

Interview with: Jerry C. Roundy
Interviewer: Jay Haymond
Interview number: 1 of 2
Place of interview: His house in Escalante
Subject of interview: His life experiences growing up in Escalante
Transcriber: Vectra Solution/MW
Date: August 6, 1998
Tape No.: 1
Side No.: A

JH: ...Jerry C. Roundy, and the date is August 6, 1998. We're in his home in Escalante, Utah. We are going to talk to him first about growing up in Escalante. With me is Suzi Montgomery and Carol Simmons and Sheree Roundy is also here with us. My name is Jay Haymond. Let's begin, Jerry, with you telling us about your memories of growing up here in Escalante, the family that you remember growing up with, your parents and brothers and sisters, if you would.

JC: Okay. Well, I was the eighth child and the fifth boy of Wallace Roundy and Ella Mae Griffin, and we lived just across the way here, and I grew up, so I looked at these hills as a growing child and didn't think they were that pretty [chuckling] when I was a kid. They've gotten a lot prettier since I've grown older and moved back and put my home here, but I was across the way where I would look onto this property where I am now. I was born in 1931, so I grew up during the 30s. It was a good childhood. I enjoyed being here. We roamed the hills and did a lot of things like that and hunted arrow-heads. My father was a cattleman, so he ran cattle up on the mountain and down in the desert, and when I got old enough to be able to travel with him, he'd take me out with him to follow him on a horse up through this Box Canyon and finally onto the top of the mountain. When we finally reached the top of the mountain, I thought I'd gone to heaven, because that was the most exciting thing to me in my whole life was just to be out in those pines. We'd camp up on the bench away from the traffic. Of course, there weren't many people up there then, but he'd start to unpack the horses, and then he would say to me, "Well, why don't you take your fish hook" and we'd always have one rolled up and sticking in our pocket. We didn't have fishing poles and he'd say "Get down and see if you can catch us a little mess of fish for supper and I'll fix camp." Of course that was fine with me, so I'd get down and fish, and I usually could catch five or six fish in a

little while, and have them for supper, and by that time he'd have a fire built. We would eat supper, and then he would go out and start to chop some pine boughs to put down for a bed. We didn't have sleeping bags. We just had the old camp quilts. He'd chop the pine boughs and make a bed, and we'd put that on and then lie down with him at night. That was probably one of the most exciting things that I remember, to follow him on the trails. I grew up here and went to school. I started the first grade. My first grade teacher was Ella Mae Lee, and she had taught all of my brothers and sisters, from the oldest to the youngest. I was the last. My older brother was 21, so there was quite a span between us, and she taught everybody from him down to me, but it was exciting to start school. We went through the elementary school and then into high school through Escalante, and enjoyed the quietness. We didn't get out of Escalante very often. We didn't have a car, so I really didn't get out of Escalante much until I got into high school and started traveling with the athletic teams, and then to go over to Panguitch was really big stuff. That was a big city to me [chuckling]. I thought that was quite all right. They even had a café over there.

JH: The roads were a little bit rough.

JR: The only road in was the road up over the mountain, and see, they didn't get this oiled road down through upper valley until 1957. I worked on that after I came off my mission, so that was a long time to get oil on the road. The road around the east end of Boulder wasn't completed until about 1980. Anyway, that was my impression of growing up in Escalante. It was a good childhood. We didn't have a lot of the amenities that other people had, but we never seemed to want. I don't think my parents were rich, but I didn't know that they weren't rich. We always had plenty. Dad was a good provider. We always raised enough food for everything that we wanted, and we always had a beef and a pig in the fall, so we had plenty of meat and plenty of vegetables. Mother bottled an awfully lot, so we were never hungry.

JH: She bottle meat too I'll bet.

JR: She bottled meat. Um-hum. She did. She bottled lots of meat and I enjoyed that. In those days, no one really worried if you killed a deer out of season or in season. It didn't matter which it was. Nearly everybody had a deer once in a while, and they bottled a lot of the venison because the bottling would kind of take the wild taste out too, so she

bottled lots of meat. She made homemade soap. I can remember chopping wood and setting a number three tub on three big boulders and then sticking wood under the tub to make a fire to boil the soap. That's the way she did the washing too. She didn't have an automatic washer. She never did have an automatic washer, but she had a wringer washer. She washed all of the while I was a little kid on the scrubbing board under the apple tree. I remember making a fire for her to heat the water, and then we'd bucket from that to the other tub for her to wash in, and some more to rinse, so it was quite an all-day process for washing.

