

Hall, LeFair
Boulder/S.G

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, Suzi Montgomery, Marsha Holland and other volunteers. 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: LeFair Hall
INTERVIEWER: Marsha Holland
INTERVIEW NUMBER:
DATE OF INTERVIEW: December 6, 2003
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Mr. Hall's home in Boulder
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: Personal History and Trapping in the lower
country and Boulder area.
TRANSCRIBER: John Holland
DATE: December 16, 2003

Tape one, Side A

MH: It is December 6, 2003 and I'm in Boulder, Utah with LeFair Hall. How are you
doing today LeFair?

LH: Fine, thank you.

MH: Is LeFair your whole name? LeFair Morias Hall?

LH: Morias was my uncle's name.

MH: Was your uncle from around here?

LH: Yes, all the Hall's homesteaded in Salt Gulch and Escalante.

MH: When were you born?

LH: April the eighth, nineteen twenty-six.

MH: So you were brought up right in the middle of The Depression.

LH: I guess, I don't remember it. (Laughs)

MH: You were too young to understand.

LH: Like that song, "We were so poor we didn't realize there was a depression".

MH: Is there a song about that?

LH: Yeah, you haven't heard that? I don't know who sings it.

MH: You grew up in Salt Gulch on the Hall Ranch. When you lived there were you
second or third generation?

LH: I would be third generation.

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MH: And was the ranch the same when you were living there as when your grandparents settled there? Had it changed?

LH: The ranch that I was born on wasn't the ranch that my grandfather homesteaded. That was the ranch in Salt Gulch. It was always the same to me, but probably not to my dad.

MH: And your dad got his own property and started his own ranching operation?

LH: Yes, he bought the property from, I guess his Uncle, Uncle Rob. William Peterson owned it before that.

MH: As far as your grandparents go, what were their names?

LH: It was Joseph Tryon and Marilla Plum Hall.

MH: Do you remember them, were they around when you were young?

LH: I don't remember too much about them. All I can remember is their funeral.

MH: Oh really, that's too bad.

LH: We had their funeral and everybody was crying and so I went outside and cried too. I didn't know why, I was just a kid.

MH: Did they die at the same time or very close?

LH: Quite close I guess.

MH: And then what happened to the ranch after that?

LH: One of their sons, the one I was named after, Morias got it.

MH: Morias took over.

LH: His brother Merlin got killed and so it ended up Morias stayed on the ranch until he sold it to Neal Jepson, I guess.

MH: So you grew up on your dad's ranch. And what was his name?

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LH: Horace. Horace Rila.

MH: And your mom was...?

LH: Maude. Christiana Maude Riding Hall.

MH: Was Maude from here?

LH: Maude was from Panguitch actually, Tropic and Panguitch.

MH: Did your parents ever talk about how they met?

LH: Yes, there was quite a story about it. Dad was shearing sheep, he was quite a sheep shearer and he sheared sheep up at Widstoe. My mother, Maude, and some other women, I think it was her sister Ella, cooked for the shepherders. So I guess the story went that when Dad saw her he said, "She's going to be my wife", and indeed she was.

MH: So she was a young woman then.

LH: Oh yeah, she would have been.

MH: Do you remember where that camp was?

LH: No I don't. I never did go to it or know anything about it.

MH: That used to be quite a thoroughfare from Escalante but from Boulder most people would go north if they had to go to a bigger town.

LH: Well then, that was the only road. There wasn't a road from Escalante down through The Blues, it was over the Escalante Mountain. It was a son of a gun in the winter, I know that. Widstoe was still a little town then.

MH: I have heard people used to come out of Bryce Valley and travel that way to get to Escalante.

LH: That was the only way there was.

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MH: Do you remember traveling from Salt Gulch over to Escalante, did you do that sometimes when you were a kid?

LH: Yes, all the time.

MH: On horseback?

LH: Horseback, yes.

MH: How long would it take?

LH: You could do it in four hours probably.

MH: Did you have any adventures along that route?

LH: (Laughs)

MH: Did your mom ever say, "Now be careful when you get to...?"

LH: Oh yes.

MH: Were there dangerous part on the route?

LH: Not really, not on a horse. On a wagon it was more challenging.

MH: Sometimes when I'm traveling over this way I'll look at that road, there are parts of the old road you can still see and it looks 'hairy' and scary.

LH: You can still see quite a bit of it.

MH: What was it like growing up on the Hall Ranch?

LH: I mean that was it, so we just grew up.

MH: Were you one of the younger kids?

LH: Oh yeah, I had a baby sister, Marie, after me but she died so I was the baby of the family.

MH: Do you remember having a lot of chores?

LH: Oh yeah, you bet.

MH: Like what? What was your normal day like when you were ten?

LH: When I was ten, in the winter we went to school. We used to come over here and stay in this old house. It wasn't like this, it was just one building. We would stay all winter and go to school. In later years we had a school bus. My dad ran the school bus from Salt Gulch to Boulder.

