found common ground between our individual research interests.

All contributed to my success, but most importantly exemplified how an academic community supports its members.

Rosa Thornley

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

I grew up listening to my dad, Paul Palmer, recount his escape from a shivaree planned for my parents' wedding celebration in Park Valley, Utah. Dad's friends and family members removed the coil wire from his 1960 Chevrolet Impala coupe (see fig. 1). Their intention was to disable the car, preventing the couple from leaving after their reception. Shivarees, in that community where he was raised, represented good-humored hazing of newlyweds, performed the night that the community was invited to celebrate the newlywed's marriage. The performance surrounding these pranks was not meant to be malicious. Schemers often allowed an avenue of escape if the couple desired. A member of the group who planned the festivities, Dad's best man and cousin, Marcell, did just that; he positioned other family members near the side door of the chapel with the keys to his own car. Dad and Mom slipped out unnoticed during the dance, drove the other car back to the ranchhouse, changed clothes, and found a coil wire for Dad's car. Dad was a mechanic by trade, so he had the knowledge and spare part to quickly repair the Impala. Marcell distracted the guests while Dad replaced the "stolen" part, and the newlyweds escaped for their honeymoon in Burley, Idaho, before the shivariers knew they were gone.



Figure. 1. Paul Palmer, my dad, beside his 1960 Chevrolet Impala. Approx c- 1961. Photographer unknown.

I retold this story to classmates in the *Folklore Theory and Methods* course during my first semester as a graduate student at Utah State University. Professor Steve Siporin had been leading a discussion about jokes and pranks when I compared one of the examples to shivaree. Although Siporin nodded his head in agreement, none of my classmates had ever heard the term. Dad's account of the stolen coil wire triggered a conversation about revelers tying pop cans to bumpers, smearing shaving cream on windshields, and shredding Big Nickel newspaper to fill cars after my classmates' own weddings. Although these pranks are what they associated with shivaree, in my mind, the tradition wasn't that easily defined. For days following that classroom discussion, I wondered: *What did I really know about the marriage tradition of shivaree? What were my parents trying to escape from? And why, fifty years after the event, does my mom believe that Dad was disappointed that they did not permit the shivaree?*

My initial search for a definition of shivaree was disappointing because I wasn't even sure how to spell the word that represented the tradition. Initially, I thought I heard

family members pronounce it chivalry; however, I was fairly confident that I wasn't looking for the gallant code of conduct followed by King Arthur's knights during Medieval times. I consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* looking for something that was phonetically similar and somehow connected to marriage. One entry I found produced several spellings: shivaree, shiveree, and *charivari* – a key French term. The French version of the term led to more definitive articles about the European custom. British historian E. P. Thompson wrote, "In international scholarship *charivari* has won acceptance as the term descriptive of the whole genus" (3, italics in text). This led to a new question: *What did he mean by "the whole genus"?*

Thompson's article introduced and discussed synonymous terms like "rough music," and "skimmington." This fresh terminology expanded my search, which produced an etymological survey; this again added more terms to my growing list: "serenade," "belling," "callathump," "horning," and "tinpanning" (A.L. Davis, and McDavid). The expanding list of words seemed to be the genus Thompson discussed since they all referred to similar social functions defined by Moira Smith's entry in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*: a "benign rite of passage for newlyweds, the shivaree was used as an extralegal ritualized expression of disapproval that enforced community morality by publicly shaming transgressors" (665). A version rooted in the British Isles, rough music, "denote[d] a rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against individuals who offended against certain community norms" (*OED* and Joseph Wright qtd in Thompson 3). Researcher Natalie Zemon Davis viewed the European tradition as a way to maintain social order through mockery of misconduct (100). Violet Alford, E.P. Thompson, and



Loretta Johnson agreed that censored behavior that disrupted the social order was commonly focused on unacceptable marriage practices. Alford listed violations that triggered *charivaris*: remarriage of a widow or widower, a large span in ages between spouses, marrying a foreigner, adultery, or the beating of a man by his wife (506). These broader definitions gave me a clearer picture of the ritual as it was practiced in Western Europe, but forced me to revise one of my initial research questions: *If punishment was the social function in Park Valley, why did Mom think Dad was disappointed about missing the planned shivaree?* Smith's definition of, "extralegal ritualized expression of disapproval" didn't fit Park Valley's version. I needed to find literature focused on shivarees in the American West.

The terms *shivaree* and *charivari* weren't completely absent from American culture, but were often hidden in personal journals, community histories, short newspaper articles, memories of participants, or legal cases in the Deep South; this last type of material linked the ritual to another more grave form of social control, lynching. Historian Loretta T. Johnson recognized the gap shivaree left in the history and folklore disciplines in her own investigation of the tradition in 1990. "Few American historians have tackled the social significance of shivarees, and even fewer have attempted to analyze the anthropological function of this ritual in American history" (372). I realized that if I accepted the challenge of analyzing this ritualistic behavior, my research approach (or combination of approaches) would have to employ more than just secondary sources. An interdisciplinary approach drawing from folklore, rural sociology, history, and ethnography, would guide me in gathering primary research from the people who call Park Valley their home. My objective became one described by nineteenth-century

folklorist P.H. Ditchfield, to uncover “The old customs which still linger on in the obscure nooks and corners of our native land, or which have survived the march of progress in our busy city’s life” (qtd in Thompson 2).

To build a foundation for an American West version of shivaree, my search began with Pauline Greenhill’s Canadian research, I found that it brought me closer to isolating the function of this tradition in the ranching community my dad grew up in. Greenhill argued that the tradition “transform[ed] from a disapproval to an approval custom,” and was primarily performed in rural locations. A response she received on a questionnaire from Laverne Rabatich voiced how the custom morphed into a “welcome” for the newlyweds, “Shivarees seemed to me to be a fun way of welcoming a couple into the state of marriage and, often, to welcome them as new members of the community” (“Welcoming the Newlyweds” 54-55). Johnson confirmed this in her own research of the early twentieth-century American Plains. She viewed charivaris as events that “tied the married couple together in a shared experience and also, by implication, integrated them – with a somewhat rowdy seal of approval – into the community of married folks” (372). This congenial initiation is what I found reflected in narratives of Park Valley shivarees. Greenhill and Johnson’s arguments were closer to answering the question about my dad’s disappointment that their shivaree didn’t occur, but their explanation was still incomplete.

After gathering what literature I could about shivarees performed on the American continent, I began to think about the practice within the context of my parents’ unique experience in the West. My perspective of Park Valley’s cultural landscape was romanticized by Western television series like *Bonanza*. As a child, I could easily compare my Grandpa Rudger Palmer’s 5,000 acre cattle ranch to the Ponderosa. The

Western stereotype of wide-opened spaces dotted with Hereford cattle was perpetuated with stories of a younger version of my grandpa chasing wild mustangs on the West Desert and working the gold mines bored into the canyons above the community.

Grandpa, the grey-haired patriarch of the clan, even had sons like Ben Cartwright. With a little stretch of my young imagination, Uncle Jim could easily fit the role of the articulate, level-headed Adam, destined to explore the world; my dad, Paul was the big, loveable Hoss (sans a few pounds) who felt most at home when he was working the livestock from the back of a horse, and my youngest twin uncles could be rolled into one character to give me the feisty, heart-throb Little Joe. A visit to the ranch was always like stepping straight onto the set of the show. In my episode, we saddled up our horses, packed sandwiches into the leather saddlebags, slid rifles into the gun scabbards, and road off through the sagebrush toward the Raft River Mountains to begin our annual deer hunt. When Hoss and Little Joe went through any of these motions on the television screen, they didn't seem fictitious events; I had experienced them, my family experienced them, and my grandfather lived that ranching lifestyle every day of his seventy-five years.

This Western lifestyle seemed exciting viewing it on a 16" television screen, but reality dawned as I grew up. I began to see that youthful adventures of pumping water from the well, or using an outhouse on short visits to the ranch, were only signs left over from the primitive conditions that once existed in the community where my grandparents lived; the lack of modern infrastructure was something the community struggled with even into the late twentieth century. Dad grew up in the 1940s and 50s without electricity and a working telephone system. That latter technology is still a joke in the community as residents point to telephone cables strung along the ground and fencelines. Lack of

modern conveniences and a highway that wasn't completely paved until 1966 kept the area isolated from the outside world much longer than other thriving communities in northern Utah.

Television reruns today remind me of stories I heard about the old days in Park Valley. During the Cartwright's visit to town, *Bonanza* offered glimpses of gold miners and Chinamen walking along the dusty streets of Virginia City. However, producers couldn't fully depict the economic impact to small Western communities when the gold mines closed and railroad companies abandoned the tracks. I had seen evidence of the bottemless mine shafts and pictures of bustling railroad stations near Park Valley, but I struggle to envision the lives those economies supported. An hour-long TV drama cannot fully capture the disappointment of empty promises resulting from land deals that destroyed the hopes and dreams of Eastern European immigrants, or the grief of a community when dozens of children succumbed to a diphtheria epidemic. The Park Valley community had shared all of these experiences. But, the most important element missing from my weekly dose of *Bonanza* was women. The Cartwright women had all died, leaving their version of the West to the men. The reality in Park Valley, however, was that Grandpa had a strong woman who worked by his side through "adventures" of running the ranch – and they had a daughter. *Bonanza* failed to show the part that marriages and the birth of new family members play in sustaining these Western communities.

The Park Valley community also contradicts another aspect of the mythic West portrayed in *Bonanza* – the sense of community. During the first season, the marshal of Virginia City cautioned a newcomer about involving himself in a barroom brawl. "This is

the kind of town where folks mind their own business” (“Enter Mark Twain”). The folks in Park Valley couldn’t afford to distance themselves socially from their neighbors. Although significant geographical distances separating homesteads and ranches from commerce often required self-sustaining lifestyles, the isolation developed a stronger social bond forming an insular community that is often absent in urban settings. This bond suggests why a marriage tradition like shivaree survived longer in Park Valley than it did in other places. Community members were, and still are, keenly involved in each other’s lives. When residents married, “[t]he community exercised its self-proclaimed right to participate actively in the marriage” (Johnson 380). Historically, this “right” to celebrate the nuptials through shivaree was claimed by other communities; however, Park Valley’s version contained unique elements when compared to practices found at other times and in other locations.

Another significant factor that added context to Park Valley’s shivaree tradition came to light when a colleague recognized the name from a community narrative essay a student had written in a composition class at Utah State University. Kaleb Pugsley was raised in this community I was investigating. His essay identified the socio-political structure as a theocracy: “The rule by people in positions of political authority; all of whom share the same religious beliefs and preferences. Theocracy may manifest in a form of government in which a state is understood as being governed by immediate divine guidance provided to a ruling clergy.” Pugsley claimed that, “Park Valley was forged on two things, family and faith, the latter being the most dominating influence in the lives of every member of the community.” He added, “To some, our age old tradition may be as foreign as early indigenous tribal rituals. Our religiously centralized way of

life is what ultimately makes someone a member of my community.” The “faith” he speaks of is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – the Mormons. The doctrines of this church that community members live by do not separate faith and family. These ideals were proclaimed to the world in 1995 by their prophet and President Gordon B. Hinckley; it codified the values Mormons in Park Valley had lived by for decades:

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. (First Presidency qtd in Hinckley)

To study the cultural landscape of Park Valley and ignore the influence of the local organization of the church would also be to ignore a common thread that has tied the community together for well over a century – one that shaped the value and belief system that established social norms. In this community, which fluctuates slightly around 200 people, 94% of the population is a member of the LDS Church. Since charivari historically functioned as a form of social control, I also needed to investigate this social structure to decide if informal control was the function in this community.

## **Methodology**

Determining how I would approach community members to collect their memories of local shivarees became a personal challenge I had to negotiate. I hadn't visited my dad's hometown since his mother's funeral in November 2007, and I hadn't really communicated with anyone that lived in the area since that time. Another

experience in Dr. Siporin's folklore class helped reconnect me with Park Valley. A classmate referred to a project she was involved in. She'd been asked to perform an interview with a man "from Park Valley" talking about his ranching background. During the break that evening I questioned her further, pleasantly surprised to find out that the man was Grover Palmer, another one of my father's cousins who had left the community decades previously. The conversation about her interview piqued my interest, and she put me in contact with, Randy Williams, one of the coordinators of the Ranch Family Documentation Project (RFDP). I contacted Williams to offer my amateur interview skills as someone who had personal connections to families in Park Valley who could contribute to their collection, and thus became an intern with the Fife Folklore Archives. At the time, I didn't fully realize the impact these opportunities would have on developing my thesis.

As Williams increasingly focused more attention on western Box Elder County, she sat down with me to discuss possible contributors for the project. I instinctively recommended contacting my Uncle Lynn Palmer who, at that time, was the only member of my immediate family still living in Park Valley. He was also serving as the bishop of the LDS ward in Park Valley, so he knew most of his neighbors in the community. He not only served as their religious leader, but he had grown up with a lot of them. Only after multiple interviews did I begin to understand how religion influences the socio-political structure of that community – what some members call a "theocracy." The area is unincorporated, and so the local church's organization offers authority figures to substitute as government structure. Three interviewees compared the bishop to a mayor and the ward council to a town council.

In January 2011, I arrived (with a little trepidation) to conduct my first interviews at the schoolhouse. Williams predicted that my roots in the community would personally connect me with interviewees to gather valuable information for the project, but I hadn't even been in the valley for several years. Prior to that, there had been gaps decades long since I'd visited. I had aged, and so had the valley. People had come and gone, and many of those I bonded with during my youth had either moved away or passed on. My fears dissipated as I pulled into the parking lot and the first person I saw was my uncle, the bishop, and the school's bus driver, Lynn Palmer. He informed me that he would also be participating as an interviewee for the project. Our Ranch Family Documentation group was already setting up inside. *But, would anyone besides the RFDP group know me?* Moments after entering, I could see a substitute custodian watching me and then she stepped closer to ask, "Are you Rosey?" a pet name used only by those close to me. Roxanna Broadus Wagstaff remembered me as the teenager who had hunted with her husband and boys over thirty years ago. Soon I was surrounded by other women who were just wrapping up their school jobs, or picking up their children after basketball practice. Some I knew and others were introduced as spouses of men who were raised in the community. They were all curious about what brought me back. The ensuing conversation with the group completely alleviated all fears of reconnecting with the community that I hoped would share memories of their shivaree traditions.

Entering the academic conversation about charivari or shivaree required an exhaustive search for any secondary sources written about or relating to the subject. This phase was accomplished by mining each document for referenced materials that led me to more. Ultimately, a similar approach was used to collect primary sources as I asked each



new interviewee for other sources. The starting point was my own family, since they were the ones who had originally passed to me their oral traditions of shivaree. With Dad's "escape" story in mind, I returned to Park Valley to talk to my Uncle Lynn. My conversation with him produced the story of my grandparents' shivaree, one my dad had never heard. Lynn, being the youngest of a set of twins who were born during my grandparents' older years, had an opportunity to spend time with them when their lives were a little slower. They reminisced about the "old days" after their work was finished for the day. During one of these sessions, they told him and his brother, Layne, the story. His version, included in Chapter 4 of this thesis, differs slightly from one told by their older sister Junelle. This seemed to be the case with most of the oral interviews I conducted. Participants either confirmed events or modified them according to their position in the event or how many times the story had been retold. The one other full-fledged shivaree that stood out in his memory was Burt and Shelly Kunzler's. I adopted this methodology, known to those in the social sciences as the snowball effect, only after experimenting with other established research methods. Before moving forward with this word-of-mouth approach to finding interviewees, I was determined to try a proven method within the discipline.

Pauline Greenhill's primary research into English-Canadian charivaris seemed to be a fairly productive method to collect charivari experiences. Her research began in 2004 by "sending letters to the editors of community and ethnic newspaper across Canada – most of them dailies or weeklies – seeking individuals who participated in or who recalled charivaris." She described the response to her effort as a "deluge." She received 36 from Nova Scotia alone. Every person who responded was interviewed or

sent a questionnaire. In a footnote, she described the storage space for the hard copies as filling “three feet of file drawer space” (“Make the Night Hideous: Death at a Manitoba Charivari, 1909” 12; “Welcoming the Newlyweds” 53). I devised my own version of her process.

Park Valley didn't publish a daily or even weekly newspaper, so I needed another distribution method. At that time, Memorial Day was a week away, and several family members told me “everybody” comes home to decorate graves during the holiday weekend. I outlined a two-page questionnaire (Appendix) that had questions I hoped would trigger memories of past shivarees. I made 50 copies and attached them to a letter describing my project and included a self-addressed stamped envelope. I set up a small folding table inside the gate of the cemetery with a weatherproof box for the questionnaires. A laminated poster with Grandma and Grandpa's wedding photo advertised my questionnaires. As an afterthought, I copied a few postcards with my address on one side and requested contact information for those who would consent to an interview on the other. The display was available over the long weekend and then transferred to the post office for a month. Despite my best efforts, I received one post card response. Although I was disappointed by the number, this process was not a complete failure. The one respondent, Shelly Kunzler, was the next person I knew I needed to interview, and now she was offering her assistance. Moreover, I realized later that the non-response to my first effort was significant in itself. It illustrated Park Valley's insular nature. I would only be successful in gathering stories by proving my own insider status and by making personal contacts through those connections. I needed to be seen by the community as a member, not as a scholar with a questionnaire.

I returned to my original approach of contacting those I knew who had experiences to share. “Snowball sampling,” became the most effective approach for several reasons. The approach is basically defined as “a technique for finding [hidden] research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on” (Vogt qtd in Atkinson and Flint). Social researchers Rowland Atkinson and John Flint found that this method proved effective in studies that are primarily “explorative, qualitative and descriptive,” and where making “inferences about a population of individuals . . . have been difficult to enumerate through the use of descending methods such as household surveys” (Atkinson and Flint). The only indication I had of who had been involved in shivarees was by word-of-mouth. Many people were aged, and just as many had moved from Park Valley and were scattered throughout the Intermountain West. As I moved through my interview process, I ended each one by asking informants if they knew of others who had experiences to share. They generally provided new names with contact information. As of the publication date of this thesis, I have personally collected 24 interviews with promises of at least that many more in the future.

This number of interviews is also relevant for other researchers who consider my argument; my research did not yield 24 different shivarees. Many people told me their version of the same shivaree that others had previously related. I drew my conclusions on patterns found in the seven examples that these interviews produced. Shivaree is an area of study within the folklore discipline where the focus is on expressive culture. What I offer here is the study of one group and how they interact with one another. Another shivaree that I touch on lightly (because of the limited time I had to research this thesis)

in Chapter 2, the Lumir and Toni Funda example found in their daughter (and my thesis chairperson) Evelyn Funda's manuscript *Weeds: A Farm Daughter's Lament* (106-7).

Preliminary discussions with Funda lead me to believe that her parents' shivaree may have had the same function that I present. It is significant to note, however, that the community the Fundas belonged to was located in Emmett, Idaho and the group that shivareed this couple did not have the religious structure found in Park Valley, Utah.

Another development that I had to negotiate in my research process was to find the active tradition-bearer. Folklorist Carl W. von Sydow "claims that tradition does not lie in the depths of the soul of all the people of a given community but rather that it has its custodians, who generally form a minority of the total population" (Pentikäinen 803). With my grandparents' shivaree, my dad was one of the oldest children, therefore closer to the actual event date, yet he had never heard the story. My Aunt Junelle Palmer Lind who was only a couple of years younger than Dad knew the story, but had heard a different version than the one told by Uncle Lynn who was almost a generation younger. In addition to the shivaree story, they both collect and remember other oral traditions that preserve the cultural history of the area, so our family has several tradition-bearers. A similar experience occurred with the Kunzler shivaree. Shelly, who was new to the tradition when it was performed after her own wedding, remembered many details of the performance that she was involved in, including what participants said. She also remembered quite clearly what took place at her daughter's shivaree. She was willing and able to help preserve their stories by passing them on to me. Her position as a tradition-bearer may be why Burt and Shelly's is one of the most "infamous" shivarees in the valley.

A factor that ultimately became a main focus in my argument was insider/outsider status, and how it came into play on several levels of this project. Outsiders in rural communities are generally residents who have lived there for only one generation (Allen and Dillman 92). Those unfamiliar with the culture of the valley might have mistaken Shelly for an outsider, since she was neither born nor raised in the valley. However, her transition into the category of insider began as early as the courting period of the relationship with her husband. This phenomenon will be explored at length in the analysis chapter.

My position in the community came into question while collecting these oral traditions – by me, not the people. From the day at the schoolhouse conducting interviews for the Ranch Family Documentation Project (RFDP), I was treated as one of their own. I noticed this during my first interview with Jay and Holly Carter. While moving through the list of possible questions, Holly stopped the interview and asked me to turn off the recorder. The stop button also became a running joke with Shelly and me. When Shelly made a quick slicing motion across her throat, that meant “Let’s talk off the record.” Or, perhaps it meant that if I shared what she was about to tell me, my blood tie to the community would be severed. In both cases, the interviewees would catch me up to date on events in the community that I was unaware of, but that shouldn’t be shared with outsiders who didn’t understand and therefore might misinterpret the social relationships that bonded this community together. Over many generations, these relationships had given birth to a *community-clan* – a relationship that only insiders recognized. These “off-the-record” conversations added context and helped me frame the questions in a manner that supplied accurate information for the interview, while remaining sensitive to

the relationship structure. I had to distinguish between information that was relevant to the academic discussion of shivaree and what could be left alone.

It is worth noting that I have a personal relationship with my research subjects. I carry a deep affection for my family – both literal and figurative – and strived to preserve that relationship. There was some information that I chose not to share, that I didn't feel was relevant, and other information that I hope this community family will smile at and say "Yep, that's us." One example came when a member of the family helped proofread the final draft before it was submitted to my committee. I had included a powerful quote that became a turning point in my research. During our family interview, Lynn's twin brother Layne added to our interpretation of the shivaree. At the time, we all laughed as he slipped into a vernacular, "If you wasn't shivaried, you wasn't liked." After seeing it in print, however, concern was expressed that the poor grammar would reflect negatively on his education. He earned a degree in psychology from Brigham Young University and works for a regional healthcare facility in Salt Lake City, so I agreed that he knew better. I chose to keep it, not to embarrass anyone, but because it was significant as a conscious choice on his part to self-identify with the community.

Whether or not esoteric/exoteric factors came into play, I wasn't sure. This concept coined by William Hugh Jansen stems from a group's perception of themselves and others. "The esoteric factor in folklore refers both to a group's self-image and to its perception of what people from other groups think of it. The exoteric factor includes a group's image of another group and its notions of what that group believes that image to be." These factors were significant because the population fit two of Jansen's categories; they were geographically isolated and they identified strongly with a particular religion

(Clements 236). I became aware early in my shivaree collection process that I would have to handle the research responsibly or I might be in danger of alienating my interviewees – people who came to be like family. During a telephone conversation with Shelly Kunzler one day, I told her I was impressed with how open everyone had been with me during the interviews and asked her why. Her response was, “You’re legal.” What she meant was that my family roots made me an automatic insider regardless of the fact that I’d never permanently lived in the valley. This reinforced how important family was to the community. Shelly emphasized this again on another day, “Everybody’s family out here. The community .... there’s so many family connections, and again so small, that you’re really involved in each other’s lives.” When I realized the community considered me an insider that they could trust, I knew I had to create a balance between an accurate report of the study and avoid destroying the trust they had in me; I had to be sensitive to people’s concerns about the way their community is perceived. Generally, the interviewees were better at negotiating this issue themselves as they would correct negative perception and at times even terminology, which again will become more evident in the following chapters.

The last portion of my methodology that deserves attention here is the environment where I collected this data. The physical environment – the landscape and the place – is integral to the culture of this people. I did spend my share of time exploring the sagebrush covered land where the cattle grazed, the crystal clear stream of Pine Canyon, the peaks of the Raft River Mountains, the school, and church buildings, but more important than these are the homes and the emotional settings they offered for my interviews. Home is a relative term in Park Valley and will be discussed in the chapter on

the cultural landscape. One of my weekend observations took place during the annual Pioneer Days celebration when many communities in the state of Utah honor the Mormon pioneers. The bowery and rodeo grounds became “home” as community members ate together, played together, and laughed together. As I watched, it was hard to distinguish between literal families as children mingled with parents and siblings that don’t live under the same roof. These collective “homes” have also been established other times of the year at the county fairgrounds 90 miles away, or on basketball courts as young women of the community play for a region title. These places and others offered opportunities for interaction with community members outside of the valley. At times, I was fortunate enough to conduct impromptu interviews in parking lots or in restaurants. This represents compromises I had to make to formal, recorded interviews. Folklorists Robert Georges and Michael Jones recommend that “fieldworkers must become largely dependent upon their research subjects” to guide the interviews. The conflict that these authors warn against comes when fieldworkers believe their subjects are subordinate to the investigation (66). An example Georges and Jones offer is when individuals “determine in advance that the successful implementation of their fieldwork project is dependent upon their filming, photographing, tape-recording, sketching, or making written records of the phenomena or behaviors they have singled out for study” (67). I found that true in several forms of the methodology I adopted, and modified my plans.

Another modification to my plan was on the list of questions I used for interviews. The questions were structured to build a foundation beginning with the interviewees’ personal history and where it connects to the valley; from there, I generally inquired about weddings and shivarees. However, I found much more success if I spent



time at the beginning of the interview creating common ground so that they knew more about my project and could connect with me on a personal level. Again, I had the advantage of being “legal.” They could usually bond with me through my family connections. From this point, we found questions that *they* were interested in exploring. This method frequently presented new views that I hadn’t previously considered. On one occasion, I phoned Kellie-she Kunzler (there are three Kelly or Kellie Kunzlers in the valley, and being one of the females, “she” became part of her name) to ask if I could set up an interview with her and her husband Del. She was very polite and accommodating, but little more. Then at one point in the conversation, I used my daughter’s name while inquiring about an event she had attended. Kellie stopped and asked, “You’re Abby’s mom?” My daughter was friends with several teenagers in the valley, so *everybody* knew Abby. This common ground broke the ice, and our conversation warmed immediately. Kellie told me that she could link our families by marriage (a line I wasn’t aware of), and made plans for the interview. I was invited to her home several weeks later where I was greeted not only by Kellie and Del, and their daughters, but fresh-out-of-the-oven chocolate cake. As a sidenote, Abby also attended the interview. Because of the warm environment we created prior to the interview, the fieldwork with this family extends far beyond just one 30 minute interview at their home. We continue to take advantage of snatches at other times when Kellie sees me in public and begins a new conversation with “Oh I remembered ....”

