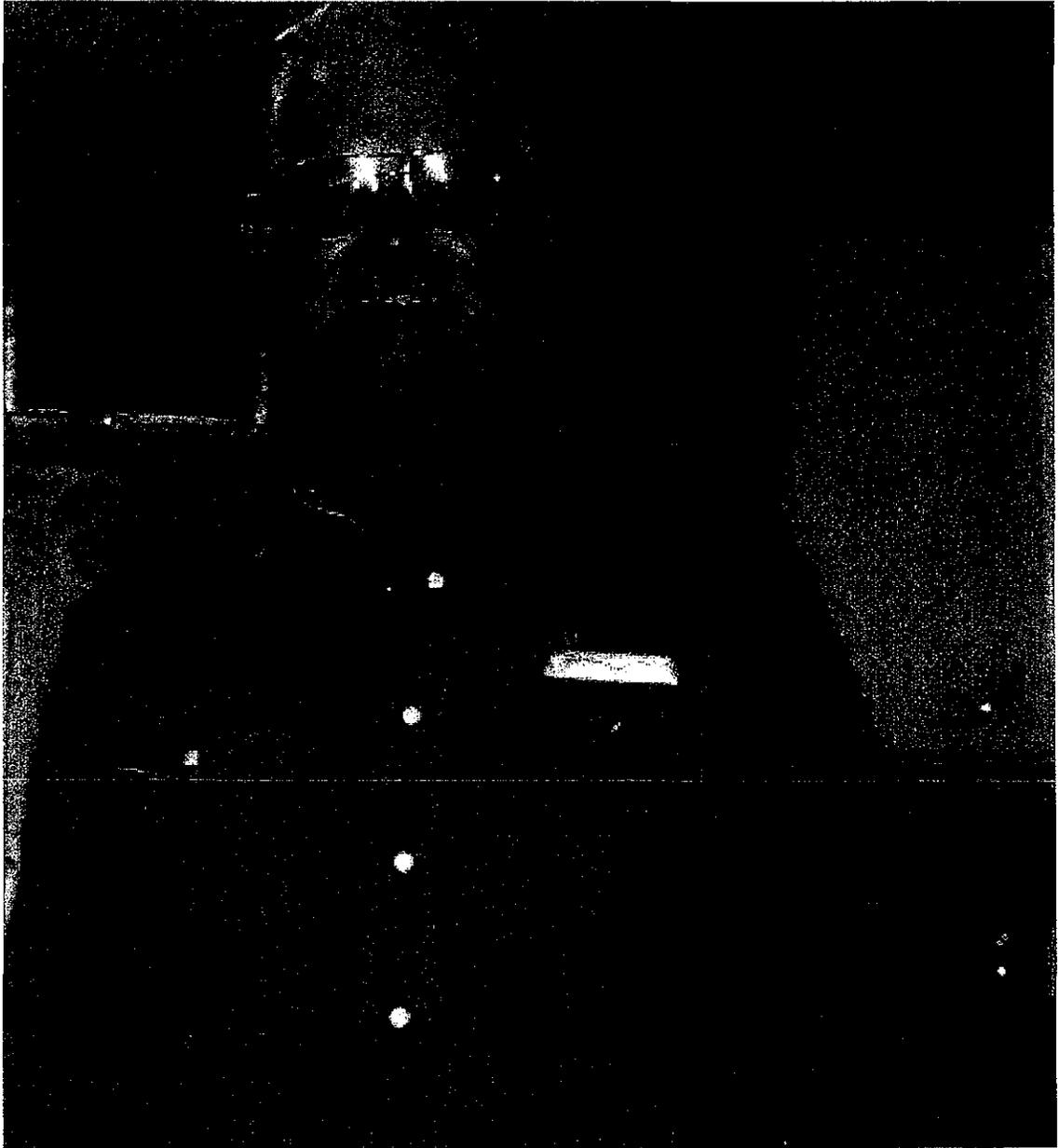


Rex Crofts 1999
orderville

Southern Utah Oral History Project

The Southern Utah Oral History Project was started in July of 1998. It began with an interest in preserving the cultural history of small towns in southern Utah that border the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The project was managed by Kent Powell, from the Utah Division of State History, who oversaw the collection of oral histories conducted in Boulder, Escalante, Bryce Valley, Long Valley, Kanab, the Kaibab Paiute Reservation, and Big Water, by Jay Haymond and Suzi Montgomery. Also in cooperation with the state was the Bureau of Land Management and the people of Garfield and Kane counties, with support from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The goals of the project were first to interview long-time local residents and collect information about the people and the land during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, the interviews were to be transcribed and copies of the transcripts were to be made available to the public at the Utah State Historical Society and at local repositories. Lastly, to build a relationship with state agencies and the local communities and provide a medium for the local communities to express their interest in preserving their own history and culture in the areas that are now included in the GSENM. Thank you to everyone who took the time to care and share their memories and stories.



INTERVIEW WITH: Rex L. Crofts
INTERVIEWER: Jay Haymond
INTERVIEW NUMBER:
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 13, 1999
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: His house in Orderville
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: Life Experiences
TRANSCRIBER: Vectra Solutions/MH
DATE: April 27, 1999

JH: You were born here in Orderville?

RC: I was born here in Orderville, Kane County, Utah on November 18, 1919 to Daniel LeRoy Crofts and Marilla Hepworth Crofts. I was born just the other end of town, and that house was moved from Mt. Carmel up to there then later years it's been moved back down there, but, I've lived here all my life except when I had a vacation to go into the service (laughs). So, I grewed up. We had a big family, I was the fourth child in a family of eleven children, six boys and five girls. We worked for everything, you know, paid work for commodities, we raised a cow, we had our own barn. We had a milk cow, we had a pig and chickens to furnish our meat and our eggs, so we had something to eat. It had been a rough go for a lot of years but, I did. When I got old enough to go to school, I remember going to school one time, starting school, barefoot. We just didn't have anything. It was during the Depression, you know, and my dad never owned any ground so we just worked for other people that did and got our hay and grain so we did have a living. That was good.

JH: Were you paid mostly in commodities or was there also cash?