MH: He would start the run out there and pick up kids?

LH: In the early years, like first, second, third grade we would come over here and stay in this little house. The school was just right down here.

MH: Was that a fun time? Did you look forward to it?

LH: You mean going to school?

MH: Yeah.

LH: No, I never did like to go to school. (Laughs)

MH: That sounds pretty normal. But during the summer time what would you do?

LH: Well, help on the ranch. We milked a bunch of cows. We didn't have a lot of fences so we had to go out and herd those cattle all day. You know, bring them in at night and milk them and then take them out the next morning. That was a boring job.

MH: Well, what would you do when you're out all day herding them? You would have to go out with the herd, so how did you spend your day?

LH: Just killing time mostly. You have a little circle with numbers up to twelve, you know. When the sun hit that then we could bring them in at noon.

MH: Really, you had a clock that you made?

LH: No, one that we made on the ground, you know, it wasn't very accurate.

MH: But close enough. Would you make slingshots and...?

LH: Yes, flippers.

MH: Someone was telling me that was how they'd keep their cows in line.

LH: When the fruit would get ripe and all the birds would come in, that was when we would use our flippers, trying to keep the birds out of the fruit.

MH: Was there a brother or sister who was close to your age that you spent a lot of time with?

LH: Dixie's the closest one.

MH: She's a bit of a tomboy, huh? (Laughs)

LH: Yeah, you talk about trapping; we used to trap together.

MH: Did she?

LH: Yeah, we did.

MH: Did you start doing that when you were young?

LH: Oh yeah. We would get five cents a piece for gophers and chipmunks and rabbits, things like that you know. We kept it all in a notebook and when it came time to pay up, why the notebook came up missing.

MH: Really?

LH: Yeah, it was quite strange.

MH: Who was going to pay you?

LH: Mother or Dad, yes. I think they paid us, I don't remember how much.

MH: A little bit.

LH: We caught one badger; I remember that very well when we were kids. We had to get help to kill it and get it out of the trap.

MH: Because they're alive in the trap, right?

LH: Yeah, mostly.

MH: And the badger is mean, eh?

LH: Oh yeah. I remember he dug the whole earth up around him.

MH: Dixie told me a story about when you climbed all the trees in your yard, do you remember that?

LH: Well, we used to hunt bird nests. I don't remember climbing all the trees. Who said that?

MH: Dixie.

LH: She said we climbed all the trees?

MH: Yes.

LH: No, there was probably about forty or fifty trees around that ranch.

MH: She knew exactly how many. (Laughs)

LH: Did she say exactly how many? (Laughs)

MH: She did. I was trying to remember what she said. I thought she said there was like one hundred fourteen and she said, "At one time LeFair and I had climbed them all", or something. Right?

LH: I wouldn't want to dispute her. (Laughs) If she said we climbed them all, why we did.

MH: So you grew up on the ranch, and did you finish high school?

LH: No, two years of high school was as far as I went.

MH: Where was that, in Escalante?

LH: No, it was here in Boulder. They had a high school then.

MH: So after two years, you're about fifteen, what did you do then?

LH: Well, I went over to Salt Gulch and lived with my sister Lenore and her husband Mac. And that's when I really started trapping.

MH: Would you trap up toward the Boulder Mountain?

LH: All around.

MH: There must have been money in it or some kind of reward for the pelts, right?

LH: You've always been able to sell the fur, that's been forever. Back then it wasn't much.

MH: Who were the buyers?

LH: Back then we'd ship them to a fur company in Kansas City, we'd ship them that far through the mail.

MH: And they would use them for coats and...?

LH: They would just go through them, grade them and send a check.

MH: What was the most valuable pelt?

LH: Oh I don't know, I guess coyote. Bobcats were, then gray fox. We didn't have any red fox here until later in my life.

MH: Tell me about how trapping works.

LH: Well you just set the trap. Back then we would use something for bait; a rabbit or something.

MH: And you would put that inside the trap?

LH: Hang it in a tree or something and then set the trap.

MH: And so the animal would go to the tree?

LH: And try to eat the rabbit and get caught. Those were the days, but now trapping has changed so much, there are so many rules and regulations that it's a lot different. You can't use bait anymore; you have to use a scent.

MH: And the scent is like oil or something?

LH: It's something like raw fish; it smells.

MH: How did you develop an interest in trapping?

LH: I don't know, I just did. It was really interesting.

MH: Well, you have to be adept and aware of where the animals are and what's around.

LH: Trails and that sort of thing.

MH: Are you a good tracker?

LH: Oh, yeah. When I was riding a horse or anything I always had my head down looking for tracks or arrowheads.

MH: Tell me how it was when you were doing a lot of trapping, when it was more of a job and not just a pastime.