JH:

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JR: Yeah. There was family all around. We lived at the edge of town, and right up the street was my aunt Nora and uncle Ray, and then right over here was uncle Albert, and across the street was uncle Hyrum and aunt Jane, and across here was uncle Usher and aunt Eva, and up here was aunt Mary and uncle Ernest, and up from them was grandpa and grandma Griffin, and over here was aunt Em, and up here was aunt Rachel, and so I could start for town, and before I got to town, I could visit more than a dozen of my aunts

and uncles and never knock on a door. You didn't knock. They were just family, so we just walked in and they walked into our house, and it was just an extended family. I thought everybody had families like that. You're all just big family, and so it was a close-knit family. My father and his brother married two sisters, so we had double cousins in one case, so we grew up like family. No one even knocked, it was just like going into another room in my house. It was a nice experience. I had a good family. Now you started to ask a question.

JH: I was going to ask you about the homemade soap that your mother made. Were you ever conscious of how strong that soap was on your clothes?

JR: Oh yeah. It was strong [chuckle]. They took a lot of lye because the wells in Escalante were hard water. For some reason, we have the same problem here. We have a well and it's hard, hard, hard, but they had to put a lot of lye in it to soften the water, but they put a lot of lye in that soap and it was hard on a woman's hands when they scrubbed with it on the scrubbing board...but I remember that, and mother would say, "Now don't stick your hand in the water. It's got a lot of lye in it" It was very hard, but it took the dirt out.

JH: Color too.

JR: [Chuckle] Yeah. Color too [chuckling], and my mother made most of my clothes when I grew up. I had brothers, but we were poor during the depression, and so I had a lot of hand-me-down clothes. I remember her sitting in the evening, sewing on an old treadle sewing machine that she pumped by feet. She made all of my shirts, and even cut up old socks and made socks for me. I didn't have any bought clothes until I was quite old.

JH: What did she use in the way of material to make a shirt? Did she make your jeans too?

JR: She'd take one of my brother's old shirts and remodel it and cut it down to fit me. She didn't make the Levis, but you could buy Levis for \$1.50, and I had those, and that was about it. Usually you didn't have more than one pair of Levis. You wore them [Chuckle] week in and week out, it seemed like, and one pair of shoes. When summer came and it was warm enough to go without shoes, they came off and we went all summer barefoot. Our feet got pretty tough. You could walk through the rocks and thistles and not hurt bad.

JH: I want to return to a camp up on the Boulder...and, in your memory, tell me about the smell of a campfire or cooking food. Let's say that you're cooking a trout, and you probably got some bread, biscuits from...

JR: Um-hum. We made bread and biscuits in the bake oven. I can smell those smells right today. It's hard to describe them, but I could smell the smell of the grease in there, and he always fry a little bacon in it so you got the waft of the bacon grease frying in here, and as the trout went down, they'd be in quite a bit of grease, and they'd just puff up, and crackle as they cooked, and they always cooked them quite crisp. They were just little brook trout. They weren't big fish. They were little brook trout, and so they were cooked quite crisp, and the smell of that campfire, the smoke going down through those pine trees and the smell of the pine and the wood fire, which was usually pine wood and Quake Aspen is what we burned, so the smell of the smoke comes back today. I can smell it and I can hear the grease popping there, and I can see him reach out and stir that, turn them over, lift it up, put it back on, and I can hear that, and I can hear the creek gurgle by as you'd lie down in your bed, and I can watch the stars and see the night birds come out and catch the insects as they floated through, and you could see those through the stars and the moon, whenever it was out. The memories are clear. I remember those just as well as if I were still there. I can remember sounds around. I can remember the sound of our old kitchen door, which it [chuckle] closed with quite a bang; a hollow sound. I can hear that in my mind today, a lot of the sounds of childhood. I don't think you ever forget sounds and smells. You smell it again, and it'll take you right back to where you were the last time you smelled it... or where you used to smell it. The smell of burning hair when the calves were being branded. That's a very pungent smell that you get, and I remember that very well when he'd brand the calves, the smell of that.

