

Davis, Larry
1998
Boulder

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: Larry Davis
INTERVIEWER: Jay Haymond/Suzi Montgomery
INTERVIEW NUMBER:
DATE OF INTERVIEW: August 5, 1998
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: His office at the Anasazi Village Museum in Boulder, Utah
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: His experience living in Boulder for 28 years.
TRANSCRIBER: Vectra Solutions/JN
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JH: My initial question is, how did you get into anthropology?

LD: I've always been interested in Indian things. When I was small I would have probably committed a crime to obtain an arrowhead, I've just always been interested in it. I worked different jobs as I was growing up, wanted to be a carpenter initially, my dad was a carpenter and I went to trade school for a year to do that, actually two years. The last year of high school and trade school. Worked at that for a while, it was quite seasonal, I worked in a department store, I worked as a cook and as a counselor at a boy scout camp and I worked as a river boatman. The first year I was working as a river boatman, working for a gentleman out of... that lived in Orem. And after the season was over I was rooming with guys in Provo and they asked me what I was going to do after the season was over and I said, "I don't know." I'd been out of school for about seven years. And they said, "Well, why don't you go back to school," and I said, "That sounds like a good idea," and they said, "Well, what do you want to major in?" I said, "Well, maybe archaeology." So I looked in the catalog and sure enough they had some archaeology classes.

I started school again, got my transcripts and all and just started out part time, just took seven or eight hours and found it to be pretty hard to be out and then go back. I'm not sure I was the greatest high school student in the world anyway. I found out college was quite a bit harder than high school but things progressed and it got a little easier, more fun, and my grades starting going up a little bit. But I've always been interested in it and was always interested in scouting to a point and at one time was even going to switch from archaeology and maybe be a professional scouter and took a few classes and

decided I was better off where I was at.

I wanted to work for the National Park Service, wanted to be a ranger. I applied for different jobs and initially didn't get much in the way of a response. And then my last year was in the fall of '69 and the spring of '70, one of my professors was on the Canyonlands Advisory Council. And the Park Service was going to take a bunch of people down through Cataract Canyon and they were looking for a boatman and he asked if I wanted to be a boatman and certainly I did. And so I worked for the Park Service for that trip and must have left some kind of an impression. I told them I'd like to apply for a seasonal job over in that country and they encouraged me and I started getting, instead of the standard "we appreciate your application but...", I started getting inquiries about "what kind of housing would you need?" and different things. And at the same time I'd applied for this job, and this was only going to be a six month job, and Dr. Matheny, my professor, had asked me to be his assistant at the field school down in Montezuma Canyon that same year.

JH: This is Ray Matheny?

LD: Yeah, Dr. Matheny. And I got so I had these three, well at least the two, positions and then one day Marv Jensen, who was our assistant director at the time, called me up and I had sent in an application, my goodness! it was in the spring sometime, it was in October sometime I got a notice back saying they had received my application. I thought, well, if it takes them five months, you know, to (laughter) have a letter from Provo to Salt Lake and then tell me that they got my application. And then in April they called me up and wanted to interview me for the job. I went up for the interview and Marv said, "Well, it's certainly different now than it used to be." He said, "Well, I'd like to hire," says, "got these other two," he said, "no, no I..." he says, "Why don't you just count on the job." And then it turned out instead of a six month it was going to be full time job. So Judy

and I talked it over and decided to accept this position.

And it was funny because we did, Judy was expecting our first child we had just bought a car, we had just bought a new Volkswagen square back, I think we paid \$2,800, and then the state said, "Well, we won't provide you housing, we'll provide you with trailer space and we'll pay your utilities but we can't provide housing for you." So we had to buy a trailer too, mobile home, we lived in that miserable thing for thirteen years over here on the park. But we were making \$449 a month and I was just finishing my masters degree, I had all of the class work done, just needed to finish up the thesis and we came down here and I actually took a cut in pay. Judy was working full time for the Spanish department as a secretary up at the Y and I had a half time assistantship. So we were making more there than we would for the state and I look back and figure out how much I was making per hour and it was almost criminal. It was \$2 and something an hour that I was making. But on the bright side, I told people I'm up to almost \$700 a month now so... (laughter). No, it's better than that, but it's been interesting. It's been fun. I fell in love with the place, I came down with my father-in-law. They wanted me to report to work about mid-May, that was my hire date, 15th of May, and I told them I just couldn't, I still had some things at school to take care of and I could go down the first of June. So I came down here the first of June in 1970.

The museum at that time was about 90 percent complete and I came down and just more or less just hung around. We dedicated it the 10th of July in 1970. And there was no training or anything, I came home, we had an apartment in Orem, I came home one day and there was a big box by our front door, it had all my uniform items and stuff in it and Marv gave me a manual, a big old thick thing, and he says, "Well, there it is, if you have questions give us a call" and I didn't have a phone, you know I'd go over to the pay phone and call up, so I just kinda' learned as you went along, kind of. And it was probably easier there then. It wasn't a lot of paper work like there is today. It just

boggles your mind the amount of stuff you have to do. So it was fairly easy. The visitation was low at the time. Main Street through town was still dirt, gravel started out here by the Hell's Backbone, Salt Gulch turnoff. And of course the mountain road was dirt and...

JH: Unless it was mud!