LH: Well, when I was a kid we always had a trap line but it was always on a horse, you know. Then later I started doing this with an automobile.

MH: So tell me, you had traps on your horse and then you would move along a certain distance, in certain areas and there's a different season for each thing you trap, right?

LH: Well, you can only trap in the winter for the fur. The fur's no good in the summer.

MH: See I didn't know that, but it makes perfect sense because the fur is thicker.

LH: Right, they fur up and then they shed their coat in the fall and then they have to grow another one before you can sell them. Anytime from say October, you can

start trapping. Coyotes and bobcats have to be later because they don't fur up as quick usually.

MH: And you go through the winter until March?

LH: Well, yeah, coyotes will start to shed when they start to breed in January and so they're not much good after that. Bobcats are good clear through March and gray fox is ok, not coyotes.

MH: That's when I see more bobcats, in the winter when I'm out in the hills.

LH: When, at night?

MH: No, during the day. Days like this when it's overcast, usually early morning.

LH: What area?

MH: Just outside of Tropic, near the "T" Hill. So up on that hill I've seen a couple.

LH: I've seen them a few times but not too often in the day.

MH: Last year I saw two within a few weeks of each other. I had a hound dog and he treed one one day. I go out running and hiking and I always take my dogs with me. So he treed one.

LH: So what did you do?

MH: I turned tail and got out of there.

LH: Did you? (Laughing)

MH: Eventually the dog came back, he got tired and they went different directions. He's just a young hound.

LH: They're vicious in a trap you know. You don't want to get too close.

MH: So you set your traps, how far apart say for coyote? How do you decide how far apart you're going to set your traps?

LH: Just by tracks and what they're doing.

MH: Like going to a water source?

LH: Well, usually along a trail, I trap there. Then when I started using an automobile I trapped in the Circle Cliff area a lot of years and it was pretty good. I even went to Arizona for several years trapping, Phoenix, down in that area.

MH: Was it the same animals you would trap down there, coyote and bobcat?

LH: Yeah, only there are more of them and they seem to be easier to trap. But now they've got it to where you can't trap in Arizona, only on private land. You have to get permission, you can't trap on public land for the past few years.

MH: Why do you think that changed?

LH: Environmentalists, I guess. Animal lovers, they have a lot of influence and they try everywhere to stop traffic, or killing animals in any way. That's why I say it's changed so much.

MH: Before, when you were younger and people were settling the land, when there was a certain wildness to the land, trapping was maybe a part of the taming of the land, do you think?

LH: Well, it was part of it and what little income you could get from it. It was just a way of life, sure.

MH: And then you would go out check your trap lines every so often, is that how it works?

LH: Yes, every few days you better, to keep something from getting away or you get an animal you didn't target for like a dog or something. You want to set them loose.

MH: Actually, my hound dog was trapped in someone's trap line just outside of Tropic but we got to him and he wasn't injured, he just got a squished paw. If you get to them pretty quick it doesn't hurt them too much?

LH: Not usually, it depends on the dog or whatever. Some of them won't fight a trap, some of them will. The more they fight it the more they're going to hurt.

MH: And you check your traps and say you've got a coyote. You can use the coyote for the fur and now they have a bounty on them don't they?

LH: They do now. Yeah, it's twenty dollars now. The county sponsored it and then the state donates half. It was pretty good but I think the coyotes are diminishing, there aren't as many. This has been a bad year for me, I haven't caught that many of them.

MH: Somebody told me over in Beaver there was a coyote-calling contest and I think they got a lot.

LH: Did they?

MH: Yeah, I heard the number was a lot higher than they expected but I can't remember how many. And they did it in Henrieville too.

LH: I saw that in the *Garfield County News* that they were going to have it. You think they got a bunch of them?

MH: I don't know. I didn't talk to those guys afterwards.
So coyote is one thing...

LH: And bobcats and gray fox. That's the three main animals in this area.

MH: And the area you're talking about is this side of the Boulder Mountain or would you go up on the mountain too?

LH: I'd go up on the mountain now until it snows.

MH: Sometimes when it snows it's easier though isn't it?

LH: Last year I caught about fifty gray fox and this year I got about fifteen so you can tell it's a different season. It's still early yet.

MH: You still have a market for the fox, is it still Kansas City?

LH: Oh, not now. I belong to the Utah Trappers Association and they have a fur sale at Nephi in February. Buyers come from all over.

MH: So it's kind of a popular thing in Utah then?

LH: Yeah, it was in every state.

MH: How many people are members of the Utah Trappers Association?

LH: I don't know, quite a few. There was a lot of fur last year. You couldn't believe it. Trapping is a big thing. People think of trapping as something from the old days but there's more trappers now, well there's more people now.

MH: I wonder what the pressure is; I guess there are more people, more urbanization and I wonder if the animals become more of a problem.