JH: Talk about some of your duties as a cowhand. What do we got? Maybe a 10-year span that you helped with the stock?

JR: Ours was a little different, maybe, than you'd say where you had a working ranch. See, we didn't feed any of the cows, and we didn't keep any of the cattle around the place. We put them on the mountain in the summertime. By June 15, we could bring them and put them up there. So, we'd go down about June 1 down into what we called Egypt country, and gathered them up and we would drive them up through the Harris Wash, and

bring them into town, and then we'd spend a couple of days branding and marking and tagging, and doing all of the things necessary, and taking the weaners away from their mothers, and then we would drive them right past up this road here and drive them about seven miles up here to what they call the mouth of the Box. I don't know if you know where Box Canyon is or not, but at that time, there was a trail that went through there and they allowed you to put your cattle in it. We had a fence across the bottom so we could push the cattle through it, and we could just leave them. They'd take about a week and feed their way through, and then a week later, Dad would come and say "Well, we'll ride through the Box and push the stragglers on out," and we wouldn't find more than a half a dozen. Those old cows would go on out, and then we'd put them in there and put their calves in a corral to wean them. Their mothers would stand there at the fence and bawl for about three days, and then finally they'd give up and head on up on the mountain, and the calves would be weaned. Then we'd put them on the mountain. Then, we had to go up once, quite soon, and carry the salt out. We'd put it on the pack bags on a horse and put what we called the salt licks. The cattle knew where they were. We'd put several chunks of salt out for the summer. In October, we'd go up and gather them off that, bring them back and do the same thing, the branding and all of that, and then we'd take them down to the desert country, and they'd stay down, and the same there. We'd just go down once or twice every winter and check on them to make sure that they were not iced in on a river bend or something. That was the extent of it. It wasn't like you were handling cattle all the time. They were pretty well on their own when they ranged, and that's really why the pioneers first came in here, was to find range for the cattle. When they came in, they were looking for a good cattle range, and they wanted an area where they could put cattle out in the winter and let them forage, and then put them out in the summer and let them forage, and never have to do any feeding, but they wanted a range that was in close enough in proximity that they didn't have long cattle drives, and so within an area of 50 miles, you've got a summer range and you've got a winter range, so it made the perfect range for cattle and sheep. So, on the first sheep they brought in here, they put down on the desert and didn't put a herder with them, and the next year they were all dead, so they found sheep could make it in this country, but they needed a herder with them, where cattle were okay on that. That was basically the duties with that.

JH: Do you remember when the Taylor Grazing Act came into effect, and permits were required on the desert?

JR: Yeah. I don't remember the exact year, but I know it was about 1936 or 1937. I can look it up for you, because my dad was one of the representatives from this area and went back to Washington D.C. and helped to draft that Taylor Grazing Act. I remember I was just five or six years old when he went back there. So it was 1936 or 1937; somewhere in that area. Of course, we can look up the Taylor Grazing Act.

JH: It actually passed in 1934.

JR: 1934 was it, so I'm a little earlier.

JH: It kicked in around the states in 1937.

JR: Well, I remember when he went back to Washington and did something with one representative because I've seen pictures of him working on that Taylor Grazing. That was in the '30s, but I don't remember the exact years.

JH: With his participation in that way, did he feel sort of an ownership of that bill and how it worked on the land? Do you remember him expressing himself?

JR: Yeah. He liked the bill. He felt it needed to be done because he felt that we needed to have some control over it and not just anybody put just as much as they want, because the land was starting to get depleted by that time. He felt that it was a good bill and they needed to do something. After that, of course when ever he got a cut in permit, then he was always a little upset too [laughing]. No, he was in favor of having some control over the number of cattle that could be put on the range, and he was the cattleman representative in this area. As long as I can remember, when I was a kid, he worked with them, and I just remember him going to Richfield all the time for something, as the representative in the committee.

JH: The idea of being a representative to a regulatory agency, he had contact with the local stock operators, how did he manage that? Did he go around and talk to them? Did he have meetings, or was it more one-on-one?