Digital voice recording was another area where I had to make concessions. In accordance with RFDP protocol, Randy Williams taught me recognized recording habits that I made every effort to follow. She and others were also generous with their guidance

and equipment. They showed me the best features of the technology, how to use different features, and then the offer to lend a machine when it was available. I learned that organizing the interview before recording started offered reference points for later. A valuable part of the process is the introduction of the interview. I would normally turn on the recorder, state my name, the place where the interview is being held, the date, and then ask the interviewee to introduce him- or herself. This refreshes my memory when I return to listen to an interview after a long period of time. Understanding protocols was valuable when it came to making decisions that were best for my own project. Several times, however, these interviewing techniques and tools became an obstacle. The recorder, or my pause to introduce the interview, changed the temperature of the environment from warm to cool.

In a coincidental meeting, I finally found the active tradition-bearer from the Carter family. An opportunity presented itself when I stopped him in the grocery store parking lot to say hello. Dale and I had been friends in high school, so the conversation was very amenable. He laughed when I explained my shivaree project, indicating that “Boy, do I have some stories to tell you!” He agreed to an interview, but when I asked if I could bring a recorder to document his stories, he was a little less sure. He explained that there might be some things that “other” people didn’t need to hear. He didn’t want any behavior contrary to the moral beliefs of the community to reflect poorly on him or others involved. Again, this probably came from the esoteric factor that I needed to be sensitive to.

I approached digital recording methodology in various ways. The size of my recording equipment was a significant factor for effective interviews. Although the sound

quality is not perfect, I found a recorder that fit into the palm of my hand became less noticeable and obtrusive during the interviews. I always asked permission before turning it on, but because of the size, my interviewees soon forgot that it was running and were more at ease during our conversation. Modern technology offers wonderful resources to enhance poorer recordings, so the size was worth the trade-off. During several pre-arranged appointments, I had to forego the formalities of introducing the interview which cooled down the warm environment I had created. When we're on a roll, I've simply had to say, "Do you mind if I turn this on?" One particular experience confirmed this casual, unobtrusive approach. Kaleb Pugsley, the student who wrote an essay about Park Valley, was very polite and shook my hand as we started the interview. As we found our common ground and warmed up to each other, I simply showed him the recorder, told him I didn't want to forget anything, and asked he minded if I turned it on. This quick exchange helped us continue our conversation and segue into my questions about his perspectives of Park Valley. Our 30 minute appointment, turned into 90 minutes. As we finished he told me, "I wish I could do what you're doing. I would give anything to talk to some of the older people in the valley and record their experiences." He realized that I was doing more than collecting data; I was preserving an important part of our shared heritage.

Neither the size of a recorder or a limited introduction would solve the problem with my friend in the parking lot who didn't want a digital recording at all. In cases like this, I had to simply take notes. This compromise demanded that I become more meticulous at notetaking, writing not only what was said, but the context and code. This was sometimes difficult as I tried to listen and write at the same time, because I missed

important clues that introduced valuable information. I concluded that my notetaking during the interview would be limited to abbreviated outlines of what we were discussing, and then I would return later to fill in details. To be thorough, I contextualized my notes as well. On several occasions, I visited my source a second time with follow-up questions and to confirm that my notes were correct. These visits and phone calls often identified whether or not the information created the esoteric factor. The participant usually took this opportunity to enhance the information, or disregard it. This sensitivity to the accuracy of the information and respect for their culture has provided me with more than sufficient data to defend this thesis. It offers me material for a lifetime of work to present this ancient tradition as it functions within the Western community of Park Valley, Utah.

## **Conclusion**

Instead of a form of social justice or simply a raucous wedding celebration reflected in past studies, Park Valley's style of shivaree became a ritualized tradition that strengthened the bonds of a community-clan that was built over many generations; it is a *rite of acceptance*. Anthropologists Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff point to this type of social behavior in their introduction to *Secular Ritual*.

To social anthropologist and layman alike, a collective ceremony is a dramatic occasion, a complex type of symbolic behavior that usually has a storable purpose, but one that invariably alludes to more than it says, and has many meanings at once .... social anthropologists frequently have looked at particular rituals as they reflect social relationships. This approach explicates ritual in terms of the manner in which a particular rite states, reiterates or reinforces traditional social ties, or expresses social conflicts, or delineates social roles. (5)

My trail of experiences provided the answer to the original question I had about why my dad was disappointed that they didn't permit the shivaree. This Western version of

shivaree became a rite of passage framed from the social norms. To fully support this argument, chapters of this thesis will be organized and expanded as follows:

*Historical Survey of Charivari/Shivaree: A Cultural Artifact*

When I asked Burt Kunzler to describe shivaree, he laughed saying, “Every community has their thing, and that was one of the things here in Park Valley. If you’re going to take off and get married, you’ve got to ... you’re going to have to pay for it a little bit” (9). His thoughts identified three components that are key to defining shivaree, regardless of where it was performed: community, marriage, and pay (interpreted as ransoms and initiations). This chapter will define, in depth, the history of the “genus” that E.P. Thompson referred to in his article “Rough Music Reconsidered.” Although some researchers point to biblical ties, the performance, containing the key components, were rooted in medieval courts where the term “charivari” originated. I will follow the custom through Europe and Great Britain where it had a punitive function. As it immigrated to the Americas, it evolved to function as a social initiation in different regions. In the Deep South, researchers connect the practice to lynching and protest, while Greenhill’s Canadian research and Johnson’s in the Midwest argue that the practice “transform[ed] from a disapproval to an approval custom.” This historical review will set the stage for investigating Park Valley’s version of shivaree.

*“Out Home”: The Cultural Landscape of Park Valley, Utah*

The concept of “a sense of place” is defined by folklorist Barbara Allen as “a consciousness of one’s physical surroundings .... a fundamental human experience. It seems to be especially strong where people in a neighborhood, a community, a city, a

region, possess a collective awareness of place and express it in their cultural forms” (1). Although none of my classmates in the folklore course that guided me to this topic knew what shivaree represented, the performance has been so imbedded in Park Valley’s social structure for the past eighty years that anyone even vaguely connected to the community knows that it is part of their culture. Using four elements in Allen’s structure – created by a study of place, people, shared experiences and distinctiveness – I will set out to develop the sense of place found in this isolated community in the northwest corner of Utah. I found that the “distinctiveness” element of Park Valley’s socio-political structure can be established using two interrelated parts:

1. Although the area is remotely rural, rooting the community in the American West will differentiate it from other research performed in Canada, and the Midwest and Deep South of the United States.
2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) is a defining and prevalent force in the social, and political structure of the community. However, the purpose of this project was not a theocratic study. The discussion of religion here, though woven throughout, is used to give the reader a basic foundation of the value and belief system of the community, offer insight into responses from interviewees, and – more closely related to the tradition of shivaree – understand why so many of the marriages were performed outside the valley.

This religious element became an area of concern pertaining to the objectivity of my research. As an insider not only to the community, but also to the Mormon religion, I had to ask myself if I was viewing the function through rose-colored glasses. When interviewees self-edited their comments or corrected my line of questioning and

terminology (seen in the use of cross-dressing), I had to determine why that was happening and if I was doing the same thing. In some respects, this issue forced me to explore multiple functions of major elements that became patterns in the shivarees that the community remembered.

In addition to my voice, I used various sources to describe the socio-political structure – publications authored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), two LDS bishops who led the Park Valley congregation during the time I was conducting my research, and scholar Wallace Stegner, a non-member, who wrote *Mormon Country* after living among the Mormons in Utah. My attitude toward and experience with the community and its dominant religion allowed me to move back and forth from positions of researcher to insider, collecting material that may not have otherwise been offered.

### *Case Studies*

The shivaree performed after Burt and Shelly Kunzler's wedding reception provides an ideal model for a case study of the Park Valley tradition. Burt is a good example of an insider of the community. His ancestors were some of the original settlers in the area, and his family still lives and ranches there. Burt's brother and childhood friends were co-conspirators in the performance of the pranks that framed their shivaree. Shelly was raised in an urban neighborhood near Salt Lake City, which positions her as an outsider who was unfamiliar with the tradition. Instead of "outsider" Shelly uses the word "move-in." The different social positions they originated from gives multiple perspectives of the ritualized tradition.

The Kunzlers' shivaree is similar to others pertaining to the individual's social position; all the other couples were also made up of an insider and move-in. In addition to Kunzlers' event, which took place in 1979, I study celebrations performed in three different eras: my grandparents', Rudger and Letitia Wight Palmer, during the Depression; vignettes of four in the 1950s and early '60s, Jim and Shirley Cloward Palmer, Paul and Margaret Whittle Palmer, Marvel and Junelle Palmer Lind, and Frank and Bonnie Pugsley Hill; and finally Trent and Melissa Kunzler Vest in 2000 .

Deconstructing these events serves to distinguish commonalities that support the idea of community relationships, while also studying minor variations according to the time periods and/or oral traditions. My shivaree interviews produced many versions of random pranks executed after Park Valley weddings, but I chose to study those that focus on the performances that include the components identified in the historical survey chapter.

*Park Valley Shivaree: A Rite of Social Acceptance*

In the final chapter, I will use analyze the four common elements found in Park Valley shivarees to discuss the performance as ritualized behavior codifying community relationships:

1. Kidnapping the bride and/or groom
2. Pranks
3. Cross-dressing, or "crazy-get-ups" (see fig. 2)
4. Breakfast ransom



Connecting these elements to the community's culture will help argue that the tradition is ritualized behavior. Ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep categorized these types of ritualistic behaviors as rites of passage:

The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another...progression from one group to the next is accompanied by special acts .... every change in a person's life involves actions and reactions between sacred and profane – actions and reactions to be regulated and guarded so that society as a whole will suffer no discomfort or injury .... A man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginning: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death. [The] essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined. (2-3)

Van Gennep's rites of separation and rites of incorporation are used to view the liminal space that is created before the couple transitions to the next stage of their lives. I will use this process to argue that Park Valley's shivaree moves beyond a "welcome for the newlyweds" to become *rite of acceptance*.



Figure. 2. Newlyweds, Marvel and Junelle Lind, in their "crazy get-ups" on the night of their Park Valley shivaree, ca – 1965. Photographer unknown.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL SURVEY OF CHARIVARI/SHIVAREE:

#### A CULTURAL ARTIFACT

Wallace Stegner's epic novel *Angle of Repose*, tells the story of Susan Burling Ward (aka Mary Hallock Foote) through the eyes of that character's grandson, Lyman. Susan is an Eastern genteel woman trying to carve out a new home in the primitive, Frontier West. Lyman is the protagonist in the novel reliving the turning points in his own life as he researches and writes his grandmother's story. As an award-winning historical author, Lyman Ward defends his literary approach to his own son, claiming to be writing about a "marriage" not a "book about Western history." The author constructs his story from "quirky little things that most people wouldn't even notice" (221). Contextualizing one quirky little detail he used could provide readers with a better understanding of the Wards' social position in the West.

Susan's marriage suffered for years, even decades, because of her husband's failure to put down roots, which would have aided in creating social bonds within a community. Susan originally migrated west to join her husband in the rough mining town of New Almaden, California. On their first night together in this community, the local boardinghouse keeper honored the newlyweds with a supper, inviting the roustabout mining crews to join the couple. Her gesture was intended to welcome Susan and Oliver to their new home. The social occasion came to an abrupt halt when the couple faced a community charivari: "The young men were indignant, Mother Fall was hurt" when Oliver put a stop to their plan and prepared to leave. "Susan stood up obediently, unsure

of what was happening. ‘There was some talk about a charivari,’ Oliver reasoned. ‘I gave them money for a couple of barrels of beer. So now I’m going to take Sue home and barricade the doors’” (95). Any interpretation of this affair must be drawn from that short passage and only one other that appears a few pages later to say, Susan was “appalled” at the thought of the threatened charivari (101). She didn’t understand that in this region, the event functioned as a rowdy welcome.

Viewing charivari through the cultural lens of the mid-1800s, Susan’s East Coast perspective might have come from New England newspapers that printed accounts of this tradition as early as 1821. The earliest American occurrences of the “evil custom” were isolated in Canada and New Orleans (“Charivari” 2). At least one report of a tragic murder filtered down from Montreal when charivari parties disregarded local authorities and made demands on a groom who refused to pay their “ransom” to stop the charivari. The article read, a “greater number collected on the following night [at the home of the newlyweds, and] whether on the part of the besiegers or besieged . . . the discharge of a musket from an upper story instantly killed one man in the street: an attack was immediately commenced on the house” (“Charivari and Murder” 3). Another incident may have traveled into Susan’s (Mary Hallock Foote) own New York neighborhood before she left for the West. Although not murderous, the alarming behavior from the following article might have painted a menacing picture for this sophisticated woman:

Being in the upperpart of Brooklyn, last evening, we heard an unusual noise made by tin kettles, drums, fishhorns, trumpets, and all manner of noise producing instruments, accompanied by the shoutings of men and boys, and bonfires and rockets. It was a genuine ‘charivara’ – such as the Canadians treat their friends to on unusual matrimonial occasions. On inquiry, we found that the hubbub was in honor of the marriage of an old Methodist parson, to a girl of 16. We have since

learned that the parson was no less a person than the famous orator, J.N. Maffit. (“A Charivari in Brooklyn” 2)

The local newspaper accounts of this practice are similar to Stegner’s tale in that they only hint at how the custom functioned in each community.

Western accounts also appear in abbreviated form in personal diaries and letters written by western settlers that preceded Susan’s own migration. The use of the word “welcome” makes one of these versions appear less menacing than those in the East.

Myra Fairbanks Eells recorded the following entry in her diary after attending a Wyoming rendezvous in June 1838:

The presence of four women at the Rendezvous was as much of an event in 1838 as that of Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding in 1836. The boisterous welcome given by the mountain men to the mission party, in the form of a Rocky Mountain charivari somewhat frightened the women, especially Myra Eells. Some of the men painted their faces and with a real scalp taken from a Blackfoot Indian, put on a scalpdance, which the women considered offensive. (97)

The mountain men performing this charivari modified their performance when they incorporated Native American elements like face paint and scalps into their version of the custom, which mimicked celebration after a victory. What Eells interpreted as a “boisterous welcome” could also have been viewed as a warning similar to examples found in European and American forms of informal social control, something that will be defined later in this chapter as I describe how functions were adapted region to region.

These contrasting examples demonstrate a need for cultural investigations within diverse regions and of the people performing this custom. “E.P. Thompson urges that historical moments and contexts continually reshape charivari” (qtd in Crane 144). This preparatory chapter builds a foundation for studying the custom as it was practiced west of the Rocky Mountains in the isolated ranching community of Park Valley, Utah. This

survey traces cultural functions of *charivari* from one of the earliest examples found in a medieval manuscript illustrating a fictional marriage in a French court, through an evolution to become an informal method of social control throughout Western Europe, then immigrated to the Americas and dispersed to function differently in regions of Canada, the Deep South, the Northwest, and finally into Utah. Scholars have analyzed and written volumes on the different functions throughout history. This survey will be narrowed to present features of the custom that are brought into conversation with Park Valley's western version.

“In international, scholarship *charivari* has won acceptance as the term descriptive of the whole genus,” wrote British historian E.P. Thompson who identified a defining factor that must be considered by researchers investigating the custom of *charivari* – versions of the term itself (467). Linguists Alva L. Davis and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. view “its pattern of distribution . . . peculiar” in the Americas “generally running from north to south . . . without any commercial or social prestige to aid in its dissemination, . . . [I]t has become one of the most widely distributed folk terms borrowed by American English from any European language” (250). Synonymous terms are mingled and overlap in cultural significance when discussing the custom. Key elements are often identified when a specific term is used in a particular region.

*Charivari* has French roots; however, *rough music* is the generic term for the practice in the British Isles. This British term, which suggests the “raucous, ear-shattering noise, un pitying laughter, and the mimicking of obscenities” signaling the beginning of the custom, was at times used alongside its French counterpart (Thompson 469). One

example of mingling the terms is found in a record of a calendric event, called “The Fifth of November,” which commemorates a failed attack on the House of Parliament in 1605:

In Devon the Fifth occasionally imitated the charivari proper. Exeter did ‘not usually [meddle] with...domestic sins on Guy Fawkes Night’, but elsewhere it was frequent – especially after 1850. In Teignouth in 1855 we observe this merging of charivari into the rites of the Fifth. Accompanied by rough music, a car passed with three effigies: ‘One, suspended on a gallows, had the inscription “S.D.R” .... the other two – one .... a man, and other .... a woman, – had over them .... “Double-face”, and “Poor Lucy.”’ (Storch 83)

The “rough” in this case was likely associated with damage to aural senses, but at other times it identified the dangerous instruments found in “the din of cleavers, tongs, tambourines, kits, crouds, humstrums, serpents, ram’s horns, and other historical kinds of music” (Hardy qtd in Thompson 469). Less threatening items that were reflected in terms, such as belling, horning, and tinpanning, were used in the custom that survived immigration to the American continent (A.L Davis and McDavid 254).

Two rough music rituals whose performance was almost indistinguishable from one another were “riding the stang” and “skimminton.” In these cases, the victim was promenaded through town on a donkey or horse, and in the American version, a ladder, pole, or rail, intended to draw attention to the transgressor’s infringement on a community code (Johnson 373-4, Wyatt-Brown 441). Thompson’s survey of the custom revealed that versions of these customs “extended across the spectrum from the good-humoured chaffing of the newly-wed to satire of the greatest brutality” (469).

One of the most “psychologically-brutal” customs related to charivari was the stag hunt. A Devonshire version directed toward an offender of the social code was described by Thompson:

[A] youth dressed in horns (and sometimes skins) would act as proxy for the victim. He would, by prearrangement, be “discovered”, perhaps in a wood near the village, and be hunted by the “hounds” (the village youths) through the streets, backyards, across the gardens, run to earth and flushed out of alleys and stables. The hunt would continue for an hour or more, and, with a sadistic psychological refinement, the “stag” would avoid, until a final kill, approaching too close to the house of the intended victim. Eventually the kill took place – slow, brutal, and realistic. The “stag” was run to earth on the door-step of the victim, and a bladder of bullock’s blood which he carried on his breast was pierced by a hunter’s knife and spilled upon the stones outside the victim’s house. (470-1)

Preparing effigies, representing the offenders as animals, or simply making noises

imitating howling wolves, cackling geese, and clucking chickens was not unusual.

“Reducing the individual from human to animal order” is associated with Biblical rites:

“‘And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities,’ reads Leviticus 16:22. On the Day of Atonement, the priest laid hands on a live goat selected by lot, transferring by ritual words the sins of the people to the beast, which ‘a fit man’ would then release in the wilderness. ‘Scapegoating’ was the literal meaning of the rite” (Wyatt-Brown 440-1).

Moving from terminology toward the social functions of the custom, one of the “earliest depictions of charivari in medieval literature” differs from the previous example’s use of animals as sacrificial effigies in rough music performances. A horse called Fauvel emerges in the allegorical satire *Roman de Fauvel* (see fig. 3) as the character that becomes head of his master’s house and celebrates his matrimonial bed. The manuscript criticizing “the last corrupt years of Philip IV (d. 1314) and his sons,” is attributed to Gervais du bus, a French royal clerk, dated between 1318 and 1322. The seditious nature of his work likely preserved the story, as patrons hid away their copies. The wedding celebration of Fauvel and his new human wife, Vaine Gloire, presented an opportunity for iconoclastic reveling described in the following scene:

Clanging pots and kettles compete with cowbells, drums, and other instruments of “paramusic” as the revelers break windows and doors and throw salt into wells. Costumes and masks hide them from accountability but also repeat the disorder of their music and mayhem: some wear their garments inside out, some wear monks’ robes, not in reverence to monasticism but in desecrations analogous to those who expose their behinds and toss dung in people’s faces. (Crane 145-7)

Susan Crane’s analysis of this manuscript comes “as a provocation to scholars to reconsider the ruling interpretation that charivari is ‘popular justice’” found in the analysis of later charivaris and rough music.

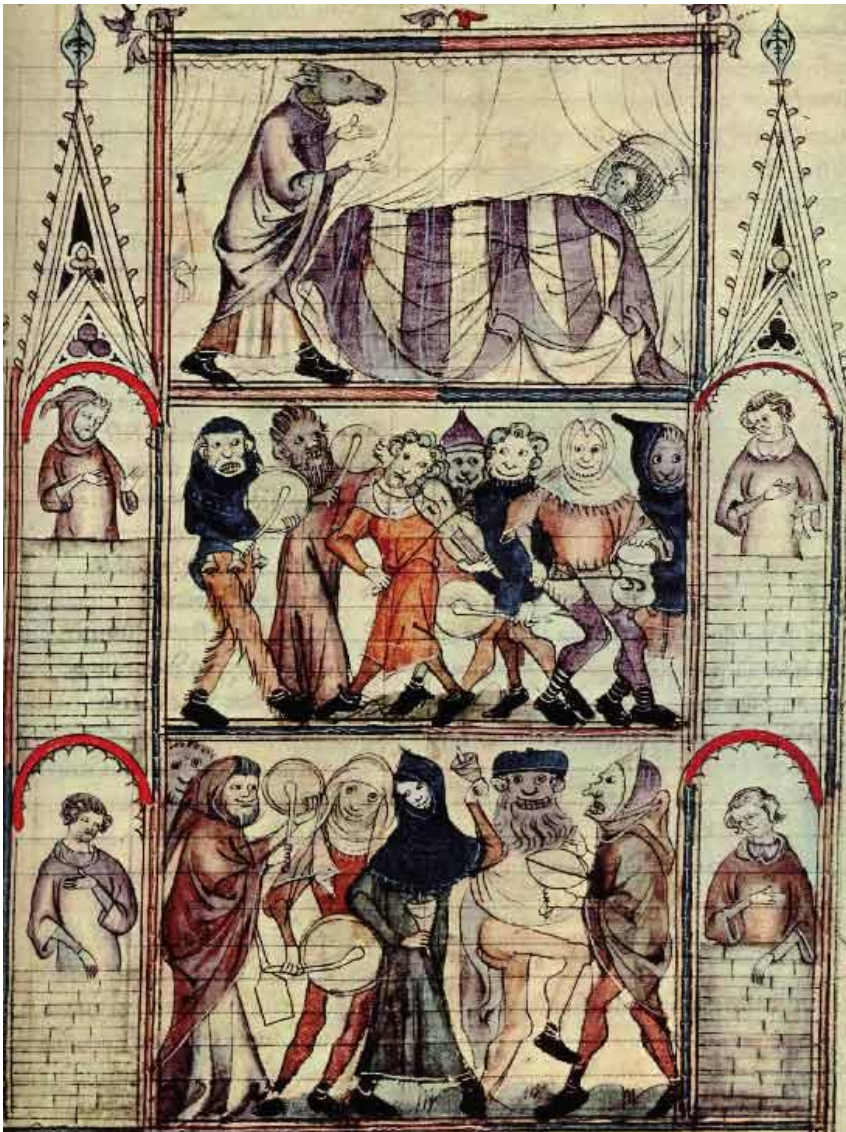


Figure 3: Charivari attributed to Gervais du Bus. *Roman de Fauvel*. 14th C. A.D. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Paris.



Although fictional, “the racket, petty aggressions, and disguises accord with accounts of historical charivaris.” Crane detects a carnivalesque atmosphere in the performance, but presented her argument as a contrast to previous interpretations of carnivalesque. Features of carnival are expressed as, “high spirits but low pleasure, inversions and parody, transgressions, noise, rejection of institutional authorities and constraints” (142). The *Oxford English Dictionary* adds further to the definition as a time for “feasting, riotous revelry, or indulgence.” The carnivalesque function is argued by other scholars as a prepolitical safety valve, inversion, or the “ritual of status reversal[, which] serves to loosen the rigor of a structured society and to ‘infuse’ through the system at least temporarily the values of an egalitarian community” (qtd in N.Z. Davis 103). In addition to their behavior, the position of the performers become key to Crane’s arguments.

Crane points out that the performers contributing to the carnivalesque atmosphere of *Roman de Fauvel* are the elitist of the court; therefore, contemporaries of the master of the house in contrast to other versions where “the carnival becomes a second life, a second reality for commoners, separated from power and the state” (N.Z. Davis 103). Crane’s reasoning “reinvents charivari as an expression of rowdy violence of, *by, and for courtiers*. This is a peculiarly elite poaching, a theft from the realm of the disenfranchised that allows those in power to be divided against themselves both socially, in denigrating a king, and individually, in complicating the decorum typically incumbent on their status” [emphasis added] (149). Her reading of this version of charivari “exposes the sovereign to ridicule not so much from the ‘popular’ position of the streets as from within the court’s own discursive and architectural space.” The position of the perpetrators is central

in the illustration, placing them inside the court with onlookers. A translation of the opening hyperbole further supports the difference between the behavior in this event and that of other festival and carnival performance establishing the class difference in the perpetrators: “never was such a charivari made by *street ruffians* [emphasis added]” (147-8).