LD: Unless it was mud and boy there was some of that! We moved the trailer down and set it up and settled in. It's been a good job. And we've had chances to go other places, had chance to go to Blanding and to Vernal, see their city. In fact is, in '73 they called us up and said, "We want you to go to Cedar City." Marv called up and says, "Harold Tippetts wants you to go to Cedar City and open up Iron Mission State Park," it's a wagon collection that they had received. I told him I really didn't want to go, we'd just bought some property here and we were just kind of getting settled in. He said, "Well, I'll talk to Harold." And so he talked to Harold, called me up a little later and says, "Harold would like you to go for six months and then you can come back." So we went over there and spent six months in Cedar City, kind of taking inventory of everything and getting things organized.

JH: Did you take your trailer?

LD: No, we kept it here and they paid... We rented our trailer to a young couple and then they paid our apartment over in Cedar, so it turned out that we just kind of broke even, really. But at the same time I was still in charge over here, so on weekends we'd come here and then we'd spent the week over in Cedar City. And I'm glad we came back. It's, you know we talked about staying but I didn't know how Judy would like this place and she's just fallen in love with it and it's home. It's a good place. You know, I told you yesterday, people ask me where am I going to go when I retire and I always tell them I'm

going to go across the street and go to my house. (Laughter) We have about three acres down here and I have a little wood working shop and just go down and just relax. And then, you know, every day I know these surrounding folks out here, ladies this morning, "Wow! What a neat place, you know, the air's so clean and it's just... What a fun place to be." And that's why we've stayed. It just really is.

JH: One of the significant events that has taken place in the law since you came was the implementation of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Do you know that FLPMA?

LD: Just a little bit.

JH: It's enabling legislation for the Bureau of Land Management. And embodied in the legislation was the elimination of local advisory committees. So the BLM was, in effect, left to the discretion of the professional land managers. And that sparked the grass roots movement that has been called the Sagebrush Rebellion. Do you remember anything about that in this country?

LD: Yeah, and of course most of these folks around here, you know, like to at least claim being a part of the Sagebrush Rebellion. And I haven't always agreed with some of the local folks on some of the stands they've taken and vice versa and at the same time have some issues. I think a lot of their -- there's an animosity and I think when we were interviewing Truman the other night you could just detect a little bit in how he had been mistreated by the BLM or at least had perceived being mistreated. And I'm not sure a lot of it didn't come from this "manifest destiny" thing where you came here and you had the right to do this and you were and you came here and you settled it and you conquered it, or at least it was there to conquer and subdue and nobody told you otherwise. You know, if you wanted to dump 2,000 sheep on the mountain, that's what you could do. Or

1,000 head of cows down in lower country and... There was no consequence, other than, you know, later on they started losing the ability to graze because there was nothing to graze. It's this whole pioneer spirit and these folks came into some of these areas and it wasn't easy, it was a hard time. And they didn't understand, I don't think a lot of them understood or even took time to notice what was around them.

I remember my wife's grandmother grew up down around St. George and it was hard there. Man, if they weren't having droughts they were having flash floods and it was just one extreme or the other. And when she heard that they had made Zion a National Park she was just appalled. She says, "Why would anybody want to come and see that?" She says, "There is nothing there but a bunch of rocks." There was some controversy, and there's been a number of them here, it's either a Kapairowitz coal-powered generating plant or the Burr Trail or whatever, now the Monument. I remember one little lady says, "Let those stinking environmentalists have the place," she says, "There's nothing here but a bunch of sandstone and rattle snakes anyway." She says, "I don't know what they even see in this country." I remember one of our county commissioners one time, Louise, at a hearing on the Burr Trail and someone from the environmental side stood up and he said, "We come down here and we like to come down from the city and kind of get our batteries recharged and kind of renew our soul and from time to time have a unique experience. And of course, you know, "Yeah, go back where you come from you damned old hippy!" you know, "We don't need you around here anyway." And Louise was the next speaker and she said, "I'd like to address this gentleman that just spoke just prior to me." She says, "I would like him to know that my husband and I have been running cows in this country for 20 years and I have yet to have a unique experience." And of course, you know, "Yeah, you tell him...." and clapping. And I thought, "Isn't that sad that you can spend 20 years getting really intimate with a country on horseback," you know, you're out there and you've yet to have what you term a "unique experience." Maybe it's become so mundane. On the other hand, I talked to old Dell LeFevre up here

just a week or so ago and he says, "You know, I was up on the Mountain" and he says, "I was just up under the rim on the horse," and he says, "you know I get closer to God up there than I do any place else." And he said, "And I have time to think." And he says, "Maybe it's what even keep me religious is to get close." And so I think there's some who do and some who it's just there and like Judy's grandmother, this is just a place to fight and conquer and subdue. And I think the people certainly over in Kaneville and maybe to an extent even in Capitol Reef and, you know, in Fruita, they did it. And here, my goodness, you listen to Truman and some of these other early people that lived here and this was a tough place. This was just about as isolated a little town as we have in the whole state. It was tough.

So, I don't know, in answer to your question, yeah, these folks have all been part of this Sagebrush Rebellion and then they... I think there was a little organization called WALU (Western Association of Land Users) that was kind of an off-shoot or at least was organized as a result of this Sagebrush Rebellion. It kind of seemed to have petered out, at least I haven't heard anything about it. Now there's some other organizations that they think are probably better organized. These folks are, for the most part, pretty anti-government, doesn't matter if it's federal or state.