JR: I think it was a little of both. I can remember meetings they had here at the school, and I remember he was involved in those, but he also was one-on-one. He knew the people very well because he had lived here all his life, and so he knew some of their feelings and things like that, but it was both; one-on-one and there were meetings held. There was a

man by the name of Don Moffat, is a name that kicks into my mind, I don't know, but he was out here. He lived in Richfield or some place, and they worked together closely on the range. Dad had been a forest ranger back in 1911 or 1912 to 1915 over this whole area.

JH: So he saw how the forestry managed grazing.

JR: Right. He was very concerned that it was being overused, but being a cattleman, he also didn't want to lose permit, but on the other hand he knew that it had to be managed.

JH: That's wonderful to have that kind of experience and then be able to provide input on the new legislation. Well, I suppose the permit process wasn't all that different for the forest service as the new rules for the grazing service. Would that be a true statement?

JR: I think it was the same thing. When they first come into effect, nobody really wants them. Nobody wants to be controlled. We all want the freedom to do whatever we want to do, and I think it was a matter of sitting down and talking it through, and saying this is what has to be done, and then a meeting of minds. I don't think anybody's upset about rules as long as they feel like they aren't forced on them or imposed on them to the extent that they're arbitrary and you don't have any input.

JH: We were talking a little bit earlier about your sports activity in, I suppose we were talking about 9, 10, 11 and 12th grades. Go through that a little bit for us. Tell us what you did and some of those activities.

JR: Well, I wasn't tall enough to be a great basketball player, but I did make the main team [laugh], but back in those days, men were shorter. Today I'd have a very difficult time, but I played basketball from sophomore on to senior, and enjoyed that, and I ran track. I was a pretty good track man. I was a 10-second man in the 100 meter when I was in high school, so that wasn't too bad, and good with the long-jump and the relay races, and I enjoyed track, but I liked baseball. I enjoyed baseball. I pitched and played second and third base and enjoyed that. You didn't have to be tall to be a baseball player or a track man and those kinds of things, but I enjoyed the high school years, and they were good years. I'm glad I was in a small school, because probably in a large school I may not have been good enough to be able to play much, but here I played a lot, and I enjoyed it, and then I played on the summer league baseball team by Delta for a couple of years. I enjoyed those years, so athletics were important to me in high school. They sort of kept

me moving along. I wasn't as good of a scholar. I would like to look back and say I was really a scholar then, but that's not the case. See, Sheree and I have only been married 13 years. She married her high school sweetheart, and he was a good athlete, and so we were on the athletic teams together and knew each other really well. I married a girl from Pleasant Grove. Lael died, and Colleen died, and so Sheree and I got together after that and have had a good marriage since then, so we've been married 13 years.

JH: Where did you meet your first wife?

JR: I met her at the Hill Cumorah pageant in New York. That always raises an eyebrow. I was a missionary back there, and that was when the missionaries put on the pageant then. We'd leave our field of labor and go up and live in Palmyra for two weeks and practice; Harold Hansen, Lael Woodbury, and those when we were putting the pageant on. That was in 1955 and 1956. BYU then would send out busloads of coeds to participate and kind of even out the boy to girl ratio. I met her there, but I didn't realize that I had really met her. I met her and we talked. Later on I saw pictures where we were in the same group, but then when we came back to BYU, one day in the library, I bumped into her around the book stands. She looked at me and I looked at her and I said "Weren't you back at the Hill Cumorah pageant?" She said "Yeah, you were a missionary," and so we started talking. So I guess technically I first met her there and then met her at BYU, and we began dating and were married in 1957.

JH: You are exonerated then

JR: I guess [laugh]. I don't know.

JH: So you went from Escalante to BYU. Is that true?

JR: No. I went from Escalante to the navy. I went one semester of school up at Utah State, then I came back and my folks were building a house, and I helped them build the house, then the Korean war broke out. I turned 19 in June and I checked with the draft list and I was next to be drafted. I've never figured this one out. I didn't want to go in the army for two years, so I joined the navy for four. I've questioned my math on that ever since [laugh], how four equates less than two [laugh], but I went into the navy for four years and then came back. It was after I got home that the Bishop asked if I'd go on a mission, so then I went on a mission during 1955 and 1956. Then I came back to BYU and met Colleen and got married. I majored in history, by the way, but never did teach history

because I got a job teaching seminary and went up to Aston, Idaho and taught for the LDS Seminary. After that, I went to Hawaii and become head of the Religion department. It was then called the Church College. It is now BYU Hawaii. That's where I knew Ken Baldrige. We were colleagues over there. Then I went from there to Rick's college and worked there, and finished my Ph.D. down at BYU and taught a couple of years there, and then the last teaching episode was in Israel at the Jerusalem Center. So we've had a good life. Teaching has been good to me although I had always thought of being a lawyer. Political science and history was my major, but I've never been sorry that I stayed with teaching. It's been a good experience.