RC: Once in a while we'd get a little cash, very seldom. There was on fellow here had quite a big farm and we'd work for him. He'd give us a little bit. Maybe a dollar or two a day and he'd say, and the end of the work, he'd say "Well let's go down a have the Relief Society write you out a check." His wife was in the Relief Society. So we had a check then, and we'd really celebrate. We had a few dollars. But it was very seldom you got money, just trade- trade work.

JH: What year were you born?

RC: 1919 I believe, so I'm 79.

JH: Sure.

RC: I grew up and went to school, grade school, high school, got out in 1939 and got married in '40 or '41. Had one boy when I went in the service about three years old and spent 19 months in the Pacific and Japan.

JH: What that the army?

RC: In the army, yes.

JH: Tell me about that experience. What did they teach you?

RC: Well, I was started the basic training in the infantry then I got over in there, I got driving trucks, hauling troops in and out. Met my brother in the Philippines, he was there before I was, he was younger than I was and I was married so I met him there and we got together for a day and then we went into Japan and I was there for a year, a little over. Got home and my life was kind of disrupted. I got a divorce from my first wife and well I went to work in the sawmills again out on the Kaibab this time and then we got married and she had two girls from a previous marriage, but we have a good family. I had this boy and she had two girls and then we had two, we lost two babies, I think it was from the atomic bomb test, they was born, they didn't have their lungs wasn't fully developed and so they just didn't make it. And this other girl she was born without a thyroid so then she's on thyroid pills every day. But we've had a good life. I worked 27 years in one stretch down

to Kaibab, set there and sawed lumber. I was a sawer in a saw mill. That's when they was building the Grand Canyon Dam. I retired from there and farmed. I put what money I could in to farm ground and I've raised a few cows and have a BLM lease where my cows can run in the summer time then I feed them through the winter. It makes me a little bit. Well, it's an expensive hobby really, I guess. (laughs)

JH: I've heard that from other farmers.

RC: Yea, the cattle business is pretty bad right now. But, I enjoy 'em, I love animals, had a few horses and so that's about the story of my life. I remember some hard times during the Christmases when I was a kid. Dad and them never had any... they didn't have any money. We used to pop corn, string corn around on our Christmas trees and maybe had a colored paper to make chain links and crossed the room with a big bell in the center where the decorations for Christmas. Sometimes you didn't get anything... oh they'd manage a little bit. I remember one time I got up Christmas morning, couldn't find the shoe. Got looking around, it was under the Christmas tree and it had a dime in it.