Masks and costumes were key elements of carnivalesque atmosphere. Mikhail Bakhtin studies grotesque imagery in François Rabelais’ literary work. The carnival-grotesque form serves “to consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted” (34). Important to plebian societies, the inversion in carnival and festival atmosphere was a pressure release valve, as all that is noble and ideal was degraded to the material level. Crane uses this view to add to her argument. Investigating the masked misbehavior of the courtiers, she suggests that the costumes allow, “Its perpetrators [to] go wherever they choose without fearing Fauvel’s men, *implying that they could have reason to fear them*” [emphasis added] (146). Instead of the function of inversion of class systems found in carnival and festival, Crane argues that, “this charivari’s atypical emphasis on costume betrays a certain strain in fitting courtiers into rowdy, oppositional positions. They need masks not only to protect themselves from retribution but to displace them from a social identity incompatible (it would seem) with disorderly violence” (151). Crane’s study offers the reader a valuable argument about how a charivari can function within a carefully guarded social

relationship (medieval courts) in contrast to the classical function of social justice identified in later episodes.

The function that Susan Crane contradicts comes from the Western European and British practice that evolved over several centuries. In England, rough music “...denote[d] a rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against individuals who offended against certain community norms” (OED and Joseph Wright qtd in Thompson 3). A historian, not of elites but of merchants, artisans, laborers, and peasants, Natalie Zemon Davis viewed the European custom as a way to maintain social order through mockery of misconduct (100). Violet Alford, E.P. Thompson, and Loretta Johnson agree that behavior that disrupted the social order was commonly viewed as unacceptable marriage practices. Alford listed violations that triggered charivaris and rough music: remarriage of a widow or widower, a large span in ages between spouses, marrying a foreigner, adultery, and beating of a man by his wife (506). Social control, methods for creating order in society, is often studied according to the mechanisms that drive it.

Sociologists often discuss the link between the two mechanisms of law and morality used in the theory of social control. Edward A. Ross divided these into two broad categories:

Such instruments of control as public opinion, suggestion, personal ideal, social religion, art and social valuation draw much of their strength from the primal moral feelings. They take their shape from sentiment rather than utility. They control men in many things which have little to do with the welfare of society regarded as a corporation. They are aimed to realize not merely a social order but what one might term a *moral* order. These we may call *ethical*.

On the other hand, law, belief, ceremony, education, and illusion need not spring from ethical feelings at all. They are frequently the means deliberately chosen in order to reach certain ends. They are likely to come under the control of

the organized few, and be used whether for the corporate benefit or for class benefit, as the tools of policy. They may be termed *political* using the ‘political’ in its original sense of ‘pertaining to policy.’ (qtd in Donajgrodzki 10)

The justice afforded in the performance of charivaris points to the first since there is no clear structure or written language to codify the custom, and because the punishable act is often viewed as an ethical dilemma. These categories could further be separated as informal and formal control.

Thompson recorded an example of this folk justice from the Wilshire Quarter Sessions records of 1618 when a woman threatened the patriarchal order of the community by beating her husband:

Coming to the victims’ house (Thomas Mills, a cutler, and his wife, Agnes), the gunners shot off their pieces, “pipes and horns were sounded, together with lowbells and other smaller bells ... and rams’ horns and bucks’ horns ...” The doors and windows of the house were stoned, Agnes was dragged out of her chamber, thrown in the mud, beaten and threatened with being carried off to Calne to the cucking-stool. (5)

Though this example is directly connected to conjugal habits, Johnson’s study of the practice added that victims could be anyone who “infringed upon the community’s moral code ... [including] employers or governing officials” (378).

Returning for a moment to the terminology, up to this point in my survey, *charivari* and *shivaree* have been used interchangeably (the pronunciation sounds identical). To differentiate between the two, *charivari* generally denotes the practice which has close ties to the French language and European practices. *Shivaree* is generally the term used west of the Mississippi in the United States, which is why I use that spelling for the Park Valley tradition. Changes in spellings help to illustrate one of the modifications found as it moved from Medieval Europe, to the shores of North America,

and spread across the continent during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; however, each region embraced the idea of informal social control and developed new functions.

Linguists have traced both the term (with yet another spelling) and the function of social order to New Orleans in 1805. This early American account reads:

When a sherri-varrie is announced, it is done by a running cry through the streets, as we cry, fire! fire! And every man runs abroad, carrying with him any kind of clanging instrument, or any kind of grotesque mask or dress. All this comes from an indisposition to allow ladies two chances for husbands, in a society where so few single ladies find even one husband! A result, it is to be presumed, of the concubinage system so prevalent here. (Watson qtd in A.L. Davis and McDavid 251)

The “sherri-varrie” still had a direct connection to matrimonial practices, but took a novel direction reinforcing social class differences through the Southern “concubinage system” referred to in the previous passage, but also known as *plaçage*:

Miscegenation was so common in Louisiana that interracial marriages were outlawed.

In place of legal and religious marriage came *plaçage*, a highly stable common law union usually between a white man and a colored woman. In light of continued miscegenation, the legal code was amended to safeguard against "colored" relations claiming an interest in the family property. (Domínguez 597)

This form of social control emphasized segregation in the South and used sherri-varrie (or charivari) to draw attention to divergent behavior. The noise of charivari took a backseat as the function escalated to become closely associated with subversive activities like lynching.

“Between 1885 and 1903 there were 3,337 mob killings in the United States,” three-fourths of which occurred in the South. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, author of *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* asserts that “Because family purity – in lineage and reputation – was the bedrock of personal and group honor, lynchings and

charivari both before and after the Civil War were concerned with misconduct, real or imagined, that threatened familial security and status” (436). Though not a routine occurrence, he claimed that the rituals threatening to shame or kill were sufficient warning to offenders who undermine the social code. Statistically this behavior was directed towards Blacks. Mississippi records indicate that only twelve percent of the instances were white-on-white.

“Cultural distance” between people in different regions of the U.S. is the mechanism that social historian Roberta Senechal de la Roche suggested increased both the “probability and severity” of lynching and charivari directed toward whites in the South. “Expressive and symbolic aspects of their social life such as language, religion, cuisine, clothing, and entertainment” were differences that triggered white-on-white mob attacks. Charivaris were considered a minor form of lynching and usually took place in rural areas. These cases were usually reduced from murder to “tarring and feathering, minor property damage, rough handling, and beating ... [but] verbal harassment alone without any physical aggression or property destruction were also common” (58). Specific examples that occurred during the late nineteenth century in Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina were the beatings, whippings, and sometimes even killings of proselyting Mormon missionaries. Senechal de la Roche believed this came not only from alien content in the missionaries’ theology and religious practice, but also their mostly Northern background and manners (59).

In this region of the Deep South, an architect of a contemporary charivari, Marta Bivins-Badon, claimed that the practice died in the late nineteenth century when “police crackdowns and a city ordinance killed a vibrant part of our city’s [New Orleans]

culture.” Her description of the custom was similar to those from nineteenth century Europe citing an important part of the function that caused “the target to come out of his home and address the crowd.” Bivins-Badon’s protest was also designed as a form of social justice to draw attention to what the organizer felt was a “coverup” in the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling platform on April 20, 2010 that caused an environmental disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Besides the owner, British Petroleum (BP), she also blamed state and local government for putting “the will of oil companies over their obligation to represent, serve, and protect the public. She advertised two purposes: “1) To draw attention to the fact that BP's job is not done; in fact, it's only just begun, as is the public health disaster. 2) To promote Health of the Gulf Town Hall Meeting that evening at 6:00.” The plan was for the charivariers to put on costumes and make noise as they converged on the former site of the Unified Command Center for BP and then move toward the federal building. The organizer didn’t expect much more than just an opportunity for an organized protest. Her invitation was to “Gather your friends and allies to join in the serious mirth. Remember, it’s better to give a headache than to receive one!”

In the northeastern region of the United States and Canada, a different form of social justice known as “whitecapping” became prevalent toward the end of the nineteenth century. It took its name from the white caps people wore to disguise their identity. Though similar to the hooded forms of the Klu Klux Klan, northern whitecapping was less about maintaining class systems and cultural distance, and more often procured in cases where the legal system failed to take action. As early as 1896, a Mrs. Koehler in Berlin, Ontario was aroused from bed late one night to be met at the door

by four whitecappers. “Her bed clothes were violently torn from her body; she was ridden on a rail for a certain distance; and finally, she was tarred and feathered.” *Her* crime was that she had “recently subjected a stepchild to considerable abuse” (*Napanee Star* qtd in Palmer 47).

The threat of whitecapping itself was often enough to control behavior. The *New York Times* published a picture of two men with white caps and masks warning youth against violating curfew “or they would be made the object of discipline” (qtd in B. Palmer 47). Although charivaris and their equivalents functioned as extralegal forms of social control in the Northeast and Deep South, examples west of the Mississippi reflected a completely different nature. As the ritualized behavior migrated across the continent and farther west, the practice became less punitive and more celebratory.

Although many elements connect synonymously with historic cases, the social justice directed toward problematic marriages evolved to become a tradition that demonstrated approval (Greenhill, “Dressing Up and Dressing Down” 7, 9). Frontier shivarees occurred when “[t]he community exercised its self-proclaimed right to participate actively in the marriage” (Johnson 380). A Kansas observer suggested that the “theory seemed to be that a good shivaree [sic] was the best sure way to start a newly wed [sic] couple on their romp through married bliss and happiness” (Hockenull qtd on 372). Loretta Johnson described frontier shivarees as a “rowdy seal of approval” (372). High jinks and disorderly horseplay were “traditional, expected for every marriage, and meant to be fun” (384):

Frontier shivarees often featured a dip in the horse tank or a local spring...One couple, rumored to have strewn fractured hearts around them, were shivareed mercilessly. After storming the bridal suite of the hotel and demanding and



receiving the traditional treats, the shivareers proceeded to the business at hand, which was to throw the couple into the horse tank at the town pump on Main Street. The groom put up a stout fight, but was eventually subdued. (Hockenull qtd on 381)

Pauline Greenhill's research of twentieth century Canadian charivaris supports this Americanized version of charivaris; it "transform[ed] from a disapproval to an approval custom." A response she received on a questionnaire from Laverne Rabatich declared that the custom morphed into a "welcome" for the newlyweds, "Shivarees seemed to me to be a fun way of welcoming a couple into the state of marriage and, often, to welcome them as new members of the community" ("Welcoming the Newlyweds," 54-55). This was the version of charivari/shivaree that Stegner's characters, Susan and Oliver Ward faced but subverted in my introductory example.

As frontier borders moved farther west, so did the welcoming function of shivaree. The "horseplay" and "roughhouse" that Oliver Ward averted in the novel was scripted to initiate the couple into the community, and the beer the young men extorted was not meant to appease a few drunken miners, but instead a ransom that belonged to traditional charivaris. This was evidenced by the indignance of the young men and Mother Fall's disappointment (Stegner, *Angle of Repose* 95). Had Stegner desired to play out the charivari for Lyman Ward's grandparents, an 1867 account recorded in the *Tri-Weekly Virginia City Post*, could have been a perfect example to follow:

... the evening's quiet "was broken by a clash and clangor of many sounds, that startled people from their slumbers, and made night hideous... The blowing of horns and the tintabulation produced by the contact between cudgels and every conceivable kind of old tinware was answered by the howling of dogs and the harsh braying" of horses. "It was found that a few boys... had suspicions that a wedding" had occurred, "and in this manner manifested... a desire to drink the health of the happy couple." Traditionally, the bridegroom was expected to buy himself, his bride, and his neighbors a little peace by providing money for a round

of drinks; in this case, he simply “informed the expectant party that ‘he would see them up town in the morning.’” According to the *Post* “The boys ‘sloped,’ and at the present writing an endeavor to find any of them is a complete failure as it has since leaked out the ‘event’ came off a week ago.” The “event” the newspaper referred to was the wedding, of course, but also the consummation of the marriage, denying the newlyweds privacy – or at least extracting payment from the bridegroom to leave the newlyweds in peace – was at the root of the chivaree [sic]. (Kohl 166)

Residents in mining towns like New Almaden in *Angle of Repose* and Virginia City, Montana practiced the welcoming custom regardless of “ethnic, geographic, and class boundaries” (165).

Although an 1866 newspaper report of a Montana shivaree performed by friends of an anonymous African American couple shows the editor’s racial biases, the lighthearted “entertainment” differs significantly from the vigilante justice found in the lynching and charivaris of the Deep South that might have been directed toward a couple crossing racial boundaries.

Two American citizens of African descent, of opposite sexes, taking into consideration the emancipation of their brethren and the propriety of availing themselves of the liberty guaranteed by the bill of rights, and believing in the doctrine inculcated in the scriptural injunction – “increase and multiply” – proceeded to reconstruct themselves in the good old way, by calling in the aid of a minister and being made “bone of one bone and flesh of one flesh.” They were happy – yea more than happy; and were no doubt cogitating on the as yet blissful delights which are supposed to be inseparable from the marital state, whether existing between black or white; more especially so when, as in this case, “two souls had but a single thought, and two hearts beat as one.” But alas! They were doomed to not even spend the first night of the honeymoon in that peace and quiet as they had anticipated. Their sable brethren taking the same view of the C.R.B. [sic] as did the happy couple, before tying the indissoluble knot, proceeded to exercise their right to the pursuit of happiness: by giving the wedded pair a large and enthusiastic charivari. The entertainment was progressing favorable; each one was trying to out-do the other in the variety, volume, and vigor of their noises, with admirable success. (167)

The author's description of the event illustrates that people in frontier communities recognized that cultural distance wasn't a concept that could be practiced if they wanted to maintain some kind of social structure. The couple in the article shared the same Christian beliefs and the reporter acknowledged this couple as fellow-citizens just years after the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves, yet prior to adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution that broadened the definition of citizenship. "Expressive and symbolic aspects of ... social life such as language, religion, cuisine, clothing, and entertainment" (Senechal de la Roche 58) were intermingled as immigrants came from Europe, and others migrated from the East to settle the Western Frontier. These settlers were of diverse nationalities and already on the move. Their social practices "could not be controlled by the threat of ostracism or exile" as evidenced in earlier charivaris. Loretta Johnson found that "[s]hivarees on the American frontier exercised social control more constructively by drawing individuals, including 'riffraff' and foreigners, into the community circle" (383, 386).

"Welcoming the newlyweds" could have been an argument for the charivari planned for Susan Burling Ward in *Angle of Repose*; beyond that, the suggestion that their charivari signaled acceptance doesn't complement Stegner's story. Susan had no inclination toward becoming part of any of the communities in New Almaden. "Susan Ward came West not to join a new society but to endure it, not to build anything but to enjoy a temporary experience and make it yield whatever instruction it contained" (81). The Cornish, Mexican, Chinese, and even junior engineers and college students from the East were considered "lower echelons" literally and figuratively. Oliver had built her cottage with verandas that looked down over the camps. She thought the Cornish crude

and barbarous, and though they “saluted her with grave courtesy,” she wanted none of their companionship. She appreciated the skills each community shared to make her life more comfortable, and their diverse cultures that she recorded in her illustrations to send home to the East, but that was the extent of her connection to any community they moved to. Cultural distance was apparent in Susan’s snobbish attitude; she was not looking for acceptance.

Evelyn Funda presents a different attitude in her mother Toni’s shivaree experience near Emmett, Idaho. When neighbors arrived at the newlywed’s house in the middle of the night banging pots and ringing cowbells, she had just enough time to pull her husband’s heavy coat over her nightgown before “the two were marched out to a pickup and instructed to join others in the truck bed.” They were driven four miles to the center of town where her new husband was compelled to push her in a “wobbly wheelbarrow down Main Street.” Cigars and flasks of whiskey were passed around to celebrate the couple’s elopement. Just before dawn, the crowd drove back to their home to share a breakfast of bacon, eggs and coffee. This “initiation” was a way of welcoming Toni Funda into her new husband’s circle of friends – a thriving community that she would be an “intimate part of for nearly forty-five years.” Toni accepted the shivaree as an important step towards putting down roots in a community (166-7).

As the narrator in *Angle of Repose* moved the Ward family to Leadville, Colorado, Susan’s attitude showed signs of transformation when she “almost persuaded herself that under the rough and ridiculous circumstances of life in the Rocky Mountains there was something exciting and vital, full of rude poetry: the heart beat of the West as it fought its way upward toward civilization” (Stegner 229). In those Colorado chapters,

Lyman could have just as easily been describing an identical community where I investigate another example of Western shivaree. This version came after the marriage of my own grandparents in Park Valley, Utah when Grandpa worked the Century Gold Mine west of town. Although many elements within these Western settlements are similar, applying the shivaree function of “welcoming the newlyweds” is not generic.

Susan’s view of her second “Western home” in that primitive mining town was the same as my Grandma Letitia’s: “a squat cabin of unpeeled logs with a pigtail of smoke from its stovepipe” and a canvas cot with just a quilt to serve as a mattress. On the night of my grandparents’ wedding celebration, they also tried to escape the planned shivaree. They turned off the headlights of his ’29 Chevy and started up the mountain to their cabin. They barely reached their new home when they turned to see a string of lights behind them. The squeals from a little wiener pig that was given as a gift had led the shivariers to their victims. Rud and Letitia left the car and hid on the sidehills behind the cabin. When the shivariers searched the house and realized they had been outsmarted, they implored them to come back. The couple gave in and walked down to be treated to a night of pranks that ended not with a keg of beer or whiskey, but with the newlyweds cooking breakfast for the perpetrators. My grandparents, like the Fundas, recognized the welcome and good humor in the performance.

Park Valley’s version of shivaree is directed towards accepting a young couple as *contributing* members of society. This may be similar to other cases, but after closer investigation, I have found an even deeper function in this community. Grandpa was born and raised in the community. Even after his parents died when he was a young adult, other families help to support him and care for his younger brother. The core of this

community was not mobile as found in other “frontier American populations.” “Most Midwestern shivarees confirmed community solidarity and *invited* newly married couples to share in that community” (Johnson 383, emphasis added). However, in this isolated community, shivarees were reserved for those who had strong roots that connected townsfolk sometimes by distant generations. In this respect, it functioned as a rite of acceptance.

### CHAPTER 3

#### “OUT HOME”: THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF PARK VALLEY, UTAH

*The feeling of being at home was complete, absolute ...And that feeling was not so much the sense of being protected by her father and mother as of being with, and being one with, her brothers. It was the clan feeling, which meant life or death for the blood, not for the individual. For some reason, or for no reason, back in the beginning, creatures wanted the blood to continue.*

---“The Best Years,” *Willa Cather*

*Every action in traditio involves a giver as well as a recipient, and the participants are aware that something like it has occurred before and will happen after they are gone.*

--- *Explaining Tradition, Simon Bronner*

#### **The Park Valley Community-Clan**

Home is not simply a structure built of brick and mortar; it is a place where a body can feel at one with its community, a place of shared experiences and distinctiveness. Bonds of trust are created through shared experiences and distinctiveness. Sociologists John C. Allen and Don A. Dillman found this common in rural areas. “The distance individuals can trace back their heritage is one measure of how others in the community interacts with them .... It takes at least one generation before someone learns the norms and customs” of a community (173, 93). My ancestors established their “home” in Park Valley, Utah in the summer of 1893. My father lived only twenty-five of his seventy-seven years there, but he still calls it home. I never lived there, but I too feel that sense of home because I was born into a Park Valley family. Because of our

community roots, our family's shared experiences and interactions became part of the traditions that maintained collective values and beliefs to shelter ours and others' sense of home. The process of *traditio*, the root of "tradition" implies that "something precious or valuable is given to someone in trust after which the person who receives the 'gift' is expected to keep it intact and unharmed out of a *sense of obligation* to the giver" (Gross quoted in Bronner 27; emphasis in original). Members of the core community have now preserved our Park Valley legacy for five generations. My great grandparents are counted as generation number one, but it was my Grandpa Rudger Palmer who *I* first remember calling Park Valley "home." Reflection on his life helps me to better understand the traditions that fostered the clan feeling in this community.

Grandpa was always an old man in my eyes. Adults usually look old to a kid, but his tough life had aged my Grandpa Rud far beyond his years. My childhood eyes saw only the grizzled face of a shrunken, white-haired gentleman sitting in my parents' kitchen during one of his monthly visits to town. I never knew the confident young cowboy in the picture I recently discovered, where he stands grinning from the left side of the photo, half-a-head taller than his brother, with his wide-brimmed Stetson cocked off to the side, shielding his eyes from the west desert sun. The photo was probably taken about the time he and his two younger brothers were left to their own resources when their parents both died around 1921 (fig. 4). From that time until the days I remember in our kitchen, he had lived a full life wrangling wild horses, working in the gold mines, marrying the school marm, piecing together a cattle ranch in northern Utah, and driving a school bus for 32 years until his health finally failed, and he had no choice but to turn it all over to his wife and youngest twin sons. This taxing lifestyle that had aged him was



also the life he loved, the life he chose; it was what was required to survive in the community he loved, Park Valley, Utah.



Figure 4: Rudger and Hazen Palmer in Park Valley, Utah. Approx. 1921. Photographer unknown.

The town is listed in *The Historical Guide to Utah Ghost Towns*. Readers are led to believe that the town is dead. Abandoned buildings, and desolate miles of sagebrush, and cedar trees, along the route belie the close-knit community that exists within the approximately 500 square miles identified as Park Valley, Utah. The *Guide* says that “In the evolution of progress, when travel became even easier, Park Valley was again bypassed by speeding autos and its importance shrank once more, till now there are only 30 families, some in town itself, and many scattered in the nearby ranches” (Carr 13). Author Stephen Carr categorizes the area as an “Agricultural” type ghost town and Class 6, which represents “Entire towns comprised of many old, abandoned buildings but with a few residents still living within” (4). He bases the ghost town classification on the “dramatic drop in population from its peak at the turn of the [twentieth] century” (13). The “few residents” and families Carr referred to are those whose predecessors survived

economic downturns, abandoned railroads, diphtheria epidemics, fabricated land opportunities, the boom and bust of gold mining, and vanishing natural resources.

Trying to ascertain the exact size of the community for myself, I turned to U.S. Census records. Between the 1950 and 1970 census, the federal government determined that the population was too small to count as individual precincts, and the entire area was simply lumped into Western Box Elder County. However, when I contacted an uncle who had been the LDS Bishop of Park Valley and asked if the church records gave any indication of the population, he could tell me house by house, who lived there and verified that the population fluctuated around 200 residents. I was reminded of the socio-political role that the LDS Church played in the area.

Rud Palmer's story was not, and is not, entirely unique in that area. The traditional ranching lifestyle he lived from 1899 to 1975 still survives today and is being preserved by descendants of some of the families who originally built their homes in the area. When I returned to the valley in 2011 to perform research into the community's marriage traditions, I looked closer at those who live there and traced the descendants of one of the original settlers to find that seven surnames exist and mingle to form a *community-clan*: Carter, Kunzler, Larsen, Morris, Palmer, Pugsley, and Rose (see fig. 5). Not ignoring other pioneers, and their blood that pulses through the veins of the aforementioned families, but green road signs along the highway that read "Kunzler," "Morris," and "Palmer" aid the passerby in understanding the connection the surviving families have to the environment. "Out home" is the phrase these natives use to refer to the Park Valley landscape. When Grandpa came to visit us in Tremonton, he referred to the trip as "going to town," but "going to town" was also shopping in Brigham City, or

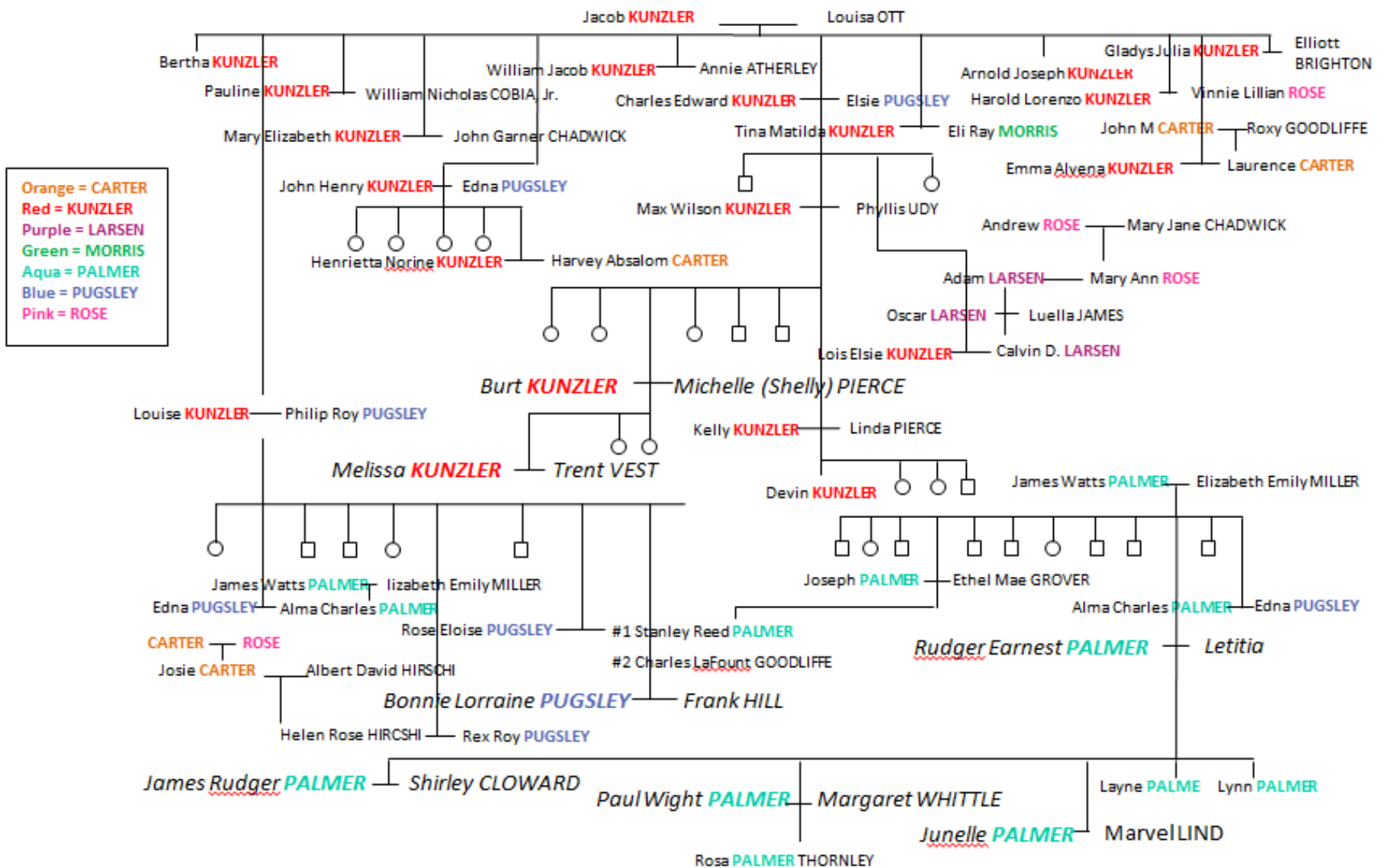


Figure 5. Blood and marriage ties of a portion of the community-clan traced from one of the original settlers in Park Valley, Utah, which shows the interrelationship of its members

○ Female  
 □ Male

taking cattle to Burley. However, their return trip was to leave the outside influences of town and “head out home.”