JH: Yeah, but there's something goes along with...maybe it goes with the country, and I think of it as adaptability. In other words they are very strong in their beliefs but they usually keep the idea of survival in mind and sometimes that means changing their ways enough to adapt to fit the new conditions. Have you seen that operate and maybe what's in the offing now?

LD: They have, you know they're tough. They've had to adapt to things for over a hundred years and they do. It's interesting however, they want to, they say, maintain our custom and culture. But they haven't defined that for me yet. And then they'll turn right around

and say, "...and we need this coal mine and we need these oil wells and we need this and this and this," and I question whether it is part of our custom and culture to have these new things come in like this. Now I was raised in Carbon County, I was raised in a coal mining town -- Hiawatha. So I know a little bit about coal and the booms and the busts and what happens and when it's good times it's good times and when it's bad times it's bad times and they think this is going to be the cure-all for everybody and tourism isn't. Tourism's low paying, little grunt jobs, you know, cleaning rooms and flipping hamburgers and so tourism isn't the thing and these other things are. But adaptability, I think the folks can adapt except now I see the Monument is here now, what has it been a year-and-a-half, going on two years, and supposedly things aren't supposed to change too much for the ranchers and I'm not privy to everything that's going on between and the BLM, but the Lymans are selling out, so they're not adapting. They're saying to heck with it, we're not fighting any more, we're going.

JH: I wonder though if Ivan and Dorothy have health problems to deal with that enter into that formula.

LD: Yeah, but their son's going too. And Arthur's going. He was kind of the son that was, you know, he was the rancher and he had a part of the ranch. As I understand, they're selling out. And I hate to see that, you know that was one of the first families here and Gladys LeFevre, who was a Lyman, she'll be the only one left here that will still be ranching. Kelly Roundy and his brother down here, they're selling out to whoever will buy it. The Haws have some property but I almost think it's just a matter of time before they sell out. It's hard to make a living as a rancher. Right now I think cattle prices are down and you have to be a gambler.

JH: I think Dell said he's the only one in town who still makes his complete living from the stock industry.

LD: Yes, yeah, he is.

JH: There were thirty families here at one time I guess.

LD: (Yes), when we moved here, my goodness the Haws and the Behunins and the Lymans then Dell and Gladys came back a little later. There was Lavern Hansen.

JH: Are the Kings gone by then?

LD: Kings had just moved, yeah. And the Meisenbaughs had bought that ranch. Yeah, there were a number of folks, the Meisenbaughs bought part of that old King place and there was a Griffin here then and he was a retired Air Force Officer or something and he had bought part of that old King place, or a good part of it, and he was doing some neat things. The Behunins were doing the same thing. I think the Lymans, to a certain extent, they were... You know for years and years these guys -- your cows went up on the Mountain in the spring and the calves grew, the cows got pregnant, you brought them down in the fall and sold the calves and they sent the cows and the heifers down in the lower country for the winter and in the middle of the winter they calved and sometimes you got a 50 percent calf drop and sometimes 60 percent. But Mr. Griffin and the Meisenbaughs and the Behunins said, "Hey, this isn't good enough. We're going to watch these things, first year heifers especially and anything that we suspect's going to have a difficult time..." When it came due they were brought in and they had little heated barn and nice stalls and stuff. It was a maternity corral, maternity sheds. And they had 24-hour watch on those things. If they lost two or three calves they felt that everything wasn't right. They wanted as much success as they could. They were breeding, doing a lot of artificial insemination, they were trying to breed and I remember a kid that worked for Griffins, I went riding with him one time and he says, "That's what our cows we hope are going to look like in a few years." That was the ugliest cow I've ever seen. Old

brindle-looking cross, I don't know how many crosses she had. But she threw a small calf but she produced a lot of milk and so she didn't have as much trouble...

End of Side One Tape One

Beginning of Side Two Tape One

JH: (Beginning of tape inaudible)....new age?

LD: It seems like they did. I don't, at least I haven't heard of many people who were doing that. I think Dell kinda` keeps track of things a little closer than a lot of folks but..., and the Lymans to a certain extent I think still kinda` watch their heifers and stuff but I don't hear these guys talking about those kinds of things like they used to. I don't know if it was too much trouble for them. I know old Kelly Roundy, you know you take your cows down and you leave them as long as you can and if you get trespassed that's fine then you'll go get them or you have somebody bring them back for you or they'll come back by themselves. And it's just kind of a lackadaisical attitude. And they can't do that. I mean they've got to have every calf so they can survive.

JH: You know, that sounds like a description of an aging industry. In other words the operators get a little older and they're not as energetic and maybe their kids aren't even coming along because their kids have gone off to school and found something more promising and so the hope for the future's not there as well as the energy is not there. Anything to that?