JH: Well!

RC: Really. That was my Christmas. I was really happy. We didn't... we made our own fun. When we got older we'd go out in the hills hunting rabbits or something, get a .22, we'd work for ... well it cost about 20 cents for a box of .22 bullets and we'd go hunt rabbits, squirrels and things. That was our recreation. We lived up here, there was three families of us, all first cousins. We had a goat, one of 'em had a goat, I had a lamb, we built harnesses for 'em and pulled a little wagon. We'd go out in the hills and get these old cedar stumps and haul wood, just for entertainment, mainly. Didn't keep any wood by no means, but it was entertainment and it kept us out of mischief. We didn't have any troubles really.

JH: Did you eat the rabbits?

RC: No, no, we didn't dare eat 'em, we was afraid of disease.

JH: Yeah.

RC: So, as I got older then I'd go deer huntin' and get a little meat that way. Sometimes I'd have a job and my Dad didn't. I'd take potatoes, buy flour, bring home some meat, some mutton or something like that to help the family. He said, "I don't know what I'd ever done without you", cause I was working and he didn't. A lot of times the Veterans could get a job when anybody else couldn't in them days. So we got by. It was good. But we've had a good family since we got married and that means a lot.

JH: You bet. You said you were working on the Kaibab during the construction of the dam. Did you every work on the dam itself?

RC: No. A lot of the guys that I worked with.. in fact, I had two brothers that went out there and they worked out there but they quit Kaibab and went. But I was getting about the same wage in the sawmill that they was getting out there and it was further to drive so I figured I couldn't better myself and I had the farm ground to take care of. I'd irrigate at nights and saw lumbar during the day or put up hay, whatever. So I kept busy. Sometimes, I'd get three or four hours sleep at night.

JH: Yeah.

RC: One time I had appendicitis, they kept acallin' the doctor to see when I could get back to work and I was out about five days and I was back sawing lumber. They didn't have anybody to replace me then. Another time I got rheumatic fever. Then I was off for six

weeks. But they kept calling the doctor, I'd go up and have a check-up and he finally released me to go back, but he said I have to watch strep throat, why he says, that'll be right back on to ya.. so I have to watch but I still go. I work right along with the young guys.

JH: The attentiveness of ... would it be the Whiting Brothers at the Kaibab?

RC: Yes.

JH: In other words, they liked you work, they liked your skills and the way you were performing. How did you feel towards them?

RC: They was a good bunch. When I had 25 years, they gave me a radio or something, you know, as appreciation and they had me talk and I told 'em, I says, "I feel like the people here in this county owe them the best they can give them in work and that because that was only employment around, really. So, I figured if I could do them a good job that's what I done. I was told that I was the best grade sawer they ever had. Some of the guys kinda butchered the logs up just to make a big ... kinda show they could put out a lot of lumber but a lot of it was going out in waste. Cause they wasn't cutting the grade lumber. So, I tried to do 'em that kind of a job and they appreciated it and they was a good outfit. Since they've gone why guys are scattered out, they'll pick up what they can.

JH: Let's talk about that situation on the Forest. You didn't have to get out on the ground, I guess. You were working in the mill.

RC: I was in the mill, but before I went there my uncle owned a mill on Cedar Mountain. Okay? I drove a logging truck, I drove Caterpillar, I run a log loader, built roads, everything like that then I went out there on what they call Orderville Canyon, one time

after I got out of the service for a year or something and I had this boy who was three years old, and I couldn't very well take him out there very good and so I went back up here and I learned to saw out there and then I come back here and sawed for my uncle until they moved to Panguitch. Then rather than drive that much further, it's about 15 miles difference, went to Fredonia again and they told me any time you want to come back you come back after I'd quit once and went back there. So I went back...

JH: Well see, that was a partnership of Pearson and Crofts wasn't it that went out...

RC: It was later, yeah.

JH: Well, it seems to be that the sawmill has been you life, hasn't it?

RC: Right. That's been my livelihood. This other is just a hobby.

JH: Yeah. What's going on in your perception of the situation, the Forest Service regulates what's done on the forest, timber cutting and grazing and all those other things.

RC: In my estimation, they've ruined the forest.

