

INTERVIEW WITH: Sarah Ott Littlefield
INTERVIEWER: Karin Barker
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Creek Ranch
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KB: My first question is about your dad. Where did he come from?

SL: My dad came from, we called it Dixie, down where Virgin is now, but it was called Duncan when he was born down there. But the Virgin River cut into their farm land and they had cattle and they were hunting food for the cows and they came over and seen this valley of Tropic, which was in the wild then, so to speak, and so they just homesteaded some of it. At that time you could homestead. And his dad and mother, my grandfather's dad and mother brought him as just a boy and they moved out to this wild land of Tropic. There was a little town down south called Cannonville and later on some of Cannonville moved to Henrieville and it was, I suppose their name was Henrie in the beginning and they moved to Henrieville and called it Henrieville. Now that's about all I can tell you, except I was probably nine or ten. I think we moved in August.

KB: From Tropic to Henrieville?

SL: We moved to Henrieville and they called my dad to be the Bishop down there and I don't know why he was called from Tropic to go to Henrieville, I do not know.

KB: Okay now, so your father came from down in the Dixie area, up here as a boy with his father?

SL: No, he was pretty well grown when he come here.

KB: Was he? Did his father move?

SL: Yes. it was his father and mother that came up here and Dad had, oh. Aunt Mary, Aunt Blanche, Aunt Vene: her name was LaVenia, and then his brothers was Joe and John and Tom. Some of them kind of had some hard lives. Uncle Joe was the first from the Tropic Ward called on a mission and he went to Germany. They send him to Germany and he fell in the ocean somewhere when it was landing or something, got pneumonia and died. Course they couldn't ship his body home so they buried him there. The church later on, when they got some in the church that was interested in genealogy and things, they got the church to build this marker there. It stands in Dresden, Germany. I've got a picture of it. I don't know which relative way back that took a picture of it when they went to Germany. And then one year, I believe it was one of my brothers went to Germany, viewed it for himself and then he got pictures and sent to all of us. I've got mine hanging on the wall. And the church put the monument up there. But you can see it. It's beautiful white marble. There are people who have been to Germany and been to it and have taken pictures of it and we all have a picture and right by this stone I've got Uncle Joe's mission picture when he went on his mission. He had his little stovepipe hat and wore quite a long coat. I don't know, we just always called it the missionary coat. But there was another keepsake which I have seen, but I'm not the oldest so I didn't rate it, but it's twenty-four karat gold. Uncle Joe went to the south (This is me and my daughter. She lost her husband and she stayed back in Virginia because that's where her kids are. She has three boys. They all live there.)

KB: Do you remember what your grandfather's name was on the Ott side?

SL: Well, his first name was David.

KB: His name was David? Do you remember his wife's name?

SL: My grandma?

KB: Yeah.

SL: Oh, she was Hannah.

KB: Hannah? Did they come, were they native to Utah or were they born elsewhere?

SL: Well they came from Dixie as near as I know anything about them.

KB: What did your father do here for a living? Was he a cattleman or...?

SL: He had cattle and a farm out in Yellow Creek. It's still out there and it's still in the Ott family.

KB: And, now your mother lived...

SL: Well, then when my oldest brother got married, then dad gave him, I don't know whether it was six hundred acres, I don't know, but anyway.

KB: Now who was your oldest brother?

SL: His name was Joseph. He died at 42 and left six children.

KB: Oh. My word. Now who else was in your family? He's the oldest, then who?

SL: Well, of the boys he had a brother, Richard, Uncle Dick, we called him.

KB: No, your family?

SL: And John, he had John Ott too.

KB: Okay, but as far as like, who's the oldest in your family out of your brothers and sisters?

SL: Oh. Joe was the oldest.

KB: Joe was the oldest? And then who?

SL: He's got, gosh, his wife, hasn't been too long since she died here. She lived just across the street. But when she died we bought that little house and then when my oldest brother died, oh gosh, that hasn't been too many years ago, we bought this house and we lived up in Davis County and we lived in Layton.