LH: Well, yeah. I don't know why animals, some years there's more than other years. Just like rabbits, they hardly have any rabbits now. Some years they're so thick. I don't know why that is.

MH: You've been through many, many seasons so you've seen the ups and downs. You haven't picked up on any patterns, through drought or through wet seasons?

LH: I just don't know. It's like this year there's not hardly anything around here. You go out and check fifty traps and maybe have one fox.

MH: Is it the same trap that you use for all the animals?

LH: I do, yes.

MH: Do you still go on horseback anymore?

LH: Not much, I did a little bit but it's too slow, it's fast paced now days. There's lots of competition in trapping and there's lots of bad guys. Thieves, they steal your traps, they steal your animals. I've probably lost six traps this year. People just come and pick them up.

MH: Your name is on the traps isn't it?

LH: Yeah, they have to be; it's the law. I don't know what they do with the trap. I don't know whether it's people who are trapping or people that don't like trapping, environmentalists, they pick them up and throw them away, I don't know. It's discouraging.

MH: In the Grand Staircase area now, has the trapping changed, the rules and regulations?

LH: No, you can still trap the same in the Grand Staircase.

MH: It didn't change when they made it a national monument?

LH: I don't know how long it will last.

MH: Have you heard anything?

LH: I haven't, just speculation you know. Like everything else, they'll stop it like the cattle, it's supposed to be the same.

MH: Part of the reason is that we've had a fairly severe drought in combination with the monument coming in, it was really not good because the ranchers had a harder time pleading their case.

LH: Yeah, I don't know.

MH: There's not a lot of grass out there.

LH: Well, water is the bad thing too. The ponds, there's only a couple that have water in them.

MH: Maybe that effects the animals that you are after too.

LH: Yes.

MH: We were out hiking near Spencer Flat a couple of weeks ago. There's not a lot of water there, not really until you get to Harris Wash, no reservoirs or ponds.

So, in the Grand Staircase where are you able to go, are there limits, or areas where you can trap?

LH: No it's not regulated that way; it's all open still. Well, until you get to the Park down there.

MH: Which park do you mean?

LH: The National Park, Capitol Reef and Canyonlands.

MH: I was thinking of Bryce. But people trap up there too.

LH: In Bryce?

MH: No, but near the boundary.

LH: I know a government worker that traps towards Widstoe and up in there and also in the desert on the road through...

MH: Is that Amand Barker?

LH: Amand Barker and he has a son trapping with him now. Les Barker is his son, that works in the County Courthouse,

MH: I know Les. And so trapping is something you still enjoy doing?

LH: Yes, it gets me out and it's something to do. But like I say when you encounter the thieves and all that sort of thing it takes away from it. But mountain lions, I caught one here a couple of weeks ago on the Burr Trail road and tried to call the game warden to get him to come help me release it. But they weren't around. So I got Larry Davis up here. Put a choker on it and turned it loose, you know.

MH: Because you have to get in and get the trap off right?

LH: It was in a good spot for that. It was around a big tree and the trap was on the hind foot so they got their head out and choked him down a little bit and I got the trap off. And then we turned him loose and he wouldn't leave.

MH: Was this a young, two year old cat that people were talking about, somebody was telling me about that?

LH: This was a grown female; I would think it was. I'll tell you why I think that because it was, I've caught quite a few lions and the females will hardly fight at all but the big toms will just tear up everything. So, I think it was a female and there was smaller tracks around and I think she had her cubs with her. But they'll eat coyote, fox, anything out of a trap. It's easy pickings for them.

MH: Someone else told me there are some cats around now, cougar.

LH: Yeah, they've come right in town. In fact a year ago, last winter there was a little bit of snow. Of course they pulled the carcasses out of my shed up here where I skin them. And one of those lions come in and got one of those carcasses and drug it right down through and jumped over a high-board fence with it. It ate part of it and buried the rest, right here.

MH: After you get the animal and it's killed, you use a twenty-two or something, what would you use, a mallet?

LH: Yeah, a mallet or ball bat or something.

MH: So, then you bring them back as a whole animal?

LH: Uh huh.

MH: And then do you wait a certain amount of time or do you just try to skin them right away?

LH: Well, the way I do it now, I run a trap line and it takes me most of the day. So when I come back at night I've got a good place up here to skin them.

MH: How long does it take for the skins to cure?

LH: It depends on the weather, you know. The way it's been lately only about a week. Just put them on a board frame.

MH: So they get put on a board, like nailed up?

LH: No just a board, a stretcher we call it. Two boards together that come up to a "V" and then you can stretch it out.

MH: And that's so it doesn't shrink up and roll up. You get a better price for one that's flat?

LH: That's the only way you can do like the coyotes, fox, and bobcats. A badger, you open it up, or a beaver you know, you stretch them round. I've trapped quite a few beaver too.

MH: Are there many beaver around?

LH: Not anymore. There used to be a lot of beaver around here.