JH: This is a bit jocular, but let's explore, just for fun, returning to the mathematics of going into the navy four years versus two years in the army, does that relate to your cowboy experience who loathed the idea of walking?

JR: You know, it just might be. I certainly didn't want to go in the infantry [chuckling]. That was one of the things that pushed me into the navy. Somebody said to me the other day, I like to hike as far as my horse will carry me [laughter], and that's a little bit like me. I like to hike as far as my horse could carry me. I never was a hiker, but I think it is growing up on a horse that I think that it's just plain part of it, and I really didn't want to be in the infantry. I'm not sorry I went in the navy. I had a good experience on two aircraft carriers. I spent most of it on the Korean waters, but that was all right. They gave me the GI bill and I was able to go clear through a Master's degree on it, so it was really a benefit, so I don't ever regret having spent the four years in the navy at all. I think it was a great blessing in my life and helped me to get my education, so I'm glad I did.

JH: I don't want to leave the relationship that horse riders have with their horses. Did you have a favorite horse?

JR: Oh yeah. When I was about six or seven, I had a little brown mare named Sharkey. That's when the government CC camp came in and built down here. I used to ride that. I've got pictures of me. My feet almost stuck straight out because I was so small, but I used to ride her down that lane, and the CC boys down there were from New York and had never ridden horses, and they were quite fascinated with that. They would give me a nickel if they could ride my horse up and down that lane, so I thought that was great. After that, they'd take me in the PX and buy me a two cent Babe Ruth candy bar. I got

so I knew all the CC boys down there. I had a great relationship. One year, when I was about 13 or 14 and there were a lot of horses that roamed out on this range, my dad came across what we call the Allen Dump out here, and roped a little colt, a little mare and brought it in and kept it out at a ranch we had out here two and a half miles out of town, and didn't tell me about it. Then on Christmas morning, when we got up and were looking at presents, he said, I think I hear a horse whinnying out there. I went out and there was that little brown colt tied to a tree out there, and he said that's your Christmas present. I was so excited over that. Talk about getting a new car or anything. There's nothing compared to it, because that was mine to have and to break, and we called her Fly. Her name was Old Fly. I broke her and rode her all through my teenage years. I didn't have a saddle at that time, and so he sent to the Stockman and Farmer's Catalog and got a little saddle, and it came into the post office. I can remember when I was expecting it. I would go to the post office. My aunt was the postmaster. I'd go and say "Aunt Mildred, anything from Stockman Farmer today?" "No. Nothing today Jerry." Everyday, and finally she said "Yeah. It's here," and that was that saddle. I've never been more excited over anything in my life. I took that saddle home and put that on that little mare. It was something else to ride around town on that little mare and that saddle. My son has the saddle today. I gave it to him for their kids.

JH: Was it the audience being able to see you in this saddle on that horse, or was your body involved in the comforting...

JR: No. It was both. I hadn't had one, and dad had put a thing around the horse, and he made some wire stirrups. It was just a cinch that went around the horse with some wire stirrups, and a blanket on the horse. That was my saddle when I would ride with him a lot. When I got that saddle and I sat down in the seat of that saddle and got to hold the horn and put my rope on there, and all of the things that come back that cowboys, I thought that now I was a real cowboy, and I have to confess that when I rode through town, I did want everyone to kind of look around and say "Hey, you got a new saddle." Certain amount of that. I wouldn't deny that for a moment.

Tape No.: 1
Side No.: B

JH: [tape begins]...for a friend and a couple of horses. What about boyfriends, girlfriends?

JR: The girls didn't like me [laugh].

JH: He says.