The fictional character in Willa Cather’s short story “The Best Years” was instilled with a strong desire for home and family. The farm daughter, Leslie Ferguesson, recognized that family is more than just parents protecting children under one roof. It was the “clan feeling, which meant life or death for the blood” (134). My desire to investigate the function of shivaree, led me to first find the source of this tradition, that some believed was a “gift” passed down from the community – the clan. I needed to understand tradition that grew out of the value and belief system that helped this community-clan survive when others failed. The shivaree tradition in Park Valley both highlights and perpetuates this family’s sense of identity in the area they call *home*.

### **Boom and Bust**

Park Valley was not always the insular community it is today. The nineteenth century was a time of bustling activity and commerce. Numerous communities sprang up over about a twenty-five year period to take advantage of the few resources that the landscape provided. Companies built railroad and mining town around commercial ventures. Other towns formed around farming and ranching resources the area had to offer. These agricultural communities organized around shared religious beliefs and values. Goods and labor were exchanged between all of these groups. The commercial activity provided the means for some of the agriculturally-based pioneers to survive long enough to put down deep roots. While many of the communities collapsed into the ghost towns that Stephen Carr identified, these roots sustained the generations that comprise the

present-day society. Tragedy and failures of preceding populations also influenced and strengthened bonds holding them together. Descendants recognize and honor those contributions.

Artifacts fashioned by Native Americans are cemented into the fireplace built in my grandparents' living room. Three perfectly chiseled arrowheads and a ten inch long knife are framed by green rock mined from Rock Canyon above the mantle (see fig. 6). My family looked forward to sitting around a crackling fire on cold evenings listening to Grandpa tell stories of his childhood. He remembered as a young boy seeing a dust cloud rising from the desert during, which signaled the return of the Shoshone tribe to their summer home in the Raft River Mountains above Park Valley. His older brother was given the task of butchering a beef for the feast to welcome them back (A. Palmer).



Figure 6: Native American artifacts cemented into the fireplace of the former Rudger and Letitia Palmer home. Spring 2012. Photographer: Rosa Thornley.

Pacifying the Indian's hunger seemed to be the best way for these neighbors to get along. Another member of the valley told of one act of mischief when Indians killed two cows for food. However, they returned the hides to the rancher tending the cattle "so he could get the dollar for pasturing them" (N. K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 2).

A gravestone in the far northeast corner of the cemetery offers more evidence that Native Americans existed in the valley and has become material for local tall tales. The inscription reads:

Indian Boy  
About 1880  
About 1896

The most popular version of the tall tale is that the "Indian Boy" had committed a crime that was so grievous that he wasn't allowed to be buried on holy ground. Tall tales grew into a legend that he was buried atop his horse to help carry his spirit to the afterlife. My cousin, who lives in Park Valley blogs about the stories she's heard, wrote that other queries trying to search out the truth tell "more or less, the same story." Either the whole community is perpetuating some kind of joke, "or it really happened" (A. Palmer). My own search directed me to an aunt who was raised in the valley and had completed some research of her own. She produced a death record that provided the true story. The little boy was run over by a sleigh during the winter of 1896 and died of his injuries. The tall tales and legends are only one indication of how the community clings to their own. When I visited the cemetery on Memorial Day in 2013, there were more flowers on this little grave than almost any other. Along with symbols of another race, many different stories and speculation abound of the first white settlers.

The “Iron Horse” may indirectly be responsible for bringing the first permanent white settlers to that particular area. An 1895 Rand McNalley map illustrates the main thoroughfare drawn through the uppermost corner of Utah (see fig. 7). This road falls further south than the printed name of “Park Valley,” which sprawls below the topographical outline of the mountain range. Skirting the Great Salt Lake, the nineteenth-century route followed the transcontinental railroad line coming from Sacramento. The bustling railroad towns of Kelton and Terrace preceded Park Valley and its sister town of Rosette. By the time the golden spike was driven to join the Central Pacific and Union Pacific lines, the transient communities of Chinese and Irish immigrants, who had built the railways, were dissipating. Tens of thousands were abandoned and left to find new homes. Many of the Chinese “returned to San Francisco, others made their way to Asia, [but] the hardiest of this outstanding group remained in the desert and became bona fide residents of Utah” (K.B. Carter 190).

The construction camp in Terrace evolved into a permanent railroad town with an “eight track yard and a 16-stall roundhouse and repair shops for maintaining and turning locomotives.” With this new economy in the desert; hotels, saloons, public bath rooms, and at least one female prostitute cropped up to entertain the needs of travelers and locals alike. The railroad’s master mechanic barred heavy drinkers from working in the engine and machine shops. An attempt to add literary culture was made when “all workers were taxed a dollar a year to maintain a fine [red-brick] library (sic)” (Carr 12). A school was erected. The conservative Mr. Beazley, who came from Maine to teach school, found a quieter environment boarding with the telegraph operator’s family. (United States Census Bureau). “The Sabbath was respected and children dressed neatly and cleanly,” but no

church building existed to worship in (Carr 12; Frederick Zaugg 8). Chinatown was built in dugouts along a shallow gulch. “Boys of the town peeked through the windows to watch work-weary Celestials enjoy the ritual which had so amazed their Irish counterparts on the railway – a hot bucket and an elaborate soaping every night.” A sticky sweet smell rose from the gulch on Saturdays when opium pipes were smoked (K.B. Carter 190).

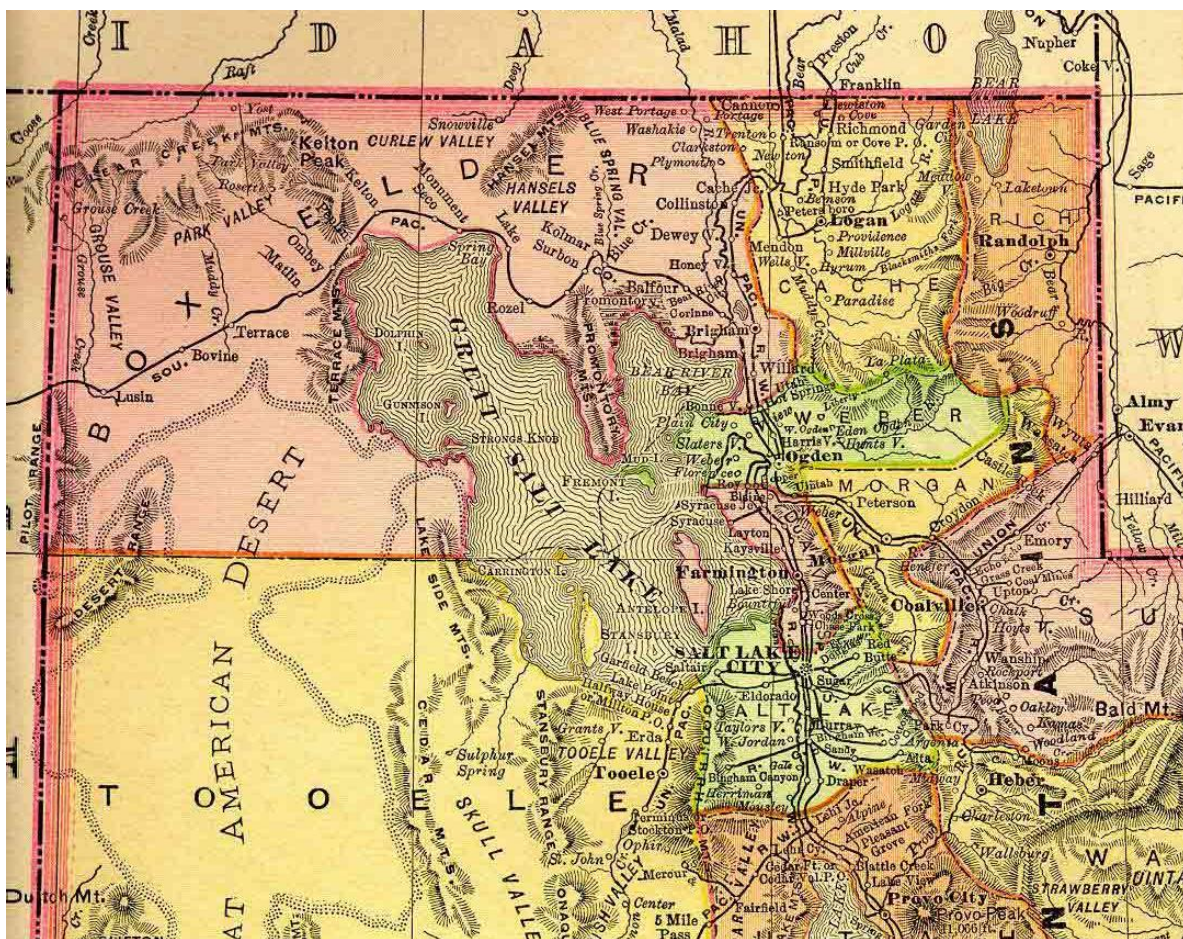


Figure 7. 1895 U.S. Atlas of Utah focused on the area in the uppermost corner of Box Elder County that became known as Park Valley.



Farther east, the Central Pacific established Kelton as the main shipping station. “The railroad had a large water tower supplied from a spring in the foothills,” which filled water cars for other points along the line, including the next terminus east in Promontory (Carr 10-11). A post office collected and distributed mail to neighboring towns. Like Terrace, the town boasted “a two-story hotel, several saloons, stores and homes” (K.B. Carter 188). Populations in both towns grew as European and Eastern immigrants brought their families. Chinese men, ages 13 to 55, worked in both towns on the railroads, in the laundry, and as cooks, grocers, and tailors. Many were married, but wives and children hadn’t made the trek to this new territory. The few Chinese women appearing in the towns were waitresses and the prostitute.

Readers of the preceding historical accounts will find more value in my research of marriage traditions derived from religious beliefs if they understand the driving forces behind each one. For railroad companies, and the mine companies that followed a few years closer to the turn of the century, commerce and rich veins of precious metals helped build those towns. A journalist for the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City sarcastically remarked that these newcomers to the West were showing the Mormons “what is necessary to build up a country and make it self-supporting and permanent” (qtd in Athearn 87). However, it was family values and the religious belief system of the Mormons immigrating to the area that ultimately sustained the community-clan that survived in the Park Valley area.

Kelton Road became a major freight and stage coach route from Utah to northern Idaho. In a turn of events, one freighting contractor trailed his runaway horses to a canyon northeast of the railroad station. Adam Larsen decided the grassy, wooded area

would be a good place to settle and returned in 1870 to build a home. Runaway horses, again lured to the natural feed and water in the foothills, led a railroad worker, Andrew Callahan, to the Rosette area where he eventually settled. William “Cotton” Thomas “entered a contract to winter about 1500 head of cattle for one dollar a head” near another spring that flowed from the mountain range to create good feed. Thinking it looked like the “park land” of his native Wales, he referred to the area as Park Valley (N. K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 2). The Homestead Act of 1862 offered more families opportunities on land where they could raise cattle, crops and kids away from the commercial railroad towns. Emily Chadwick Zaugg recorded her family’s move:

When I was about five years old, my father took the family out to Park Valley, in Box Elder County, to survey the possibilities of establishing a new home there .... That summer we lived in a one room log cabin with a dirt roof in Park Valley. In the fall we returned to North Ogden.

Three years later, we left our home in North Ogden and went back to Park Valley to stay. There were several families that moved there at that time. There was only one house in Park Valley, so we all slept in our wagons and ate in this one house. We also held church in this house. (1)

Chadwick’s along with many other newcomers brought with them a religious culture that separated them from the libertine character of the railroaders; the church services that Emily referred to were led by the Mormons.

A review on the back cover of Wallace Stegner’s *Mormon Country* is a fitting depiction of these Park Valley Saints:

Where others saw only sage, a salt lake, and a great desert, the Mormons saw their “lovely Deseret,” a land of lilacs, honeycomb poplars, and fruit trees. Unwelcome in Illinois and Missouri, they migrated to the dry lands between the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada to establish Mormon country, a wasteland made green. Like the land the Mormons settled, their habit stood in stark contrast to the frenzied recklessness of the American West. Opposed to the often prodigal individualism of the West, Mormons lived in closely knit – some say ironclad – communities.

The story of Mormon country is one of self-sacrifice and labor spent in the search for an ideal in the forbidding territory of the American West.

Unlike Saints along the Mormon Corridor, the Park Valley congregation was not “called” to colonize the settlement. Members trickled in over thirty years starting in the late 1860s, coming and going according to personal aspirations. According to Stegner, this region of “Mormon Country” had no natural boundary lines like those “on the east, where the Colorado Rockies form a barrier, and the north, where the southern end of the Bitter Root Range and the spurs of the Tetons and the Antelope Hills mark the transition to alpine and uncultivable wilderness.” It sat along the “arbitrary western line,” which cuts through the Great Basin (37), where members were “scattered for a distance of about 10 miles from east to west.” The first church meetings were held in 1871 at the home of the presiding elder, Thomas Dunn. Within a few years, a small meeting house was built in the middle of the sagebrush where they held services and administered the sacrament – and in 1879, Park Valley Ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) was officially organized (Jenson).

The land of “milk and honey” did not appear spontaneously. When Mormon convert Frederick Zaugg, who later became Emily’s husband, came to Park Valley from his beloved homeland of Switzerland, he “looked for fruit trees, for flowers, lawns, streets, and fine homes.” The journey to his new home changed his perspective. Instead of the orderly society and infrastructure Brigham Young built the Salt Lake Valley, Zaugg was introduced to the wild frontier West. When his sponsor, Christian Hirschi, picked him up a little north of SLC in Brigham City just days after arriving by rail, they immediately left the Young’s civilization along the Wasatch Mountain Range and road

into the barren desert area of Western Box Elder County. What met his gaze was “sage brush and cedar, jack rabbits, rattlesnakes, and many kind of other wild animals ... along the way as well as great salt flats with nothing growing on it.” He was eager to see a “sparkling stream running across the road” at one point that he hoped would quench his thirst after a long morning of riding. He nearly choked when the water tasted like brine and was as bitter as gall. Their trip was not even half over before he started to think, “Surely, this can’t be Zion.” After surviving the night in the desert, the next day brought little difference than the first. As they topped the last hill riding into Park Valley, his first impression was that it was as “dreary as a place could be.” Zaugg finally voiced his disappointment asking if this desolate place was his Zion. Hirschi made a deep impression, responding “Yes, if you make it.”

The motivation for the farmers and ranchers in Park Valley was to build a “home” and a legacy to pass on to their family, not to chase the elusive dollar so common in the culture of railroad and mining towns. They went to work grubbing cedar trees and plowing land for farm ground to plant alfalfa fields, apple orchards and gardens. Pine canyons offered lumber to build homes, outbuilding, corals, and firewood for cold winters. Pioneers with foresight like Fredrick Zaugg eventually created their land – their own Zion – of “milk and honey, bread and butter, meat, vegetables, and berries of a variety.” Some years, however, this wasn’t enough and growing Mormon community had to depend on their Gentile neighbors on the south end of the valley for supplemental income. Facing spiritual dangers amongst the “rowdies,” men like Zaugg could find work in Terrace as “roustabouts” earning \$25 to \$30 per month with board and room, which

quickly multiplied to more than the \$80 a year working the ranches in Park Valley and Rosette.

A tragedy that didn't have a straightforward remedy hit the Mormon community in 1883 and illustrated the spiritual, emotional, and temporal resources the community shared and eventually came to depend on. C.R. Rohwer recorded in the *Deseret News*:

Our little settlement has been called to mourn for the loss of many of our dear little ones who have been taken from us by the hand of death through the dreadful disease, malignant diphtheria. Ten of our children have been called away since May 28 last, and still some more are sick with the same malady. But we hope to save them. Dr. Mitchell, from Ogden, was attending some of the patients, but he pronounced some of the cases hopeless, in which he proved to be correct. How such a plague can get such a hold here is one of the mysteries, as we are scattered over a large fine valley, situated on the south side of the Raft River mountains, at a considerable elevation, overlooking the Great Salt lake, which is distant about sixteen miles.

Our day school [sic] was in a flourishing condition, but on account of the sickness we had to dismiss both that and the Sunday school and meetings. Our bishop has been laboring faithfully night and day to help the sick and bring relief and comfort to the bereaved; also his wife, Sister M. Mecham, as well as Sister Lucy Godfrey, who helped in our time of need to their utmost, for which the hearts of the people feel grateful to them.

Crops look well, and the people are prospering and increasing, and our prayer is that this scourge may soon be at an end and no more of our dear ones taken away. (Rohwer)

Families were lucky if Dr. Mitchell could make the train ride to Park Valley via Kelton to administer medicine. In the meantime, the community turned to their LDS bishop, Erastus Darwin Mecham, to provide more than just spiritual comfort for his congregation. He exercised a holistic approach with natural remedies he learned from Indians and trappers while working for the American Fur Company in Wyoming years earlier, that also provided physical relief to many throughout the valley (N.K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 4; Ingram). The epidemic didn't stop at the ten reported deaths, taking its toll on

many families (see fig. 8). Members of the community provided support by building and lining caskets, and sewing burial clothes for the lifeless bodies (N.K. Carter, Palmer, Morris 4). The Christian Hirschi family lost six, leaving only the very oldest and very youngest. For the Rohwers this “plague” took three children, which added to a total of six that died during their time in Park Valley. The loss tested their faith in the venture to make a permanent home in the community. It was too much to endure and they returned to a better established area of Box Elder County. The Rohwer’s decision provided an opportunity for my family; several years after they left, my great grandfather, James Watts Palmer, purchased the old Rohwer homestead.



Figure 8: A common headstone stands as a monument of the diphtheria epidemic that took many children’s lives in the 1880s. Summer 2011. Photographer: Rosa Thornley.

My Great Grandpa James Watts Palmer's view of Park Valley was different from Frederick Zaugg's as the family's heavily loaded covered wagon rolled into the valley almost ten years after Zaugg. "It was early summertime and everything was green and wild flowers grew throughout the brush and natural meadows." Rohwer had built a large five room house including "a kitchen with a rock cellar on the main floor and a large open bedroom area upstairs." A grassy yard, for the growing children, surrounded the house. "Much of the land was covered with meadows, willows," and cold, clear streams of water flowing out of the canyons in the snow-capped mountains above the ranch, which was ideal for raising sheep and cattle. When James Watts Palmer became the new bishop, his family shared the meadow below the home with the LDS Ward, and was used as a gathering place for celebrations (Lind, *Our Palmer Legacy* 4).

One cyclical festival in the Palmer's meadow became a community tradition, which continues today just a short distance from the original location. A correspondent (probably a local) sent a report to the *Box Elder News* of one of the first Pioneer Day celebrations:

Palmer's grove was the place selected for gathering and nearly every individual within a radius of fifteen miles was on hand. Promptly at noon a spicy program was rendered the most striking number being a song by John Carter and Elisha Whitaker .... A most sumptuous repast was served at the close of the program. The committee had berries, confections, ice cream and lemonade in abundance and while only the latter was absolutely free the other refreshments were sold so cheaply and by such charming young ladies, that nickles, dimes and quarters flowed in, in a steady stream. Then the fish pond was opened and every fish caught in about ten minutes. Pity the committee did not have about five hundred more. Egg races, baseball and children's dance occupied the afternoon and at night a grand ball in the Opera house concluded a most enjoyable day of merry making.

The author gave further insight into the state of the growing community when he reported a “building boom” as Mr. Callahan completed a “handsome addition to his residence. The school trustees [erected] another commodious room and Mr. Kunzler has built a fine cellar.” The article continued by congratulating the newest additions to their increasing population. Mr. and the new Mrs. Alfred Petersen had just returned from tying the “nuptial knot” in Logan. And, he closed by referencing a new, significant economic enterprise that affected all four established communities of the area – the Century gold mine (“Rosette”).

Two shepherders digging around in their spare time had picked up rocks that they felt showed evidence of mineral content, and within a few years men with larger investment capital than the shepherders took control. Gold and silver ore flowed from tunnels along the Raft River range as fast as the streams of water, creating new industry and markets for Terrace, Kelton, Park Valley, and Rosette residents. In its heyday, the Century mine “paid [investors] a dividend record of \$40,000” (“Utah Mining Notes”). A new company town named Golden built, in the foothills above Rosette, became a hub for hundreds of men working the gold veins in the surrounding Century, Golconda, Buffalo, and Susannah mines. My Great Grandpa James Watts Palmer and two other families contracted with the mining company to transport equipment and supplies with a 16-horse team from the railroad towns to the new five-stamp mill. Upon arrival in Golden, Great Grandpa used the team of horses to grade various levels for shops, an assay office, a store, a post office, a cook shack, and the Hurry Back Saloon, luring “the old freighters and teamsters” (not the bishop) back after their loads were dropped (N.K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 10). “On the return trips, gold ore from the tunnels, and later gold bricks,



often hidden under wagon seats, were hauled to the rail heads for shipment to Salt Lake City” (Lind, *Our Palmer Legacy* 4). Other farmers and ranchers “found a ready market for freshly churned butter, milk, meat, eggs, and other farm produce” for this new economy. Mr. Morris raised and sold onions, and Jacob Kunzler butchered and sold meat (N. K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 4, 12). All of the communities in that corner of the state were thriving as commerce flowed freely between them and spilled into other towns just beyond the reach of the valley.

One social element that was not as negotiable was their source of entertainment. The Mormon communities sought out more wholesome recreational activities than those offered to the miners and railroaders. Smoke-filled saloons serving liquor where patrons gambled and consorted with the prostitutes were prohibited by the Mormons’ Word of Wisdom, moral beliefs and established doctrines. Because they were “isolated socially and sometimes geographically” from communities that shared the same moral beliefs, the “isolation allowed them independence in developing the social plan best suited to their needs.” Their social lives were far from puritanical. “The Mormons not only were allowing play, but they were advocating it and sponsoring it” (Holbrook 348). Dances became a frequent event that all members of the valley enjoyed. Old and young alike turned out on the dance floor. They kicked up their heels in the same buildings on Friday and Saturday nights, where prayers and sacraments were offered the following Sunday. During summer months, courtship traditions like “basket dances were very popular, where girls furnished a basket lunch and boy[s] bid on the baskets and shared the [meal] with the donor” (Ingram). Pioneer dancing was a common “sociological-cultural pattern” of community life in Utah and especially in Park Valley (Holbrook 350).

Such traditions that sprang from their collective values and beliefs, and the first evidence of shivaree traditions date back to this time. Weddings were an occasion for celebration, but followed a unique pattern found in Utah. Mormon culture teaches a principle of eternal marriage that can only be performed in a dedicated “House of the Lord” where they make covenant to receive promised blessing that extend beyond the grave. When the Logan Utah Temple, was dedicated by their prophet, John Taylor in 1884, many of the valley residents like the aforementioned Mr. and Mrs. Petersen made the trek to partake of those promised blessings. Because of time and expense, family and friends seldom attended the official wedding ceremony. Upon their return, the community followed the pattern of many other frontier communities and “exercised its self-proclaimed right to participate actively in the marriage” (Johnson 380). Local historians list shivarees as integral part of the festivities. “All manner of pranks on the bride and groom” was the best definition they gave for this valley’s version of the shivaree (N.K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 40). The practice became so engrained in the culture of the community, that nothing is recorded about how or when this practice started. As folklorist Simon Bronner suggests, “The participants are [only] aware that something like it has occurred before and will happen after they are gone” (29).

Relatively tame social activities like basket lunches and shivaries were not completely satisfying for the Mormon youth, and curious teenagers could not resist venturing out to investigate the licentious life available on the south side of the valley. Two adolescent boys profited greatly from one such visit. After finishing chores one evening, they decided to take a ride down to Kelton looking for adventure. They arrived a little after dark and hitched their horses outside the saloon. Attracted to the piano and

racket coming from inside, they crawled underneath the floor to listen a little closer.

Builders had used green lumber for planks on the flooring, and as it cured, little cracks appeared between the boards. The boys could see that they were right under the poker table. The next thing they knew, they heard a coin roll across the floor and into a crack hitting the ground right beside them. One of them lit a match and found that it was a \$50 gold piece. Scrambling out of their hiding place, they headed for their horses just as the gambler came around the building to retrieve his lost coin. They jumped into their saddles and reined the horses toward Park Valley as fast as they could go, hearing cuss words and threats shouted at the two little thieves who had stolen his \$50 gold piece (Lynn Palmer). This kind of excitement offered by booming economies in the mining and railroad towns eventually burned itself out. As the Mormon communities continued to sustain themselves, half a century after the first white men pitched their tents in the railroad camptowns of Utah territory, those hubs that were once central to the economy of the valley began to collapse.