LD: I think so. I think some of the old timers, and this is just a personal opinion, personal observation, and I can say, okay, as an older person you resist change, dramatic change. And if you've been doing something a certain way for years and years and years and it's worked, at least you think it's worked, it's not easy to change. And then, you can look at

the Lymans for example. I don't know how many kids they had, five, six, seven kids, and Arthur stayed. He's at the ranch and his kids, he's got five or six kids, well, you know the ranch doesn't support all of those people. And to be quite honest, that's tough work and these kids down here know how to work. The Lyman kids, you know at sixteen years old, they're out doing man-size jobs. They're hauling hay and changing sprinklers and plowing and doing everything else. And branding calves. I know my daughter had a couple mustangs that she got from the BLM and she was down with the Lymans, she had them taking care of them for a while, and this little Clint, he was about 14-15 at the time, he went out and she says, "Don't get behind that horse, Clint, it'll kick you." "Ha, I been kicked in the guts before." It's just Lyman toughness, you know, that's just what you do. I mean once in a while you get kicked in the guts. But it's hard and when they can see something better down the road I don't blame them for picking up and going someplace else and doing something different. It's a hard, hard life. But, yeah, it's an aging industry but I for one hate to see it, I really hate to see it die. Because these are good -- most of them -- are good hard working folks and I sympathize with them, I really do. They're having a real hard time of it now. But, maybe we have to adapt. Everybody has to adapt. This little town's changing and we who have been here longer are going to have to learn to adapt or start a militia and fight. (Laughter) It's been discussed. (More laughter)

JH: You served the community Larry, as an elected official. Tell us about that.

LD: I was on the town council, I think I served one full term for four years and then I was elected for another term and we had a mayor who was a little different and she and I had a little disagreement so she was just doing stuff on her own, you know, without the council or anything. She'd buy stuff or she'd... One time she bought a bunch of signs and put stop signs and stuff around town. I said, "Well, Vivian you shouldn't do that without discussing it with the council, I mean that's what we're here for." And I says,

“Besides that you have no police force here, you have no...” I says, “What happens if I run a stop sign?” “Well, we’ll have the Deputy in Escalante come over once in a while.” I says, “Okay, fine.” I says “Then who does the money go to when I pay the fine?” I says, “Does it go to Escalante, does it go to Garfield County?” “Well, we’ll have a Justice of the Peace here. I make a motion that we assign Madlyn Haws as the new Justice of the Peace.” I says, “Vivian, you can’t do that, that’s not the way you do stuff. I mean, there’s a process you go through to do a simple thing like getting a Justice of the Peace. There’s a process.” So we just kept getting at odds and at odds and so I resigned about mid-way through. The issues at the time weren’t near as important, it seemed, as they are now. You know, probably the big thing was are we getting good television reception in town and what do we need to do to upgrade the translator boxes up here on the hill. You know, do we have enough money to pave this section of the street or not. And now, my goodness, you know, we’ve had to create a planning commission. The mayor would call a meeting once every two-three months or so, you know, and we’d go there and discuss a few things and we had old Otto Haws, he was on the board with me, and Otto never liked to make a decision, you know. His favorite thing, “Let’s ponder on that,” he’d say. (Laughter) I mean a simple thing, like let’s buy a new box for channel 2, “Oh, let’s ponder on that,” he say. So we had to ponder for three months until he got back the next meeting, you know, and I don’t know I ever did hear him make a “yea, let’s do that.” So it was pretty easy at the time. I don’t know that I made a whole lot of contribution. We did one time the ladies in town really wanted some things to do and they talked about getting a ceramics class going. I’d taken some ceramics in school and stuff and so we worked and I think we got a little grant from someplace. Anyway, we got some money from somewhere and bought some wheels and a kiln and a bunch of stuff and they started their ceramics. And it went really well for a while, worked good. Guess that’s the only thing I really got involved in that turned out real well. And Judy and I have always tried to be part of the community. Of course the biggest share of the people here are Mormons and so we’ve tried to go to church and be part of that culture. Judy’s

been the secretary for the town for, I don't know, 26 years or so. She's been a postmistress for the last seven or eight I guess. I was the president of the water board one time, I think I missed a meeting or something and they elected me president. (Laughter).

JH: That'll learn you!

LD: Boy, I tell you, yeah, the culinary water system, well, there's the irrigation company and then the culinary system and boy, what a learning experience that was. Water's a pretty volatile issue anyplace here in the state and it was an old system, been put in years ago and we were having all kinds of trouble with it. And had these little boxes around town where with valves in that you could regulate the flow and stuff and in the springtime this end of town always went out of water. I remember it being out of water here at the park for three days. During Easter weekend, of all things. I was carrying water in five gallon buckets from the canal over here to flush the toilets, you know, in the restrooms and I remember, Dorothy Lyman lived down at the end of town, down the other end, she's the last house. And sometimes her pressure was so bad that it would just almost tip the bucket over. We'd call everybody in town, say, "Folks, if you're watering lawns or something, if you could just quit and let the head house fill up a little bit," and Dorothy's comment was, "Well, it looks like you live on the wrong end of the system, doesn't it." (Laughter)

JH: That sounds like her, you do a good rendition! (Laughter)

LD: But, it was interesting, we a few new valves and stuff that we put in, but boy it was an interesting position. And I was glad when it was over. But, yeah, I was town council and that water thing. I was in the bishopric with Truman for a little while and then his wife died so I was only in the bishopric for a couple of years. His wife died and then they changed the bishopric and I just kind of hung out for a while. Then they put me in again

about a month or so ago. Told someone it's certainly a sign of the last days (laughs). Put me in as a second counselor in the bishopric.

