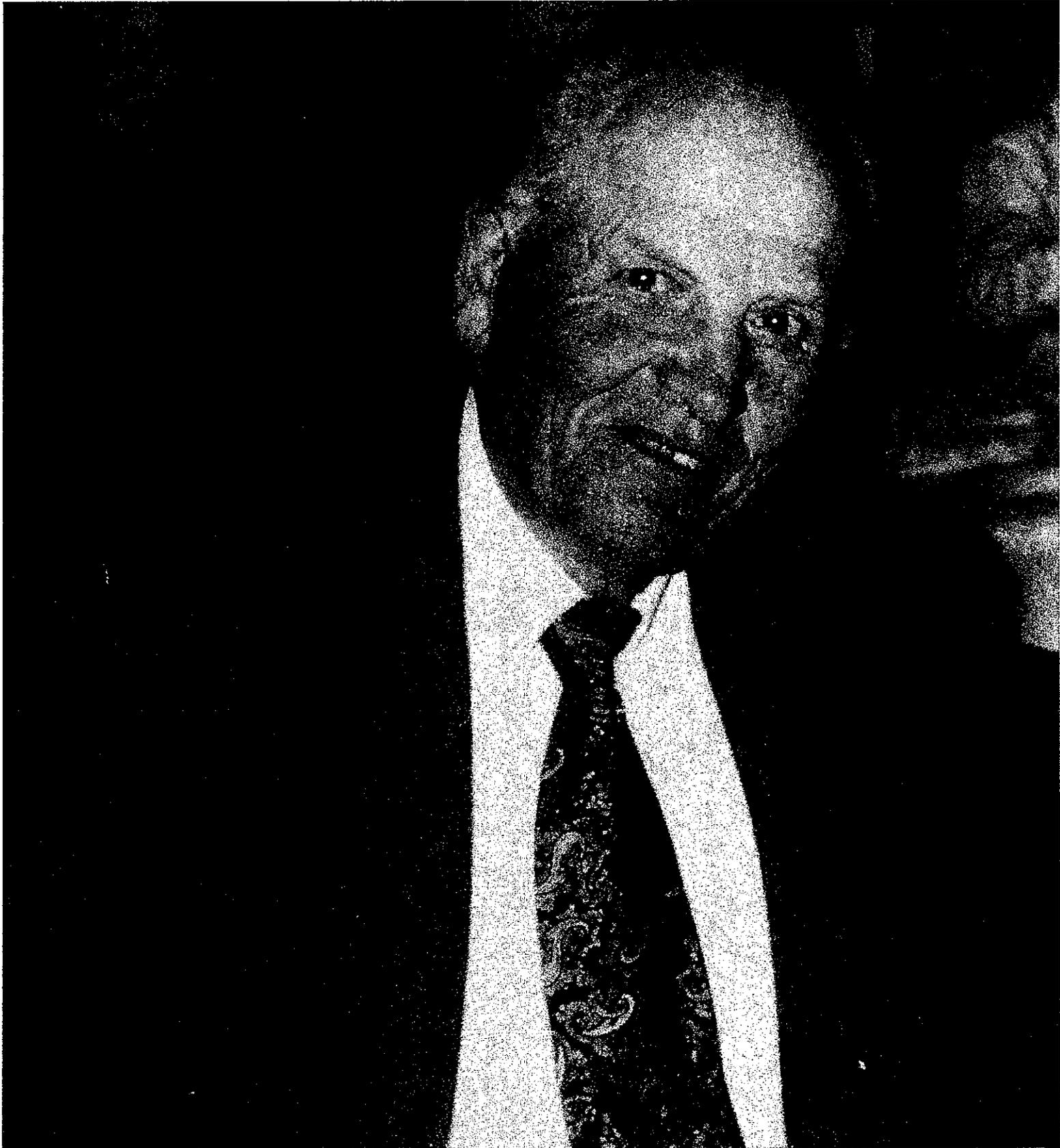


Lester Clark 2000
TROPIC



INTERVIEW WITH: Lester Clark
INTERVIEWER: Jay Haymond
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One of One – Lester retyped a more comprehensive version of this interview that is available with the original transcript in hard copy.
DATE OF INTERVIEW: June 15, 2000
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: His Home In Tropic, Utah, Garfield County
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: His Life in Garfield County
TRANSCRIBER: Vectra Solutions/LA
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JH: Okay, to begin with, let's have you talk about the family into which you were born; father, mother, brothers and sisters, please.

LC: I was born in 1924 in Rexburg, Idaho and I had no memories of this place. We moved from there when I was, I assume, quite small. And the next place I remember, the first place where I lived, was in Malad, Idaho. And I remember very little about that place and some of my brothers and sisters was born in St. Anthony, I guess, before we lived in Rexburg. And we moved from Malad to Logan. I remember three different places, homes there where we lived, when I was a small child. I went to the first grade of school in Logan and this was back in Depression times and my father, when I got out of the first grade of school, he picked up the family and we moved down here to Cannonville. Well first we stopped at my grandfather's place in Panguitch and we lived there a while and then we came to Cannonville. And my father went back, and it was kind of hard to find work I suppose, and went to work and we lived down in this country ever since.

JH: What did he finally do? What was his work? What work did he find finally?

LC: Now in Malad he was, him and his brother-in-law, they had a furniture store, I know for a while and then I remember he'd assemble some of these large combines for grain, to combine grain. I remember being with him one time. They was taking one of these big combines out to try it out and they had a big string of horses on the front of it, course I

was a small boy and it looked like that string of horses was eight or ten teams out there. I kind of believe it was, and I got to ride on that. It's one of them, you know, I have up there.

JH: That's big dry land grain country.

LC: Yeah, and in Logan, I remember my father; he was working for one of these companies where they bottled pop. I don't remember- it seems like he tried salesmanship and different things. I suppose I remember that. I don't remember too much about his work.

JH: What work was there down here in Garfield County? He must not have picked up any work in Panguitch to come on down here?

LC: No, he only stayed a few days and then he went back and he worked around I suppose up north there some and then he went to California and worked. I know he was in Fresno, California for quite a while. Seemed like he was a clerk in a hotel or something. I remember that. Don't remember too much.

JH: What drew you over to Bryce Valley?