A headstone lying somewhere between Kelton and Terrace reflects the demise of these two towns; it reads: *Short was your stay on earth below, And loath we were to let you go* (K.B. Carter). Just as quickly as railroad companies brought civilization to this remote corner of Utah, they began to take it away. Completion of the Oregon Short Line to Shoshone replaced Kelton as the major supply distribution point for Southern Idaho. A visitor one season later noticed that “grass now grows over the defunct overland Kelton stage road where the wary traveler once traveled in clouds of dust.” (qtd in Jones 2). The death knell tolled for the already ailing towns when the Southern Pacific built the Lucin Cut-off, a monumental engineering fete, which redirected the tracks over a causeway in

the Great Salt Lake bypassing Terrace and Kelton completely. Jobs in Terrace were transferred to Nevada, and the buildings were distributed to neighboring communities (Carr 11; N.K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 30).

Men like section foremen and engineers took their families and followed the rails back to Nevada and California to take railroad jobs they were trained for. The Chinese didn't fare as well. Historian Kate B. Carter found that "there were no wives ... and no children" in Utah. Without families, the communities were probably doomed anyway. Some broke camp and moved to Montello and Carlin, Nevada where the railway shops were. Others were too old to relocate. As these "men died, they were taken with appropriate ceremony to a cemetery west of [Terrace] which defies location today. Later some of the remains were shipped back to China" (K.B. Carter 190-91). Lack of family – clan – meant not only death of the community, but "death for the blood" (Cather 134).

The bustling railroad and mining communities turned into distant memories belonging only to the oldest residents remaining in the valley. As the railroad communities dissipated, so did that the economy and its benefits. Valley residents lost the convenience of catching a train from Kelton to the more populous cities of Utah; they lost their frequent mail service; and they lost that mode for shipment of livestock and produce. As the towns were abandoned by the railroad companies and the tracks were taken up to use as scrap during WWII, the remaining agricultural and religious communities in the valley became even more isolated and dependent on each other.

## **Consolidation of Community**

Park Valley and Rosette communities were not free from their own challenges. When the gold vein was lost in the mines, many residents lost any source of supplemental income connected with that enterprise. “Drought, hard winter, overgrazing, and overstocking, caused the grass to die and it was replaced with sagebrush and cedar trees and junipers, except where there were natural springs or mountain streams” (Ingram). Irrigation wells had to tap into natural springs that sometimes dried up; drought and grasshoppers killed crops. Local history recorded how these natural resources (or lack thereof) affected the population:

As drought years came and the grass became scarce the large numbers of sheep and cattle that were once pastured here dwindled. When the valley could no longer support these large numbers of livestock which were the main source of income, the people moved to areas where there was more water. Many took with them shattered dreams but left behind contributions to the history of the valley. Many of the homesites can not be found now – the cleared field have gone back to sage brush (sic) (N. K. Carter, Palmer, Morris 39).

As residents left looking for greener pastures (literally), homestead sections were consolidated to eke out a living.

Speculators took advantage of the abandoned railroads and bought up a portion of land where the tracks once laid. Pacific Land & Water Company advertised greener pastures in a brochure published around 1911. “Hundreds of acres of land [are] lying ready to respond most generously to the touch of the husbandman,” enticed immigrant farmers who would invest in land near Park Valley (Yates 14). As others were leaving for lack of natural resources, this scheme brought more than 100 Russian Molokans escaping religious persecution from their home country. They hoped this isolated location would allow them freedom to worship and follow their native customs. They built sturdy plank

houses, dug new wells and cleared land for farming in preparation for their new life. They had furniture and farm equipment shipped in, and bought livestock from local ranchers. These new neighbors received respect, admiration, and cooperation from the Mormon community. Elizabeth Goodliffe Hirschi, whose father owned the store in Park Valley, remembers, “They were very honest, and you could trust their word” (16). However, the Russian’s American Dream died quickly. Drought conditions resulted in poor and failed crops. Financial resources were depleted and at the end of five season they realized that they were poorly equipped to conquer this demanding lifestyle in the Utah desert. They quickly returned to California, following new promises. The Russians also lacked a large enough social network to sustain them through their trials. This support network was something that allowed my Grandpa Rud Palmer to stay in that country he always called home.

Ranch life was what Rudger Ernest Palmer was born to. His mother gave birth to him in the family home in Park Valley, Utah, literally at the turn of the nineteenth century on December 28, 1899. When his parents, Bishop James Watts and Elizabeth Emily Palmer, died within two years of each other, the younger boys lost their home. To feed themselves, he and the youngest brother, Alma (called Almy), took jobs for a sheep company in Idaho the summer after his mother passed. They rode their horses back to the valley after work ended in the fall, stopping at Goodliffe’s store for bread and cheese. Leaving, they saddled up and Rud turned to face Almy and proclaimed, “We have no home to go home to.” I suspect that it was at that moment, he realized that *home* was a much broader term than a house of sticks or mortar; it was a place bound together by people. That valley was all he’d ever known, and he wanted to stay. As they ate their

meager lunch sitting on a big rock below the schoolhouse, Rud formulated a plan. He took Almy down to the Dave James family who lived south of the community, and arranged for the teenager to trade work for room and board while the boy finished school. Grandpa found work as a ranch hand for another neighbor, Oscar (Oc) Larsen. He later told his children, “Those men were friends of our father and were good and honest men. We felt at home with the James and Larsen families, a bond that would last throughout our lives” (Lind, *The Palmer Press*).

When Grandpa Rud met and married the pretty red-headed school teacher, Letitia, they had a lucky encounter that helped them establish a permanent home in the valley. While visiting her parents in Brigham City one afternoon, Grandma and Grandpa met their neighbors Mr. Seeley in the grocery store. He told them he couldn’t make a go of ranching because of the economic stress common during the Depression Era. He had just left the bank where loan officials were foreclosing on his property west of Park Valley. As they talked, he suggested that this might be an opportunity for a younger couple. Rud and Letitia went straight to the president of First Security Bank with a proposal to take over payments. Grandma sold a life insurance policy she had from teaching school to provide a \$250 down payment. They signed the papers and became landowners. Over the next 50 years, their one square mile section increased to over 5,000 acres. Many other hardy souls followed the same path, merging quarter-sections abandoned from the Homesteading Act to build their ranches. The Mormon church in the valley also went through a consolidation process.

Religious communities are a significant element in most rural areas. “The traditional role of the church .... was to provide a cohesive fabric for the maintenance of

the community values” (Allen and Dillman 169). My study of the Park Valley/Rosette area showed that in 1910, the LDS population had increased to the point that a second ward was organized, separating Rosette and taking forty one members from their home ward of Park Valley, which challenged this idea of “a cohesive fabric.” To adequately investigate this concept I compared Park Valley’s division to another rural study performed John Allen and Don Dillman in Bremer, Washington. I found that separate buildings and congregations offered alternative options for worship. For older folks in Bremer, Washington, religion was a driving force. However, elder members of the community watching younger ones believe didn’t see the same commitment to religious values; “people just aren’t concerned about life after death.” The different religious leaders in Bremer catered to different beliefs and lifestyles of each individual. (169-172). This assessment indicates see that dividing the population into separate wards formed in Park Valley and the other in Rosette didn’t have the same effect on their community values. Author Wallace Stegner, who spent a portion of his adult life in Utah, found that “the Mormons were never, in their Church Organization or in their social patterns, what we think of as democratic.” They are viewed as passionately loyal to their prophet in Salt Lake City, which some see as giving “rise to a theocratic and patriarchal form of government” regardless of the geographic boundaries (*Mormon Country* 94). This geographical division of the ward boundaries was short-lived as the population again dropped, and by July 1941, the wards were again consolidated into one. The Park Valley school precinct now delineated the ward boundaries:

Bounded on the east by a line running from the summit of the Clear Creek mountains to the Ombe station, then southerly along the western base of the Terrace mountains [on the edges of the Great Salt Lake] and the eastern base of



the Copper district mountain to the county line between Tooele and Box Elder counties, bounded on the south by Tooele County, on the west by the line between ranges 14 and 15 west [near the Nevada state line] (that being a guide meridian) and bounded on the north by the summit of Clear Creek mountains [on the Idaho border], which are also called the Park Valley mountains (Jenson).

The arms of the ward now basically stretched through the longitudinal and latitudinal box of 1895 Rand McNalley Map. Though ranches were separated, sometimes by twenty miles, the Mormons living in the Park Valley Ward were “opposed to the often prodigal individualism of the West” and embraced each other in an ironclad, close-knit community (Stegner, *Mormon Country* back cover).

Jakob Künzler entered the valley prior to the 1880 census. While living in Grantsville, Utah, this Swiss immigrant claimed to have looked north across the Great Salt Lake at the snow-capped mountains along the Raft River Range one spring and, according to his grandchildren, decided “there’s got to be something under that mountain.” He traveled to Rosette, just west of Park Valley, to investigate and then to stay. Five generations later, Devin Kunzler still works alongside his father and uncles to preserve the ranching legacy his great-great grandfather created.

My study of the regions’ history provided evidence of the consolidation pattern found in cultural aspects of the community, and is followed through the literal bloodlines of the people there. Many Park Valley families can trace their family tree back to the roots Jakob – Americanized to Jacob – planted over 130 years ago, and to the Carters, Larsens, Morrisises, Palmers, Pugsleys, or Roses. They are the ones who succeeded when others failed. Success isn’t measured by money in Park Valley as much as the ability to survive in that West Desert. Even when times were tough, Max Kunzler’s son saw him as an “eternal optimist.” Next year was always going to be better, but *better* simply meant

that they were still there. Max's grandson, Devin, describes it as "a lot of work and not [always] a lot of [financial] reward." Others in his peer group plan to seek a "better life" either because they didn't like it or there was not enough to support more than one or two families. This eighteen-year-old, however, plans to come back after attending school and serving an LDS mission to work the ranch with his brother Derek and cousin Charley and carry on the family legacy. "It's all I know. It's home."

Devin's father was one of the "others" who left the community proper to seek out a "better life" by pursuing a career as a physical therapist. But, the ranching lifestyle was a strong magnet. He told me in an interview, "I wanted to come back. It was home. It was what I loved to do. It's what I wanted to do." Home to the Kunzlers and the families, who have worked their ranches for generations, is a legacy. Devin describes home:

It's more the area you live in. There's a lot of houses out there that I would call home. I wouldn't be a scared to walk into at three in the morning and go to their bedroom and ask them if I could sleep on their couch. There's a lot of houses out there that I wouldn't be scared to do that at... Park Valley, you knew everybody, and you knew what was going on in their lives. You knew if she was sick or, you know, when her baby was coming. You got bucked off and "how's he doing?" You knew how everybody was doing. As I moved into town and lived in Tremonton, you knew of people, you know of your next-door neighbor and how they were doing, but three houses down the road, I didn't even know half their names in the little subdivision that I lived in. I knew a few here and there, but most of them, it was, you know, wave to them as you drove by in the car, was about it.

This solidarity continues to support and sustain the community. Their sense of a communal home can only be understood by those whose ancestors invested their lives to preserve that legacy.

In Park Valley, those who don't have blood ties to previous generations are called "move-ins." The community opens its doors to welcome new neighbors, but conflicts

sometime arise when move-ins don't understand social norms like the community family watching out for each other. One of the Kunzler wives was moving cattle to the mountain range one morning when part of the herd strayed. As the herd separated, she knew it would take more help than she had at that moment. Seeing that the strays were moving toward a new neighbor's empty corral, she herded them in and shut the gate. After quickly informing these "move-ins" of the situation and that she would return within four hours, she herded the rest up the canyon. Later that afternoon, she pulled up with the stock trailer to load the strays and found the gate open with the cattle nowhere in sight. The woman told her that they didn't want to be responsible for someone else's animals and had opened the gate to let them out again. These neighbors resented what they saw as an imposition by someone they barely knew. On the other hand, Kunzler's frustration was that these newcomers don't live with a "country sense of mind." They don't understand what it takes to survive together in an isolated community and how dependent they are on each other. Too many are moving to these rural areas to disappear from society and live independently. In Park Valley, they play together and work together.

Mildred Morris who married into the community three generations ago emphasizes Kunzler's feelings of interdependency. "You could always depend on your neighbor if you got into trouble." When a fire – multiple fires over the years – threatened the Morris ranch east of Park Valley, the matriarch of the family remembers, "Everybody came to help." Their ranch had no phone service until the 1970s and their closest neighbor was eight miles away, but people came from all directions when word spread that their homestead was threatened.

Paradoxically, isolation required families to plan ahead. When their daughter, Marsha, was born Morris was snowed in with her new baby for six weeks. Scattered ranches had to be self-contained, so they grew gardens, nurtured apricot, peach, and apple trees, then preserved the produce for winter. In the early years, many raised turkey, chickens, and pigs, milked the beef cows and cured meat in their own smokehouses. My Grandpa Rud was taught to use every part of a cow when it was butchered for meat. He worked untanned hides for strips to braid tack and laces for spurs used on the ranch. Lariats required a piece of rawhide twice as long to braid a 30" length. Starting on the outside, he would cut the hide (avoiding the flank where it was weak) in a corkscrew pattern toward the middle which would give him a longer strip than straight through the hide. He used the fencing around the corral as a stretching post by wrapping the strips around and letting it sit in the sun for weeks until it cured. A homemade hidesplitter was fashioned from a piece of steel or hardwood. Grandpa niched a hole and imbedded a knife blade in the center. This tool helped cut the rawhide into perfect strips for braiding that endured use on the ranch for decades. Although most farms in the valley today aren't prepared with a chicken coop or smokehouse anymore and leatherwork is becoming a lost art, Shelly Kunzler teases that she has a mini Home Depot in her garage. She claims that another neighbor's basement storage room has any grocery item someone might need to borrow. Each family goods are shared freely from one end of the valley to the other.

All of the children leave the valley to attend their last two years of high school in Tremonton. Some further their education at the university level. My Grandpa Rud even left for a few seasons in the 1920s attend the Agricultural College of Utah (now Utah State University) in Logan to learn the farrier trade. The school's three-fold mission at

that time was, “to experiment in agriculture in order to know how to improve it, to teach the young people who came to the Institution the dignity and worth of the farm and to carry the knowledge gained on College Hill to the people of the Territory” (Ricks 5). Grandpa took not only took his horseshoeing skill back to the community but a solid education in blacksmithing and carpentry. Neighbors throughout the valley brought him equipment to be repaired. He eventually built himself a little 20’ by 20’ log blacksmith shop near the branding corral. It was equipped with a hand-cranked forge covered by a hood that exhausted out the top. Grandpa sharpened many of the plowshares farmers and ranchers used to cut hard soil for planting. These basic trades and other traditional skills were offered throughout scattered ranches to sustain the whole. Again, because of the absence of the railroad transportation, and, until fairly recently, modern infrastructure, the community-clan became self-sufficient, keeping the outside world – town – at bay far longer than larger communities.

### **Codification of Traditions**

Today, a few things have changed. Leatherwork and Grandpa’s blacksmithing trade isn’t in as great of a demand. Ranchers are more likely to climb on their “Japanese quarter horse” instead of the four-legged breed to head up the trail. Their Kawasaki ATVs cover more country when they’re in a hurry. Other jobs still have value. Devin Kunzler followed the same route as Grandpa Rud, heading to Logan for a welding certificate. He employs contemporary technology using his welder and hardfacing rod to repair equipment and build other things. His practical skills keep the farming and ranching operation moving. A day running to town for parts is a day wasted on the ranch.

Ranchers couldn't afford waste: a broken knife blade, a fresh cowhide, a salvaged railroad tie, or five hours on the road to town. They found value in the simple things.

Devin's mom, Linda, wonders if the people of the valley are getting a little lazier – not because of their work ethic. Her husband can bale as much hay in three days as his Great-grandpa Jacob used to put up in three weeks. They are becoming less dependent on each other for basic necessities. Instead of planning for a weekly trip to stock up, it's "I'll just come back in on Thursday...Eh, I'll go in on Monday. It's just so close anymore." They have more means of travel than the previous generation. One infrastructure, the roads, was improved as interstate commerce developed. Instead of the railroad grade, the main road now runs directly through Park Valley and Rosette. In the mid-fifties, the road was oiled, and in August of 1966, the "North of the Lake" Highway 70 (now 30) link to the Nevada line was celebrated in Rosette (N.K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 15). This faster pace of life and a closer route to the outside world is transitioning the community; they are less isolated. Nevertheless, while some connections to the past are fading, other interactions that preserve the communal family are still held tightly.

Familial relationships like Linda and her next-door-neighbor Shelly's may sometimes be taken for granted in the community; these two sisters married brothers. In fact, they had another sister who married another brother. Some of their kids joke that the Pierce family ran out of sisters for their Uncle Kerry to marry. Many of the school kids refer to each other as "cousin" and can trace their family tree back to a common great-great grandfather. The Mormon church, of which many of the members of the community still belong, stress the importance of family for their eternal salvation. In a manifesto issued in 1995, leaders of the church proclaimed, "the family is central to the Creator's

plan for the eternal destiny of His children . . . . We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society” (Hinckley). However, family doesn’t just refer to a bloodline, it belongs to the “home” attitude and the Mormon church is central to this. Members around the world refer to each other as Brother So-and-so and Sister Such-and-such. Home teachers and visiting teachers are assigned to check on the individual needs of ward members each monthly. Bishops are often called the “father of the ward.”

In Park Valley the bishop also has civic duties. “There is no mayor, town matters are handled exclusively by the Bishop, our valley’s divinely inspired authority, and there is no city council, so the differing church organizations are appointed to take care of different aspects in our community,” which is why my uncle could mentally account for each household member. Informant Kaleb Pugsley labels the community a “theocracy.” “Valley celebrations, after school activities, volunteer work, cattle and farm business, rodeos, school administration and any other possible community involvement is all done under the review and jurisdiction of the Bishop and his church.” He questions and answers this dilemma – or blessing – in one breath, “So where does this leave us as members of such a grand community? Wherever ‘God’ sees fit to place us.”

People were taught from a young age that when the bishop, “or the Lord’s servant” asked something, you did it. Pugsley worried that the church was not only his life-line in the community, “it is also the bane of my existence.” These men who are called to be the religious leader depend on inspirations from their Lord for guidance, and their congregations in turn depend on his guidance. Bishop Kerry Kunzler recognizes the

kinds of difficulties that come from this level of reverence. He remembers growing up in Park Valley and that obedience to requests from the community's religious leader was sometimes by "blind faith," but adds that it is just as "hard being bishop .... It's a humbling experience." The bishop was always the one person the whole valley looked to. In times of drought, severe struggles, or tragedy, people look to him to see what the bishop's going to do. Former leaders like Bishop Mecham doctored and buried members of his flock, and my great-grandpa, Bishop Palmer hosted community parties in his meadows. Bishop Kunzler's sister-in-law, Linda defends his position insisting that the "valley recognizes that someone has to have the say, and in Park Valley, the bishop is that person." This is contrary to sentiments in other rural communities. The study I found in Bremer, Washington showed that people in that area argued that their "religious leaders should guide only in personal religious matters, not in the overall direction of the community" (Allen and Dillman 174). This claim comes from the fact that in rural communities like Bremer, they don't personally know their religious leaders. Their preachers are short-term citizens working there on temporary assignment. Local Mormons leaders are different. The global organization based in Salt Lake City (SLC) is guided by the belief that "Man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof" (J. Smith). Those in SLC claim the authority, but "call" the bishop from the local congregation. He is an established member of the community and because his "calling" comes from God, he is not a paid clergy. This accounts for the respect and authority locals give their bishop.



Nonmembers and less active members acknowledge the authority of the bishop. “The church was everything about the valley. The church was the center and still is the center of the valley” (Kerry Kunzler). If you ask a less active to home teach, they home teach. The bishop does not serve alone. Some laugh that the bishop is the “mayor,” and leaders of the local ward auxiliaries become the “town council” (Layne Palmer). Community celebrations are planned in ward council and to church standards. This filters down from previous generations. When the Carter family donated grounds for the park, firehouse, and rodeo arena, there were stipulations that there would be no drinking. They wanted a gathering place where community members could come and feel safe – where people could turn their kids loose and not have to worry about them.

Far from the idyllic utopia where everyone lives in peace and harmony, Park Valley has had its internal struggles. Great-grandpa James’ second counselor in the bishopric was murdered in 1913 when a neighbor shot him behind the Rosette store. An argument stemming from grazing cattle had triggered the deadly confrontation. Fights, “both fist and legal, over the rights” to the scarce sources of water exist in the memories of older citizens (N.K. Carter, Palmer, and Morris 39). Cattlemen and shepherders didn’t always see eye-to-eye. J. Ed Meacham told a story similar to the biblical David and Goliath when he confronted a neighbor one day on the open range. “Jake Kunzler, who was a cattle man, ordered J. Ed to move [his family’s] sheep off the land. Jake was on a horse and tried to be tough, but [the young] Ed was determined to call his bluff. Jake used strong words and hit him with the bridle reins. Ed picked up a rock and his aim was straight and true. Jake fell off his horse. He climbed back in the saddle and quickly rode away and never bothered Ed again” (Ingram).

The shout “*traitor...TRAITOR*” can be heard on late afternoons on a weekend in late July, not in a threatening way, but teasing as neighbors are again divided between Park Valley and Rosette to compete in the tug-o-war during the annual Pioneer Day celebration. As my search for not only strong traditional values continued, so did the study of the individual events that have been preserved for generations since Great-grandpa James Watts Palmer’s time. During my trip back to the community in the Summer of 2012, I found that other games and races are left to the children until the tug-o-war is announced. Those sitting in the back “start standing up and putting their shoes on.” When teams are split between Park Valley and Rosette, marriage ties are sometimes broken ... for only a few moments. A Rose girl from Park Valley who married a Pugsley boy from Rosette, returned to her own family’s on the opposite end of the rope. Father was pitted against son in my family’s case. Uncle Lynn moved in to Park Valley from the ranch in Rosette, so faces his son Travis across the line dug into the dirt. Blood boiled as the rope started to move. Burt Kunzler, the 6’5” anchor for Rosette, sat down and dug his heels in. The rope sucked down to half its size. Teams were screaming to recruit teenage friends from town who had come out to participate in the festivities. Visitors are welcomed at those times into the folds of the family. Linda Kunzler laughs, “It’s not blood death, real mad, but it’s competitive.” The pull sometimes lasts ten minutes, but in the end Rosette families like to claim that they are usually the victors. Though divided for a few moments, common experiences like the tug-o-war are the lifeblood of the community. The bonds that these traditions have created sustain the community. Kellyshe Kunzler (there are three Kelly Kunzlers living in the community) insists, “We may scrap with each other, but we’ll defend them against outsiders.”

The community is not exclusive. Sure they invite the town kids to pull for their side of the tug-o-war, but it goes beyond a polite welcome. They treat their neighbors as family. Perhaps it is an open gate for a straying herd or extra hands when a fire threatens their barn and crop of grain. Profits from the Pioneer Days celebration are distributed throughout not only their community, but to others as well. Some years they have bought wheel chairs or scout tents. It may go to others down on their luck. Perhaps they have cancer and need help. When a family's home burned in the next town east, the money was donated to help give them a new start. These are just a few of the behaviors that develop the trust that they will take care of each other in a communal style – one that move-ins can't grasp until they've invested close to a lifetime in Park Valley.

Family ties are not a cultural phenomenon. Philip F. Notarianni explored other community-clans in “The Family Endures: A Look at Utah History.” The introduction to his investigation offers his idea of what makes each “family” unique:

Throughout history, the family has had a profound influence on individuals. It serves many functions for family members, but maybe none is as key as its role in simple survival. After all, it is through the family that most people sustain themselves economically – and in Utah's history, the tasks of adaptation and survival echo as main themes in the peopling of the state. But issues of survival go beyond just sustaining life. Families also help their members to survive and prosper socially, culturally, and spiritually.

Notarianni acknowledges that the definition of family may be extended beyond the nuclear – father, mother, and children – and take many forms. “While families may have different forms, the function – that of survival – remains the same” (3).

Park Valley's familial society may not be entirely different from other cultures that have bonded to create a community with shared values and beliefs, but using these values and beliefs, they constructed traditions and maintained them over generations.

Isolation preserved these traditions against outside influences for many generations.

Visitors are welcome in the community, but only those who respect and help uphold those traditions, those who contribute personal resources for their neighbors' survival, are accepted. This is how the Park Valley community endures when others failed. Grandpa Rud chose to spend a lifetime there even after his parents passed. This is why there is a sense of home. This is what preserves the lifeblood.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARK VALLEY SHIVAREE CASE STUDIES

The case studies in this chapter are a fair representation of shivarees that were performed in Park Valley, Utah over four generations. Although ritualistic shivarees very likely took place before the Great Depression, none of those stories survived – or I have not located the tradition-bearer. Stories that I gathered are presented in narrative format; however, I have been careful not to insert personal bias. Any indication of such comes from the many interviews it may have taken to create a single history of the event. The details included are in direct proportion to the memories of the participant, their connection to the community, and the uniqueness of their shivaree. My analysis will be reserved for the final chapter.

#### **Depression Era: Rud and the School Marm**

The United States was in the middle of the Great Depression and jobs were hard to come by in 1930 when Letitia Wight accepted a job teach first, second, and third grade in Park Valley, Utah for a salary of \$75 per month. She worried about moving the ninety miles from her family in Brigham City, but another young lady at the school orientation meeting, Edna Pugsley, who had also accepted a teaching position, offered her a ride out in her father's old Buick. Letitia recalls, "I was happy for the ride into this unknown country which was about to become my home. We drove out past any civilization, through the mountains and across the sagebrush flats. We finally arrived at the little community. Edna stopped at the hotel where I arranged for a room for the school year." Edna and the hotel were to have a larger impact on her life than just a good friend and a

place to lay her head. Edna introduced her to her future husband, and the hotel was where my Grandma Letitia and Grandpa Rudger Palmer first met.