MH: When was that? Because I've heard that there were beaver around here.

LH: Oh, back in the sixties, there were a lot of beaver. You had to get tags for them, you know.

MH: I know on Calf Creek there's an occasional beaver and beaver dam.

LH: Yeah, I've caught a few beaver out of there.

MH: Where else would they be?

LH: On the mountain, on the streams up there. That's one thing people accuse me of is trapping too many beavers but beaver will build a pond and then they'll get all the timber that's close and when they can't get any more aspen or whatever to eat then they'll move somewhere else.

MH: And it actually destroys trees, because they ring them, drop the tree.

LH: Yeah, they'll fall those big old quakie trees, chew them right down.

MH: It's not anyplace they stay, build a house and hang out. They move on.

LH: Yeah, they have a house and they have to go down [in the water] and then come back up and build a house.

MH: I've seen a couple of lodges down on Calf Creek, but I don't know if there's beaver still living there.

LH: I don't know if there's any living there now or not. When I trapped them they were right by the road and the state road figured they were going to undermine the road, you know.

MH: Do you mean by digging?

LH: Oh yeah. They dig; they tunnel back in the bank if they don't have a house to live in. It's interesting because they can cut the willows, whatever you know and make it sink to the bottom of their pond. How they do that, nobody really knows. And in

the winter they'll come out of their house and they also have a tunnel out to where they call it a feed area. They'll eat that bark off of the willows and then go back in.

MH: So it's like a tunnel.

LH: Yeah, a tunnel, kind of muddy on the bottom and if ice freezes real thick why they can still use that tunnel and find their food under the ice.

MH: And you said the willows sink?

LH: Yeah, they have a whole pile of willows and small quakies that they store their food in. In the fall and they'll make that sink in the pond and I don't know how they do it. If I threw a willow in the pond it would come to the top.

MH: I wonder if they secure it somehow down there.

LH: Maybe mud to start with or something, I don't know.

MH: That's kind of an interesting thing. They store their food underwater, is that what you're saying?

LH: Yeah, and then they'll live in this house and like I said, if the pond freezes over, sometime ice that thick, why they can still come out of their house and have this tunnel to their food source and that's they way they live all winter.

MH: That's an interesting thing about the beaver.

LH: It is.

MH: I didn't know that. You mentioned another animal it was beaver and something else?

LH: Muskrat? They're just a small animal.

MH: Badger, you said.

LH: Badger, yes. We don't have any muskrats around here, I don't know of any.

MH: Do they ever come into human populations and bother folks, badgers?

LH: No, I've caught them on my trap line a lot of times. There's what they call a fur badger. I've only caught one in my life but I mean that was a pretty thing. That was really something. And the rest of them are just, I guess hairy, you know. They used to use them for shaving brushes.

MH: Because it's a very coarse hair?

LH: They don't have much fur. Only this one I caught one time; I wish I would have had it mounted.

MH: Because it was unique?

LH: It was really unique, yes.

MH: What are some of the habits of the coyote that you've picked up on?

LH: Well, they're kind of a smart animal. They're not that easy to trap but they range a long ways. They'll range from here down the Burr Trail road; they'll range a long ways. A lot of people think there are coyotes around their ranch or something, they stay right there. Well, that's not true, they go a long way.

MH: I've always heard this thing about how they can draw out dogs and kill them. Is that true?

LH: Well, I guess. I don't have a dog like that myself but they have a lot of dogs that will kill coyotes. I remember on the ranch sometimes a coyote would come out on the field and the dog would bark at it and they'd bark back. Once in a while the dog would go a little ways, the coyote would go a little ways, they never did get together.

MH: They would just check each other out?

LH: Yeah.

MH: How long did you stay out on the ranch with Mac and Lenore?

LH: I guess about two winters I stayed out there. About two years.

MH: Not that long. Was that when Mac moved over here, when they first had the ranch?

LH: I guess the ranch still belonged to Dad then and then later he bought one part of the ranch and I bought the other part.

MH: Do you still have an interest in that ranch?

LH: No, I sold mine.

MH: Does Dell have that part?

LH: Dell has his. Mac stays right over there on the ranch. Have you interviewed him?

MH: Yeah, he's got that big bear skin so I asked him the story of the bear and it's so funny. He roped it.

LH: Yeah, and he was a lion hunter too.

MH: You wouldn't normally trap lions, you would shoot them.

LH: No, that's just accidental. He would just chase them with the hounds and tree them that way.

MH: This is still really wild country. Salt Gulch as an area seems even wilder than Boulder. Is that true?

LH: I guess so. When we was there only what, five ranches there now.

MH: There's an area out there that's for sale now. And you could just take off right from there and get up on to the Boulder from behind the ranch?

LH: Well, going up the Hell's Backbone road, yeah.

MH: So you're trapping now right?

LH: Yes.