LC: My grandfather Henderson, my mother was a Henderson, now he was living in Panguitch and he run sheep. He had two big herds of sheep. His two oldest boys, one each took one of those herds and they was running them. And then he had a shearing corral, he owned that and he operated that in the spring when all the sheep men would bring their sheep there to get them sheared. I was in grade school in Cannonville and in the spring, why us grandsons, we'd all go to work in the shearing corral. Packing those fleeces and washes the shearing tools for the shearers. There was twenty shearers working in that plant. I know we'd shear there for about eleven days or something like that. There was a

lot of sheep in the country in those days. And then my one uncle, he run his sheep up on the Griffin Mountain up here and the other one, he went on the East Fork Mountain with the other herd. I got to go on the Griffin with my uncle. The Fourth of July he'd go up and let his boys come home and I'd stay up there maybe ten days with my uncle and then we'd come home and then they'd come back, and by the 24rth, why they'd may go home again and we'd go back up to herd the sheep until they come back. That was quite a highlight in my life. Being up there on that mountain and eating that mutton and sourdough bread.

JH: Talk about that for our readers, a little bit about what a day was like when you were up there as a relief crew. What did you do? What was a day's duties?

LC: Well, we'd get up early in the morning and eat our breakfast and then we'd start the sheep out in a certain direction. maybe we'd camp in one spot for quite a few days and we'd go different directions maybe every day with that herd sheep and during the day we'd usually just walk, let the horses rest. (Laughter) My uncle would hobble the horses out and they'd just run, eat lots of good green grass and get fat. He preferred to walk I guess. And there wouldn't be too much work to do, just try to go out and check on them maybe once in the morning and in the afternoon along about evening we'd go out around them and make sure we'd get around them all and start them towards camp and they'd come to camp. Maybe put a little salt out in little troughs for them to eat and then if there was a place where you could fish, why sometimes we'd get to fish a little bit. Catch a few fish, which we did. But maybe the last twenty years I'd do a little deer hunting back up in that country and I'd see my name written on this quaking aspen trees, clear back in 1933 and '34 and some of those years. And then they got rid of the sheep and then my uncle, he rented a man's herd and took over that range and he was running sheep up there and I went and spent the full summer up there with him and his boys. That was in 1939. I was up in high school then I guess.

JH: When you were out, let's drop back to this experience you had with him going up on the holidays to let the regular herders come back, was he teaching you all that time? Can I hear his voice as you were doing these things he was teaching you while you were going along?

LC: Yeah he was. I was learning from him all the time. He was a farmer and he run those sheep for, I don't know how many years and took quite a long time and then he had a farm in Cannonville and he was running cattle in his later years. I helped him on his farm in Cannonville. I was pretty close to him. And I've had a little farm ever since. How many years have we had a farm? Forty-five years? It's a small farm down here you know. And I've enjoyed that farm; I still farm it. We just put up the hay. I had a couple of grandson's a helping me. I don't lift the bales quite as good as I did a few years ago. It was a good place. I raised three fine sons on that farm and they learned to work and take responsibility. We made a little money, but then if we hadn't a raised nothing but them three boys, it was worth it.

JH: You sort of followed along then with the livestock raising experience. Did you usually work for someone else, in kind of a livestock end?

LC: Where this was just a small farm, I always had a few sheep. I had those few sheep and then I've run a few cows, only just to have a little bunch and I just barely sold them here a few weeks back. I decided I'd had all that I wanted and then I worked at the sawmill. I worked at the sawmill for fifty years.

JH: Did you go to Panguitch and work in that mill?

LC: Yeah, I worked in that mill for over twenty years. And I went up Pine Lake way and up

towards Sweet Water.

JH: Was that the Crofts, Pearson-Crofts?

LC: Yeah, I worked for them for over twenty years and I took care of the saws, them big band saws, I was a saw filer. And then I decided to leave there and I went to Escalante and worked the last fifteen years before I retired and took care of their saws. They put in a big band mill over there. So I've had that and this little farm on the side.

JH: That's what it takes to be a farmer these days.

LC: Yeah, you've got to have a pretty good job to support one- these little farms.

JH: Lets talk about that mill work. What was the, well describe the routine of your work with that big band saw?

LC: Well I started out first taking care of. I was taking care of, I can't remember now what you call them, a different kind of a saw. (*gang mill saws*) Went up and down this way. Anyway I worked at that about ten years I think and then I started, I was learning, 'course I was helping with the band saws all that time too and then the guy that was in there, he left and they turned it over to me. And those band saws; the circumference was about thirty-seven and a half feet long. You had to- head rig they called it. They put these bands on, them wheels on that head rig were six-foot wheels and then they had an automatic grinder. You'd put those saws on this grinder and then they had a special swedge, where they'd swedge these teeth. You'd have to swedge them out and kind of stretch them right on the points there about every third run. And then you'd swedge, and then you'd have another little machine you put on there and they called it a shaper. You'd shape every tooth so it was exactly the same width. It kind of mashes in the sides.

And then you'd sharpen it on that sharpener, you'd go around automatically, you have to keep adjusting it until you got it right out to a fine sharp point and then you'd have to take this big saw, you had a special bench there, you'd put that saw on and you'd have to have a big roll there that you'd run that saw through, a roll on the top and on the bottom and you'd put pressure on that top row and run that saw around. You'd have to what they called 'tension' them; that would stretch the center. You'd come in about an inch and a half from the front and start the tension and then you'd kind of tension through the center.

In the center you'd have it stretched a little more right square in the center and towards the back edge and you have to have the back, you'd have to stretch it to where it was just a little bit longer than the front so when that saw tightened up on those big wheels, the front edge was the tightest.

JH: Huh uh. Did that give it a sharper edge, or did that, what was the purpose of that procedure? Help me understand that a little bit?

LC: Well we'd sharpen on the grinder and that grinder would shape that tooth. You'd press that wheel, grinding wheel to where it would make the gullet in between the teeth, called it the gullet. And you'd have to have that shaped just right and there were thinner saws, that's why the sawmills got to using band saws instead of the big circle saws. The circle saws, they eat up more of the wood and wasted it than these bands saws so they went to band saws and they got more lumber out of a log. But you had to fit that saw up just about right to make it ride those wheels and stand up and cut through that wood. It was quite a trade.

JH: Sounds like it's very precise?