Edna's family lived in Rosette, and her boyfriend, Almy, was my grandpa's brother. Shortly after the women started teaching school, Almy returned home from serving an LDS mission in England. He asked Rud to sing with him during the church services when he reported his experiences from the missionfield. The two young men loved to sing; people said Rud "had a beautiful tenor voice" (Lind, *Palmer Press*). The variety of songs these brothers were known to sing were "When You Wore a Tulip," "Tie Me to Your Apron Strings Again," "Oh, My Father," "Whispering Hope," "Danny Boy," "Red River Valley" and "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." Perhaps their choices may have had significance to the landscape and their familial home. I would like to think that the last one may have helped my grandparents' romance bloom. The accompanist (Rud and Almy's sister-in-law, Amber) lived in the rooms next to Letitia in the hotel. She likely heard him finish practicing the hymns through the thin walls, then transition into strains of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart":

I am dreaming Dear of you, day by day  
 Dreaming when the skies are blue, When they're gray;  
 When the silv'ry moonlight gleams, Still I wander on in dreams,  
 In a land of love, it seems, Just with you.

Almy and Edna invited the other couple to attend the missionary homecoming report as their first double-date.

The entire community joined in the budding romance. At school, Letitia's students would dance around her teasing, "Are you going out with Rud tonight?" The nucleus of their courtship was the old hall next to the hotel. The open floor provided

room for dances on Fridays and Saturdays, then transformed for church services on Sunday. Grandma's talent on the violin was shared in the small band that accompanied dancers. Rud "was an excellent dancer" Letitia later told her children, "As soon as the music started Rud was on his feet, kicking up his heels and ready to go. He was usually among the first on the dance floor and never missed a dance." This hall was the gathering place for the community to play and worship together throughout the weekends.

On a cold evening during her second winter in Park Valley, Letitia remembers his proposal:

After Sacrament Meeting was over and everyone had gone home, Rud and I went back to the hall where the fire was still nice and warm. Alma had taken Rud's car to go see Edna. We talked for awhile and then Rud proposed and asked me to marry him .... Rud gave me a new wrist watch that Christmas. It was also an engagement present. No one had money to buy diamond rings. He always felt bad about that and said someday he would buy me a diamond. He did give me the diamond ring for Christmas in the 1960s. (Lind, *Palmer Press*).

They were married the next summer on July 22, 1932, and returned to make the Park Valley area their home.

Everyone in the valley loved Rud and the red-headed school teacher, so the couple planned a big party in the old community hall to celebrate their marriage. The ceremony was performed in the Logan LDS Temple, so the party took place when they returned home several days later. Weddings were another good reason for dancing and socializing in Park Valley. The Glen Orchestra played. So many people attended that there was barely enough room to swing their partners around the floor. Everyone went to the dance; other members of the community remembered that there was nobody to leave the little kids with.

Wedding festivities in that little community usually involved initiating the newlyweds. Rud's friend, Al James, planned a shivaree with a series of pranks to welcome them into their new station in life. He greased a little white wiener pig and turned her loose on the dance floor; if the couple caught it, they could keep it. Rud didn't want to soil the suit he borrowed from Almy, so he stood back and let Letitia chase it. The audience waited around the edges and kept it herded toward the center of the room. This was the best entertainment they had all night. Finally, she got frustrated, put her hands on her hips and said, "For heaven's sake Rud, get over here and help me." He headed in and caught the pig by the hind legs, carried it outside, and put it in the rumble seat of his old '29 Chevy.

That greasy little gift served another purpose for the revelers. After the dance ended, Rud and Letitia headed out for their little log cabin in the canyon near the Century Gold Mine. Trying to avoid further pranks, the couple turned off their headlights as they pulled away from the festivities that night, hoping darkness would cover their route up the mountain. When they reached the cabin, they looked back down and saw a string of lights from the partiers following them up the canyon. They realized that the shivarriers could hear the squeals from their new little companion in the back seat. Rud knew what was in store for the newlyweds since he had been involved (probably the instigator) in other shivarees. He took his new wife by the hand and said, "C'mon, we're going to surprise those people. We're going to fool them." Still dressed in their wedding attire, they climbed the steep hill behind the cabin and sat down in the sagebrush. With the pig still squealing in the back of the car, they watched the shivarriers light their lanterns and



search the cabin. When the group realized they'd been fooled, some of the men in the group hollered up,

“Yeah, we know you're up on the side of the hill.”

“We can't see ya'.”

“It's going to be all night.”

“Come on down and be good sports.”

The couple gave up and walked on down the hill to greet the shivarriers (see fig. 9).



Figure 9: Rud and Letitia revisiting the cabin where they were shivareed after their wedding in 1932. c. 1964. Photographer: Lind.

Part of the shivaree performance was to “let” the couple dress up in opposite-gendered clothes. The “let” part came from good-humored peer pressure from the shivariers. They put Rud in Letitia’s clothes and vice versa. Then, the group provided the couple with some chickens to prepare a late dinner for the party. Older members of the community remember the name of the event being modified to “chickaree” on occasions that they raided local chicken coops for the meal. Other newlyweds were required to butcher the chickens and pluck the feathers. They either scalded or fried the chicken to serve to the group.

Lynn Palmer remembers his parents relating the story to him. Both would insert a little information that the other forgot in the telling. My Uncle Lynn remembers Grandma’s face turning red when the story of the wiener pig was told. She said, “Well we needed the meat, Rud.” Vera James, Al’s sister-in-law, reminisced with Letitia years after Rud passed away, “I remember the party they gave for you up at the old Century Mine – I don’t believe the smiles ever left either of your faces all evening. It was a fun time.”

### **“They Thought Enough of Us”: Jim and Shirley**

A generation after Rud and Letitia Palmer’s shivaree in Park Valley, this marriage tradition was still actively practiced and their children experienced new versions of the tradition. James Rudger (Jim), Paul Wight,<sup>1</sup> and Junelle were all born within five years of each other. The family was geographically isolated in a rural community, so they were intricately involved in each other’s lives and developed close relationships with friends

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<sup>1</sup> Paul had a twin sister Paula Patricia who died shortly after birth.

on neighboring ranches. Twins Layne and Lynn were born when their older siblings were almost grown. In October of 2011, I sat around a kitchen table in South Jordan, Utah to talk to Jim, Junelle, Layne, and their spouses about their memories of events surrounding their weddings.

Health issues had brought Junelle and her husband from their family home in Heyburn, Idaho to live with her daughter and husband in South Jordan. Jim suffered from a stroke he had several years earlier and had difficulty communicating. Layne moved his family from Park Valley when their children entered their high school years when the kids would normally have been expected to leave their parents and live in town to finish their last two years of secondary school. Layne's family lived in Tremonton, Utah until the three kids graduated, then settled in North Salt Lake. Because of the age differences, Layne remembered the events from a child's perspective. Paul and Lynn were interviewed in their own homes on separate occasions to add their memories of the following events. Regardless of when or where the interviews took place, the most solid memories of their wedding celebrations were all deeply rooted in their familial family home of Park Valley.

Jim left the valley to first attend high school in Brigham City, and then to serve an LDS mission in Brazil. Instead of returning to Park Valley, he chose to study Botany and Animal Husbandry at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah where he met Shirley Cloward from Neola, Utah. Shirley's Guatemalan roommate had been converted to Mormonism by one of Jim's roommates, so she invited his entire apartment over for dinner one evening. Jim and Shirley had been dating for quite a few months when he invited her to the Preference Ball. During a break between dances, Jim said, "Let's go out

to the car for a few minutes,” and she asked him “What for?” He replied, “Oh let’s just go out for a few minutes.” Shirley humored him and followed him outside. When they got to the car, he pulled out the ring and asked her to marry him. When asked if he got down on one knee to propose, she laughed saying, “No, we were sitting in the car.” They got married the following September 1958 in the Logan LDS Temple. They spent their honeymoon in Bear Lake, camping in the park under the bowery the first night and then traveled to Park Valley the night after the wedding for reception to celebrate.

When I asked if Jim remembered the shivaree, he dropped his voice and said “Yes, we have tried to block that out.” The others in the room burst into laughter. I asked if it was that miserable, he joined in the laughter and replied, “No.” Shirley joined in to help him describe how the events unfolded. During the dance, Jim’s friend, Lon Neal, brought his wife to where the newlyweds were and separated the couple. Neal took Shirley to one corner of the cultural hall and his wife took Jim to an opposite side and began dancing. Shirley continued:

We were dancing really fast, and I said to him, “What are you doing?” because we were just twirling around the floor really fast, and he was just kind of laughing, and Jim was dancing with his wife, and all of a sudden, he just swished me out the door, and there was [who she thought was her brother-in-law] Paul, and Paul got hold of me, and I got hold of the door sill trying to hold on yelling “Jim – Jim!” Anyway, he didn’t get there soon enough.

Her husband laughed and claimed that he didn’t even know she was gone. This “kidnapping” was not an entire surprise to the couple at this point of the evening. Earlier in the night they suspected something was going to happen when they tried to walk out through the kitchen. “Dad Palmer” [Rud] was there and he asked them, “Where you going?” and they told him they were leaving. He said, “No you’re not. This isn’t a good

idea. Go back in there and let them have their fun. You'll be sorry if you don't." They returned to the dance floor to where the shivaree evolved.

The women whisked Shirley away to a neighbor's home. Bernice and Chet Kunzler lived in two little rooms in the back of his mom and dad's house eleven miles southwest of the church where the reception was held. They dressed Shirley in men's cloths (described as a "crazy get-up") and waited for the men to bring Jim out to Rosette. In the meantime, they had taken the groom to another home and dressed him in a stylish black and white party dress (see fig. 10). Eventually, they were brought back together at his parents' homestead in Rosette. The shivariers had prepared a large pot of oyster stew. Shirley couldn't stand oysters, so she went out to the corral and hid by the barn long enough to avoid eating the dish. Shirley's absence left plenty of stew for Chet Kunzler to serve to the twenty to twenty-five guests. Marvel Lind who was dating Junelle at the time attended the festivities. Chet kept bringing the stew to Marvel because he knew he didn't like it. During the interview, he corrected that stance saying, "I liked the soup, but I didn't like the oysters. After about the third time down, they finally stayed."

Jim and Shirley never permanently returned to the valley after their marriage. ROTC at BYU led him to a career in the military and he entered the Air Force as a chaplain. His assignments took him all over the world, with short visits home every few years. After his retirement, however, the family made the decision to reconnect with his roots and purchased the home where his father was born along with the ranch that originally brought his grandfather to Park Valley. He, his sons, grandsons, and son-in-laws commute from Utah Valley to run the ranch during the summer months.



Figure 10. Jim and Shirley Palmer dressed in their crazy get-ups on the night of their shivaree. Photographer unknown.

### **“They Thought Enough of Us”: Paul and Margaret**

Paul was next of Rud and Letitia’s children to marry in November 1961. My parents met also met while they were attending school in Provo. He was taking auto mechanic classes at Utah Technical College and Margaret Whittle was at BYU. Again, roommates brought them together – his was dating hers. When he was drafted into the Army, they exchanged letters for a time. On leave one weekend, he took her horseback

riding in Park Valley to propose from the top of the mountain. I suspect he looked over the scene below as a good place to make their future home.

Paul was on leave again when he returned to wed in the Logan LDS Temple. The ceremony was performed in the morning, and then a celebration with a dance was planned for later that evening with residents of Park Valley. Although his shivaree was incomplete, an explanation of the events will add to a later analysis of this community tradition. Shivaree was not unknown to Margaret's parents in Kimberly, Idaho where rumors of this marriage pranking had resulted in the death of a new husband who was run over by the wagon the newlyweds were riding in. Margaret's family cautioned the newlyweds against letting it take place, so Paul's cousin Marcelle helped plan an escape. Unlike Jim and Shirley, this younger couple succeeded and slipped out of the dance early under guard of Marcelle's family, and apparently unbeknownst to "Dad Palmer." The pranks had already begun when the newlyweds realized that the coil wire had been "stolen" from their car. Marcelle came to the rescue and lent them his car to drive the seven miles to the family homestead, where they gathered their personal belongings and the spare part to repair the car. The escape was complete when the missing part was replaced and they were well on their way to Idaho before the party was over.

Paul would have eventually returned to Park Valley to settle on the family ranch and make a little income on the side with his mechanic trade, but Margaret wanted more stability. She was raised on a farm and knew the hand-to-mouth existence that often followed that lifestyle. She defends their decision that "the people of the valley were always kind," but her vision of their future was a weekly paycheck to provide for a houseful of kids – a house where the children lived until they graduated from high school,

not where the apron strings were cut at sixteen years old. Paul found a job and they purchased a home in Tremonton a little over an hour's drive from Park Valley. This location was close enough to satisfy his yearning for his childhood home with a visit there every few months.

### **“They Thought Enough of Us”: Marvel and Junelle**

Marvel Lind first noticed Junelle Palmer as the cute girl with red and white shirt and the pedal pushers at a 24<sup>th</sup> of July celebration he attended at the James Watts Palmer Ranch with a friend. Marvel lived 16 miles west of Park Valley in Lynn. Sometime during the celebration that day, Junelle's brother Paul invited the visitors over to their place in Rosette to change clothes before the dance. Marvel took a liking to Junelle and offered to take her home after the dance that night. Their first real date took place several months later at another celebration, Peach Days in Brigham City. Marriage was not in their immediate plans, however, and their relationship started to fade. Junelle decided to serve a mission for the LDS church. She felt that was the reason she shouldn't pursue marriage at that time.

Marvel continued to date other girls while she was gone, but every time he brought them home to his mother and asked, “Do you think she would make me a good wife?” She always answered, “Yes, but I think Junelle would make you a better wife.” Marvel's dad wrote to her while she was on her mission, but Marvel never did. When she returned, he attended her missionary homecoming, but Junelle still wasn't convinced he was the man for her. He claims that different experiences and people kept confirming that he should pursue the relationship. On one of these occasions, Marvel and his friend Dean



invited her to go rabbit hunting at night. They were driving down a dirt road in Marvel's gold convertible when a rabbit popped up in front of the headlights. Dean pulled up his 30-06 and shot the animal. It exploded into the air. As it was coming down, they cringed when they could see where it was headed. They leaned in under the windshield to avoid getting splattered as it landed on the hood. Both men struggled to suppress their gag reflexes, so Junelle got out and scraped the guts off the front of the car. Dean turned to Marvel and encouraged again, "You ought to marry that girl."

Marvel claims that during the holiday season that winter, he received a Christmas card that read, "Have a wonderful Christmas. If you're ever in Provo, stop and see me, Junelle." He took her up on the invitation on one of his trips through the area and took her out for a hamburger. This time the relationship flourished. One day several months into the courtship, he told her that if she hadn't written that invitation on the Christmas card to visit, he would never have stopped. She denied writing it. After a friendly argument, she asked if he still had the card, and he did. Returning home that weekend, he reread it and this time it said, "Have a wonderful Christmas, Junelle" (see fig. 11). They were engaged three months later.

LDS missions seemed to be intertwined with many narratives of these Park Valley relationships. This couple waited for another year to plan their marriage until his parents returned home from serving in the Western States Mission. Marvel told the crowd in South Jordan on the day of the interview that it was almost seven years from the time he met Junelle until the wedding. He joked that at least his situation was not like the Biblical story of Jacob and Rachel. Junelle didn't have an older sister that needed to be married off first. He continued joking along the lines of religious beliefs confirming their decision

that there was only one “true temple to be married in, and that’s the Logan Temple.” He followed the footsteps of his Great-Grandfather and Great-Grandmother Toyne who were sealed<sup>2</sup> in that temple in 1889, five years after it was dedicated for service. Junelle’s (and obviously her sibling’s) Great-Grandfather and Great-Grandmother Miller were sealed in the same temple in 1890, a year later. Each generation after that, including many of the Palmer grandchildren, followed the custom of marriage in the Logan Temple. Marvel and Junelle’s wedding took place on April 7, 1965.

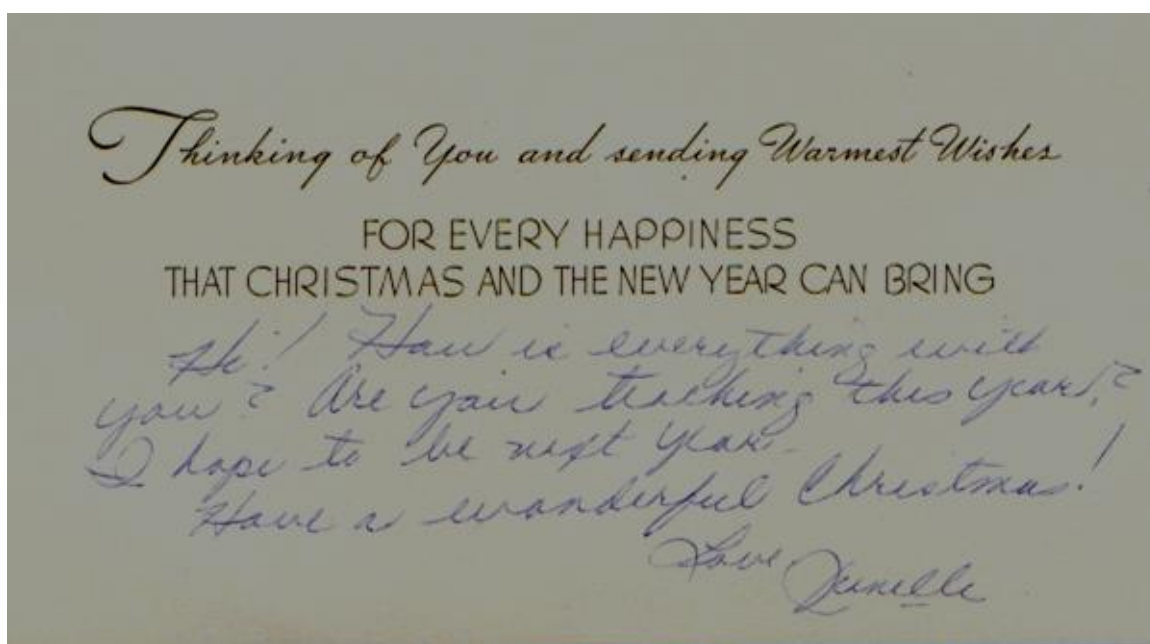


Figure 11. Reading – or misreading – this Christmas card proved to be the turning point in Marvel and Junelle Lind’s relationship.

<sup>2</sup>A “sealing” for the Mormons represents what they believe is “The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage.” “[A] man and a woman can be sealed to one another for time and all eternity. Those who are sealed in the temple have the assurance that their relationship will continue forever if they are true to their covenants. They know that nothing, not even death, can permanently separate them.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “Marriage.” *True to the Faith*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004. 97-101. Print.

They spent their honeymoon in Salt Lake City. Three days later, they picked up their flowers and wedding cake to return to Park Valley for a celebration. Neither the couple or their siblings could remember the details of their reception in the cultural hall of the church, except that it modeled many previous wedding events with a receiving line followed by a dance. Their best memories are of the shivaree. Junelle maintains that she “never gave shivaree a second thought,” and doesn’t remember the circumstances immediately after the reception. She knew that they, like Jim and Shirley, ended up at their family home in Rosette.

Many of the same pranksters that were involved at Jim and Shirley’s shivaree, were waiting to welcome the newlyweds on this occasion. Chet and Bernice Kunzler were involved, but Marvel recalled that Harvey and Norine Carter were the main “ringleaders.” The groom remembered how Chet had made him eat oyster soup at his brother-in-law’s shivaree. Since Marvel was given the “opportunity” of serving the delicacy this time. He retaliating by making sure Chet got plenty of oysters to eat. Chet didn’t like them any better than Marvel had. In fact, nobody participating in the interview could think of a single person in the valley who liked the soup. Nobody went hungry, however, because fried eggs (again borrowed) from neighbors’ chicken coops were also served. They defended their illegal actions saying, “We were just gathering the eggs at midnight.”

Good-humored ribbing continued as the interviewees remembered that next phase of the tradition. The shivarriers rummaged through closets to find clothes to dress up the couple. Junelle wore Paul’s army fatigues and Marvel modeled Mother Palmer’s house dress that buttoned down the front. When I asked them in the interview, “Why dressing

up – crossdressing – in the other’s clothes?” Marvel replied, “Well, I don’t have any idea, but really, I kind of enjoyed it.” The room again erupted into laughter and he was quick to counter, “I really didn’t come out of the closet that night.” When the noise subsided, he became serious. “It was fun. They thought enough of us that they did that [the shivaree] for us. It made me feel like I was kind of accepted into the group.” Junelle’s brother Layne agreed “It was a status symbol in Park Valley; if you wasn’t shivaried, you wasn’t liked.”

### **“They Thought Enough of Us”: Frank and Bonnie**

The Palmer family was not the only one who was tormented by well-wishers. No investigation of Park Valley’s shivaree custom would be complete without studying one of the most infamous episodes. Bonnie Pugsley was Edna’s youngest sister, but her shivaree is more closely associated with the same generation as the oldest three Palmer children. Like Junelle, she also dated her fiancé, Frank Hill for seven years before they married. They originally met after she left home in Rosette to attend high school in Tremonton and ended up in a seminary class together. When their class was assigned to present a sacrament meeting in the Park Valley Ward, he offered to give her a ride out. On the ride home Sunday evening, Frank invited Bonnie on their first date. During the interim before their wedding, she finished a college degree while he served an LDS mission and a stint with the Army during the Korean War. The Logan Temple was the setting for their marriage in the summer of 1953.

The Hill’s dance and reception were held in the same recreation hall where Rud and Letitia had celebrated their wedding. Chet Kunzler was again involved in the

mischievous of the the shivarees. The couple thought Gary Rose and maybe Sid James and Harvey Carter helped this time. Friday night dances generally lasted into the wee hours of the morning. As the music died down and parents packed their sleepy children into the back seat of their cars, young men of the community escorted the newlyweds outside to their waiting carriage. Instead of riding away in Cinderella fashion, Bonnie described their transportation as an “old rickety buggy” that was hitched behind a car and pulled back to Bonnie’s home in Rosette.

The groom in this case was not as receptive to the custom as other outsiders of the community had been. Although Bonnie surrendered to the badgering and donned a pair of men’s pants, Frank refused the woman’s dress that was presented for his costume. When he wouldn’t play along, they moved on to the next part of their plan. He was compelled to follow his tormentors back out into the dark and urged into a car. They drove him out to a dirt road, took his shoes, and told him to walk the seven miles back to his in-laws’ home. The whole affair was meant to be a good-humored prank, but this one turned out to be painful. When the young men came back to get him, Frank saw the headlights and thought the worst. He ran for cover under cedar and sagebrush. Not locating him, the pranksters went back to Pugsley’s and ate the pressed chicken sandwiches (no fishy soup this time) Bonnie’s mother had made for them. They eventually gave up their hope of finding the groom in the dark and went home. When it started to get light around 5:00 a.m., Bonnie resumed the hunt for her new husband on her own. She found him about a mile from the house. His bare feet were cut and full of pokeweed – the word *unhappy* fails to express the extent of what he felt. Retelling the story of their shivaree nearly sixty years later from their home in Tremonton, he claims he still has the scars. Bonnie shrugs

it off saying, “If he’d done what they’d told him, he would have been fine, and they would have brought him home for dinner. If he’d only cooperated, he’d have been fine.”

### **“Everybody’s Family Out Here”: Burt and Shelly**

The second most famous – a little less than infamous – shivaree in Park Valley belongs to Burt and Shelly Kunzler, and this event became one of my most substantial case studies because most of those who were involved were still available for interviews. When my research began in 2010, every member of that community who learned about my interest encouraged me to ask Burt and Shelly about their experience. Each recommendation followed with a few snippets about what that person knew of the shivaree. I heard buzz about kidnapping, a woosack, Burt in a dress, and breakfast, so I was determined to pursue a detailed version. My first opportunity came when a group of folklorists working on the Ranch Family Documentation Project (RFDP) invited me to participate in recording interviews in the Park Valley community; one of my assignments was Burt Kunzler.

My interview with Burt began with some background about how the RFDP was focused on collecting oral histories of families who made a living in the ranching industry. I also told him I was personally interested in learning about his shivaree. This elicited a smile and low rumbling laugh from Burt. After my responsibility for the RFDP was fulfilled, I pursued my own research interest. His response was a little shorter than I hoped for:

They just ambushed me when we left the reception and I don’t know, they gathered me up. I might have ended up in a woosack. I can’t remember. Anyway, I figured what the hell. We just as well give into it and they took me

somewhere and took her somewhere. We ended up someplace in the wee hours of the morning cooking breakfast for everybody.

That was it. More prompting didn't produce any more information. That was all he remembered. Fortunately, his wife responded to a request for interviews when I distributed the questionnaires in Park Valley. Only after the full interview with Shelly did I realize why he didn't recall details.

Shelly Pierce was introduced to her future husband through letter-writing. Her brother became friends with him when they both served missions in Florida, and he asked her to write his new-found friend. She wrote to him for a year before they met. She remembers that, "The big question was 'Would he come and look me up?' because I was interested in meeting this guy I'd written to for a year, and as it would be, he did. He came a month after he got home and came down to see me and then the dating started from there." Most of their dating took place in Salt Lake City where Shelly lived. She had never heard of Park Valley before she met Burt Kunzler.

Three to four months of steady dating passed before Burt took her home to meet his parents. He waited "until he knew that there was something worth bringing [her] out for." She stresses, "You've got to be a little interested in each other, or a little serious." Shelly understands why after living there for thirty years. The community is small enough that "when somebody different shows up, you know...you know, that's somebody that's not in Park Valley, and you generally make the connection really quick" about who they are with and why they are there. He took her to church, and she remembers that "I was the one everyone was looking at that day, 'cause I've looked at many others since myself as boys have brought their girlfriends home to Park Valley, and

you're like 'Oh, look, look, he's got his girlfriend here.'" These visits are important because "Everybody's family out here. The community ... there's so many family connections, and again so small, that you're really involved in each other's lives, and you know so much about each other's lives. You wonder, 'Is this going to be another one of my fellow valley members and sisterhood, and somebody I'll work with in Relief Society?'" Prior to arriving in church, however, Shelly, like Letitia Wight, endured the drive out "past any civilization, through the mountains and across the sagebrush flats."