KB: Well now do you remember when you moved to Henrieville? Do you remember?

SL: Yes, I can remember. I was nine and we moved in August and I would be ten in October.

KB: And how did you feel about moving? Did you want to?

SL: Well, every ten year-old kid wants to go somewhere. (Laughter) So my oldest ones, they didn't feel very good about it. The school only went to the fourth grade then in Henrieville. But the next year they got more school and they even got us, what we called a school bus. It was not a bus at that time, it was just a pickup truck with canvas stretched over it in the winter and...

KB: Now did you live right in Henrieville?

SL: Oh, right in the middle of the town.

KB: And when you lived in Tropic did you live in the town of Tropic? Before you moved?

SL: I guess I was born in Tropic. I hope I can die here. (Laughter) I got married while we lived here.

KB: Oh really. Now with Malen from Tropic, your husband?

SL: Yeah. He was three years older than I was.

KB: And he was from Tropic?

SL: He was from Tropic. So I did go with him a little in school. Grades wasn't separated all that much and I don't know, just one of the crowd.

KB: Now when you lived in Henrieville, which church...?

SL: Oh I got married there.

KB: In Henrieville?

SL: Well we were married in St. George, but we were living in Henrieville.

KB: But Malen was living in Tropic?

SL: Up here.

KB: So how so how did you date? How did you get together?

SL: Well, we were in the same school. We went to school together.

KB: So now was the bus you were talking about. did it take you from Henrieville to Tropic?
This old truck?

SL: I guess Malen's lived here all his life. except the years when we lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico. We went out there. I had my second child out there, my little girl. Santa Fe, New Mexico.

KB: Now let me just ask you? You went to school in Henrieville first?

SL: That's where I started school. yes.

KB: And then you went there how many years to school there? Did it go through till the sixth grade and then you had to go to Tropic?

SL: I didn't go to Henrieville until we lived here. My dad lived here and had the cattle and what out to Yellow Creek. That was where he homesteaded. And, oh his grandson and his son own it now. Oh they feed cattle and, I don't know, there's so many restrictions I certainly don't try to keep up with the coming and the going and now [with] this Grand Staircase thing that's come up. They're taking all this ground and stuff out that way. I don't know how it's all going to end. I don't try to keep up. My brother still has ground out that way. He says that's something for my kids to worry about. They change the rules, they change the roads and what used to be roads you could go on is now fenced and all that old stuff. I don't try to keep up with it. My children, none of them live here. I don't think there's any that ever will.

KB: Well now tell me more about his school bus? It was an old truck with canvas on top?

SL: I don't know who drives it now, but it hasn't been Wallace for several years. Wallace is my brother, but it started out to get transportation from down there. When I was out of

eighth grade we had to have some higher grades. so they had a place here that was an old store and they fixed that up. There was two rooms in it. They fixed that up and that is where we went to high school. We had one teacher and finally the man that was teaching school got married and brought her back so they give her a job too.

KB: So they both taught?

SL: So they both had a good job. There were from up in. oh. what county is it? It's about in the middle of the state. Oh. I can't begin to try to recollect the things that started back there. I started riding the bus. there was about four or five of us: Henrieville and Cannonville and we had this pickup truck and in the winter we'd take blankets, and my mother would heat some rocks or bricks and wrap them up and get them good and warm, wrap them in newspaper and in a towel or something, put them down by us and so we kept pretty warm. I can't ever remember getting too cold. Except once the bus broke down and the bus driver told us to stay with the bus, but who minds a bus driver? (Laughter) So after he started to walk to town to get some gas or whatever was needed, then three or four of us decided to follow him and the snow was heavy and it kind of crusted over and we'd break through. It was a hard three miles and I got my hands frozen. And I can stand very little cold on my hands in the winter. I have to always go out with gloves on. In fact I wear them here in the house sometimes because my hands got frozen. I've got this one finger that never did develop right. That's why I tell mother I couldn't learn to play to the organ. is because my finger was bad. (Laughter)

KB: (Laughter) Of course.