LC: Yeah, and if you, you had to be a little careful how you put that tension in, if you got it a little close to the front in a spot or two, why them saws would crack. And then of course

some would say, oh, you're not a good filer unless you get a few cracks. (Laughter) And you had to be a good welder and you'd have to weld those cracks up and keep that saw going and keep wearing it down. That saw would start out at about twelve and a quarter inches wide and then you'd wear them down, if they didn't wreck them and ruin them, why too bad, even when they wrecked them you had fix them up the best you could and keep running them and get everything out of them you could. Once in a while they'd hit a nail that was in one of them trees or something like that and then they'd rip out a bunch of teeth, so you'd have to build some more teeth. You'd just take the torch and you'd build up some metal on there and you'd have to kind of force that down with a hammer and get everything flat and you'd have to kind of needle it there to soften it so it isn't too hard to buzz and then you have to shape that tooth and then you can put it on the grinder and get the final shape on it and it'll come out just like the others. It was quite a trade.

JH: It does sound like it. The only thing that could make it worse is if you had to do this while it was running. Well help me understand a little bit about this...

End of Side One, Tape One

Begin Side Two, Tape One

JH: I was going to follow up with what we just talked about by asking about the welding equipment. I'm a real amateur when it comes to this kind of equipment and this procedure but it seems to me that you'd have to have a special welding rod and pretty good welding equipment to make that stuff stick on a band saw. Am I wrong about that?

LC: You're right. You had a special rod of the same kind of steel that the saw was made out of, I guess. And we used an acetylene torch. You had to weld just a little bit at a time and then you'd take your hammer, make sure it was red, and then you'd beat it down and flatten that little spot out and then you'd do another little spot. You might, on a crack that

was maybe an inch long or longer, why, you might weld three or four spots on there as you work toward the edge. And you had to beat that down with a hammer. That kind of made the metal tougher or finer or something. I kind of forget some of these terms now. I forget what they called it. (*A process called 'anneal'*) Sometimes they'd knock out maybe fifteen teeth in a spot, you know, with nails or something, if you'd hit a big nail. Once in a while you'd get in an area where they had sheep camps and so on and so forth and in some of them trees they'd pound a nail in to hang stuff on and the tree grows up around it.

JH: Hides it. [Laughter]

LC: Yeah. That was interesting.

JH: It sounds interesting. You said that those bands were something like twelve and a quarter inches wide when they were new. At what point do you have to reach on that width or some other condition before, you said, well that's all she's got and went to a new band?

LC: Well, you could, most of the time why then they'd wreck those saws and you'd have to rebuild them best you could and just try to get everything out of the saw you could. But sometimes you could wear them down to about eight inches and then they started getting a little narrow and it wasn't very often you could wear one down there before it got wrecked so bad that you couldn't, you have to throw it away. I remember I wore one clear down to eight inches and I'd never had a crack in it and had never wrecked it, but that was very rare.

JH: Huh uh, right. They probably gave you an award for that one.

LC: Don't remember any reward, but it was quite rewarding to me to be able to do it.

JH: How did you learn how to get into the welding trade? That's pretty technical.

LC: When I got out of high school I went to a welding school up to Salt Lake. It was World War II and then I went to California, Richmond, California and I worked in the shipyards for a couple of years. Just a big kid, they didn't take me into the service because I was 4F and I worked welding ships there for two years. That was a good experience for me. I learned. I worked hard and I tried to do the very best at that welding and I done fairly well I think. And then when I come back from down to California, the war wasn't quite over when I came back to Utah and I got work in the sawmills and I got using that welding trade a little bit. I just kind of picked up the acetylene part.

JH: But it was arc welding on the ships wasn't it?

LC: Yeah, it was all arc welding. Yeah they built liberty ships down there.

JH: Kaiser?

LC: Henry J. Kaiser. Yeah. There were a lot of people working in them shipyards.

JH: Oh yeah, I'll say. Well compare arc welding with acetylene welding. You know, it seems to me like there's a different technique involved in dealing with that hot metal, that molten metal when it's under arc than when it's under acetylene?

LC: Yeah, well that arc welding, that's all electric. I never did do any arc welding only just the stick arc, you know, back when I was working in the shipping yard. I have a little welder in my garage and an acetylene outfit too. Both helped on the farm a little. Helped the neighbors a little bit too. But the arc weld, you get so that you could handle that hot

metal, it don't matter whether it's overhead or vertical or flat, any position, you just, yeah, I used to enjoy, I got to welding the ships on what the called shell welding, I welded just on the shell. Take you the whole shift to maybe go three-fourths the way up the side of a ship, doing one of those vertical welds. And then we'd do horizontal welds. You'd sit on a bucket and then horizontal, then we done quite a lot of overhead welding too. Yeah. Go down underneath on the bottom. Do quite a lot of overhead.

JH: On a vertical job, would you go from the bottom up or from the top down?

LC: You'd go from the bottom up. They wouldn't let us do any welding downhill. But after I left the shipyard, why working pipeline or something like that, why you'd go downhill. That was after the war. And seemed to be successful, but they wouldn't let us weld anything only uphill.

JH: What was their objection in that procedure? Do you know? Did they say?

LC: Well going uphill you get better penetration and you'd weld the inside on those seams first and then they take this big air chisel and kind of clean that weld out on the outside there so it was all clean and shining and then we'd weld the outside.

JH: Always working a solid surface?

LC: Yeah, oh yeah. And, oh I enjoyed that. Just a big kid and I was determined to be the best. (Laughter)

JH: Good. This building experience paid pretty good too, I imagine, didn't it? The wages were a lot better than, well herding sheep for one thing, but it was better than a lot of wages wasn't it?

LC: Well a journeyman welder. I believe it was about a dollar-twenty cents an hour back then in World War II.

JH: Yeah, that's pretty good.

LC: Lead man, he got a dollar-thirty-five I believe it was. I worked day shift. If you worked swing shift, half of that shift would pay you a little more than a dollar-twenty. I don't remember exactly what it was. And if it was all graveyard shift, the dark hours, why I guess you got a little more money, but I always worked straight days.

JH: Where did you live when you were down there?

LC: I just lived in a boarding house. Yeah. I think I got board and room and laundry for about \$17 or something like that a week. Seems like that's about what it was.

JH: What did you do in your off hours?

LC: Oh, there wasn't much to do. go to a show sometimes, that's about it. My father, he lived, I was in Richmond, California and he was over in Vallejo, California, him and my oldest brother and I'd go visit them quite often.

JH: What kind of work was he doing?

LC: My father was an electrician in the Mare Island Shipyards and my brother, he was, let's see, a rigger. They both had good jobs.

JH: Was your mother and the rest of the family located there or were they back here?

LC: No, my mother, she was back here in Cannonville and some of the younger brothers and sisters.

JH: You came back in '44?