I think Judy and I and our family have probably been accepted as well as anybody coming from outside. In Maine they call it "being from away." And it's hard. Someone this morning says, "How long you been here?" I says, "Twenty-eight years," he says, "Well, you're a native now, aren't you?" I says no. I don't think you ever really are. And it reminds me of a story I heard. I collect folk humor and when we were in Maine there was a guy there by the name of Tim Samples who is a humorist, and he was talking about these two old Mainers, down easters. They were sitting there and they were discussing things, they're both in their nineties. One old gentleman says, "You know, we're both Maine natives." And the other guy says, "Hold on Harvey," he says, "I know and you know and you know that I know that you were six months old when you moved up here from New Hampshire. You aren't a native." And he says, "Yeah, but you know, me and mother have had six kids just up the road here," he says, "they're natives." The other old guy says, "Harvey, if I had a cat that had kittens in the oven I wouldn't call them biscuits," he says. (Laughter) So, you just aren't. A friend that I went to school with was a Forest Service archaeologist in Blanding and while he was there he did a little study on Blanding and the social structure in Blanding. And found out that if you were a 'Hole in the Rocker' and a good member of the church, you were here, socially. If you're a 'Hole in the Rocker' and not such a good member, then here. If you weren't a 'Hole in the Rocker' but a good member, then you were here. And it went on down and had some of these old cowboys that, but they were okay because they were ranchers and stuff and they were still okay. And it went on down, and then there was the Indians and then there was government employees, and they were even below the Indians. But the interesting thing is, he said if a male 'Hole in the Rocker' married a female outsiders, she became a 'Hole in the Rocker' and all the kids became 'Hole in the Rockers'. But he says if a female 'Hole in the Rocker' married an outside he never did become a Hole in

the Rocker but the kids did. It was really kind of an interesting thing, how it goes.

Periodically, and Dorothy is probably one that brings it up more than anybody, "Well, you know you're an outsider," not realizing that she is also. She came from Salt Lake. But see, she married a native so she became one. But we've been accepted pretty well, there's folks here that I just love the dickens out of. Little old ladies here in town that just... There's a little old lady, Veda Behunin, I don't know if she's shown you her quilts or not. This is the most amazing little lady. She can crank out a quilt in just a matter of days and it's just...it's so well done, the darn things are worth, I don't know, hundreds of dollars. When our son got married, here came Veda with a quilt that she had made for our son that just made you want to cry, you know, 'cause it was...you know, see her at church or on the street or something and I always get a hug, you know, and poor little Idona Haws, she's all crippled up with arthritis and osteoporosis, she's just all hunched over and not bigger than a minute now and she always, there's a little hug there and Renon Peterson, bless her heart, she's just this firmest handshake and she's always, "How ya doing, Larry."

JH: I was going to mention that about Dorothy, she's got a good shake too. She could put a cow down. (Laughter)

LD: Yeah, and she's probably done that on occasion. (Laughs) They're pretty tough folks.

JH: And you've seen some remarkable changes. I was tempted to say a maturing process, but I'm more than an outsider, I'm a government bureaucrat. Is there such a thing?

LD: As a maturing process? I don't know if these changes...a maturing process almost is like you're growing up or you're achieving this ultimate goal and I don't know if some of the changes here that are taking place, I wouldn't consider them a maturing process. I'm not

so sure that they're good changes. You know we have two people now in town who have sued the town or are in the process of suing the town to get a liquor-by-the-drink license or a beer license and the one gentleman has said, "I'm going to take Utah out of the 19th century into the 21st century." And he told one of our council members, he says, "When I get through with you people, I'm going to have everything you own and you'll leave this town wearing nothing but your underwear."

JH: Big talk.

LD: It is and you don't do that, Jay, and expect to be accepted. I've found that, hey, we talked about adaptability, you adapt and you try to fit in and you try to learn from these folks and his comment is, my daughter Stacy worked for him, and we were always just a stupid bunch of Mormons. Well, it doesn't matter what religion you belong to, if I went down south and lived with the Southern Baptists, I would try to adapt -- I don't have to be a Southern Baptist -- but I wouldn't sit there and bad mouth them all day long. And I wouldn't go to Wisconsin and criticize the Lutherans. You try to fit in with folks. This other guy, with his freedom beer and freedom from religion signs and stuff, is the same way, he's suing the town, and he's suing me. And you don't do those kinds of things and try to be accepted. He told someone clear back in '90 he was going to get rid of me, he has an agenda and I was kinda` messing it up and so he's going to get rid of Larry Davis. Jay, he's written to the governor, he's written to Dee Hansen, he's written to our director and everything else, you know, and "Larry Davis isn't the proper person for Anasazi State Park," you know, "he does this and he assaulted and battered me," and it's all a bunch of hooley. But you have to put up with it -- that crap.

JH: And even answer the questions to your superior officer.

LD: Yeah, and they're satisfied that nothing did, but he keeps it up and I just got a summons

the other day, I assaulted and battered him again somewhere, I don't know where it was but... So you have to hire a lawyer and then I says, "How can he do this?" He says, "Larry, the unfortunate thing is that anybody can sue anybody for anything they want, any time they want." He says, "You have to answer." But you know, these kinds of things I don't think are part of a maturing process. I think they're unnecessary.. And they're certainly disrupting more than being part of a growing process. I think they are really disrupting things and folks now are looking at all these changes that are happening, and they're happening pretty rapidly. You know, in the last two years there's been more property bought here and cut up into pieces and the planning commission's trying to stay right in front of these folks to keep them from cutting stuff up into half-acre parcels and selling it. But I don't know, it's hard, and the little town's going to change. And in ten years I don't think we're going to even recognize it from what it is now.

JH: It's hard to think of it. It's hard to accept.