MH: And what are the rules for trapping now? You need to check your traps every forty-eight hours?

LH: Yes, that's the rules. And the bobcats, last year you could get eight, this year they cut it down to six. You have to apply for the tags.

MH: You apply for each one?

LH: For the bobcats. In fact I missed out this year, I don't even have any bobcat tags. But you apply in the fall and then they send you what they call a temporary tag. When you catch a bobcat you're supposed to mark the date and the sex and all that sort of thing on the tag and then you take it in for a permanent tag later, before you can sell it.

MH: So they keep track of how many animals, what would you call the animals that you trap? Is there a category of animals, fur-bearing animals for example?

LH: Yeah, but coyotes, there's no season. You can trap those year-round, and red fox too. But gray fox and anything else has a season. Bobcats are the only ones you have to tag.

MH: And why do you think they do that, they're more regulated?

LH: Well, I guess what you call endangered species. Back in about eighty-five, bobcats were so high priced everybody was trapping them and then they kind of got so they weren't worth that much. Now they're back up again. That's why they cut it down to six this year, because everybody was out there trying to catch bobcats.

MH: They were more popular.

LH: Well, price-wise.

MH: And you said trapping had become popular again.

LH: Oh yeah, there's more trappers now than ever. It's not a dying thing unless people that want to kill it, the environmentalists or the animal lovers, you know, put enough pressure on the legislature to get a bill through to stop trapping, why they can do it.

MH: Is there a movement on to do that?

LH: Not in the legislature no, but they are trying to get it to the legislature.

MH: Do you think you'll see that in your lifetime?

LH: I don't know, I hope not.

MH: There is also a lobby that is pro-trapping too and Utah is kind of a unique state because people like to hunt here and obviously like to trap and like to use the land for recreation. I'm not sure how that will change in the next twenty years.

LH: One problem too is that people like to hike with their dogs and of course their dog gets caught that's a bad deal. It's bad for the trapper and it's bad for the hikers.

MH: It's a conflict that's for sure. I told you our dog was caught in a trap near our home in Tropic.

LH: Was the dog hard to get out of the trap?

MH: No, it wasn't bad.

LH: Sometimes they're real hard to get out of the trap. They're really hurting and they'll bite you.

MH: We had enough people; my husband and my son were there. I took the dog's head like this because I thought it might happen. They both worked the trap and got it off

but it was on a line. That dog is doing what he was supposed to be doing, chasing after a lion's scent. I'm sure it happens around here.

LH: I don't like to catch a dog, I don't like it at all but it happens.

MH: Have you come along your trap line and found a dog?

LH: Caught in my trap you mean?

MH: Yeah.

LH: Oh yeah, quite a bit.

MH: They're usually ok though, right?

LH: Ok yeah, but like I say, some of them are hard to turn loose. I've got what we call a choker, you put on and hold them out away from the trap and then you can release them.

MH: That's right, they would be in pain and you're a stranger.

LH: Right. I used to catch a lot of dogs in Arizona because there are people all the time and there are wild dogs that just run loose out there.

MH: The choker kind of chokes them and you pull them away and you have to release them with one hand?

LH: No, I stand on it. And while you've got the dog you can pull him out of the trap. It's the same with a bobcat. I have to turn my bobcats loose this year because I don't have any tags.

MH: Who regulates that here, who goes out and checks on you.

LH: The Fish and Game, they're the ones.

MH: Even on BLM land?

LH: BLM, I don't think they have any authority to tell you what to do or anything like that on a trap line. But the game wardens, the Fish and Game, they're the ones. Unless you try to get a hold of them to turn a lion loose, like I said and then you can't find one.

MH: And they're supposed to come in and help you with that situation.

LH: Yeah, you're supposed to report it and then they're supposed to, they have a tranquilizer gun. It's simple.

MH: I was going to tell you that Clint Mecham does that, he tracks lions and puts collars on them so he tranquilizes them. He would be a good person to contact.

LH: Right.

MH: We were traveling over this way one time and I was interviewing him. He was talking about the pressure on the animals because people can get so far in to the backcountry now. What do you think about that?

LH: I think that's true. Four-wheelers they call them, ATVs yeah. I don't think that's any more than on a horse, and that's been forever that you could hunt animals on a horse.

MH: But it's not as fast.

LH: I see what you mean.

MH: You can get right back there, the animals are sort of always on the run.

LH: That's true, the deer population.

MH: So how have you seen things change over time?

LH: People moving in and that sort of thing. One guy this fall was out walking his dog and he was setting my traps off and putting little notes on them, "Please don't trap

here”, you know. So I encountered him one day. He said, “Why don’t we compromise?” I said, “That’s not a compromise. I’ve been trapping here since probably before you were born and I don’t think I want to move just so you can walk your dog”. So anyway that’s the way it was. I said, “I’m going to leave these traps here another couple of weeks and don’t set any more off, and keep your dog on a leash”. But I haven’t seen him since, I guess he...