LC: Yeah, I believe that's about when I come back, '44 or '45, probably '45. And I decided I was getting old enough to be finding a wife, I guess along about that time. My sister, she came out there and I says, "Well, I'm going back home, now who could I, what girls can I go with when I get back out there?" She mentioned this one. She give her a good recommendation. (Laughter) So I got going with her and we got married. We got married in '46. Had three boys and three girls. Raised them up. We feel like we've been quite successful with our family...because of their mother (Laughter)

JH: He's blaming you for the success of the children. (Laughter) Well did you take the family, let's say, to Panguitch when you working in that mill or did you commute?

LC: I commuted. We've lived; we had another house just north of this. We bought it, oh, hadn't been married only a year or two when we bought the place and got the little farm with it. Got both for \$5,000: paid it off at \$75 a month. Was making \$114 a month. I don't know how we done it, but she's been a hard worker and a good gardener. I worked the sawmill and run the little farm.

JH: Was she the financial director?

LC: Yeah. (Laughter) Yeah, she keeps the books and done a great job. Then we decided we wanted to build us a home. We was about to remodel that old one over there, sure glad we didn't, but come over here and dug a hole. Got somebody to come and dig a hole for

a basement and it took us quite a few years to build it, we just done it ourselves. We didn't know how, but we learned as we went and when we moved in it was all paid for.

JH: Wonderful.

LC: All but the rug on the floor. Carpet. (Laughter) We was quite a few years building it. Just worked at it in spare time. Sending kids to college and boys on missions. Yeah we sent two missionaries while we was building it, didn't we? Three kids to college.

JH: Did you do any work in the community? I was thinking politics or volunteer work or anything like that, that you'd like to mention?

LC: Oh I haven't been in politics any. (Laughter) Can't think of anything. Church.

JH: That's a form of community service: maybe you'd like to talk about that.

LC: Oh, we've always been active in the church. Our three sons, they went on missions. I've served in the Bishopric and the High Council, the Stake Mission Presidency, the Elder's Quorum President, Sunday school, superintendent twice.

JH: Sounds like a busy time.

LC: Yeah. We were especially blessed.

JH: Let me return briefly, if that's appropriate, to the subject of the sheep industry. Did you work with the sheep after you came back at all? You came back in '45 and...?

LC: Oh yeah. Yeah I had a stepfather and he had sheep and I went and herded sheep a little

bit before I was married. Spent one full winter, or most of a winter, I think, down on Buckskin Mountain. He wintered his sheep down there in the winter and I don't know, I always kind of liked sheep. Cows too, but I didn't get into the cow business too much. Just a small bunch. I run a few out on the BLM in the winter and summer. But I had a little flock on my farm all the time. We kind of liked to eat that mutton. Yeah.

JH: I presume your uncle taught you to cook in the camp? Maybe I could get you to describe that camp cooking operation?

LC: Yeah, you'd have to cook for yourselves when you get out there. Yeah, I learned how to make that sourdough bread pretty well. Yeah, you used a bake oven to cook in. We used to barbecue that mutton. I guess you'd call it barbecue, we'd dig a hole in the ground and burn some wood in there and get some hot coals and then you'd take your shovel and take out about half the coals and fill your bake oven on up with mutton and season it up with a little salt and pepper and put it in there, you wouldn't add no water or nothing, just put it in and put a little sourdough around the lid to kind of help seal it, lower that in the hole and then you'd put that in the hot coals that you'd shoveled out on top and then you'd put a little dirt over that. You'd do that in the evening and the next morning you'd go out and dig that up, bring it in, it would be full of juice and oh that would be real good meat, tender. We really enjoyed that.

JH: That would almost take you to lunch right there.

LC: Yeah that was really choice.

JH: How is that different from Dutch oven? Or are we talking about the same thing?

LC: Yeah, well Dutch oven cooking is just, mostly you just put the bake oven on the fire.

JH: The bake oven you'd put right down in the ground?

LC: Well you'd use the same oven for both, but, oh that mutton cooked in the bake oven, there's nothing better. (Laughter)

JH: Huh uh. Sounds great. Well, you mentioned sealing the lid with...

LC: ...just a little dough around it.

JH: Dough. I hadn't heard that part of it.

LC: Well, that's the way my uncle did it. That's what I learned when we herded the sheep up on Griffin when I was a boy. And that's the way he did it.

JH: Sounds like a wonderful idea.

LC: Yeah.

JH: It seems to me, especially with the dough sealer would keep the moisture in that, especially for a long term cooking procedure, that would really be a good feature.

LC: Yeah, nothing gets in or nothing gets out I guess. I've been wanting to try it for the last few years, but I haven't tried it for a long time.

JH: Well sheep have gone out of this country more or less?

LC: Yeah, just a few little flocks on the farms, a few of them and that's all.

JH: Right. The other thing I wanted to ask you about was, you know we talked about the experience in the sawmill and you mentioned the construction of this house with the experience, I think I'm hearing you say that you've built on the experience of the sawmill, working with that wood, sort of?

LC: Yeah, well I got my lumber for this house at the sawmill. I got a discount on it, you know, most of it. And I had book my father had, it says, "How To Build a House for Thirty-five Hundred Dollars." (Laughter)

JH: Wow. (Laughter)

LC: Now you know that was an old book. (Laughter) But in that book it illustrated in pictures along with the literature how to frame a house and how to lay brick, how to plumb, how to do electricity, how to do everything in a house. So I could go to the book and that's the way we built the house and you can always go to people and ask questions and always get answers. I hadn't built anything much before that. Back there in that old house over there, the wife built the closet.

JH: She knew where to put that. (Laughter)

LC: If there's a will there's a way. And we come out pretty good.

JH: You came back in 1945, how did you keep in touch with your father in California? I presume he stayed down there?

LC: Yeah, he stayed down there until after the war and then he come to Utah.

JH: Huh uh. And where did he live?

LC: Let's see, he was up at Layton.

JH: So he lived in Layton? Was he following the work industry?

LC: He was working for Hill Field as an electrician after he come to Utah for quite a few years. He married another woman up there. My mother married another man and my stepfather, he had that herd of sheep, you know, a farmer. So I got some more experience there.

JH: Did the relationship with your stepfather work out? You worked for him I take it?

LC: Yeah. It worked out real good. He was a fine man. Yeah.

JH: Sometimes families really have to work hard to keep the relationship strong. What about your brothers and sisters? Did you keep in touch with them?