SL: I had a couple of sisters that played pretty well.

KB: Well now when your dad moved from Tropic to Henrieville, did he just keep his cattle; that's what he still did as a living?

SL: Well he still had the same kind of living because he moved down closer to his ranch.

KB: Oh, Henrieville is closer?

SL: Oh yes, Henrieville's just was up there, well about, we're talking about ten miles or so between here and Henrieville.

KB: Did you like it in Henrieville?

SL: I loved it there. The water wasn't piped, no electricity.

KB: So were you there when they had the ditches out in front?

SL: Yes.

KB: And that's how you got your water?

SL: Every Monday we'd go take the water and turn it in the yard or on the garden. We always raised a beautiful garden. If we didn't, why our neighbors did and you always had stealing rights. (Laughter)

KB: (Laughter) I heard about that--the chicken stealing.

SL: (Laughter) Yes. Boys would go steal the chickens and the girls would cook them and we'd have chicken dinners at midnight.

KB: And melons.

SL: Melons? Melon busts. My brother's got kids here that talked about the melon busts. I even remember the name of the melons. The ones that was our favorites was called 'keckly sweet'. I don't know whether you could buy seed now or not. Mother used to save the seeds from the choicest melons. Dry the seeds and put them in a fruit jar and label what it was and then when it got time to plant she'd get the seeds out and plant them. Right in this town there is what we call 'bird egg beans'. The reason they're bird egg beans is because the bean looks just like a little robin's egg or something and anyway I asked- I hadn't seen these bird egg beans until we moved to Henrieville and the story of that is the bird egg beans came back from the south with somebody that went on a mission or something and put a few of those bird egg beans in his pocket. Last year, my brother Wallace, he says that's the only kind of string bean I'll touch or I'll eat is a bird egg bean. And I asked Ora the other day, I said, "Ora, please raise me some bird egg beans." Oh she says. "I wouldn't have a garden without them." I said, "Where do you get the seed?" And she said, "I think I'll have to go to Henrieville and see if I can find some this year." And then her daughter lives in Escalante and she says, "But I'm sure Donna will have some." So they just scattered this way and that way.

KB: Well I'll have to see if I can't get some and see what they are like.

SL: Oh, they are the best beans in the whole world, to bottle or to cook fresh out of the patch.

KB: Now let me ask you, when you lived in Henrieville, did the road go from Henrieville to Escalante then? Or did you have to go up...

SL: ...No, we had to go up over this hill. In fact, I was living in- oh it hasn't been that many years that they got this new road over there. You could not get to Escalante and Boulder. You had to go over this big mountain.

KB: Over the top over there?

SL: Yes.

KB: How was that road? Did you ever go?

SL: Nobody got to Escalante very often.

KB: It was really a rough road?

SL: It was. Heavens they didn't get this road cut through here until just a few years ago. Oh, I'm talking like thirty, maybe.

KB: And so everybody had to go over that mountain to...

SL: ...had to go up this way. We had to go through Escalante or I mean Widtsoe.

KB: You had to go to Widtsoe to go to Escalante?

SL: To go to Escalante we had to go to Widtsoe and go over that way. I wonder if that road would be passable?

KB: I'd like to try it.

SL: Well I think there's some who tried it, but they say, wouldn't get around those curves, of course people always went in buggies when they were sporting, or a wagon the other times. My brother Wallace, I don't know how old he was, but he said he was just a little tyke and our oldest sister married a school teacher that came here to teach school, Charlie Wintch, and she was the one who took one of the first rides over this [way] through Henrieville.

KB: Oh, on the new road?

SL: Uh huh. I didn't live here then. I was gone. I either lived up in Davis County or I don't know, I must have still been in Tropic. I can't remember all those things.

KB: Now when you lived in Henrieville, did you go to the white church up on the hill or did you go to the little schoolhouse?