MH: Took his dog somewhere else?

LH: Yeah. That’s the change, people coming in and they want to change everything to suit themselves, suit what they want. There was quite an interesting poem in the little paper you know, “We were here first, you’re welcome to come but don’t try to change us, it’s not right”.

MH: Which is why we’re talking about this, because it’s an aspect of life along the Monument. There are more people visiting here who have a different philosophy about things. But they’re visitors, most of them.

LH: So I don’t know. I imagine sooner or later the trap line that I’m running now I’ll have to give it up for a number of reasons because more people like to use the area, you know and it’s just a conflict like you said.

MH: And it gets to be difficult for you to even do it.

LH: Not worth it in other words, not worth the hassle. That’s one part of it. You’re worried about trapping, I mean you’re out there by yourself and do just the way you want to do and that sort of thing but when people start telling you how to do it, that’s different.

MH: ...or not to do it.

LH: Or not to do it because they want to do something in the same area.

MH: That's a hard one.

LH: It is, yes.

MH: And I wonder if it will get to the point where it's the same, where you have restrictions like in Arizona?

LH: If they can pass it, yeah. It has to pass the legislature. That's what they did. They got a bill through to ban trapping on public lands. And they are still trying to fight it. I guess the trappers association has spent thousands of dollars on attorneys trying to fight it. There are other states that have had that, I think Idaho had a bill passed and they finally got it repealed. They can trap again.

MH: And so who's property is this, was this part of your family's property where you're living here?

LH: Yes.

MH: Because I remember Dixie telling me something about the store, is it this store that she used to work in?

LH: Yeah.

MH: Did you work there too?

LH: Well yeah, I used to own it see.

MH: Oh really?

LH: Thirty-nine years we owned that store. My dad started it up after he had a heart attack and left the ranch. You see the front porch, that wasn't there, that's been added on and the porch, everything has been added on. It was what they called the Relief Society Building when they first built it. They held Relief Society there. And

then after that why it was a school lunch place where they had the cook from the school. We would eat our lunch there and then go back to school.

MH: And then your dad decided that it would become a store.

LH: Somehow, I don't know how he got it probably when they divided the lots why he got the property and started the store. That was way back.

MH: Do you remember what year that was? Was it the first store in Boulder?

LH: No, there were other stores before that. I'm trying to think of the year, maybe nineteen thirty-six, something like that.

MH: So clearly out of the depression.

LH: Oh yeah.

MH: Did he decide to give up ranching?

LH: Well, in a way he gave up ranching, he had a heart attack and had to give it up and turned it over to his son-in-law and then he came over here and did the store. He had a truck and he'd freight.

MH: He would freight in from Richfield?

LH: Yes.

MH: So he would stock the store and you guys would run it?

LH: Yes, we were just young.

MH: Was it pretty successful?

LH: Yeah, oh yeah it was.

MH: People were pretty dependent on you really.

LH: Right, it wasn't that easy to chase somewhere and do your shopping, you know.

MH: No, it's still the same, don't you think?

LH: Well, now you can go do your shopping and you don't have to depend on the store here. It's still a store; gasoline is the big thing with a store like that now.

MH: So who owns that store now?

LH: Cottam's from Escalante.

MH: That's becoming a monopoly on Highway 12.

LH: Yes. He bought it from me and then after he bought it I think he was a little discouraged or something, he tried to sell it for about a year but nobody would buy it so he put in new gas pumps, twenty-four hour gas you know.

MH: That's how it works. Did someone live in the store? Did your mom and dad live there?

LH: Yeah, my mom and dad did. Dad had the store and I guess I was in the army when he finally closed it up and then he turned it into a rental and people lived in it then. When I came back from the army it wasn't a store any more.

MH: And then you took it over and made it into a store again?

LH: Well, actually it was quite a few years after, I don't know how many people lived there and I think it was vacant and my wife and I decided let's start it up again. We remodeled it a little bit then started it up again. We had it for a few years then and then we sold it to a lady here in Boulder and we went to Cedar City to work. Then I came back from Cedar City and then I went to Glen Canyon Dam to work and then when I come back from there we decided to start the store again. So we had it for thirty-nine years.

MH: I remember coming through here before this road was paved, when was that, in the eighties?

LH: Eighty-five, I think is when they finished it.

End of Side B, Tape 1 - Start Side A, Tape 2

MH: So this was all family property here?

LH: Yeah.

MH: It's a neat barn and you have a couple of out buildings.

LH: There's a couple of furs on the stretchers right there; you can barely see them.

MH: Oh yeah, what kind of fur?

LH: One red fox and one gray fox.

MH: And you just put them out in the sun?

LH: Yes, that's where they dry out.

MH: So what do you do when you're not trapping?

LH: I'm retired. That's the only thing I miss about the store is not having something to get up and go do in the morning.