LC: Oh, yeah. We scattered quite far and wide I guess. We was in touch. This has always been home it seems like to all of us and they'd come back and go and come. Just like our kids, they're scattered far and wide, but they like to come home and we like to have them. My dad came back here and lived four years. Yeah, we kept him right here at our place when we lived right over here. He had a trailer house and he lived here and he went down to Mesquite and he lived down there a few years then over to Panguitch a few years. Then we got him in a rest home. He lived to be about 80. He lived to be 80 years old. My mother, she didn't live to be that old, she was about 69. Yeah.

JH: Stayed in Cannonville all that time?

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LC: Yeah. One of my younger brothers, he's got the old family home down here. I've got a sister up town here with a bed and breakfast and my brother, he's...

End of Side Two, Tape One

End of Interview

Version 2

**Transcript edited
and retyped by
Lester Clark**

**June 15, 2000
Tropic, Utah**

JH: Okay, to begin with, let's have you talk about the family into which you were born; father, mother, brothers and sisters, please.

LC: I was born in 1924 in Rexburg, Idaho, but I have no memories of living there. Some of my older brothers and sisters were born in St. Anthony, Idaho before we lived in Rexburg. We moved from Rexburg when I was quite small. The first place I remember living was in Malad, Idaho; and I remember very little about living there. We moved from Malad to Logan before I start my first grade year of school. While living in Logan we lived in three different houses, I vaguely remember living in two of them when I was a small child. I went to the first grade of school in Logan and this was back in depression times. When I got out of the first grade of school, my father picked up the family and we traveled to Panguitch for a visit with our grand parents. This visit became an extended stay, we ended up living with my grandfather for the next year. While living in Panguitch that year I attended the second grade and then the family moved to Cannonville the next summer. My father went back up north to find work, which was kind of hard to find during depression times, and the family has been living down in this Southern Utah country, off and on, ever since. This has become our home.

JH: What did he finally do? What was his work? What work did he find finally?

LC: While living in Malad my father and his brother-in-law, manage a furniture store where they sold new and used furniture. Later my father worked a job where he assembled large grain combines that were used to harvest wheat and other types of grain. I remember being with my father one time when they were taking a new combine out to a farm for a test run. It seems like there were eight or ten teams of horses being used to pull the combine. My father allowed me to ride on the combine and I remember watching it operate as the horses pulled it through the grain field.

JH: That's big dry land grain country.

LC: I also remember, while living in Logan or Malad, my father worked as a credit manager or bill collector which resulted in him traveling around. There was company located in Logan that bottled pop and I remember my father working there until he was laid off. I don't remember for sure, but it seems like he tried salesmanship and several different things. I don't remember too much about his work.

JH: What work was there down here in Garfield County. He must not have picked up any work in Panguitch to come on down here?

LC: No, he stayed a few days and then he went back and he worked around up north for a while and then he went to California and worked. I know he was in

Fresno, California for quite a while. Seemed like he was a clerk in a hotel or something as I remember.

JH: What drew you over to Bryce Valley?

LC: My grandfather Henderson, my mother was a Henderson, had a vacant home in Cannonville that we moved into. My grandfather also ran sheep. He had two big herds of sheep. His two oldest boys, uncle Jasper and Uncle George, each took one of those herds to manage and run. He also owned a shearing corral at Promise Rock, south east of Cannonville, that he operated in the spring when all the sheep men would bring their sheep there to get them sheared. When I was in grade school in Cannonville, grandfather would have all of his grandson's go to work at the shearing corral. Our schoolteachers would excuse us from school for eleven day during this time. Our job was packing the fleeces and washing the shearing tools for the shearers. There was twenty shearers working in that plant. I know they'd shear there for about eleven days or something like that. There was a lot of sheep in the country in those days. Uncle Jasper ran his sheep herd up on the Griffin Mountain, which is north of here. Uncle George ran his herd up on the East Fork Mountain which is west of here. During the summers of my ninth, tenth and eleventh years I got to go to the sheep herd on the Griffin Mountain with uncle Jasper. On the Fourth of July and the Twenty –Forth of July I would go with uncle Jasper to the sheep herd on the Griffin Mountain so his boys could come down to town for the holiday celebrations. I'd stay up there maybe ten days at a time with my uncle and then we'd come home and his boys would go back up to herd the sheep. That was quite a highlight in my life. Being up there on that mountain and eating that mutton and sourdough bread.

JH: Talk about that for our readers, a little bit about what a day was like when you were in there as a relief crew. What did you do? What was a day's duties?

LC: Well, we'd get up early in the morning, about first light when it was still cool, and eat our breakfast and then we'd start the sheep out in a certain direction. We'd camp in one spot for a few days and then we'd go in a different direction and camp for a few days. We tried to move the sheep to a new area every day. During the day we'd usually just walk, so the horses could rest (laughter). My uncle would hobble the horses and let them just move about where they wanted, they'd just run free, eat lots of good green grass and get fat. When we needed them to move camp, we would go find them. He preferred to walk I guess. During the day there wasn't much work to do, sometimes we would go fishing if there was a fishing hole close by. We usually checked on the sheep once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Along about evening we'd go out around the sheep and start them towards camp, once they got started, they'd come on to camp on their own. Occasionally we would put a little salt out in little troughs for the sheep to eat.

During the last twenty years I'd do a little deer hunting back up in that country and I'd see my name written on Aspen trees, dated clear back in 1933 and '34 and some of those year. About 1937 or 38 grandfather Henderson sold his sheep herd. My uncle was hired by the man who bought the sheep permit from Grandpa Henderson, to herd his sheep up on the Griffin Mountain for the summer. I went and spent the full summer up there with uncle Jasper and his boys. That was summer 1939. I was up in high school then, I guess about fifteen years old.

JH: When you were out, let's drop back to this experience you had with him going up on the holidays to let the regular herders come back, was he teaching you all that time? Can I hear his voice as you were doing these things he was teaching you while you were going along?

LC: Yes he was. I was learning from him all the time. He was a farmer and he run those sheep for, I don't know how many years. His farm was in Cannonville and he also ran cattle in his later years. While I was a growing boy I helped him on his farm in Cannonville. I was pretty close to him, and I've had a little farm ever since. How many years have we had a farm? Forty-five years? It's a small farm just south and east of town. I've enjoyed that farm; and I still farm it. We just put up a crop of hay. I had a couple of grandsons helping me. I don't lift the bales quite as good as I did a few years ago. The farm is a good place. I raised three fine sons on that farm and they learned to work and take responsibility. We made a little money, but then if we hadn't raised anything but those three boys, it was worth it.

JH: You sort of followed along then with the livestock raising experience. Did you usually work for someone else, in kind of a livestock end?