For Shelly, the drive to Burt's home west of Park Valley was part of the cultural adjustment she had to make between his and her own home in the urban area of Salt Lake City. During that first visit, they had been riding for almost two hours when they exited off Interstate 84 and she thought, "We're here." Little did she know then that they still had almost 40 more miles to travel. When the car didn't slow at any of the scattered ranches, the only thing going on in her mind was, "We're never going to get to this so-called place he's taking me." She broached her thoughts about their isolation after the family finished dinner that afternoon, and Burt's mom brought a gallon bucket of ice cream from the freezer. She admits to being a little amazed thinking, "They've got ice cream clear out here in the wilderness? ... How do they get ice cream out here? They are so far out. There's no grocery stores, and they've got ice cream." This simple detail functioned to normalize the area for her. She began to understand that people could live conventional lives that far away from large populations. However, she wasn't personally committed to the idea of living there herself ... yet.

The couple's relationship had a short set-back after that first visit to Park Valley. During their weekly telephone visit that week, Burt asked Shelly, "So what did you think



of Park Valley?” She admits to being a bit naïve, “Oh, it’s great for the people who live there.” The significance of the question didn’t hit her until he repeated it again a week later. This time it was a little more probing. He wondered if she thought that she could ever live there some day. She did not think she could. Burt had strong roots that connected his life to the family ranch. “He was born and raised in it, and it was literally in his blood and running through his veins .... He had a loyalty to this ranch like nothing [I] had ever seen, as well as a love for the sheep industry, that he wanted nothing but that ... For him, whoever he married had to live here and had to accept it and enjoy it because he .... committed to [the] ranch the day he was born – that [even] as a little boy, .... that’s all he ever wanted.” According to Shelly, Burt hung up the phone that night and decided that was the end and wasn’t going to call again. He knew the woman he married must share his devotion to the ranching lifestyle. Shelly tells the story of kneeling to pray later that night. An overwhelming feeling came over her that she had sent him the wrong message. She was falling in love and needed to reverse her response when he called the next week – if he called. His feelings were apparently just as serious because he decided to give her one more chance. This time she could hardly wait for the opportunity to say, “Oh, I just need to tell you I think it’s a wonderful place, and I probably could live there ... I really like Park Valley.” Every-other-week visits to Park Valley continued for another four months before she actually made the adjustment from city life to rural life, and she accepted his proposal of marriage.

Like many other ceremonies (and specifically all of those where I found a shivaree), the wedding took place in an LDS temple outside of the community. Their wedding was performed on August 17, 1979, in the Salt Lake Temple. A reception was

scheduled for Park Valley a day later. The church cultural hall was decorated, tables were set, and refreshments were prepared for their guests – the community. All seemed normal until they were standing in the receiving line that night. Burt’s friends started to get a little “jittery” and weren’t being very attentive. Shelly’s childhood friend who’d been invited to stand in with her, leaned close and whispered to her, “Shelly, you need to hold onto Burt’s hand. Do not let go of Burt’s hand.” When she asked why, her only response was, “Just don’t!” Later when the reception started to wind down and the crowd started to disperse, the same friend that had previously warned her not to “let go,” came back to ask Shelly to come out to the parking lot to say goodbye. This made the bride a little nervous, so she explained, “Well, I can’t. I have to hold on to Burt’s hand. I can’t let go. We’re still, you know, here with the visitors.” Her friend got a little more persistent and Shelly finally gave in. She no sooner got out the front door, but she was grabbed by a group of women. Burt had already been abducted in the foyer of the church and was dragged out behind her. At 6’5”, he was strong enough to put up quite a fight, and it took four to five men to hold him back. Burt’s brother saw Scott Morris took the brunt of it as he went flying during the struggle. Shelly remembers turning around in time to see Burt on the lawn of the church in his grass-stained white tuxedo just as they were pulling 25’ long cloth bag over his head. The sack was likely one used for raw wool on the ranch. She screamed, “Wait...Wait...Burt! What’s going on? What’s going on?” At this point in the interview, I realized that this explained why Burt had only remembered the little information he had offered in the previous interview. He couldn’t see out of the woosack after the two were kidnapped from the church.

Shelly was pushed into the backseat of a car with the culprit who had enticed her to leave her husband's side. The woosack, a.k.a. Burt, was loaded onto the back of a pickup. The car full of women headed east to Larsens, while the men drove west to Rosette. In bewilderment, this new bride asked what was going on. They assured her, "It's going to be okay Shelly. We're not going to hurt you. They're not going to hurt Burt ... You and Burt have been shivaried." This response was little comfort; she was completely unfamiliar with this tradition, or the next step. The shivaree escalated from there.

"Dressing up" came next. Her wedding gown was exchanged for a pair of her husband's Levis, an old shirt, and boots. Because he was twice her size, she could only describe them as "gaping." When they were brought together a short time later, however, the size different was more obvious. Burt's kidnappers had allowed him to keep his pants since the polyester dress he wore fit him more like a shirt. This couple was spared the oyster soup. Local refrigerators instead of chicken coops were raided for bacon, eggs, and pancake batter to prepare breakfast for who Burt referred to as "their so-called friends." Grills and the stove in an old camp trailer provided heat for cooking under the sheds at the Kunzler's ranch. More horseplay than anyone can remember must have continued through the night, because Del Dee Kunzler claims it took him six months to clean raw eggs and shells off the side of the camp trailer.

Eventually the party died down around 1:30 the next morning. Shelly speculates about the function of this wedding tradition. "The point they told us was that they were trying to hold us at bay as long as they could to keep us from going on our honeymoon ... [That] was the point in that shivaree. [It] was 'don't let them leave the church and go

off peacefully on their honeymoon. We're going to keep them up all night partying, cooking, and serving food to as many people they could get so that we could not leave to go on our honeymoon and be alone." Remembering how scared she was at the beginning of the shivaree, I asked her if she had any regrets. "No," was her answer, "It was a sweet, fun gift that everybody gave us. It was taxing at the moment when I knew something was up, and I was scared, but to look back on it now, it's a memory that Burt and I will always cherish, and we've had many opportunities to talk about it since, many opportunities." And so has the valley. Friends and family enjoy telling the story along with them. Burt and Shelly built their home on the last slow curve out of Rosette just before the road straightens to take travelers southwest into Nevada. They raised three daughters on the ranch that Burt operates with two of his brothers. Shelly treasures the wedding "gift" the valley gave them, and recommends "that kind of a shivaree to anybody." Apparently this tradition was valuable enough that the gift was passed on to her daughter.

### **Like Mother, Like Daughter: Trent and Melissa**

Many of the valley residents who I asked for examples of shivarees, remembers Burt and Shelly Kunzler's as the "last real shivaree." However, on the day I interviewed Shelly in Park Valley, her daughter Melissa was visiting from her own home in West Bountiful, Utah. When my interview with Shelly was finished, she casually introduced her and mentioned that Melissa and her husband had been shivareed. In this impromptu interview, she told me a short version of her experience.

Melissa met her husband through a college roommate. Trent Vest was serving an LDS mission the first year that Melissa shared an apartment with his sister in Logan. The next year when he returned, they formally met and started dating. After a short courtship, he proposed to her in the middle of the floor at a Western Swing dance. They married in the Salt Lake LDS Temple twenty years after her parents. The two days after the wedding followed basically the same pattern as her parents': A reception in the SLC area, travel to Park Valley the next day for a celebration there, a reception, a dance, and, just maybe, a shivaree.

Because Melissa grew up hearing about the shivaree tradition, she knew to expect one. Her uncles planned the event that would take place after the formal reception, so they teased the couple throughout the night. Trent's brothers from Bountiful joined in and were posted at the door to make sure nobody slipped away. The newlyweds played along retorting, "Why would we want to leave? We're here for the party." When the dance was over, they simply presented themselves willingly for the shivaree. Shelly interjected at one point in the interview that she felt the couple "dowsed their fire" because they didn't put up a fight.

Melissa's twin uncles separated the couple and took Trent down to a knoll they called Cedar Hill to duplicate the kidnapping prank Frank Hill had experienced. When Trent got a little "cocky" with them, they told him that he could make it easy or hard. "You're going. You can either get in and cause no scene, or we can drag you; it really doesn't matter." One of the twins, Kelly claims it isn't as fun if the couple is not irritated. They warned him that the "more he talked, the farther they would drive." In the beginning, they had decided to take him the seven miles to Dove Creek, but because he

was so compliant they just took him a couple miles over the hill. This shivaree didn't do as much damage on the groom's feet (he must have had his shoes), but he turned the tables on the shivariers when he took a short cut back and beat the majority of the party to the sheds where the pranksters were preparing for breakfast. The shivaree was never scary in Melissa's mind; she knew it was meant to be fun. Shelly believes that this couple's shivaree was a highlight of the whole wedding for his parents because they were impressed and appreciated being invited to participate in the "old fashioned country ways."

### **Patterns Emerge**

The pattern of these Park Valley shivarees that will be analyzed in the following chapter is outlined as follows:

- Either the bride or groom has multi-generational ties to Park Valley
- Marriage sealing ceremony takes place outside of the community
- Formal reception party is planned for community members to attend
- Distinctive pranks, usually specifically designed around the couple's circumstances
- Kidnapping
- "Dressing up"
- Breakfast

Viewing these as a whole will support my claim that this tradition has become a *rite of acceptance* for the couple.

## CHAPTER 5

### PARK VALLEY SHIVAREE: A RITE OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

*“A collective ceremony is a dramatic occasion, a complex type of symbolic behavior that usually has a storable purpose, but one that invariably alludes to more than it says, and has many meanings at once (5).”*

--Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff, *Secular Ritual*

#### **Ritualized Tradition**

Bonnie Pugsley grew up in Park Valley surrounded by her cousins; in fact, there were three families of double-cousins. Two of her mother's brothers married two of her father's sisters. Holidays were always spent together. On Christmas Eve they gathered in one house to wait for Santa Claus. The kids sat on top of cabinets in the kitchen until they heard bells ringing from outside, and then they start singing Christmas carols as loudly as they could. Santa would peak in the window, still ringing his bell. After making a grand entry, the jolly old elf listened as each child sang a song or recited a poem, which Santa rewarded with a treat. After these individual performances, Santa passed out gifts, which were (unbeknownst to the little ones) provided by their parents. One year each child received a new bicycle that they anticipated learning to ride together in the spring after the snow melted. This provided a summer full of fun pedaling back and forth down the gravel roads to each other's houses. These types of traditions are the lifeblood that runs deep through the family roots of this isolated, rural community in Western Utah – traditions that both express and continue to strengthen their ties. Family is literal and figurative in Park Valley, “Everyone is family” (Shelly Kunzler). Over time, blood ties

have connected many of the families that currently live there, but the interactions between these families through community traditions has bonded the people of Park Valley together to form a community-clan.

Bonnie told me the stories of her childhood Christmases in Park Valley during an interview in 2012. Other stories about her family's ranching lifestyle were meant to serve as a preface to the story about the shivaree that members of the community performed after her wedding. She wanted me and future listeners of the recording to understand the shivaree tradition within the context of the community. Public opinion associates "tradition" with three main traits: continuity through time, actions that draw attention to themselves, and implying social connections (Bronner 13-14). These traits can all be found in the Christmas traditions Bonnie remembered from Park Valley. Using this same set of traits, other practices shared throughout the community could also fit the definition of tradition: deer hunts, branding cattle, and the annual Pioneer Days celebration. Folklorist Simon Bronner's explanation of "tradition" began at its most basic level with the root; it was a process of transference from one generation to another. "Every action in *traditio* involves a giver as well as a recipient, and the participants are aware that something like it has occurred before and will happen after they are gone" (29). Shivaree, as practiced by this community, also fit this definition of tradition; it became a gift that codified the community values and beliefs that had been established generations earlier.

Using Bonnie's story and others, my study of shivarees in Park Valley presents a unique view to functions found in past studies. Similar to rural Canadian charivaris where the practice was a fun way of welcoming newlyweds "as new members of the



community,” and in the Midwest where it “integrated them – with a somewhat ‘rowdy seal of approval’” the tradition in Park Valley is similar but more complex (Greenhill, “Welcoming the Newlyweds,” 54-55; Johnson 372). I discovered that, although commonly considered an impromptu performance, the shivariers acted out specific events that followed a recurring pattern. Several portions of these events challenged the legal and moral codes of the community – in a way similar to behavior that is found in ritualesque and carnivalesque performances. “We recognize the carnivalesque in the festivity, but the ritualesque lies in the performative use of symbols . . . . to effect social change” (Santino 62). This behavior leads me to believe that it became a *rite of passage* in the community that moved couples from one stage in their lives to another.

Over time, a significant pattern emerged the cases I studied. Historian Loretta Johnson’s research provided evidence that “most witnesses [to American practices] confirm that the shivaree was traditional, expected for *every* marriage, and meant to be fun . . . . Shivarees gave *everyone* a share in creating and defining the unique identity and social norms of their community (384, 386, emphasis added). Although portions of her description match Park Valley shivarees, their’s were not performed after *every* wedding and not *everyone* had a voice in the structure of the community. The tradition was only threatened or performed for couples who had blood-ties to forefathers of the community, and these predecessors are credited for the “unique identity and social norms” of Park Valley.

Shelly Kunzler, who experienced a shivaree after her marriage to a member of the community-clan, believes “it was a sweet, fun gift that everybody gave us.” This tradition represented more than just the transference from one person – or couple – to another. It

became “something precious or valuable [which] is given to someone in trust after which the person who receives the ‘gift’ is expected to keep it intact and unharmed out of a *sense of obligation* to the giver” (Gross quoted in Bronner 27; emphasis in original). The “gift” was more than just one event – the event perpetuated a culture that had been built on many shared experiences that merged to establish the community code that they live by today. In Simon Bronner’s effort to explain the definition of *tradition*, he found that

[e]nacting *traditio* drew attention to itself by the use of a repeatable symbolic practice that relied on a shared knowledge between agent and recipient about the consequences of the act. The tradition became noticeable in the flow of life because it was ritualized and framed as time out of time; in that special time, differences between present and past collapsed. One was aware in the tradition that the action had precedent, but especially important was a transcendent concern about what it stood for. (28)

Bestowing the gift of shivaree adds a distinctive function to others found in historical examples. Shivaree has become a *rite of acceptance* in Park Valley.

### **Defining Park Valley’s “Acceptance”**

Arnold van Gennap, the primary scholar on rites of passage, views these types of events as an integral part of societies:

The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another...progression from one group to the next is accompanied by special acts...every change in a person’s life involves actions and reactions between sacred and profane – actions and reactions to be regulated and guarded so that society as a whole will suffer no discomfort or injury...a man’s life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginning: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death. [The] essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined. (2-3)

Shivarees in particular were performed at crossroads marking when a member of the community moved from puberty into adulthood as a married member of the society they

live in. The marriage, or coupling, was a way this individual could move forward into the new stage of life. However, before I discuss Park Valley's shivaree as a ritualistic tradition, I must first clarify the difference between the definitions of *welcome* and *accept*. Furthermore, unlike rites of acceptance in other communities, the ritual performed in Park Valley didn't require rejection as an alternative to acceptance.

Using the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* as a foundation, I discovered that many other sources offered similar if not identical definitions of the word *accept* and then the word *welcome*. Creating my own charts (figs. 12 and 13) by combining several texts to view the terms side by side I found that even though variants of "accept" are used to define "welcome," (see fig. 13) phrases like "acceptable as a visitor" and "address to a visitor or guest" show a somewhat ambiguous, even superficial relationship between the giver and receiver. On the other hand, "accept" is a verb – an action verb. The terms used to describe it gave a sense of reciprocity. Whereas "welcome" is "freely permitted or allowed," "accept" is "to consider or recognize a person or thing, to be a specified thing, or to have a specified quality" and "to agree to consider as validly served." Applying this definition to the action of a giver, he or she recognizes the quality and validity of a gift of acceptance. Another phrase, "endure with patience or resignation; to tolerate, submit to; to come to terms with," demonstrated sustained behavior that embodies traits of the receiver. One particular part of the terminology used to describe "accept" shed light on the complexity of the shivarees in Park Valley: "To acknowledge the receipt of and agree to pay of exchange or a draft," which suggests an investment by both parties that increased the magnitude of the social relationship. The exchange taking place in tradition was investing in social capital.

**accept**, *v., adj.*

- To take or receive (something offered) willingly
- To receive (a person) with favour or approval, esp. To take up a particular role; *spec.* to agree to a proposal of marriage from (a person).
- To endure (an event, situation, or person) with patience or resignation; to tolerate, submit to; to come to terms with
- To show undue partiality towards a person. To show partiality or favouritism
- To consider or recognize (a person or thing) to be a specified thing, or to have a specified quality; to take as authentic, valid, or adequate; to believe
- To consent to
- To agree to consider as validly served
- To take responsibility for; to agree to take up
- To acknowledge the receipt of and agree to pay of exchange or a draft
- To understand as having a particular meaning
- Accepted; approved; considered or taken as acceptable.

Figure 12: Combined definitions of the word *accept*.

**welcome**, *n., adj., and int.*

- Of a person: Acceptable as a visitor, companion, etc.
- Of a thing: acceptable, agreeable, pleasing
- Freely permitted or allowed, cordially invited
- Used in the vocative as a form of address to a visitor or guest
- An assurance to a visitor or stranger that he or she is welcome: a pleasant or hearty greeting or reception given to a person on arrival at a house or other place.
- A special award in a lottery, made to the persons first drawing lots or blanks on the opening day or on each of the subsequent days

**welcome**, *v.*

- To greet; to receive (a visitor) gladly and hospitably; to accord a friendly reception to
- To greet heartily or joyfully (the return of a person, etc.).
- The greeting with pleasure the coming or occurring of (an event, etc.).

Figure 13: Combined definitions of the word *welcome*.

Considering shivaree now in terms of acceptance, I searched for other “rites of acceptance.” One example found in the ancient social philosophy of Heracliteanism (beliefs that revolved around fire as the primordial substance of the universe and that all things were in perpetual flux (“Heraclitus”)) revealed that the initiates during ritualistic ceremonies were either unequivocally accepted or rejected:

No natural born infant was a child of *this* man or an heir of *this* family until several days after coming from the womb. The rite of acceptance, the birth-rite really, was acted out when the father or ruling elder of the family ran around the hearth several times with the infant. He allowed the fire to scrutinize the novitiate, and to accept or reject it. Later on, marriage was valid only if the bride-to-be was introduced to her husband’s hearth properly. At the critical moment, bride and groom shared a cake with the fire. She was acceptable when the fire did not give an unfavorable sign. Finally, at death, a ritually exact burial was needed to ensure

safe passage to the next world. The authenticity of the burial was assured through proper invocation of the power of the hearth. The hearth was overseer for correct departure and insured safe arrival at that farther place. (Helm 567, emphasis in text)

If these humans moving from one stage of their lives to another did not pass the test according to the fire – the hearth – they were rejected and did not progress. The child may not have received his birth-rite, the new wife may have been shunned by the husband's family, and the dead may not have been buried in hallowed ground, preventing him from entering heaven. However, social exclusion is not what I found in the study of Park Valley's rite of acceptance. Outsiders were welcomed to participate in many social activities, and some joined in the revelry that took place during the shivaree. In Burt and Shelly Kunzler's shivaree, it was actually a childhood friend that was not a member of the community-clan who enticed her outside before her kidnapping.

The theory of "in-groups" and "out-groups" does not require total exclusion of outsiders, but instead recognizes insiders who share "a sense of we-ness .... The construction and maintenance of boundaries (physical or symbolic) are the primary ways by which groups establish what it means to be 'in,'" and these boundaries are "socially constructed through .... narratives, creeds, rituals, and social practices" – symbolic markers that outsiders fail to identify with (McCallion 2338). Shivaree was an example of a ritual in the community that outsiders didn't understand. Shelly's friend may have participated with Burt's friends, but she didn't fully comprehend what this ritualized tradition meant to the clan. As Sally Moore and Barbara Myeroff found in their study of secular ritual, it was "a complex type of symbolic behavior that usually has a storable

purpose, but one that invariably alludes to more than it says, and has many meanings at once” (5).

Bernice Kunzler Ralphs admits to struggling with understanding the cultural significance of the shivaree tradition. She married Chet Kunzler in the 1950s and compared the social practice of shivaree in Park Valley to those she experienced in her hometown of Cranbrook, British Columbia. A charivari in Canada followed a wedding when all the young people grabbed an old pan and stick or spoon, went to where the reception was held, and banged until the groom came out and threw a handful of change at them to get them to quit. “It was just kids banging on pots.” She believes that to understand what a shivaree in Park Valley meant to those who were members of the community-clan, you had to be “part of that type of living, and I don’t know how vast it was.” She admits to originally being an outsider in that sense. Because of extenuating circumstances, Bernice and Chet weren’t shivaried. She swiped her forehead saying “Phew! Escaped that one.” Again the definitions of *welcome* and *accept* come into play. Sometimes impermeable, boundaries are created by a lack of understanding of the symbolic meaning in rituals like shivaree. It was only after Bernice married and member of the community-clan and lived much of her adult life there, that she came to understand the culture and could attempt to describe what shivaree meant to the participants.

Rural sociologists John C. Allen and Don A. Dillman found that it often “takes at least one generation before someone learns the norms and customs” of a community (93). Author and farmer Wendell Berry lives and farms in the same area of Kentucky where his family worked the land for at least five generations. The National Endowment for the Humanities recognizes him as someone who “stands for local culture and the small

family farmer, for yeoman virtues and an economic and political order that is modest enough for its actions and rationales to be discernible.” Berry wrote about the relationship between people, land, and community and how social capital is built in rural communities. “One must stay to experience and study and *understand* the consequences – must *understand* them by living with them, and then correct them, if necessary, by longer living and more work. It won’t do to correct mistakes made in one place by moving to another” (187, italics added for emphasis). This understanding describes how the social capital in Park Valley was built. Outsiders visiting the community of Park Valley don’t fully understand the commitment multiple generations of families have contributed to the culture. The community-clan extends a hand of welcome in many aspects of social interaction; however, it takes an extensive investment of time before someone can fully understand the social structure.

In my case, generations of my family had already made that investment of time, which is why I could appreciate the stories Bonnie told about her family traditions. I had already gained enough of the context she offered; you could say it was inborn. My dad had been born and raised in the community-clan – a group that was entrusted with preserving and paying allegiance to the traditions that bond them together. I grew up hearing my dad’s stories of traditions on his parents’ ranch. I spent days and weeks at a time experiencing the ranching lifestyle when I visited. Friends have told me that I have a Park Valley drawl and my husband told me recently that I swagger like my uncle who lives there, traits I must have acquired instinctively throughout my life. Perhaps time with Dad supplemented by my own time in the valley is also why I could understand the

traditions Bonnie spoke of. This is how I knew to look for more meaning in the Park Valley shivarees than what explanations of other American versions held.

When my mom reminisced with me about the shivaree my parents had escaped in Park Valley, we discussed her relationship with and understanding of the community-clan. She had positive words to offer, which is the same impression I got from most of the women who married into the group. People were always cordial and inviting. Kellie-she (“she” is one of three Kelly/Kellies who live in Park Valley) Kunzler remembers the welcome she received from the community when she started dating Del Dee. She grew up in Almo just over the mountain from Park Valley. The courtship lasted for over a year before he proposed. Kellie-she remembers how excited the women in the community were that Del had a girlfriend. Her neighbor-to-be, Shelly threw her a bridal shower and invited all of the women to bring a gift representing an assigned letter of the alphabet. Kellie-she was impressed that Norine Carter came up with a gift for the letter “Q.” She brought quart jars filled with fruit. The initial interaction between these women occurred when Kelly-she was in the role of bride-to-be and was offered tokens of friendship that were meant to help her establish her new household.

A cordial atmosphere is what outsiders experience when they are invited to participate in other festivities like the annual Pioneer Days celebration. For several days near the end of July, friends and family play side by side with the community-clan. The fun begins Friday night with a dinner and dance. My cousin who commutes to Tremonton from Park Valley to work at Federal Land Bank invites one of his colleagues out to provide boiled corn as a side to the steak dinner. The next morning starts off with breakfast and then transitions into games and races for the youngsters. Locals beg teenage



friends for help to win the tug-o-war that divides opposite ends of the valley for a few, riotous minutes in the afternoon. Later, young friends from town who are more accustomed to wearing ball caps and sneakers pull on cowboy boots and cinch down counterfeit Stetsons to try their hand at bronc riding and calf roping during the rodeo. These visitors are all welcome to become part of the community for a time by participating in all of the activities, but there are boundaries.

One thing that is frowned upon is meddling with long-held traditions that take place during the celebration. Kelly (the male in the group of Kelly/Kellies) Kunzler claims that old-timers literally had to die out before the time of the breakfast served on the morning of that celebration could be moved from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. For previous generations, the earlier time meant that they could eat breakfast, run home to do chores, and then be back for the afternoon activities. And, the fare served to community and friends was non-negotiable. Someone – a move-in, as they call them in Park Valley – made the suggestion to serve a light breakfast of fruit and yogurt instead of the traditional pancakes and sausage – her suggestion was met with stony silence. Kelly’s sister-in-law Shelly has lived there long enough to know that “they (the community-clan) like the traditions and memories.” She went on to tell me during an interview that “not enough of the outside has moved in over the years to overtake the established way of doing things.” Sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf found that “it appears to be a general law that human groups react to external pressure by increased internal coherence” (qtd in McCallion 2338). This move-in did not understand that the type of food served for a hearty “country breakfast” was a tradition that sustained a hard working rancher throughout the day, and therefore

also represented their culture. This challenge to the community-clan's lifestyle served to codify that tradition further.