JH: The Forest Service?

RC: You betcha. They've let these bugs get out of hand. When we had that mill on Cedar Mountain, there was two rangers and they went all over that forest. When they'd find a place the bugs was working they's string it off with strings. We'd go out there and we'd get that bug timber and they controlled it. But for years now they've never done a thing until its got so bad now that can't do nothing, can't keep up with 'em. Now they want to close all the roads down where we used to log. What's gonna happen if a forest fire gets

into a lot of them and, as far as I'm concerned, they've ruined the forest. So I think sometimes they did cut too much timber off, kind of clear cut the older trees. The way I think it ought to be run is leave a few good seed trees in an acre. In case there's fire why it'll wipe those young ones out, why they've got some seed trees that will re-seed and when they cut the timber why the Kaibab and all of them they'd going back and resetting new trees all the time. They spent a lot of money re-seeding and planting of trees. So, that's the way I feel about it. But they wouldn't listen to any thing I would say. But I am 79 years old, I've seen what the forest does. You can go over Cedar Mountain, there's dead Ponderosa pines standing there, bugs a killed 'em.

JH: This is a Western Pine Beetle, isn't it?

RC: Yes. Yeah and the spruce beetle. That's mainly up there around Brian Head under there that's mainly spruce...they've really killed it out.

JH: What plant is going back in there in the absence of these killed out pine trees?

RC: Oh, they get these young Spruce and Ponderosa trees and re-set 'em out.

JH: I see.

RC: I had this one cousin that's what he done. He worked up there and they just plant trees during the summertime you know. But, I didn't get on that. I was still sawing 'em up then but they replaced more than they cut.

JH: I'll bet. Is the action of the Forest Service driven by their own perception of silviculture or... what's going on there that they've taken this strategy of exclusion?

RC: Just the power of the environmentalist.

JH: So it's a competing interest group?

RC: Right.

JH: I see.

RC: When we would cut timber we'd go in a forest and they claimed, guys'd run sheep same placed we was logging, they said that was the best they'd ever had where they'd kind of loosen up all that soil and took out part of them trees.

JH: Yeah.

RC: Then sheep man says that's the best feed they ever had. Now, all they care about is the wildlife and it don't matter about anybody making a living.

JH: Well, yeah, that's the appearance isn't it? What has happened to the Whiting Brothers? Where are they located now? They changed their form of business. They're still around aren't they?

RC: Well, they've most of 'em I think still got service stations and may be some land development down in Arizona but here they've... nothing.

JH: Completely our of this country?

RC: Yeah uh huh. There down, some of 'em down in Phoenix and down that way.

JH: None of them north of the river I guess huh?

RC: Yeah.

JH: Are there any big operators on the strip? Who uses the land on the strip now?

RC: Oh, I see you had Vard Heaton there. They have a lot of cattle range down there. Earl Sorenson has a cattle range. There's a lot of people from Kanab that do and St. George, they go clear out. Cleve Esplin has some clear out next to the Boulder Dam, out that way, they call Pakoon, there's cattlemen. Lee Esplin has a big outfit, his boys now, he's dead. And they've developed that. They've seeded lots of that where they made ponds and reservoirs where before there was nothing but trees, sagebrush and cedars and that didn't amount to anything. But they've gone in and the government's helped them seed but they do a lot of it themselves then they rotate around on different areas to graze their animals so they don't overgraze.

JH: Well, if you were looking at the management of land and comparing the Forest Service to the BLM, what would be your perception of it with your experience?

RC: Well, I'd kind of run the same, I guess. But they're trying. They do seed a lot but I think they Forest Service has gone a little bit too far the wrong way. Because from my experience with 'em where we'd logged and they said it's the best feed they ever had, why I think it just... all they wanted was recreation. It don't matter if the people around make a living. The same way without the Kaiparowits where the coal.. all them things are just environmental groups is strong and they have money and they close everything down.

JH: Uh huh.

RC: Too much of it right in the Forest Service and the BLM and that... too many environmentalists, I think.

JH: Where there's certainly a new group, or I guess they've been around for what 30 years or so, but they've really gotten organized.

RC: You bet they have and that... people out of Chicago, New York! They have more say around this country than we do, then the people that's lived here all their lives. This on account of them big groups.

JH: Sure.