SL: I went to the little schoolhouse and it was, no we had the church in Henrieville, but it wasn't a church, it was a dance hall. All your recreation was performed in that dance hall--your church dinners, and your church. It had one big room and they just built seats that sat on and they would move these seats around, portable, and they had curtains hanging from the ceiling if you needed to move them around and make an extra room. They used to put on theaters. Memorized the parts. Oh, I'll never forget the one that I was in; it was two hours long. Imagine memorizing that kind of a part.

KB: Two hours, yeah. Do you remember what the play was?

SL: Yes. "Bound by an Oath." And course I didn't have the lead, but I was a busy body, old sister that come as a salesman. I can remember that much about the plot. But I don't know where the name came from. But there would always be humor. And then there was some you could go to that you would sit and cry. This "Bound by an Oath" was. It was somebody who was working for the government, had come out west, see, this is the plot- had come out west and someone had stolen all of the cattle. He brought them in on a train, but I can't remember all the plots, but I just happened to remember the name of that one because it was such a hard part to learn. Oh we changed scenery, we'd make a kitchen out of stage and change the furniture and put a few rugs on the floor or something and it could turn into a living room in about half and hour and just all these kinds of

things. We built false windows and people would go to the back and you know, we'd have holes cut for windows. I can remember crawling through to do some robbing I guess, I don't know. But I got just a little ways and the stage fell on me. (Laughter)

KB: (Laughter)

SL: And you know, when we were doing a serious part, you'd get started to giggle, look at somebody had put a moustache on and it fell off, they grabbed it and stuck it back on and put it on upside down. It was just things like, events like that I remember. And so the Escalante school wanted, there was three acts in that show and they wanted us to bring it over to Escalante. I was in, maybe, my second year of high school. I wasn't the lead, but I'm the one that got to giggling when he turned his moustache upside down. (Laughter) Oh, I don't know why kids can't have fun like that nowadays. It didn't cost you anything. Maybe you'd charge ten-cents for a ticket. The Mutual always put on one and then they got them dropped to one act plays, but they don't have anything like that anymore.

KB: They don't really.

SL: They don't have fun anymore. I'd say. When automobiles came the whole world changed.

KB: And television.

SL: Right in this town. I don't think I ever got in a car until I was ten years old. We was moving to Henrieville and our brother-in-law come here, well he came to teach school, married my oldest sister and he had the first car in town. It was an old Ford and you would have to push it up the 'Dump'. (Laughter) My sister-in-law that came from up in

Sandy, some place up there to teach school, she would ride up in that, but no, she wouldn't ride down, so she'd get out and walk.

KB: All the way down the Dump?

SL: All the way down the Dump and as many kids would go with her could go.

KB: Was it really steep?

SL: (Laughter) No. Mabel was so fun though. She was my first grade school teacher. Married my oldest brother. Oh, he was a good brother. He's got, let's see, he died about '42 or something like that.

KB: Now your mother, what was her maiden name?

SL: Who?

KB: Your mother?

SL: Jeanette Matilda Johnson.

KB: Johnson? Was she one of Seth Johnson's?

SL: Yes, she was Seth Johnson's. He had two wives, you know and she was Martha, my grandmother would be Martha, and then she had a sister, Rose, who married and went to Idaho.

End of Side One, Tape One

Begin Side Two, Tape One

KB: Where did you get that?

SL: Well my grandma, that's really what brought her into the church, was her violin. Some Elders was singing on the corner and they was off tune so far. And she played the violin in the concert. Anyway, he got the violin because my grandpa was named David, and well he was named David. I asked David's wife, a widow that's here, once, I said, "Margaret, did you ever hear of great grandma's violin story?" And she said yes, and Dave got it and we've only got one boy, only had one boy. She had a whole bunch of girls, but she said Dave got the violin because he's named David. And his wife gave it away to somebody. They don't know where it is. There's somebody that doesn't want anybody to find it.

KB: Yeah. Well now let me ask you again about the yucca plant. When you take the bulbs and the roots, and you pound them down.

SL: The Segó?

KB: No, the Yucca for washing your hair and stuff? You pound down the pulp...?