JR: No. I had close friends when I grew up, but right up the next house up was my first cousin, and across the street was my first cousin, and the three of us were really close together, and then through the lot was another second cousin, who is now the Bishop, and we grew up very close, and we built tree-houses together. We built dug-outs together. We went on the mountain together. We did everything together and I had very close relationships with them. They would sleep at my house, and I would sleep at their house, and I ate at my house, and I ate at their house, and it was just kind of a one-family unit almost, that's the way the friends were, but those were my three closest friends growing up, and then as we went into school, then it broadened out. We only had about 20 in the class, so you knew everybody in the class, and you were friends with everybody in the class.

JH: Do you know Dale Jolley?

JR: Yeah. He's a first cousin. Yes. I know Dale.

JR: In the neighborhood were also a bunch of girls who were all cousins, first cousins, second cousins, and we grew up together. We played together boys and girls, and never thought much about it. I remember the first date that we went on. My friend and I decided that we'd take our two cousins to the movie, but we told them we didn't have any money to pay for their ticket, so if they could get the money, why we could take them to the movies [chuckle], so they did, and then when we got about 30 or 40 feet from the ticket office, we stopped and says "If you'd like to give us your money now, we'll go buy the tickets" [laughter]. We walked up like we were paying the tickets. [chuckling] I don't know how old we were. We must have only been about 12 years old or something like that.

JH: That's your entrepreneurial spirit.

JR: That's my entrepreneurial spirit sticking out there, but it was kind of funny [laughter]. We had a great time. I lived over here on this edge, and there was a bank of sage brush on there that went down before we got down into our field and down where we gardened and had the crops. But every year, some gullies went down through there, and my mother would always let us have a Halloween party at my house, and so we would spend weeks making a spook alley down through those old tall sage brush bushes and down through that, and then my older sister and her friend, they would be the fortune tellers, and they would help. We had that thing rigged up and so the kids in the neighborhood, we'd invite them all down. My dad was the biggest kid of all. He'd take a jack-o-lantern and stick it on the end of a long pole and put a sheet on the end of that, and then they'd stick that pole there and go out in the middle of that pasture and walk around so it looked like a ghost floating through the air. He scared those kids half to death [laugh]. One little gal, I remember [chuckling] cried and bawled, and we had to take her home, but we had a great time. It was just fun. Halloween was my most favorite holiday. We'd work on that spook alley for weeks and fix that up. Mother was good. She'd always say that we could have the Halloween party there, and she'd fix food for us, and had a great time. Lots of friends didn't have to worry about people to associate with. Like I said, once we got into school, your whole class were your friends.

JH: I can hear you talking about the community. It even goes beyond family. It's sort of like a form of tribalism, and it's where the whole group feels a sense of responsibility for each other, even though you had this byplay of kid stuff, but there's a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the group and each individual in that group.

JR: I think you're right, and I think in some ways we're losing a little bit today. I wish it were more like that. When I grew up as a kid, and Sheree was a teenager, we knew everybody in town. You could name everybody in every house, and every member of the family. We knew them all, and so it didn't matter what part of the community you were in, you were not a stranger. You knew everyone.

JH: You haven't mentioned the church yet, except for the mission, but you haven't mentioned being involved in the church here in town.

JR: The church was a big part of our life. In fact, most of the social activity was the church, other than the high school, but the church and the high school, a lot of times, were

intertwined. They would say “We won’t plan something on this night because that’s a church night,” and the church said would say “Well, that’s a high school night,” and things like that. As a young boy growing up, we went to church regularly. My mother was relief society president. Dad was on the high council, and those kinds of things. As a deacon, I remember passing the sacrament very well. That was a vivid memory in my life, and then you get to be a priest and you start to say “Well, I don’t know if I want to go to church as often as I should,” but they weren’t bad years and the church was our everything. The MIA, of course, every Tuesday night, we all went to mutual because there was no place else to go. I confess there was a lot more basketball played there than should have been, a lot more basketball played than there were lessons taught, as far as formal in-class lessons, but we loved to go to the old gym and play basketball on Tuesday nights, and the church was a big part of your life. We were very much involved in the church.

JH: Did you enjoy a leadership position in the priesthood that you had responsibility...

JR: I was president of the deacons quorum, and then after that I didn’t have any leadership positions in the priest’s quorum or the teacher’s quorum, that I remember, but I did in the deacon’s quorum. I remember being president of that. In the MIA, not while I was here. I was president of the Young Men’s but that was after I was married, but I didn’t have a leadership position. I don’t remember a lot about it. I don’t remember ever going home teaching with a senior companion when I was young. They just didn’t assign them for some reason. It was just the older people they assigned, so I didn’t have any of that kind of experience in the church, but went to church and was involved in that way.