RC: They have money, they get into 'em and just like the Escalante Staircase, Grand Staircase, why the President went into Arizona, designated that Staircase as a park so... that isn't right. Would you think?

JH: Well, I have to admire his wisdom for taking the... and he was maybe in danger coming over here.(Laughter)

RC: Well, I don't think he was in too much danger, but the Utah people couldn't even go out there were he'd done it. But, they said they wanted to leave things the way they was but people has improved it.

JH: That's true.

RC: They have. They've improved this country. That old pioneers and right on down. They haven't hurt it. They wanted to look forward to their grandkids and so forth, so they can see that it was better now than it was in the years back.

JH: Yeah. I talked to an operator over in Garfield county and he says, "I've learned some things about this operation", he says, "I think it's the economy that's having the impact on the stock man not the environmentalist." You know, they've been a source of irritation but he said the economy where the price of beef is so low, you know, we small operators we can't live very long without a little profit to keep us going. So, he said, "I'm changing my tactics, I'm not after the environmentalist like I was." And I thought that was an interesting point of view. He certainly knows more about it than I do.

RC: Oh yeah. What the price of beef on a hoof, and now you take a piece of meat in the store, why it hasn't made no difference, it keeps going up.

JH: Yeah.

RC: It's just big packers who caused that. Why I can kill a beef of my own, it costs me \$150.00 to get it cut and wrapped and you get may be or two or three hundred dollars live weight at the auction. So that just don't make sense to me. It's way out of hand that way. But they say it's just the big packers, they control it. There's only three or four in the United States and they can control that price.

JH: Yeah, it's amazing isn't it.

RC: It is. Yep.(sigh) But I guess if its just a hobby for me why it don't matter anyway.
(laughs).

JH: (laughs) Oh boy. But you can still have fun.

RC: I enjoy it. I work every day and got a little farm equipment, a little farm ground and I enjoy it. I put everything I could make into farm ground that I've got and then wages is

pretty small but we lived good, we ate good, that's what life's all about, isn't it?

JH: Right, right. Help your neighbor a little. Did you think of your employment with that larger farmer when you were young as a neighborly gesture on his part and a neighborly gesture on your part working for him? In other words, you were serving him and he was helping you out a little bit. Was that a reciprocal kind of exchange?

RC: Well, that's the way I felt. If I can help him, why I wasn't getting help back. So that's why I tried to do the best job I could do when I was working for somebody. And now I don't have any trouble, I can keep busy every day just helping and doing things for other people.

JH: Sounds like a pretty good life actually.

RC: It is. That's what's kept me as young as I am.

JH: (laughs) That's right.

RC: Yeah, I work right along side with the young guys, hauling hay, baling hay and everything like that. Even after rheumatic fever and that, I still go.

JH: Yeah, that's good. A little bit ago we talked about what the army taught you. You learned things growing up in Orderville that you took to the army. What kind of things did you know that you took into that army?

RC: Oh, I learned a lot about trade and guns and all those kinds of things like that. I was a squad leader in the army and so I knew things that a lot of the city boys didn't know and it helped me a lot. So I felt like what I'd learned through life, why it made it easier for

me in the service.

JH: Do you think you were a more effective soldier because of the things that you knew?

RC: That's what I figured I was, yes. I wouldn't have been a squad leader over other men if I wouldn't have known what I did. I could have got into a different outfit on account of my knowledge. In the Philippines they had a little saw mill and they said well if we'd known that you could have been running that sawmill. But they said the Japs run it one day and Americans the next day. They'd run each other off! But, I was satisfied with what I was doing. I got in Japan and I maintained the diesel motors. I bossed a lot of Japanese helpers in a Red Cross building after the war was over and everything. That was a lot of fun. The Japanese, they was good people. They didn't want war any worse than we did, the ordinary people.

JH: Yeah.

RC: We'd go on in the country on our Sunday, get a recreation vehicle, we could go out and look the country over and we got lost one time up in the mountains and tried to get somebody, some Jap, to tell us how or where to go to get out. Well, they was scared, they'd run and hide, they was scared of us.

JH: Yeah, yeah.