SL: ...well you just, oh there's one in the Georgetown cemetery. Oh I could dig that. I tried to put one out here in my rock garden and it was too, oh those barbs are just as sharp as razors.

KB: But you would take the roots and you'd pound them down?

SL: And you'd pound those roots and it would give just like soap suds, soften.

KB: You pound it and then you'd...

SL: Soften it and put in water and it softens in water, turns water soft and you'd just use it like soap when you would wash your hair. And if we ever had anything that was washable, or I mean not washable, you could wash it in this root and it would be so soft. But getting down to the roots, you've got to peel it and you've got get those little spikes off from it.

KB: Now let me ask you again about the Segó Lily. You'd pulled the bulb up; you pull out the bulb?

SL: It looks just a lot like a green onion. It's a bulb like a little button onion really.

KB: And how would you cook them? You'd just steam them?

SL: We never did cook them. We just gathered them and ate them like a turnip.

KB: Oh, just ate them raw?

SL: Just ate them. Oh they were sweeter than turnips. I haven't tasted one for so many years. I haven't seen one for probably twenty, thirty years. I don't know.

KB: Were there a lot here in the valley?

SL: There was quite a lot in the sand, down by Cannonville. They seemed to have soil that's, anyway all I've ever tasted that I've, just been a few here that, they stand about this high; they're a beautiful lily. A beautiful lily, white and then it has yellow centers, not solid centers, but just the littlest yellow. They have a look all their own.

KB: Now let me ask you. You said that David Quilter drove the old bus that you used to ride?

SL: Who?

KB: David Quilter?

SL: Oh, David Quilter. He was a church convert from England and after they got here to Utah, I really don't know what they did for a living.

KB: But you said he drove the school bus?

SL: He drove the school bus and it started out by being just a truck and oh it was cold in the winter. We'd bundle up with those quilts and canvas and anything to keep the cold out.

KB: And your mom wrapped up warm rocks and he put a canvas over the top?

SL: My cousin, Lorene. who was my dad's brother's girl, and we were the same age, about. I was from October to January older than her. But we stuck it through graduation and we were the first two in Tropic to graduate.

KB: Oh really, wow.

SL: Just two of us and we were cousins.

KB: How long was the school year? I read where it was just four months.

SL: Well we went just right a long with the school kids, when they run the bus, any kid that was old enough to go to school rode the bus, this little old pickup truck.

KB: Would school start in September or October or?

SL: It started usually the first week in September, but we were always out of school by the first of April.

KB: Oh, the first of April? So then you could go out to the ranches?

SL: Saw people, when they could get out to ranches, started out to ranches to graze cattle or whatever, farm.

KB: Your father would take you when school was out and move out to Yellow Creek Ranch?

SL: That's right.

KB: How did you get out there? Was it by horse and buggy?

SL: We had a wagon and...

KB: ...a wagon?

SL: Then on Sundays, usually we would come in on Saturday night. Dad wouldn't let us work on Sunday. After he got to be the Bishop down to Henrieville, we'd do just like we did before, go out and camp.

KB: Now did you have a house out there?

SL: Oh yes. And then my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, I don't know how come, but they was living in the ranch house until it burned down.

KB: Oh, the ranch house burned down?

SL: Yes.

KB: Well, that's too bad. Now how long did take you to drive out there from Henrieville?

SL: Oh, three or four hours.

KB: That's all?

SL: That's all.

KB: And what about water, did you just take it out of the creek out there?

SL: We just took it out of the creek. We had barrels we'd dip it up and fill. We had a barrel out by the gate, in front of our gate and we'd bail into the barrels, settle it. (Laughter) Oh, I remember this smart brother that I've got, Wallace, he was kind of a character, he says, "Oh, I'd just as soon cut off my head as hear them say Sarah was going to have a bathe and wash her hair."

KB: (Laughter) Why was that?

SL: Our wash water we heated on the back of the stove. Mother had a great big old tank on her stove that was a reservoir, the stoves came that way, most of them and then they had little a little shelf with doors on that we could keep the food warm pretty much up in there. Oh, I wish I had kept that old range.