LD: It is, it really is. When we built across the street we thought of either building down here or across the street and finally built over there and Judy says, "We're going to be so far away from everything." If you can be far away from anything here in town, but I can wake up at three or four in the morning and there's cars going by. When we first moved here I could lay in bed and I could tell you whose car it was going by at a given time of day, I could recognize Max Behunin's truck and I could recognize Lyman's truck and Burns Ormund. I knew all the dogs, literally, and you say, "Well, there goes old so-and-so, going up to the ranch." Or, "Here comes Heber down the road from working at the power plant." But you just forget it any more, there's a couple of kids with their souped up cars I can recognize them as they go by, but other than that, I don't know.

JH: I was fascinated yesterday when I came over with how much business you were conducting. Is that a common summer business day?

LD: Yes. It's interesting, when we first opened here, as I mentioned before, and our visitation was down between 8-9,000, 10,000 a year, the road over the mountain wasn't paved 'til '85 so our season was fairly short, they never attempted to keep the mountain road open in the winter time so after the first snow, that was closed and they didn't open it again until right around Memorial Day, end of May. Now we're getting 56,000 people and years ago Anasazi State Park was right on the bottom of any statistics that the Division had, visitations, revenue collected, we were always down here. And now there's only one Heritage Park that collects more revenue than we do and that's over in Vernal and they have right around 300,000 people a year. We collect more revenue than any park in our region, that includes Quail Creek and Snow Canyon and by far all of the Heritage Parks. And visitation-wise, we do okay for a Heritage Park, but we collect quite a bit of revenue and it's not too unusual for us to have a \$1,200 day. I've pushed for a lot of things and I don't want to carry just ticky-tacky things, I don't want turkey feather headdresses and little rubber tomahawks and stuff. I like to carry a little bit of high end stuff, but at the same time some books and things that folks can enjoy" and I told them, "why can't we have stuff on credit cards? Most of the people now want to use credit cards." "Well, the State can't do that." I says, "Yeah, they can." "The State of Utah cannot use credit cards." I says, "Liquor Control Commission uses credit cards at their liquor stores," I says, 'why can't we?" They says, "Well, I don't know, we'll look into it," they said. So a month or so later, "We're having a meeting Larry, we're going to try out six credit card machines in the division, you've been chosen to be one of them, and if it doesn't work it's your fault 'cause you're the one that pushed it." Well, now we're doing credit card machines 'cause it works. And man, the lion's share of our business sometimes is credit cards and because of that the people are buying more stuff and they're buying bigger things and we're busy. Yeah, there was a time when one person could have probably handled this by himself, during a given day, but you can't anymore. And invariably- well, the day before yesterday, the water valve broke and so I had to go out and take care of that and then this little kid informed me yesterday that the vacuum

cleaner's down and so there's always something where you have to fix something. The other day they called me up -- it was my day off -- "one of the breaker boxes back here is smoking." (Laughs) Shut it off! (Laughs) And so we have to...and to get someone here to fix anything is amazing. An electrician or a plumber, something, if it's a major thing, it's just really...

End of Side Two, Tape One

Beginning of Side One, Tape Two

SM: You said you were interested in Indian artifacts all of your life, since you were a young boy and I was just wondering if you remember any stories or where your interest began and what you did to satiate that.

LD: You know, I don't know where it began, I can't pick out a time when all at once I was interested in this. I remember in grade school some kids came in one day and over the weekend they had been south of town -- I lived in Hiawatha, that's a little town actually been east of town -- but there was some little mesas and they'd been down and they'd found some portions of some tools, I think one of them had even found an arrowhead. Oh man! And I did some trading or something and got something from these kids and I had this piece of flint, I thought there's a piece of flint, and I'd get something and I'd hit them together and I'd get this little spark and I thought this was so neat. Here was something that these Indians had made and as a boy scout, I was in what they call the Order of the Arrow and you'd deal with Indian ceremonies and different stuff and so we were making dance costumes and had your buckskins and your necklaces and stuff that I still have. And I can't, Suzi, pick out a time when just all at once I was just interested. I just for some reason always have been interested and not necessarily just with artifacts but things Indian. Contemporary or pre-historic, it didn't seem to matter. And to be quite honest, you know, when I was young we'd go out and we got a little older, in my teens, we'd go out and look for arrowheads, which is I realize now was kind of a no-no,

you don't disturb a site, it's important to leave it intact but I didn't find a lot of stuff. I know when I found my first arrowhead I was deer hunting one time and I was just walking along and I probably never did have a lot of luck hunting deer but I always found more stuff than everybody else 'cause my head was always down instead of looking where I should have been if I was a deer hunter. I was down in the dirt and saw just something white there on the ground and I just kicked it and I kicked up this beautiful arrowhead. And it's just a beautiful thing, about so long and just perfect.

SM: So you were talking about traditions and customs that people were trying to preserve in the community. Would you say that finding or looking for Indian artifacts was ever once a tradition or a custom in this area, since you've known it?

LD: To some people. Here in town not so much. This site wasn't vandalized much at all. And I think one of the reasons is that, in talking to some of the old timers, they said that getting a load of sand for a sandbox at school or cutting a road down through here, they uncovered some burials and they said, "Hey, this is an Indian burial ground, we'd better leave it alone." And they did. Now, if this was in another part of the country that would have just been an open license to come up here and just dig the tar out this place. They thought so little of it that the son of Mr. Coombs, who owned the back part of the property, wanted to come here on the mound and bulldoze, make a irrigation pond here on this hill. I'm glad he didn't, but there's other people, and we've had problems. We had some people steal some metates, some locals from Escalante, out here on the site. There's a number of people in Escalante that this has been something that they've done. And the interesting thing is, just like over in San Juan County and some of those places, it's a "right." "How can you tell us that we can't do this, this is a right that I have to do it." We can talk about the Shumways, we can talk about any of these other folks that have just...they do it because of that "right" that they have and I'm not so sure it's just not an addiction. And I can see how it could be.