RC: I had an interview with a white Russian there in Japan and they wondered if the United States would go right into war with Russia and I told him no, I didn't think so because there the Russians was down, they didn't have nothing and I says the United States was still in fairly good shape, I figured they'd had a lot of soldiers, they had good equipment so I don't think they'd been any trouble but I'm glad we didn't. I was just a little ways

across one island from Russia- pretty close. The snow was deep. They'd carry it with Caterpillars and carry-alls and dump it in the ocean, off of their streets in the city.

JH: They'd gather snow with a carry-all?

RC: Yeah.

JH: No fooling. I never heard of that.

RC: (laughs) Well, that's what they'd do. Our engineer group. I was boss in the Red Cross building but I was through the engineers and they had Caterpillars and big old scrapers and carry-alls and dump it down in the ocean.

JH: Well, how would you pick it up? Just gather it up with a scraper?

RC: Yeah, it'd just have a blade underneath that'd scrape it up.

JH: I grew up in construction. I've operated a scraper and Tournapull and all those, so I know what you're talking about but I've never heard of gathering snow with 'em.

RC: Yeah it was packed, it was....

JH: Ice.

RC: When it started to thaw in the spring why we had chains on six wheels of them trucks to even go. The Japanese'd slide down into their homes there was that much snow. I had pictures of how they was. (laughs)

JH: Was this northern Japan or the Eluciations?

RC: It was in Japan.

JH: Uh huh.

RC: Yeah, yep. Up on Sopora. It was on the upper island.

JH: Hokkaido.

RC: Yep.

JH: Well, interesting. The idea of being in the army is like, well it's like you serving your country, you're representing your country. What was that like? Did you feel a strong responsibility representing your country?

RC: Well, just like when I'm on another job. I felt like if I can do the things that will help our country, that's what I wanted to do.

JH: Yeah.

RC: I didn't really get into the actual battle. I was a little bit later getting there, but I went into the Philippines.

End of Side One

Begin Side Two

JH: You said that being in the service was like being on any other kind of a job. You were

doing the work, the work that they needed.

RC: Well, I was there. At one place I was a truck driver, sometimes I'd go haul food from down on the dock or something like that. The officers would call for a truck driver.. well I'd get to go and haul stuff and standby at the officers' hotel if they needed anything, I was on a job to go get it. So, one place we had two man that was on a water pump that had to be on guard. I was in the camp, I'd haul their food to 'em and one thing or another like that. So I had a job, I'd volunteer because I didn't like sitting around.

JH: Yeah.

RC: We had basketball team there and I played basketball for most of the guys from Utah up to Draper and Salt Lake and all around there, we all got together and we had us a good basketball team and we played ball over there on one island, we moved on the other island and had another season cause there was still snow and we couldn't get out and do anything else really. But I've have guys that was in the service with me and visit once in a while and it's quite nice.

JH: Somebody had access to the roster, huh?

RC: Yeah (laughs). Eighty-one of us from Utah went overseas on the same ship.

JH: I see.

RC: Some of the guys, like my brother and some of them, never seen hardly another guy from Utah when they went over, but I was lucky. They'd have church and that was pretty good, I thought.

JH: You participated in the church activities as they'd bring them together over there.

RC: Yeah, that means a lot to the guys when they are in the service and gone from home.

JH: You bet. Sort of becomes a home connection, doesn't it?

RC: Right. Yeah, I have always been in the church, I was sometimes not as active as I should be, but when I was still working over there I'd put in five days other there and Saturday and Sunday I'd irrigate or hay or something here. Well, it shouldn't have been done on Sunday, I guess, the way I've been taught, been taught right. Sometimes I didn't do exactly right in that respect because I had things to do, when you have a water turn you take it whether it's Sunday or what it is, so that 's what I was doing all my life.

JH: You know that water turn business, a lot of people don't understand that idea of that responsibility. I know a man that said that he moved from Box Elder County to Salt Lake County because of the 54 hour water turn. In other words, he got out of the farming business.

RC: That's right, well, I have farm ground on the Mount Carmel irrigation system, my turns would come every 17 days and 6 hours and I had 40 or 50 hours of that, day and night, and now I've got the same on Orderville ditch. But this is going to change. We're putting in a new big sprinkler system where you can do it at your own convenience if it works right. (Laughter)

JH: Yeah that's right. Success to ya. I hope it works.