KB: Yeah. Now you said that you had a big tin tub? And you put it in the kitchen?

SL: Number 3.

KB: Number 3? And then you'd all use the same bath water? You just started out with a little bit and?

SL: Would pour in.

KB: For each child you would add a little bit?

SL: The one that got the first bath got the choice.

KB: And then they just washed. And she just put in a new thing of water for each child, huh?

SL: Yeah. Bath day was about like a wash day. We heated the water on the stove to wash in. We had an old tub outside, put it up on rocks and then we'd heat our wash water outside when the weather was permissible.

KB: For your baths?

SL: For our baths. Not as much as wash day.

KB: And how did you do the wash?

SL: With the sweat of our brow.

KB: Just like?

SL: We had a washtub and a washboard. We scrubbed them on that washboard.

KB: And would you boil the clothes?

SL: We'd boil the white clothes and put a little blueing in the rinse water and that made the white get whiter.

KB: Now what about when you'd make the soap? Would you make that outside?

SL: Mother always did. She had a soap tub she called it. It just kind of went, the neighbor, we didn't need two soap tubs in the house, so two or three of the neighbors, they'd go together and black one tub and then they'd just...

KB: ...when you say black it, what do you mean?

SL: Well, you'd put it on a bonfire; it's going to turn black.

KB: Huh. You put it right on the bonfire.

SL: Put it right on the rocks outside and heats the water.

KB: Huh. But you said that you would kill the pigs that you had and save the lard from the pigs and make that into...

SL: ...well, I didn't get into this pig killing. (Laughter) That was usually the boys that...

KB: ...but you guys would take the fat?

SL: They'd just go if somebody needed a pig killed. I don't know, they just kind of made their own equipment.

KB: How do you get the pig's fat though?

SL: Give them some corn.

KB: No, but I mean like when you killed the pig, would you have to skin it? Would the fat that you'd take be between the skin and the meat?

SL: You don't skin a pig. You scrape the hair off.

KB: Okay.

SL: Just scrape it and scald it and scrape it off and then it's a rind.

KB: And then what would you do? You'd take the rind off?

SL: Take the rind and heat it and pour the grease off.

KB: So you take the rind off the pig meat? And then you boil it?

SL: You don't boil it; you just bake it and let it...

KB: And then it would just melt? Is that what it did?

SL: Yes, just melt it and pour it into lard buckets or something. I didn't do a lot of that because I didn't like the smell of it.

KB: I don't blame you. (Laughter)

SL: I don't like fresh pork now.

KB: Well would you ever use cow fat?

SL: Oh, the tallow, we used that. Mother would use that to make salt with.

KB: The tallow? What about candles? Did you ever make your own candles?

SL: Make what?

KB: Your own candles.

SL: Oh, I never did, only just did what the Beehive girls' book said. I've got some old wax candles now that I've got for emergency, in my emergency kit. I don't know what all's in there.

KB: Now down at the ranch, did you ever have electricity down there, electricity down at Yellow Creek?

SL: No, heavens no. There isn't even a house or anything there now. Well there's something there.

KB: And did you like it down on the ranch?

SL: I didn't know anything else. It was just a way of life like we do now. We'd get up in the morning, you do what you have to do that day, what you can put off until tomorrow, you do that too. Even now.

KB: Now what did you do on the ranch? What were your chores?

SL: Well you always had eggs to gather, chickens to feed, garden to hoe, water to take and run down the ditches. Don't worry, a mother like her had kept us busy.

KB: Worked most of the day?

SL: Mother would say, "A busy child is a good child." That was pretty true. I can remember my aunts, there was three of them, mother lived in Henrieville and Aunt Sue and Aunt Sarah lived in Cannonville, those three old sisters would get together and they'd have to go by buggy or something, wagon or something, but they'd get together every now and again and have what they called a "sewing bee." They'd sew for all these kids that we had. It was just fun to listen to them and there gabs, and oh dear, I get so sad when I think of those good stories about the candy pullings they'd have.