LC: Where this was just a small farm, I always had a few sheep. Along with the sheep I also had a small herd of range cows. I just barely sold the cows and got out of the cow business a few weeks back. I decided I'd had all of that I wanted for now. Along with the small farm, sheep and cows I worked at sawmills for fifty years.

JH: Did you go to Panguitch and work in that mill?

LC: Yes, I worked in that mill for over twenty years. I also worked in sawmills over in Flake Bottom, Pine Lake, Sweet Water, Henderson Canyon, and Escalante. I cut and logged timber up in Sweet Water, just north of here, while working for Jensens. It seem that at one time or another I have tried and worked at most every job that is associated with sawmills and the lumber industry.

JH: Was that the Crofts, Pearson-Crofts?

LC: Yes, I worked for them for over twenty years as a saw filer and I took care of the saws, the big band saws, gang saws, circular saws, resaws and planer knives. Later, the Steed family put in a big band mill over in Escalante. I decided to leave the Panguitch sawmill and I went to Escalante and worked the next fifteen years, taking care of their saws, until I retired. So, I've worked sawmills and this little farm on the side for most of my working life.

JH: That's what it takes to be a farmer these days.

LC: Yes, you've got to have a pretty good job to support one of these little farms.

JH: Let's talk about that sawmill work. What was the, well describe the routine of your work with that big band saw.

LC: Well, I started out first taking care of the "Gang mill saws", and did a little work on the band saw as well. I worked at that about ten years I think and then I started taking care of the band saws. The guy that had been taking care of the band saws, he left and they turned it over to me. Those band saws, the circumference was about thirty-seven and a half feet in length. These saws circulated on two big wheels that are part of the, "head rig". They put these band saws on the head rig wheels that were six feet in diameter. The saws were sharpened on an automatic grinder in the filing room. You'd put those saws on this grinder and then they had a special swedge, where they'd swedge the saw teeth and reshaped them so they were all the same width. This was done after the third run of the saws on the mill so the saw teeth could be kept the proper size and shape. You'd have to swedge them out and kind of stretch them right on the points about every third run. And then you'd swedge, and then you'd have another little machine you put on there and they called it a shaper. You'd shape every tooth so it was exactly the same width. It kind of mashes in the sides. And then you'd sharpen it on that saw grinder, it would rotate the saw around automatically. You'd have to keep adjusting the grinder until you got the saw teeth sharpened right out to a fine sharp point. Once the saw was sharpened it was taken off the grinder and moved to the bench. On the bench, you'd put the saw on a special rolling machine that was used to stretch the center and the back part of the saw. This procedure was required so that the length of the front of the band saw, where the cutting teeth are located, was shorter than the middle and back of the saw. This procedure of stretching is what they called "putting tension in the saw". To put tension in a saw you'd come in about an inch and a half from the front and start the rolling machine that was used to stretch the middle and back of the saw. The amount of tension in a saw could be measured by using a tension gauges. One type of gauge was used to measure the tension in the middle of the saw and another gauge was used to measure the back of the saw, both required very precise measurement and accuracy. By making these measurements I could adjust and fine tune a saw so it would cut straight lumber properly. By having the front of the saw shorter in length than the middle or back

of the saw, the front edge was the tightest part of the saw when it was tightened up on the wheels.

JH: Huh uh. Did that give it a sharper edges, or did that, what was the purpose of that procedure? Help me understand that a little bit?

LC: Well, we'd sharpen the saws on the grinder to get the proper shape and size of cutting teeth. You'd adjust the grinding wheel to where it would grind the gullet which is the space in between the teeth. Band saws are thinner saws, that's why the sawmills got to using band saws instead of the big circle saws. The circle saws, they eat up more of the wood and wasted it than these band saws do. The sawmills could get more lumber out of a log when they used band saws. But the band saws had to be tuned up just right to make them ride on those head rig wheels and stand up and cut through that wood. It was quite a trade.

JH: Sounds like it's very precise?

LC: Yes, you had to be a little careful how you put that tension in, if you got it a little close to the front in a spot or two, the saws would crack. And then of course some would say, oh, you're not a good filer unless you get a few cracks. (Laughter) You also had to be a good welder so that you could weld those cracks up and keep that saw going and keep wearing it down. These band saws would start out at about twelve and a quarter inches wide and could be used until you'd wear them down to about eight or nine inches, that is, if they didn't get wrecked or ruined. Even when they wrecked them you had to fix them up the best you could and keep running them and get everything out of them you could. Once in a while they'd hit a nail that was in a log or something like that and this would rip out a bunch of teeth. To replace the teeth the saw was placed in a clamp and new teeth were welded in or created with a torch and welding rod. Once the general shape of the tooth was made with a hand grinder the saw was put back on the regular grinder to get the final shape on the tooth so it was just like the others. It was quite a trade.

JH: It does sound like it. The only thing that could make it worse is if you had to do this while it was running. Well, help me understand a little about this. I was going to follow-up with what we just talked about by asking about the welding equipment. I'm a real amateur when it comes to this kind of equipment and this procedure but it seems to me that you'd have to have a special welding rod and pretty good welding equipment to make that stuff stick on a band saw. Am I wrong about that?

LC: You're right. You have a special rod of the same kind of steel that the saw was made out of. And we used an acetylene torch. You had to weld just a little bit at a time and then you'd take your hammer, making sure the saw steel was red, and you'd beat it down and flatten that little spot out, this

procedure is called, "anneal", and then you'd do another little spot. You might, on a crack that was maybe an inch long or longer, weld three or four spots on there as you work toward the edge. That kind of made the metal tougher and finer. Sometimes they'd knock out maybe between fifteen to thirty teeth in a spot, you know, with nails or something, if you'd hit a big nail. Once in a while you'd get in an area where they had sheep camps and in some of the trees they'd pound a nail in to hang stuff on and the tree would grow up around the nail so no one knew it was there until the saw ran into it.

JH: Hides it. (laughter)

LC: Yes. That was interesting.

JH: It sounds interesting. You said that those bands were something like twelve and quarter inches wide when they were new. At what point do you have to reach on that width or some other condition before, you said, well that's all she's got and went to a new band?

LC: Most of the time they'd wreck those saws and you'd have to rebuild them the best you could and just try to get everything out of the saw you could. But sometimes you could wear them down to about eight inches and then they started getting a little narrow. It wasn't very often you could wear one down that far before it got wrecked so bad that you couldn't use it any more, and you had to throw it away. I remember I wore one clear down to eight inches and I'd never had a crack in it and had never wrecked it, but that was very rare

JH: Huh, uh, right. They probably gave you an award for that one.