RC: Yeah, I do to, it's expensive but for years now, I bought extra water and I still can't, by flood irrigating, I can't get it through my fields. Bottom ends burn up and the top is

drownded out trying to get it through and I've done levels, I done things to try and better it but it's still in dry years, why it just won't go.

JH: Well, I think it's the nature of the soil for one thing.

RC: It is, you bet it is. But some of these fields right here below town, they haven't irrigated more than, not even two-thirds of their ground for the last several years. They put in a concrete pipe several years ago and it's built up with sediment, lime, until they can't even get ... the last few years, they haven't even gotten 80% of the water that they own. So their field is burned up.

JH: Boy, that a loss of a big investment, it sounds like.

RC: You bet it is. Some of the guys they built a pond and they could go store the water where it was high enough they could. Why they, one or two have been able to sprinkle and they could see all the difference in the world they'd get their ground irrigated and guys who are flood irrigating just don't get it.

JH: Yeah. So they irrigate with gravity, huh?

RC: Yes.

JH: That's wonderful.

RC: They have to go up a river just ... oh about two miles or better to get enough pressure so they can have gravity flow. My uncle tried pumping but the power was too expensive what little ground that he had, he said it's just not worth it.

JH: Well there has got to be some economics in there or it just won't work.

RC: That's right.

JH: If it doesn't make enough to pay for the bill, you're in trouble.

RC: Right, these expensive hobbies just... (laughs)

JH: (laughs) Oh, boy.

RC: That's right.

JH: You've heard that old story about the farmer that was asked what he would do if he had a million dollars and he said he'd just keep farming until it was all gone.

RC: Yeah, (laughs) that's the way it is. I remember one time when I was working for Kaibab, lumber got a little hard to sell and so they had some salesman going around selling lumber and they said one of 'em was good enough that he could sell lumber whether the guy wanted it or not. He says, they just liked the guy that was a cream separator salesman. He said he went to a little ole farm and he was good enough salesman he talked the guy into selling his cows so that he could buy the separator. (laughs)

JH: (laughs) That's good. Oh boy, well salesman are a wonderful thing.

RC: I wouldn't be a very good one.

JH: Me too.

RC: They wondered when I got out of the service, my uncle and his boys wanted me to go down to St. George and be a car salesman and I says I don't have big enough line of bull to sell cars. (laughs).

JH: Where have you lived most of your life then? Right here in Orderville?

RC: Yes. The only time I've left here was just the service. We drove 60 miles a day to Fredonia to work, over and back, 30 miles each way. I'd get up at a quarter to four when I was on day shift, milk my cow, get my breakfast and be over there sawing lumber at six o'clock in the morning and then come home and farm until way in the night and.... that's the story of my life.

JH: Sounds like it. You know Orderville's a unique place.

RC: It is.

JH: You've stayed here because you obviously like it.

RC: Right.

JH: What's been your opinion of some of the other places where you've visited or been as a soldier. Lets say, were you in Tokyo or did you say it was Sopora in Hakaido that you were located in, that city up there in Northern Japan?

RC: Yeah, well they're industrious people and they had lots of rice paddies and they'd have their hillsides terraced so they could raise rice clear up them hillsides, there was enough water and moisture there that they did, they'd plow them with them old oxen and

JH: Water buffalo.

RC: Yeah. I watched them thrash rice one time. They had a little peddle deal. They'd peddle and it turned a wheel and they'd stick the heads of the rice in there and they'd beat the rice off and then they'd weave sacks out of the straw. Kind of raised what looked like a winter radish or something, they'd hang them out and try 'em. They really was an industrious people, worked all the time.

JH: You admired them.

RC: I did. I had a lot of friends- oh two or three of 'em but I didn't ever go to town only if I had to drive truck or something. But every time I did I had one little friend that'd bring me some kind of a 'presento' he says. His dad was an English teacher in Tokyo at the time so everytime he'd watch for me at the truck and be on the street and give me a 'presento', he'd say.

JH: That's good.

RC: But I thought a lot of some of them people. They was good. Good friends if they was a friend.

JH: Have you watched Japan since the end of the war and seen how they've recovered from the devastation of that war?

RC: Well, what I could I have. And I've said sometimes I wouldn't mind going back and see how they've built it up. I'm sure they have a lot.

JH: That'd been amazing.