MH: Because you can stay busy in the winter, right?

LH: Yeah, but I get a horse in the summer and ride all over the mountain.

MH: Go down and visit Mac?

LH: Um hum.

MH: Where is your horse stabled?

LH: Actually I don't own a horse. I borrow it from Del LeFevre. I borrow it in the summer and then give it back to him in the winter, let him feed it.

MH: Did you have horses when you were growing up though?

LH: Oh yeah. Even workhorses, that's the way we farmed for a lot of years, with a team.

MH: I remember Mac telling me they were still cutting hay by hand when he came over here.

LH: With a team you mean or by hand?

MH: Yeah, right. Well and now it's just by machine. Though I guess it was sort of a machine.

LH: Yes, it was pulled by a team and the wheels powered the thing you know, gears and that run the sickle mower.

MH: I know what they did by hand; they stacked it.

LH: Yeah.

MH: You probably remember doing that don't you?

LH: Oh yeah, you bet.

MH: So you went over to Cedar for a while and then you came back. What was your wife's name?

LH: Loreena.

MH: Was she from around here?

LH: She was from Teasdale.

MH: An out of townner, eh?

LH: (Laughs) Yeah.

MH: How did you ever meet up?

LH: I think she came over here with a friend of mine or something, I don't remember for sure. And then we started going together and going to dances and that sort of thing. That was my first wife. I've been married three times and divorced three times.

MH: That was your first wife and she was from Teasdale. Loreena, that's a pretty name. And then did you marry other girls from around here?

LH: No. Well, I guess the one gal was from here that I married, when she was young, and then she moved away and then we married. We were only married for a couple of years and divorced. Then the last one was from Arizona. I met her when I was going down there trapping.

MH: How long did you live down there, or did you just go down there seasonally?

LH: I would just go down in the winter, for about six or seven years.

MH: So did she come back here?

LH: Um hum, yeah. We run the store together for quite a while.

MH: It's a different spot. I always have to ask this question; did you feel like you were isolated when you were growing up?

LH: Well, I think that's just how it was. You didn't feel anything like that.

MH: You didn't know the difference. And then was it more fun to move into Boulder? Were you glad when you moved into Boulder from Salt Gulch?

LH: I don't know that I ever thought about it that way.

MH: Where were these pictures taken?

LH: That's my grandfather's old house. It was down where the new schoolhouse is across from the church?

MH: Yeah.

LH: And our school burned down, I don't remember the year but anyway they just put us in different buildings and this was the building that we went to school in. That was our school group there.

MH: That was your class? It looks like everyone is in high school.

LH: Let's see there's Alma Wilson, he used to go to Tropic a lot, he was sort of a doctor too. That was the high school group, the high school teacher.

MH: There were Wilson's in Tropic, or no they were from over by Hatch.

LH: By Hatch probably, yeah.

MH: Hillsdale. Do you remember these people's names?

LH: Yeah. Can you pick out me?

MH: Probably not. I would have to put on my glasses. I would just guess this one.

LH: No, right here, this is me. Ok, and this is Dean Oldsman, and LaFaye Coleman, Melba Mooseman, and Eva Coombs, and Darwin Peterson, Milton Coleman and Walter Stephanson.

MH: I recognize all those names except Stephanson.

LH: Ok, well his mother married my Uncle Morias and they lived in Salt Gulch. That's why his name, he never changed it to Hall but that's where she come from. She had three, Walter, Mack and Merlin. She had three children when she married him.

MH: Right, from a different marriage?

LH: Yeah, then she married my Uncle Morias and they lived in Salt Gulch.

MH: So you had a little bit in common, Walter...?

LH: I guess we all did.

MH: That's a really beautiful building too.

Well, we're just at the end of the tape so I just wanted to say thank you LeFair for doing the interview.

LH: Ok.

MH: Now there was one of the person's names was LeFaye?

LH: Lefaye Coleman.

MH: That's an interesting name, LeFair and then there's LeFaye. What was that from?

LH: I don't know. I never did find out why I was named LeFair. I guess Dad heard it someplace but I've only run on to one other person with that name.

MH: But you did run into somebody. Anyway, thank you for your time; I appreciate it. It was nice talking with you.

End of Interview

LeFair, please sign at The *

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT AND DEED OF GIFT

I hereby give to the Utah State Historical Society the tapes and transcriptions of the interview/interviews recorded on 12-06-03 and grant the Utah State Historical Society the right to make the tapes and transcriptions available to the public for such educational and research purposes that are in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Society's Utah History Information Center.

NARRATOR LeFair Hall

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Boulder, Utah

SIGNATURE LeFair M. Hall

DATE Jan - 20 - 2004

INTERVIEWER Marsha Holland

ADDRESS _____

Tropic, UT

SIGNATURE Marsha Holland

DATE 12-06-03