### **Liminal Space Between Welcome and Acceptance**

Liminality is realized when visitors leave their own lives behind for a time and travel to Park Valley and join the community during celebrations like Pioneer Days and wedding receptions. Friends and family cross the threshold from "town" and are welcomed into community-clan's "home." By separating themselves from the outside world (residents refer to anything outside of Park Valley as "town") they can enter this rural community and interact side-by-side as if they belonged. Anthropologist Victor Turner spoke of liminality as a state of "betwixt and between." To position this concept, he built on the work of noted folklorist and ethnographer Arnold van Gennep from *Les Rites de Passage* – "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age":

Van Gennep has shown that all rites of transition are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or *limen*), and aggregation. The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural condition (a "state"); during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (the "passenger") is ambiguous: he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state; in the third phase the passage is consummated (see fig. 14). ("Betwixt and Between" 235)

Considering this concept of moving from one position to another, visitors who participate in the events of the Pioneer Days celebration go through a rite of separation when they leave their everyday lives behind and try on a new state of pretending to be ranchers for the day in their stereotypical country clothes. The "urban cowboys" never achieve official

status as members of the community, because their stay is temporary. They cannot pierce the barrier between the liminal space and incorporation because they have not invested sufficient time to fully understand the Park Valley culture. While there they are also expected to abide by the code that prohibits drinking on and around the rodeo grounds. They don't know the history behind the informal community code that was established generations ago to protect a gathering place where community members felt safe – where the people could turn their kids loose and not have to worry about them; it was part of their home. Again, this lack of understanding is why outsiders only move back and forth from separation to liminality, never penetrating the boundary of incorporation. The community welcomed visitors to participate in the activities planned for the Pioneer Days celebration, but the outsiders will ultimately go back to their “town people” status. They are not rejected by the community; they simply remain in a liminal state of neutrality. Their relationship is not consummated, and they are never fully integrated into the community-clan.

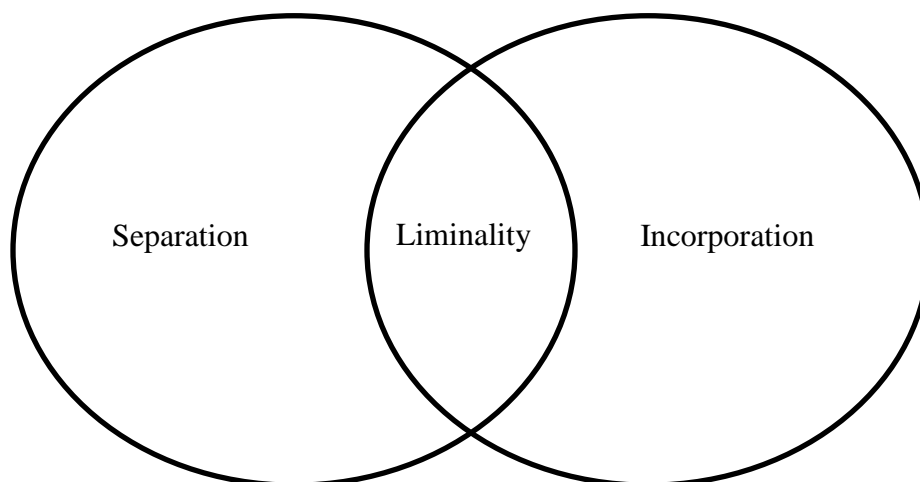


Figure 14: The liminal space between separation and incorporation.

Van Gennep used doorways and thresholds to symbolize rites of transition from one position to another. For the urban cowboys the threshold was to leave their normal lives for a few days and enter the community boundaries and go through the motions that represent the Western lifestyle. Brides-to-be like Kellie-she Kunzler were also in the same liminal space during events like the wedding shower. Her engagement had allowed her to cross the threshold and be welcomed into the community by the women who had become part of the community-clan. These women had opened the door and invited Kellie-she in, but she was still in a neutral, polite liminal state. Only after the wedding could she be fully incorporated into the community. Shivarees that celebrated weddings in the valley created the kind of liminal barrier that could be pierced by a couple to move through to the rite of incorporation or *acceptance* into Park Valley's community-clan. The shivaree is symbolic of the groom carrying his new bride across the threshold into their new home, which consummates the relationship.

### **Bestowing the Gift of Acceptance**

Rites of passage usually refer to an individual's transition from a "place, state, social position and age" (Turner 235). Betrothal and marriage is one transition that affects more than an individual. "For at least one of the spouses it involves a change of family, clan, village, or tribe and sometimes the newly married couple even establishes residence in a new house." The social groups they are leaving and entering are also influenced by this passage, which is why a study of this nature is so much more complex. Arnold Van Gennep cautions against interpreting rites of passage "by considering isolated segments" (116). He maintains that the distinct lines separating his subcategories of separation,

limen, and incorporation, “which have specific effective aims, occurs in juxtaposition and combination . . . are sometimes so intimately intertwined . . . that it is impossible to distinguish” between them (12). Although the performance of Park Valley shivarees is what I focus my analysis on the most, liminality can be viewed on a broader scale. All of the shivarees and intended shivarees (which from this point I will simply merge the intended with the executed performances) that I found in my study were performed for couples who first left the valley to be married in an LDS temple. Attendance to the sacred ceremony that takes place in the Mormon’s “House of the Lord” is limited by space and to those who have been found worthy by the church’s standards to hold a special recommend to enter. Because the entire community cannot attend, they may very well have been “exercis[ing] their self-proclaimed right to participate actively in the marriage” by performing a shivaree (Johnson 380). When the couple returned for the wedding reception, another liminal space was created. If the shivaree wasn’t performed that night immediately following the reception, it did not take place at all.

The shivaree performed for Lumir and Toni Funda in Emmett, Idaho as described in Evelyn Funda’s memoir, *Weeds: A Farm Daughter’s Lament*, resembled other recorded cases found in Canada and the Midwest where the pranksters came after they had established their homes, often quite a lengthy time after the wedding ceremony took place. Friends of the Fundas’ arrived at their house banging pots and ringing cowbells in the middle of the night two months after the couple returned from their elopement to Winnemucca, Nevada (Funda). However, in Park Valley’s tradition, after the couple crossed the threshold back into the valley, the shivaree had to take place after the reception and before the next morning, or the door of opportunity closed and the shivaree

wasn't performed. In Chet and Bernice's case, a member of the community-clan died and they returned for the funeral, and then left immediately afterwards for a celebration in Canada. When they returned to Park Valley, Bernice was experiencing serious health problems, so it wasn't appropriate to inflict undue stress. The opportunity for the shivaree was gone. Kellie-she and Del Dee were married in November when a shivaree was not compatible with the weather, so they were not raised from their beds months later like the Funda's to endure a shivaree. In Park Valley, the liminal space closed the morning after a wedding reception and no shivaree was expected.

The timeframe the shivaree could take place can be viewed as the macro level, and the performance the micro level. The door for the actual shivaree began to open as the formal celebration at the reception was fading. Cowbells along with clanging pots and pans did not usher in Park Valley's performance as it did for other American examples. Those cooking utensils were reserved for a more important act that transpired at the end. In Park Valley, the noise was not a significant element. Music was played by the bands and orchestras during the wedding dance, and a few participants randomly honked car horns as the party drove through the valley, but it didn't belong to the shivaree ritual. Kidnapping the bride and/or groom is the major element that replaced the loud music and signaled the beginning of the festivities, and ushers in the rite of separation.

Those who remember shivarees in the valley, say that the majority of the performance was moved outside of the LDS ward meetinghouse where the reception and dances were normally held. This building was symbolic of the moral beliefs that heavily influence the religious structure of the community. Many of the activities in the shivaree challenged moral and legal codes in the community; therefore, out of respect it was

appropriate to remove the intended victims from that sacred sphere to a quasi-public sphere where the performance could take place. Since residents thought of the entire valley, including individually-owned structures, as a communal “home”; kitchens, sheds, and roads became the arena for the performance.

The Park Valley kidnapping element was most often performed by those who Van Gennep refers to as “the two sex [or gender] groups, sometimes represented by the ushers and bridesmaids” (118). When Burt Kunzler was asked who was involved when his wife was whisked away and he was bound up in a woosack, his response was, “Friends you know...that’s who gets you is your good friends – the ones you wouldn’t think – they’re the ones that do it to ya’.” Van Gennep explains that this “capture express[es] the resistance of the losing groups” (124). The brief separation of the husband from his wife came to represent the permanent separation they were experiencing from social puberty. “To marry is to pass from the group of children or adolescents into the adult group, from a given clan to another, from one family to another, and often from one village to another” (124). The loss to their childhood friends comes from a weakening of the bonds between friends as the newlyweds strengthen a matrimonial bond which moves them into the next stage of adulthood with new responsibilities that will ultimately strengthen their new social group, and sustains the community-clan.

This rite of separation creates liminal space. Shelly Kunzler felt that the function of the shivaree was to “hold them [the couple] as long as they could to keep them from going on their honeymoon.” In this liminal space as the couple is transitioning from one social category to another. The wedding ceremony has been performed so they are no longer adolescents, yet they have not taken up their new station in life as married folk.

They are “betwixt and between” (“Betwixt and Between”). Turner considers this an ambiguous state “They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified .... Their condition was one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories” (*The Forest of Symbols* 96, 97).

The liminal space in this community’s shivaree took on a carnivalesque atmosphere echoed in the medieval practice where customary behavior is turned upside down. Park Valley shivarees closely resemble humor during other carnivalesque events wherein the crowd was “emphasizing differences from others” and “thrives on the incongruity of absurd reversal and contrasts. By emphasizing differences, .... [they] serve to reinforce them.” The humor “temporarily liberates participants from control by the social system” by “releasing tensions and [then] reinforces[s] status quo” (Alford, Freud, and Koller in Belk 108-109). Although the Park Valley shivarees are very festive, the elements seem to “reinforce the status quo” through ritualesque behavior as defined by Roger Abrahams: “[T]he primary vocabulary of ritual underscores such motives as continuity and confirmation; the transformations put into practice are responsible for maintaining the flow of life” (177). This “flow of life” not only represents the legal and moral codes, but also the newlywed’s new responsibilities to help maintain that social structure which sustained the community.

For Layne Palmer who was just a young boy when he watched young men of the community shivaree his older brothers and sister, it was “scary.” He wanted his siblings to be safe, and he “didn’t think they were safe in these people’s hands.” He says, “Guys swooped them away, put on strange clothes and made them cook crappy food.” He describes the community as very “conservative” and those times were “out of sorts.”



“Kidnapping” at any other time would be considered a felony with dire consequences. During the shivaree however, rules of social order were suspended. Layne warned, “Dangerous things happened.” Rumors abounded of deaths in other communities which could trap participants in that liminal space forever, which is why my mom’s family had discouraged letting the shivaree take place. During a personal conversation with Josie Pugsley, a younger member of the Park Valley community who had never participated in a shivaree, she said she remembered hearing about a tragic event “over the mountain” where the groom suffocated after being locked in a trunk of a car during a “kidnapping” scenario. Community members vowed that kind of tragedy never happened in the Park Valley shivaree (J. Lind, Personal interview). The danger is controlled by ritual which “precisely separates him[, or in this case, the couple,] from his old status, segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry to his new status” (Douglas 96).

Layne Palmer compares the suspension of social rules during shivaree to the only other time it is permitted in the community – Halloween. Traditionally, the liminal period represented in this holiday was the essence of “robbery, destruction, [and] arson” – activities that belong in the same felonious category as kidnapping (Tuleja 87). Functionalists believe that this behavior during liminal periods served as a “safety valve for feelings of injustice” from political power, “thus channel[ing] away from true rebellion.” The danger came when societal boundaries were pushed beyond the breaking point as evidenced from examples in urban areas (Belk 109-110):

The most prominent example is the Halloween prelude of Devil’s Night arson in the Detroit area, which seems to have peaked in 1984 with 810 fires started over a three-day period, leaving dozens homeless . . . . Detroit is not alone in such incidents. Camden, New Jersey, has similar arson and vandalism on its Mischief Night. San Francisco’s Castro Street Halloween celebration prompts numerous

incidents of antigay violence by other celebrants. On Halloween 1990, a group of New York City teenagers in Halloween costumes attacked a homeless camp, killing one and injuring nine others with knives, bats, and a meat cleaver while shouting, “Trick-or-treat!” (110)

Pranks pulled on the newlyweds in the shivaree performance are comparable to the “trick” portion of the sister event of Halloween’s trick-or-treat.

While these marriage initiates waiver between two worlds – adolescence and married life – they are in an independent state. After the first stage of kidnapping, the newlyweds stepped through an open door into neutral territory, and are subject to a variety of pranks: Letitia Palmer had to chase a greased pig that was released during her wedding dance, Paul Palmer’s car was disabled, and Burt Kunzler was bound up in a cloth bag used to store raw wool (Lynn Palmer; Paul Palmer; Burt Kunzler). As evidenced in these examples, those interviewees insisted that innocent pranks never escalated to the deadly levels found in other areas. Folklorist Steve Siporin believes that the behavior during liminal periods is accepted in rural communities as long as it doesn’t cross the line (55). For this reason, Park Valley shivarees should be considered ritualized behavior which arose “out of shared apprehensions in the face of individual and social changes; devised in order to cope with them, it [gave] names and definite border to transitions and transformations” (Falassi 174). Boundary lines to protect participants were often drawn by the newlyweds themselves.

Shivariers were known to frame the pranks to allow escape; permission had to be granted by the couple to perform the shivaree. My parent’s story is one such case. They were in line for a shivaree on their wedding night when Dad’s friends and family disabled his car to prevent the couple from leaving. They recognized he was a mechanic by trade,

so he had the knowledge and spare parts to quickly repair the main coil wire and escape the shivaree. Dad's regret for not allowing the shivaree to take place is best described by his brother Layne who compares the practice to a "sorority." He thinks "it was a status symbol. If you wasn't shivaried, you wasn't liked." This argument coincides with Van Genep's link between transition rites and rites of initiation; both move people from one social group to another (65-115).

The phenomenon of exchanging clothing to wear those of the opposite sex was a significant point of discussion that reinforced the strong religious beliefs held by the community. Early in my interviews, I broached this practice using the term cross-dressing during interviews because of my own naïvety about the insinuation it made about the participant and, frankly on my part, for lack of a better word. None of the interviewees used the term, and most laughed, sometimes uncomfortably, when I used "cross-dressing" to ask about the exchange. Bernice Kunzler stopped me saying that idea had never crossed her mind with shivareeing, "That's new terminology." Definitions from the *OED* helped to acknowledge my mistake; the canon points directly to transsexual identification. Usage in a 1979 publication cited by the *OED* clarified it further. "When cross-dressed, the transvestite . . . achieves a completely emotional identification which is sexually abnormal but aesthetically correct." The idea of dressing in their new spouse's clothing was never a conscious choice of the newlywed, and never with the thought of expressing transgender tendencies. Joking about the undertone of transvestism, my Uncle Marvel laughed, "I kind of enjoyed it," but was quick to classify the comment as an attempt at humor, "I really didn't come out of the closet that night." "That was the only

time you saw anything like that.” “That’s why it was kind of like Halloween; it was a kind of a costume party” (J. Lind; Layne Palmer).

Finding a function of this irregular attire could point back to the carnivalesque atmosphere in the medieval Roman de Fauvel charivari. Susan Crane interpreted the revelers’ dress in several ways: “Costumes and masks hide them [the charivariers] from accountability. . . . The masks and costumes of Fauvel’s charivari provide[d] courtiers with a new identity from which they can talk back to the court,” hence, the “iconoclastic reveling” (146, 154). In the other trajectory, Crane argued that the “bestial” costumes were metaphorical of “corrupted power” in the court. “Fauvel embodies inferior desires usurping the human soul and upending the social order in which animals should serve humans” (153). Park Valley’s versions were not comparable to either argument. The only participants who were dressed differently than everyday attire were the newlyweds, not the shivariers, and the inversion did not appear to be directed toward corrupted power.

Another citation found in *The Times* (London) in 1985 helped to construct the definition of cross-dressing found in the *OED* and goes further to explain the function of Park Valley’s costuming and confirms how the community’s strong religious beliefs contradict the transvestite insinuation. “Androgynous clothing is a challenge to fixed concepts of femininity/masculinity, and once that demarcation line was established in Christian society, cross-dressing became subversive.” Mormons’ beliefs on transvestism are deeply-rooted as expressed in a manifesto released by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints titled “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” The church rejects the belief that gender identity is a choice. Leaders preach, “Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity

and purpose” (Hinckley). When I realized how awkward this term was for interviewees, I would always ask for another; my Aunt Junelle said they were just “dressing up” and Bernice Kunzler offered, “just crazy get-ups.”

This costume element of Park Valley’s shivarees is similar to Natalie Zemon Davis’ investigation of “reasons of misrule” in early Modern France. “Festive life can . . . . perpetuate certain values of the community,” but this explanation stops short of the rest of her argument that it is to “criticize political order” (97). Layne Palmer describes the performance of the shivaree as a “time out of sorts,” which is characterized by carnivalesque atmosphere in festival life. With credit given to Mikhail Bakhtin for the initial analysis, a concise definition of carnivalesque appears in Douglas Reid’s research on wakes and fairs in nineteenth century England. “Its leitmotif was the inversion of the normal rules of culture. The relaxation of inhibition and the acceptance of folly were encouraged by the adoption of costume and masking by the participants; the blackening of faces or the fully fledged masquerade disguised the normal self and excused lack of responsibility” (125). In Park Valley’s case, the shivariers were allowed to challenge the moral code during the liminal period. It brought the practice of cross-dressing forward, only to help codify the beliefs the Mormon culture has in gender roles.

### **The Gift of Community**

The “crappy food” that Layne Palmer spoke of could be considered another prank; however, the food was actually a symbolic marker leading to the rite of incorporation. Several explanations could be considered. The oyster soup mentioned by many of the informants, quickly prepared by heating milk, then adding a can of the

infamous seafood, would be an obvious place to start when connecting it to a newly married couple. Oysters are a classic aphrodisiac, because they are compared to both male and female sex organs. Some describe the function of aphrodisiacs simply as fostering “fun in the sack.” The eggs that were “gathered” from Park Valley chicken coops in the middle of the night also relate to the reproductive capacity. Culinary expert and freelance writer Miriam Hospodar maintains that “food and sex are bedrock to the survival of the species.” She believes that the most “compelling reason to use them [aphrodisiacs] has been to make babies” (82). This concept supports the transition the newlyweds are making to the adult group that sustains the community. A direct link to aphrodisiacs must be disregarded. Participants deny the connection. Without knowledge of how the tradition was carried to the valley, it would be difficult to refute their veto of this explanation. A point that supports their denial is that *everyone* ate the soup, including unmarried adults, who by the community’s moral code should not be engaging in extramarital relationships. What other reason could there be for a non-native food like oysters?

Other considerations could be explored, one by backing up a step to say that it *was* just a prank – that the culprits were just trying to be irritating. Marvel Lind asserted, “I liked the soup, but I didn’t like the oysters. After about the third time down, they finally stayed.” Chet Kunzler warned his wife Bernice not to let on that she didn’t like it, or they’d force her to eat it. So she “faked it .... We all ate it.” Trying to torment everyone attending the shivaree would be a simple answer. Another alternative that makes more sense because of the community’s self-reliance attitude is just the availability of the ingredients. A can of oysters could be stocked on the shelf for just such

an occasion. Eggs “gathered” from local chicken coops also complemented this alternative. They were produced on almost every ranch in the valley and could be accessed any time of the day or night.

Yet another alternative is found in Van Gennep’s investigation of rites in betrothal and marriage. He indicated that a change in social status or transition from one family to another often has an economic aspect. “If the family, the village, or the clan is to lose one of its productive members, whether girl or boy, there should at least be some compensation!” Paying a “ransom” is customary in many cultures to allow “free passage to the new residence” (119). Food distribution was one way to pay that ransom. In many European charivaris, the victims paid a monetary ransom to stop the loud music. However, in Europe and America, it was common to substitute food or a complete meal for the ransom (Johnson 374). A Canadian interviewee “stated that in her experience ‘they always went and made a noise. But if they [the charivariers] would stop their noise, the young couple would bring them out candy or something and treat them’” (Greenhill, “Welcoming the Newlyweds” 65). Perhaps the food that the new couple was supposed to prepare for their guests at the end of a Park Valley shivaree could be considered a way to pay that ransom. It was the last event that everyone remembered before the couple was released to go along their way to married bliss.

My analysis of the interviews and several impromptu conversations provide evidence that these other ideas were minor to my argument that food has significance as a rite of incorporation. Holly Carter told me that she and her husband Jay were not shivaried – another escape story. They told everybody they had to leave immediately after the reception because they were going to a concert. After the show they snuck back

to the valley without telling anyone and stayed in his grandfather's vacant home. She remembers that by the next day, they had to go knocking on a neighbor's door and beg for food. Being newlyweds, they hadn't set up house and so, their pantry was empty. The isolation of the community prevented them from running to the store for groceries, or to McDonald's for a Big Mac. Other couples remembered that after being directed to fix the meal at the end of the shivaree, they were almost immediately invited to sit down and enjoy a little more time with their "guests" while the shivariers cooked the food. The meal served at the end of shivarees gave the community an opportunity to share the newlywed's first meal in the valley together. They were "breaking bread."

Internationally acclaimed author Margaret Visser's writing, *The Rituals of Dinner*, offered the richest function for food found in Park Valley's shivarees. She affirms that sharing food goes beyond just providing physical nutrition; it helps us understand "kinship systems (who belongs with whom; which people eat together) .... Breaking bread and sharing it with friends 'means' friendship itself, and also trust, pleasure, and gratitude in the sharing. Bread as a particular symbol, and food in general, becomes the actual bond which unites us" (1-3). It didn't matter what was served in the shivaree performance. The final stage of sharing the couple's first meal together was the final rite of incorporation.

Altogether, the stages of the shivaree combine to offer a rite of passage – a rite of social acceptance. I was able to frame this unique function only by studying each minute detail separately and then in connection with the others. One last factor was left however. What was I to make of my parent's escape story? Was my father's disappointment well-founded? Did it mean that they weren't accepted by the community-clan? My Uncle



Marvel Lind – at one time an outsider – gave me the answer. Expressing his feelings about his experience, he felt that “they *thought* enough of us that they did that for us. It made me feel like I was kind of accepted into the group.” My emphasis on the “thought,” shows the intent of the community-clan to accept them in, whether or not the shivaree was actually played out. Although the performance seemed impromptu, Park Valley shivarees followed a unique pattern that had been passed down for generations. Other functions for kidnapping the bride and groom, dressing up, and “crappy food” like oyster soup had been long forgotten. All that remained was a sense of social acceptance.

An isolated community like Park Valley that is dependent on its members to take care of each other, is acutely aware of changes in social status, “Marriage constitutes the most important of the transitions from one social category to another” (Van Gennep 116). Couples like my parents, Chet and Bernice Kunzler, and Del Dee and Kellie Kunzler were never shivaried, but they were given the “sweet, fun gift” that Shelly referred to. Theirs was the *gift of intent*. The taunting, teasing, and interrupted pranks these couples experienced during their receptions was as significant as the actual gift of shivaree that was played out for many other couples. The shivaree in Park Valley was a gift offered – actual or intended – to newlyweds by the community-clan to celebrate children of the clan reaching an age and social status where they possessed enough understanding that they could be trusted to carry on the traditions and pay allegiance to their culture. My grandparents were the first in our family to receive the gift, but the gift of acceptance was extended to their posterity, along with others, because they belonged to the community-clan.

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APPENDIX

## SHIVAREE QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer these questions from your own experience with shivaree or anyone else's shivaree that you remember. You're welcome to fill in only the portions you know; everyone's experience and memory will be different. If you don't have enough space, write on the back of these pages. If it would be easier, I'd be happy to do a personal interview instead of asking you to write or type. Thanks for participating.

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What is your connection with the community of Park Valley, Utah?

- Where did you live or do you now live in the community?
- How long did you live/have you lived there?
- If you had ancestors who migrated/immigrated to Park Valley, where did they come from and what took them there?
- What was your/your spouse's occupation and/or how did you support your family while living in the community?
- Did you leave the community for your education?
  - When did you leave?
  - Where did you attend school outside of Park Valley?

- How long were you away from the valley?
- Do you have memories of improvements to the infrastructure of the community (e.g., roads, communication systems)?

Can you give me information leading up to, and including your wedding?

- Tell me about your courtship. How did you meet? How long did you date before you got married? How did you get engaged?
- When did you get married?
- Where did the ceremony take place?
- Were there circumstances in the world/country that had any effect on the marriage?
- Who was in attendance and what was your relationship to them?
- Describe other celebrations you had that were connected to the wedding.
  - Was there a dance?
  - Who played or sang at the dance
  - What style of music did they play?
  - Were they local?
- Where were the celebrations held?

Are you familiar with the tradition of shivaree?

- Where did you first hear about the tradition?
- Were you shivareed?
- What have you done to participate in shivareeing other couples?
- Describe any of the details associated with any of those experiences.

- Where did you take the couple?
- What did you have them do?
- Who else was involved?
- How were the performers associated with, or related to the couple?
- What items were important to the performance (buggy, clothes, food, etc...)?
- What kind of food was prepared?
- Where did it come from?
- Did the performers make the couple change their clothes?
- What did they ask them to wear?
- How were animals used in the chivaree?
- Where did the animals come from; how were they used?
- How did your spouse and their family react to the shivaree?
- Did you “escape” a shivaree?
  - How and why?
- What function with a shivaree serve in in the Park Valley community?
- Do you have any documentation (histories, photos, journals, diaries, etc...) that you would allow me to scan for this project?

Can you share other stories of jokes or pranks performed in the community or within families related to ranch life?

Do you have suggestions of others I should contact about this project?

- Please include any contact information that you have