RC: But I saw a friend, a buddy in the army, that saw where the atomic bomb had hit and he gave me some pictures and boy, I'll tell ya, that was bad. They said there was so much heat. One place there was a shadow one a man that was that bridge that burned that shadow still had it right on the concrete in that bridge. It burned the insulators off of their poles... so there was that much heat. That was terrible, I'll tell ya.

JH: There's a beautiful park dedicated to the memory of those that died there and it's a touching thing to visit that park.

RC: I'll bet it is. Yep. Too bad there has to be war. I guess if the big leaders didn't want to rule the world why it would be alright. What do you suppose would happen if we have lost the war to the Japanese people. Do you think we'd been living like we are today?

JH: What do you think?

RC: I don't think we would.

JH: Think we'd be trying to grow rice on these hillsides?

RC: (laughs). I don't think they'd raise much rice here. No, I don't. But I think they'd been... well, in the service they was mean. They didn't care what they done to the soldiers you know. They might have been over here ramrodding us with a bayonet, I don't know. Making us work like they did. Course I didn't mind working as far as that goes but I didn't want no bayonet.

JH: There's a Samurai culture... do you know that word Samurai? I think it refers to the warriors, the people who are dedicated to being at war as a way of life. I think that what you're describing in the army.

RC: I think so. It just.. the leaders and it's drilled in to them from the time they are little kids on up that it is an honor to fight for their country but I asked an interpreter, I says, "Don't you think the Japanese would have been better off if they would have built their country up, invited the people to come in and visit as tourists and that?" He says, "Well, I don't know." And I says, "Well, what have you got now? You haven't got anything. You've been bombed and everything else and now you haven't got anything. Pretty country."

JH: What do you think of when you hear the word racism?

RC: Well, when I watch the news, I think that a lot of these different breeds of people is moving into our country, there's a lot more crime up in Salt Lake City why you watch most of it, 90% of it is a different breed of people that originated in these country, that's caused the crime. Drive by shootings and things that way.

JH: You think that's a racial problem?

RC: I do.

JH: What if we talked about it from the standpoint of the Japanese? What if they believe that anybody that wasn't of Japanese ancestry was inferior and therefore to be avoided. Did you ever see any of that kind of an attitude in them?

RC: No. I didn't. Seemed like they couldn't do enough for us guys when we was there. They'd.... of course, I treated them decent and some guys didn't. I seen some of 'em that would go downtown, of course they was usually ones that liked to drink, and they'd see them Japs and they'd beat up on them or something. But I respected 'em. They had their life. It was too bad the way they was done, but this one guy, he said, "well, they killed my brother." Well he'd go downtown and he'd beat up... it didn't matter if it was man,

woman, or child. He's beat up on em just cause he was drunk or something you know. I didn't like that.

JH: No. What I was thinking about is the way that the leaders felt towards foreigners. See, I think there was a strong racist attitude in them- a feeling of superiority. They called it the a 'Special Kingdom', or the 'Kingdom of the Rising Sun' which meant that they were going to dominate the world.

RC: Yeah. There was supposed to have been what they called, in the upper island Hokkaido was it, they was supposed to have been a superior race of people being bigger and all that, but I didn't see too many of 'em that was very big and maybe they figured they was superior but I couldn't actually see it.

JH: Well it's an interesting thing how we react to our neighbors, of whatever ethnic background or origin. It's not an easy answer to try and decide what to do. I think sometimes we can come to a decision and work with the answers as best as possible but it's a hard question.

RC: It is, you bet. I always figured... course, I'm LDS, I figured our missionaries would do a lot more work then a lot of these occupation army because a lot of them... I've seen guys that didn't care about anything only themselves and they could harm some of the others, why that's what they done. But the missionaries goes out there, they can teach 'em. I figured that was as lot better than an occupation army. I wasn't good enough on all the church to teach 'em that much but I made friends with 'em and fellowshipping that there means a lot.

JH: That's pretty good. You bet, I agree. I agree. What part of you life have I failed to give you a chance to talk about?

RC: Well, I think we've pretty well covered it.

JH: Okay. I've enjoyed visiting with you. I thank you for the time that we've spent.

RC: Well, when we get talking it brings some memories and things that way, so I've enjoyed it too.

JH: Okay, thank you.

RC: You bet.

End of side two, tape one

End of Interview

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