KB: Did you ever do that, the candy pulling?

SL: Oh yes. Even after I was married and we moved up to, oh I'm talking about, this is just later years, I taught the Beehive girls in our ward up in Layton and we learned how to make candy. I've got a sister that worked for Snelgrove making candy. She can dip chocolates like you wouldn't believe. Oh, her health is so poor now.

KB: Well did you make candy down here when you lived out on the ranch?

SL: Oh, we made honey candy and raised popcorn, shelled the corn and dried it.

KB: You made your own popcorn?

SL: Made our own popcorn balls and used honey to cook, oh, it's good. When Jim was here this year, he said, "Mom, why don't you make us some Cracker Jack?" I said, "Well, okay if you'll pop the corn." 'Course we have electric poppers.

KB: Oh yeah. How did you do it back then? Just over the fire or?

SL: We just put it in the fire. Had a great big old frying pan and we'd get the honey and sugar and melt it together. It went syrupy and I put a lot of butter in it. Makes it a lot tastier.

KB: Huh. And so now did your dad raise grains and stuff?

SL: Yes, wheat and he'd take it to the gristmill that was up in the canyon, up this way.

KB: Up here by the waterfall?

SL: By the waterfall. They used the water for power.

KB: Who owned that gristmill? Do you know?

SL: Well the first one I can remember dad taking the grain to that and bring the flour back, the last one that I can remember was Levi Bybee that lived her in town. He's still got kids here.

KB: Oh yeah, I'm sure the Bybees are part of that. And so he'd take it to that gristmill?

SL: Dad would take that to the gristmill and trade wheat.

KB: So he'd take the grains and?

SL: He'd take the wheat to the grist mill and bring the flour back and that's the way we, he'd

always have a thousand pounds of flour a year. He built a bin for it out in our granary.
Lined it with screen wire so that a mouse couldn't get in.

KB: A screen wire? So the mice, he'd have this big bin of flour? What about weevils?

SL: Well, you had weevils to fight.

KB: That was just part of it?

SL: As it got too old. It'll even get weevils in it now.

KB: Yeah, it does.

SL: But it won't if you'll heat it first.

KB: If you'll heat the flour before you store it?

SL: Before your store it.

KB: Did he do that or? What did you do about the weevils? Did you just sift through and take...

SL: ...I'm wondering if we didn't just eat it and didn't know it. I don't know. I'm sure my mother wouldn't feed us that kind of junk.

KB: Because I know one, and I can't remember who it was, and they told me that the weevils were just always there, you just sifted through and took them out. Now did he have his own grain ground or did he just trade his grain to get flour?

SL: Yeah. It was just: oh I'm sure there was big stories told back and forth about the flour stories. I can just barely remember of going to the mill with Dad in the wagon, big sacks of wheat and come back with "Bryce's Pride." That was the name of the flour. Why didn't I keep some of those sacks and things? They'd be so precious now.

KB: Oh yeah. And what would you do with the sacks? What did you use the sacks for?

SL: Oh heavens. I've had skirts made out of it. They used to- I always had a flour sack for a dish towel. always.

KB: What about underwear and...?

SL: That I don't know. I can remember mother making our underwear. We used to have to wear long legs and long sleeves, but they did things to keep you warm. My mother knit stockings for all of us. And we had the cutest little garter belts. That was just part of your clothes and getting dressed, with that little garter belt you'd put on and then pin the little garters on with a safety pin.

KB: And what about fabric? Did they carry the fabric here or did you have to travel to get fabric?

SL: No, they had to bring the fabric in. But the stores would have big stacks of fabric. That was in my day to sell that down to where Bryce Village is now. There was one store. My mother clerked in the first store they had here. Her brother owned that store. I don't think she could have clerked very long and done very much because she got married when she was 18. And that was old. (Laughter)

KB: Yeah. It was a lot different back then. And so she clerked there before she

got married?

SL: Well they don't talk much about it.

KB: So before you moved to Henrieville. did your dad still go down in the summers when you lived in Tropic and still go down to Yellow Creek?