SM: Well, it might be something economic, right? They sell it on the black market.

LD: To them it is and people don't realize that there's a real black market in pre-Columbian art now. Texas, California, Japan, Germany, New York, all those places, there's a pretty active black market in this stuff and here in the four corners region, unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, the preservation is really good because of the dry climate. So we have different kinds of artifacts that are preserving: we have basketry and blankets, turkey feather blankets and the rabbit-skin blankets and all kinds of stuff. Organic stuff preserves here that doesn't someplace else and then a lot of ceramics, a lot of nice pieces so people are doing it for economic reasons. I've often made the statement, "You know what we ought to do is sick the IRS after these guys. We can't catch them getting it but the IRS ought to check to see where their income coming from, you know, and have them justify that."

SM: Do you think that one of the reasons they didn't touch the mounds down there, do you think it was out of respect or out of just disinterest or what do you think the reason was...

LD: Probably a little bit of both. I think there was a respect there. They said, "Hey, it's an Indian burial ground, we hadn't better do this." And then I think there was a disinterest really, here. When the museum was made and we dedicated it, some folks came out for the dedication, we had a pretty good crowd, but there were old-timers here in town and I know there's still some that the only time they come here is if they need something notarized and I have to notarize a paper for them. But they could care less. I remember old Max Behunin telling me, he says, "Doesn't matter to me one way or another if you're here," says, "the museum here, if it isn't here, that's fine too. Doesn't matter at all." It's just kind of a "I don't really care attitude." And I think some of the folks here were that way, it didn't matter to them whether it was here or not. But I think there was a certain amount of respect. I really do. And it's been an interesting study. People are interesting, it doesn't matter if it's prehistoric people or modern day people, we're pretty interesting

folks, we do some interesting things.

I've created a lot of friends over the years in the profession and Native American friends. Have friends at Santo Domingo who've invited us to feast days last year. You know, we get jewelry from them and the Abeyta family. And so we went down and Richard Abeyta, the father, he says, "You folks come," says, "You just stay here in our house." He says, "This will be for the day. You'll come, you get tired, go in this room and nap." And he says, "Just kind of use this as your headquarters. Don't knock, nothing, just come in." Well, feast days is a time when anybody that comes to the home in the village and knocks on the door, you're invited in and your fed. Every time we went back to the house, "Better sit down and have something to eat," they'd say. We had the most wonderful stuff! We had these big loaves of bread that they cooked in these hornos, these outside ovens, and posole stew and we had blue corn meal mush with green chilies and we had red chilies and we had turkey and we had salads and we had...it just went on and on and on, you know. We went there the night before to make sure we could find the place and, "Better have supper." So we sat down and had supper. "Better come early in the morning and have breakfast." We had breakfast and we had lunch and we had dinner and we left a camera and had to go back the next day and, "Better sit down, have some more breakfast." (Laughter) And then this year we weren't able to make it -- it was yesterday -- and we couldn't make it and called them up and told them we wouldn't and they felt really bad. "Maybe you can come down for Christmas," they said, "we have celebration, Christmas time."

Alph Sekakuku, a Hopi that I know, called yesterday and he's coming up in a couple weeks and wants to visit and wants to bring some stuff up. Over the years we've just developed some friendships and the thing I find is that we're all just folks, and we're all people and I talk to different groups and one of the things that I do when I start a program is I say, "I want all of you to think in your mind and answer in one word, what's the first thing you think of when I say the word 'Indian?'" I let them think a minute and it's

interesting, and I get some things like "tomahawk, drums" what have you, but I get words like "ignorant, primitive, stupid, drunk, fat, lazy." And I say, "Okay, for every ignorant, stupid, primitive, drunk, fat, lazy Indian you show me I'm going to show you some ignorant, primitive, stupid, drunk, fat white guy." I said, "That's just the way it goes." I says, "These folks don't have a corner on this stuff," and I say, "it really irritates me that we think this way anyway." And I had a lady one time at a workshop -- had her for a whole week, for Pete sakes -- one of these museum workshops, and we were doing primitive technology. We did flint knapping and fire building, cordage making and all kinds of stuff the whole week. And I'd just pushed this on them. These people had to be intelligent to adapt to this environment and exist the way they did and have their population increase, for pete sakes. And this is a pretty inhospitable environment. The lady came up to me and she says, "Well, if there's one thing I've learned during the week, Larry, is that Indians are not as smart as white people." I thought "where did I go wrong?" (Laughter) "What did I do wrong?" And I says, "Why do you say that?" She says, "Because I teach them," and she was a teacher at the old Brigham City Indian School, remember they had there. And I thought, "Therein lies the problem, you know. She never will let those kids be smart. She said, "They don't do as well on the SAT tests, they don't do as well on these tests that we give." I says, "Why don't you give, if you're teaching some Anglos, why don't you give them a test on the Navajo Ant Way? Why don't you give the Anglos a test on... have them write an essay on the importance of maize or corn among the Hopi. What's the significance of feast day at Santo Domingo?" and see how well the white kids do. I mean these tests are kind of a cultural, they're very culturally oriented and I think they're really unfair for a lot of folks. But it's been fun and I've had a good time. You like to think somewhere you make a difference, maybe you touch somebody somewhere and maybe you never will know. It doesn't matter, you just think maybe you did and that's okay.