LC: Don't remember any reward, but it was quite rewarding to me to be able to do it.

JH: How did you learn how to get into the welding trade? That's pretty technical.

LC: When I got out of high school I went to a welding school up in Salt Lake. It was during World War II. After welding school I went to Richmond, California and I worked in the shipyards for a couple of years. I was just a big kid, they didn't take me into the service because I was 4F and couldn't pass the physical exam. I worked at the shipyards welding ships for two years. That was a good experience for me. I learned, I worked hard and I tried to do my very best at that type of welding, I think I did fairly well. When I left the shipyards and came back from California, the war wasn't quite over but I got working in the sawmills and I was able to use my welding trade a little bit. I just kind of picked up the acetylene welding part.

JH: but it was arc welding on the ships wasn't it?

LC: Yes, it was all arc welding, they build liberty ships down there.

JH: Kaiser?

LC: Henry J. Kaiser. There were a lot of people working in the shipyards.

JH: Oh yeah, I'll say. Well compare arc welding with acetylene welding. You know, it seems to me like there's a different technique involve in dealing with that hot metal, that molten metal when it's under arc than when it's under acetylene?

LC: Well, arc welding, that's all electric. I never did any arc welding other than just the stick arc welding, back when I was working in the shipyard. I have a little welder in my garage and an acetylene outfit too. Both helped on the farm. I have also been able to help the neighbors a little bit too. When you arc weld, you get so that you can handle hot metal, it doesn't matter whether it's overhead, vertical, flat, or any position, both right and left handed too! I enjoyed welding the ships on what they called shell welding. I welded just on the shell of the ship. It would take you the whole shift to maybe go three-fourths of the way up the side of a ship, doing one of those vertical welds. And then we'd do horizontal welds. You'd sit on a bucket and work your way along a horizontal seam on the side of the ship. We also did a lot of overhead welding too. Most of the overhead welding was done under the decks, but we also did vertical, flat and horizontal welds under the decks.

JH: On a vertical job, would you go from the bottom up or from the top down?

LC: You'd go from the bottom up. They wouldn't let us do any welding downhill. After I left the shipyard and after the war, I worked welding pipelines and sometimes you'd weld downhill and it seemed to be successful.

JH: What was their objection in that procedure? Do you know? Did they say?

LC: Welding uphill on the seams of a ship, give the weld better penetration. You'd weld the vertical seams inside the ship first, then using a big air chisel they would clean that weld out, in a "v" shape, on the outside of the ship so it was all clean and shining and then we'd weld the outside of the seam.

JH: Always working on a solid surface?

LC: Yes, and I enjoyed that. I was just a big kid and I was determined to be the best welder. (laughter)

JH: Good. This building experience paid pretty good too, I imagine, didn't it? The wages were a lot better than, well herding sheep for one thing, but it was better than a lot of wages wasn't it?

LC: A journeyman welder, I believe, was paid about a dollar-twenty cents an hour back then in World War II.

JH: Yeah, that's pretty good.

LC: A lead man, he would get a dollar-thirty-five I believe. I worked dayshift, but welders that worked swing shift would get paid a little more than a dollar-twenty per hour for part of the shift. I don't remember exactly what it was. And if you worked the graveyard shift, the dark hours, then you got paid a little more money, but I always worked straight days.

JH: Where did you live when you were down there?

LC: I lived in a boarding house. I think I got board and room and laundry for about \$17 a week. Seems like that's about what it was.

JH: What did you do in your off hours?

LC: Oh, there wasn't much to do, go to a show sometimes, that's about it. I was living in Richmond, California and my father and my oldest brother, Bill, lived over in Vallejo, California, I'd go visit them quite often.

JH: What kind of work was he doing?

LC: My father was an electrician in the Mare Island Shipyards and my brother was a rigger, they both had good jobs.

JH: Was your mother and the rest of the family located there or were they back here?

LC: No, my mother, she was back here in Cannonville along with some of my younger brothers and sisters.

JH: You came back in '44?

LC: I believe that's about when I come back, '44 or '45, probably '45. And I decided I was getting old enough to be finding a wife, I guess, along about that time. My sister, Ethel, came out to Valljeo to stay with my father, and I told her I was going back home to Cannonville, I ask her "what girls can I go with when I get back out there?" She mentioned this one (my wife). My sister, she gave her a good recommendation. (laughter) So I got going with her and we got married. We got married in '46, and had three boys and three girls. Getting

married was my greatest accomplishment in life. As a wife, mother and homemaker, my wife really excelled! We feel like we've been quite successful with our family...because of their mother. (laughter) When we were first married we lived in Cannonville for about a year and then we moved to Salt Lake City and I worked construction as a welder. We stayed in Salt Lake City for about two years and then moved back to Tropic and have lived here since.

JH: He's blaming you for the success of the children. (laughter) Well did you take the family, let's say to Panguitch, when you working in that mill or did you commute?

LC: I commuted, our roots were sunk to deep here and we couldn't be moving around! We lived in another house just north of this one. We bought it when we had been married about five years. When we bought this place it include the little farm as well. We brought both for \$5,000 and paid it off at \$75 a month. We were making \$114 a month in wages at the time. I don't know how we managed it, but my wife has been a hard worker, good gardener and because of her industry we always managed and ate well. I worked the sawmill and run the little farm.

JH: Was she the financial director?

LC: Yes! (laughter) she keeps the books and has done a great job of it. We were about to remodel the old house that was just north of here, I'm sure glad we didn't though. Rather than remodel we came over to this side of the lot, dug a hole and built this new home. We started by getting somebody to come and dig a hole for a basement and it took us quite a few years to build it, we just did it ourselves. We didn't know how, but we learned as we went and when we moved in it was all paid for.

JH: Wonderful.

LC: All but the rug on the floor, the carpet. (laughter) We were quite a few years building it, we worked on it in spare time. During the time we were building it we had kids going to college and boys going on missions. We sent two missionaries while we were building it, and a third one later. We sent all of our kids to college, some had short stays though.

JH: Did you do any work in the community. I was thinking politics or volunteer work or anything like that, that you'd like to mention?

LC: Oh, I haven't been involved in any politics that I can think of. (laughter) I have been involved in the Church and its organizations through the years.

JH: That's a form of community service, maybe you'd like to talk about that.

