

# Georgia Hutchinson

## The Great Depression/The Dirty Thirties

By Erik Unruh

**Erik:** What's your full name?

**Georgia:** Georgia M. Hutchinson.

**Erik:** How old are you now?

**Georgia:** I am 97.

**Erik:** Where do you currently live?

**Georgia:** Here in Cimarron.

**Erik:** Where were you born and raised?

**Georgia:** I was born in Newton, Kansas but the majority of my life was spent in Dodge City.

**Erik:** During the Great Depression, how old were you?

**Georgia:** I was around 25 years old or something like that.

**Erik:** Where were you living during the Great Depression?

**Georgia:** In Dodge.

**Erik:** Were you married?

**Georgia:** Yep, and I had two children. I was married to Kenneth L. Hutchinson.

**Erik:** What was one of the first changes in your life as a result of the Great Depression?

**Georgia:** When it first really began to start, we were in <sup>?</sup>Hougton. Ken worked for the Rail Road. He got bumped off his job and was coming back to Dodge. He went out there because he got bumped off his job in Dodge. That was a Godsend for us because he learned everything that was in the station work. He had worked everything and could manage to work everything. He could manage to keep work all the time because he was the only one who knew how to do everything. He worked all over: as far to Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, wherever they wanted to send him.

**Erik:** What did you do during the Great Depression?

**Georgia:** I just stayed at home. I did the work that a woman does. I really didn't get affected by it.

**Erik:** What financial hardships did you notice?

**Georgia:** Well, we couldn't have everything we wanted. But Ken made enough that we could always pay the necessary bills. But the bills we had to catch up on afterwards were doctor bills and bills like that. But not your actual living. We could pay for groceries and pay the rent. We rented a two bedroom house for \$18 a month. Ken could get cash for his job because the Rail Road was good. Other people who worked uptown would get their checks but they weren't good. Ken was paid every two weeks. The Rail Road took out hospitalization just they take out for insurance nowadays. Well, he had to pay that and after he had paid it and his total check was \$0.24. We never cashed it. I had it put in a glass case. I gave that to my son after Ken died. He got \$0.24 for two weeks work.

**Erik:** Did you have any new responsibilities to take on?

**Georgia:** Not really. When we moved back from Hougoton, we moved in with my parents for about two years and we pooled all our things together and got by.

**Erik:** What was your source of income?

**Georgia:** Ken was our only income. He had trained himself to work all over. He was always on call too. Sometimes he would just get home and get called out again. And there were other times when he would only get called in for an hour.

**Erik:** Did you have a vehicle?

**Georgia:** No, we walked everywhere we went.

**Erik:** What was one of your most memorable experiences?

**Georgia:** Well, I don't know that we lived much differently than before. We had enough for the necessities. I remember the banks would close and if you had money in the banks, then you would lose it. But we never had money in the banks, we didn't have enough to put in there. There were many suicides because of all the loss those people had suffered. My parents didn't have any money. My dad lost his job and he was poor. My brother was a college professor in New York and he sent money to my dad. Sometimes \$15 a month. But my brothers helped my parents get through the Great Depression.

**Erik:** What were your social activities?

**Georgia:** We'd get together and play games. We did a lot of puzzles. We traded them with our friends in the neighborhood. My parents were part of the Odd Fella's Lodge but I can't remember if they still met.

*Fellows*

**Erik:** Did you ever get caught in a dust storm?

\* **Georgia:** I never got caught in the storm. I always made it to the house. You could see them about five miles off and see them coming. This one storm was called the Black Blizzard. It was on a Sunday and Ken had gone to work. On the Santa Fe, you got no time off so Ken had to work. It was a beautiful Sunday and all at once we began hearing yelling and we looked up and that thing was coming. It looked like it was enveloping all the houses. And when it hit our house, it was like midnight. We had all the light on and you couldn't even see them because of the dust. We were waiting for Ken to come home for supper and I had baked a cake. After the storm was over, the cake was covered with dust. I just don't know how to explain it because it was so terrible. It looked like it was rolling over everything.

**Erik:** Did that affect your health?

**Georgia:** No, it was just dirt. We covered the *duvans* with sheets and rolled up the rugs and just had the bare floor. I had two windows in my bedroom and I weighed the dirt and it was over two pounds after a storm. They came frequently. People got lost in their own lawns.

**Erik:** How long did they last usually?

\* **Georgia:** Oh, Lord, I don't know. The dirt would mound over people's fences. Just blow over them and cover them up. They were horrible things. People wore dust masks on their faces because of them. Ken walked home during the Black Blizzard. The only way he knew where he was was by counting the streets that he walked across. People would turn their porch lights on so people might be able to see.

**Erik:** Did you have any worthwhile experiences?

**Georgia:** Well, you would see them coming [dust storms] and people would run to the school and get their children. But other than that we just had to live through it.

**Erik:** What about the Great Depression?

**Georgia:** It wasn't that bad for us, we had everything we needed and we could pay our rent. But I know other people had worse problems. We were really lucky.

**Erik:** Is there anything else that you can remember and like to talk about?

**Georgia:** Not really. Not that I can think of now.

*100/100*