SM: I've got one last question about the Indians here and I'm just wondering if there's much interaction between the old cowboys in the area and people like your friends, the Hopi

friend you have or the people from New Mexico that trade jewelry here or bring jewelry here.

LD: Doesn't seem to be a lot of interaction. These old cowboys are pretty independent bunch of folks. They have their little clique or their little culture and so there's not a lot of interaction. Talking to the old-timers, the Navajo used to come up from time to time, they'd cross the river and come up into Escalante into a little bit here into Boulder and trade -- they'd trade blankets mostly for horses and some other supplies and stuff -- but that's about the only interaction. And, you know, the old-timers, to be quite honest, Indians were looked at as if they were a lower class people, which is real unfortunate thing.

JH: The word "nuisance" comes to mind, is that a...

LD: (Yes) and they were dirty and they stunk and stuff like that. Good grief! You know, look at ourselves, we're talking, they were telling stories in church a couple of weeks ago, some of the old timers. The bishop said, "Because it's close to the 24th they wanted people to come and just talk about what it was like living there in town. And they talked about bathing on Saturday.

JH: Whether they needed it or not.

LD: Yeah. I can remember when I grew up, Saturday was bath day and you bathed on Saturday. I remember going to my grandmother's, if we were there, bathing in a miserable old number two tub, you know, in the kitchen and she'd put a little curtain across a corner and she got some granulated soap from a Union Tea man, he used to deliver in a little van, he had extracts and that miserable soap that I'm sure was nothing more than just pulverized sandstone 'cause there was no lather and it never did dissolve, you know. (Laughter) And she's scrub us.

JH: Scrub off your skin.

LD: Yeah, and then if the water cooled off she'd grab the tea kettle off the stove and pour it in and you were scrambling to get out of the road of this scalding water, you know. And you liked to be first because if you weren't then, they didn't change the water. Well, I'm sure we stunk. The thoughts of taking a bath once a week now is just -- you know you get up in the morning and you shower, I mean, that's what you do. But I don't think the Anglos have the corner on cleanliness. Fact is, some Indian people were extremely clean, others weren't.

JH: Specially the travelers, I would imagine, had a hard time.

LD: Sure. And I've been... You know I was down in Yucatan some years ago, we were doing some archaeology and we stayed in a little Mayan village and some of those folks were just really nice, you know, just really clean and nice and others weren't. And we have the same thing in our cultural. I have some Europeans that come to the museum here. The worst person I ever had was a guy from France and I honestly had, from time to time, had to turn my head and take a breath and then go back to talking to him. That guy was just rank! He smelled, oh I don't know, like an old rotten onion or something. The body odor and his breath. My golly! You know, spend two bucks and go through a car wash or steam clean or something. (Laughter) But I think most of them were thought of as kind of a nuisance, someone that I remember growing up in the little town of Wellington, they raised a lot of sugar beets and they had those poor Indians come up and hoe beets, ten cents a row. Miserable, long rows and they'd stay bent over all day long, hoeing beets for ten cents. Ten cents a row. Make two or three bucks a day. One lady had twins, just took time off and had twins and the next day she was back, hoeing beets. They had no housing, they had to stay in an old granary. It was just kind of...it's really sad. But if this is telling me anything, and consequently then I can handle these artifacts out here and I can look at things and it just, they almost...the people come alive. Maybe

that sounds crazy, but I've made the comments a number of times, "I sure hope there's something to this hereafter business. I don't want a heaven with piped-in organ music and people dressed in white and dry ice clouds and stuff, that's not heaven, that's someplace else. I want to hunker down in the dirt and build a fire and talk to these folks and say, you know, "We thought all of this stuff. Did you really do this? And how come you did this?" And I'm sure I'll get some... "You know, man, you missed that by a hundred miles. Yeah, you were pretty close on this one," but you know they do come alive, and as you gain respect for these folks and what they did and the kind of people they were, then you do the same thing with present day people. And growing up in Carbon County, there's a real ethnic mix there and boy, interestingly enough, it was, at the time, one of the few counties in the state that where if you were Mormon you were in the minority. And so, this guy was a black Mexican, and boy I fought those guys on a weekly basis and that's why I've got this kind of crooked nose and these kind of heavy brows, but... And I just flat out didn't like those guys. I didn't like Mexicans. And I tolerated Greeks and Italians and they were black Mexicans and I was a white trash Mormon. I remember there was an old scout master from Dragerton, he wasn't even my scout master, name was Ned Arambula, he was an old Mexican guy, he was the most wonderful wood carver and story teller. I just fell in love with that old guy and hung around him all I could. And he'll just never know what he did, how he influenced me with stuff. I remember I was at police academy and called home for some reason and Judy says, "I have some bad news for you, Larry." She says, "Ned Arambula just died." He was a big strong, wonderful old Mexican guy. Died. And I went back to my room and cried. And so, you know, it's taught me a lot. People are people and there's good folks and there's bad folks, you know, but it doesn't matter what skin color they are, there's good ones and bad ones in every -- mostly good folks.

JH: Thank you.

LD: Rambled enough.

End of Tape Two, Side One.

End of interview

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