LC: We have always been active in the church. Our three sons went on missions. I've served in the Bishopric, Stake High Council, Stake Mission Presidency, Elder's Quorum Presidency, Sunday school Superintendent, MIA Presidency, and as Sunday school Teacher.

JH: Sounds like a busy time.

LC: Yes, but we have been especially blessed.

JH: Let me return briefly, if that's appropriate, to the subject of the sheep industry. Did you work with the sheep after you came back at all? You came back in '45 and...?

LC: Oh yes. I had a stepfather, Sam Graff, and he had sheep and I went and herded sheep for him a little bit before I was married. I spent one full winter, or most of a winter, I think, down on the Buckskin Mountain which is in southern Utah and northern Arizona. There is a mountain call the Little Buckskin close to the Southern Utah and Northern Arizona borders, which is where we herded sheep. This area was his regular winter range and he wintered his sheep down there every winter. I have always kind of liked sheep and working with them. I've enjoyed working with cows too, but I didn't get into the cow business too much. Just a small bunch. I ran a few out on the BLM range in the winter and the summer. I have always had a little herd of sheep on my farm since we bought it. We kind of liked to eat mutton, especially when its been cooked in a bake oven.

JH: I presume your uncle taught you to cook in the camp? Maybe I could get you to describe that camp cooking operation?

LC: You'd have to cook for yourselves all the time you were out to the sheep camp. I learned how to make sourdough bread pretty well. We used a bake oven to do all of our cooking for every meal. On special occasions or just once in a while we would barbecue the mutton. I guess you'd call it barbecue, we'd dig a hole in the ground and burn some wood in there so that we had some hot coals in the bottom of the hole, then you'd take your shovel and take out about half the coals. Next you'd fill your bake oven on up with mutton and season it up with a little salt and pepper. We didn't add any water or other liquid, we just put a little sourdough around the lid to kind of help seal it and the mutton would cook in its own juice. After we had the mutton sealed in the bake oven we put the bake oven in the hole and covered it with the hot coals that had been shoveled out earlier, then we would cover everything up with a little dirt. You'd do that in the evening and the next morning you'd go out and dig that up, bring it in, and it

would be full of juice and oh, that would be real good meat, nice and tender. We really enjoyed that!

JH: That would almost take you to lunch right there.

LC: Yes, that was really choice.

JH: How is that different from Dutch oven? Or are we talking about the same thing?

LC: Yes, well Dutch oven cooking is just mostly baking or cooking on an open fire.

JH: The bake oven you'd put right in the ground?

LC: Well, you'd use the same bake oven for both, but, oh that mutton cooked in the bake oven, there's nothing better. (laughter)

JH: Huh uh. Sounds great. Well, you mentioned sealing the lid with...

LC: Just a little sourdough around the lid to seal it and keep the dirt out.

LC: Well, that's the way my uncle did it. That's what I learned when we herded sheep up on the Griffin when I was a boy

JH: Sounds like a wonderful idea.

LC: Yes.

JH: It seems to me, especially with the dough sealer would keep the moisture in that, especially for a long term cooking procedure, that would really be a good feature.

LC: Yes, nothing gets in or nothing gets out I guess. I've been wanting to try it for the last few years, but I haven't tried it for a long time.

JH: Well, have sheep gone out of this country more or less?

LC: Yes, there are just a few little flocks on the farms around this area now, no big herds anymore.

JH: Right. The other thing I wanted to ask you about was, you know we talked about the experience in the sawmill and you mentioned the

construction of this house with the experience, I think I'm hearing you say that you've built on the experience of the sawmill, working with that wood, sort of?

LC: Yes, well I got my lumber for this house at the sawmill. I got a discount on its cost, since I worked at the sawmill. And I had a book my father gave me, titled, "How to Build a House for thirty-five Hundred Dollars." (laughter)

JH: Wow. (laughter)

LC: Now you know that was an old book. (laughter) But in that book it illustrated with pictures along with the literature how to frame a house and how to lay brick, how to plumb, how to do electricity, how to do everything in a house. So I could go to that book and get information to help me, that's the way we built the house. You can always go to people and ask questions and always get answers as well. I hadn't built anything much before I started building this house. Building this new house was a family project. Back when we moved in to that old house over there, my wife built the closets.

JH: She knew where to put that. (laughter)

LC: If there's a will, there's a way! And we came out pretty good!

JH: You came back in 1945, how did you keep in touch with your father in California? I presume he stayed down there?

LC: Yes, my father stayed down there until after the war and then he came to Utah.

JH: Huh uh. And where did he live?

LC: Let's see, he was up at Layton

JH: So he lived in Layton? Was he following the work industry?

LC: He worked at Hill Field as an electrician after he came to Utah for quite a few years. He married another woman up in Layton. My mother married another man in Cannonville. My stepfather, had a herd of sheep, and was a farmer as well. So I got some more experience while working with him.

JH: Did the relationship with your stepfather work out? You worked for him I take it?

LC: Yes. It worked out real well. He was a fine man.

JH: Sometimes families really have to work hard to keep the relationship strong. What about your brothers and sisters? Did you keep in touch with them?

LC: Oh, yes. We scattered quite far and wide for a few years, I guess. We seemed to always keep in touch with each other through years. This has always been home it seems like to all of us, we have all come and gone during the years and then most of my brothers and sisters have come back here to southern Utah in the past few years. Just like our kids, they're scattered far and wide, but they like to come home and we like to have them. My dad came back here and lived for four years.

We kept him right here at our place when we lived right over there in the other house. Before he moved here with us, he had a trailer house and lived in it down to Mesquite, Nevada, he lived down there a few years and after he lived here with us he lived over in Panguitch a few years. Then we moved him to a rest home. He lived to be 80 years old. My mother, she didn't live to be that old, she was about 69 when she passed away.

JH: Stayed in Cannonville all that time?

LC: Yes. One of my younger brothers has remodeled and lives in the old family home down there in Cannonville. I have a sister up town here with a bed and breakfast. Another brother lived in Henriville until he passed away just a couple of years ago. My youngest brother still lives up in Kerns, Utah and my older sister lives in St. George. Of the eight children in the family the two oldest boys and our youngest sister have passed away.

My own family has grown from me and my wife and our six children to about eighty family members, including spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren all of which I am very grateful for and blessed to have and to which we acknowledge the hand of divine providence.

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X Date of Interview June 15-2000

X Primary Subject Experiences in sawmill

Other Topics Welding in California; sheepherding camp; cooking

Number of Tapes 1

X Signature Lester Clarke

X Date June 15/2000

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