SL: Yes.

KB: And so that just was...

SL: ...my dad, when he first got married. he homesteaded his ranch out to Yellow Creek. You know, that's how you got property in those days. You had to be...a good credit rating and you had to. to get a homestead you had to be pretty good people.

KB: Did he have to buy anything though? Did he have to pay for the land when he homesteaded it or could he just move in?

SL: I imagine that long ago had we known then what we know now; we'd have some relics. I know my dad and mother had a corn sheller. We'd have to shuck the corn, you know and let it dry properly and then shell that, we'd just shell it with our hands. Rub two cobs together and rub the cob down just right and then brush two cobs together and shell the corn.

KB: Huh. And you'd dry it for corn meal?

SL: Huh uh. Get it good and dry and then it would grind.

KB: How did you grind it? Did you take it to the gristmill or did you do it at home?

SL: I've got a mill; no, I think I gave that away. Don't know whether Reed's got it down there in his relics or not. But anyway, all those things people used like their horseshoes and, oh I can see dad shoeing those horses. We had one old mare that, oh she was a wretch. She didn't want those shoes. They pound them on with special nails, right through their hoof and Dad would always shoe the horses that he'd take out to Yellow Creek in the wagon to make their feet soft. I don't know why they put shoes on them. Why do they?

KB: I think it's because the real hoofs are too soft. So they put the shoes on to make them harder so they don't feel the rocks and stuff as much. Makes them tougher.

SL: And they'd have a rasp that they'd rasp that old hoof with. I've seen Dad shoe horses. He would never let us be around much, so we could watch through the corral fence or something because the darn horses can be mean and they can kick. Well, there goes the school bus.

KB: Yeah, it's the kid's come home from their swimming lessons. Do you remember very much about Tropic before you moved to Henrieville?

SL: Well, just that it was our home.

KB: What would you do in Tropic when you were young to entertain yourselves?

SL: We would go to school in the wintertime and go out to the ranch in the summer.

KB: --Now I read a story about they would take bones and make toys out of them?

SL: I've seen Mother make us rag dolls but I never did see anything else.

KB: So you had rag dolls? Did you make any toys yourself?

SL: No, a few rag dolls just like they make today. We always got, oh, big enough we'd get one toy. It would be just one toy and then our stocking would have, that was one time of the year that we'd get peanuts and hard candy, a few gum drops, they'd put in our stocking to make Christmas.

KB: Now do you remember Christmas in Henrieville?

SL: Oh, a lot of Christmas's in Henrieville.

KB: What did they do for Christmas? What was the celebration?

SL: Well, we hung up our stocking on Christmas Eve. We always had a Christmas tree that we went out to the ranch and got or just up on the hill.

KB: What kind of decorations?

SL: Oh, crepe paper and sometimes we'd paint paper with crayons and just make fancy ones. Use flour and water and make paste.

KB: And would the paste be like a dough or something and you'd make decorations out of those?

SL: You'd just make chains. Just chain it together.

KB: Paper chains?

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SL: Paper chains. We'd use colored paper.

KB: And what about Santa Claus?

SL: He always came. Usually, you know, one of the older ones in the family, I think Ora has got a Santa Claus suit now that she gets on once in awhile and goes to her grand kids and ho ho's.

(Recording stops here/tape runs out)

End of Side Two, Tape One

End of Interview

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Interview Agreement and Deed of Gift

In view of the historical value of this oral history interview and my interest in Utah history,

I, Sarah Ott Littlefield
please print or type your name

knowingly and voluntarily donate to the Utah Division of State History the audiotapes, videotapes, any transcription, as well as any and all copyrights and other rights, title and interest that might exist. I also permit the Utah Division of State History full use of this document for whatever purposes they may have. This includes the rights to use this interview on the World Wide Web.

Interview Description

Date of Interview June 7, 2000

Primary Subject Family; Life in Tropic & Henrieville

Other Topics _____

Number of Tapes 1

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Sarah OTT Littlefield
Bryce Valley 2000

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.