JH: When you graduated from your high school, and you went for a year to Utah State, what kind of a transition was that for you?

JR: It was hard [chuckle] because I confess I hadn’t studied as hard in high school as I should have done, and I really didn’t know how to study. I don’t think there was a lot of emphasis put on scholarships as there should have been. I think there’s more today, than when I went to college. All of a sudden, if you don’t read your assignments, you don’t pass the test, and it was hard, but I got through all right. It was quite a transition for me because the town was small. Logan was not a large town, but it’s still a lot bigger than

Escalante, and the college was a lot bigger than Escalante High School, and so I found it was a little hard of a transition there. I wasn't too excited about that first year in school.

JH: Had you chosen your life vocational pursuit at that point?

JR: No. No. I hadn't chosen any pursuit. I had no idea what I wanted to be that year when I went to school. I just took some general classes and, I don't know, maybe majored in something that would help me be a farmer or livestock man. I really did want to come back and buy my dad's cattle, and he refused to sell them to me [chuckle].

JH: He did deliberately?

JR: Yes. He did that deliberately, um-hum, and I was a little bit upset. I thought, well why not, and he sat me down and he said, "Listen," he said "I know what's going to happen. We have a few cattle and next year we'll have a few less, and then a few less as we keep getting cut back, and so pretty soon you won't have enough to make a living on. Then you won't have an education. Then you won't really have a profession, and you'll just have a major day-to-day existence," and he said "I want you to go ahead and get an education and do something more than run these cattle." As I look back on it now, that's the best advice I ever got in my life, but at the time, I didn't want to go to school. I wasn't a scholarly person. I had no idea, and the last thing I ever wanted to be in my life was a school teacher. I thought, man, to be cooped up in a school room all day long, that would be about the worst punishment you could inflict upon anybody, and I had no idea...

JH: That's coming from a cowboy.

JR: Yeah. That's coming from a cowboy, and that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to get on my horse and ride the range and be out in the open. I didn't want to be confined, and I didn't want to wear a tie, and I didn't want to do any of those things. Then, as I went into the navy, I got looking around and I thought, hey, I'm not an officer and they have a lot better life than I do - although I didn't have any real menial duties to do because I did go along in the enlisted ranks pretty fast and I didn't have to do KP, and I never did do any of that - but I realized that if I'm going to make a career of the service even, I don't want to do it, I want to go back, so I got thinking I've got to get out of here and get an education. So, when I got out of the navy I wanted to go to school. I never had a car in my life, so I bought a car. I'd saved up enough money, oh a few thousand dollars while I was in there, so I bought a car and was already enrolled at BYU until Bishop Baker

called me out of the classroom and asked me “Will you go on a mission?” He’d asked me when I was 19, he met me in the hallway one day, and he said “Would you go on a mission if I called you?” And I said “Yeah. I guess so.” No big deal. I wasn’t really saying whether I was for it or against it, I was just kind of ambivalent about that.

JH: Did you know missionaries when you were growing up in Escalante? Were there people who were on a mission?

JR: Yes. There were people who went on missions, and my dad had talked about his mission a lot, and I thought about a mission, but by the time I got to be 19, I was not thinking really one way or the other. Then you had to be 20 when you went, so when he had asked me at 19 if I would go if I was called, I guess I was thinking down the line a ways. Then I went in the navy and came out of the navy, and a mission was the furthest thing from my mind because I was 23 years old and I wanted to get into college and get moving along with life. Then he called me in and sat across the table and looked me in the eyes and he says “Now will you go on a mission?” Oh, [chuckling] I just wanted to say no so bad, and I said “Yeah.” I’d just been taught that you do what you’re called to do, and that’s all there is to it, and so I said yes, so I went at 23, so I didn’t get home from my mission until I was 25, and so I didn’t get back in college until I was 26 years old, so then I went winter and summer and finished up by the time I was 29, and was offered a job teaching seminary.

JH: Did they have a formal seminary training program then or did you sort of...

JR: Oh, it was kind of formal. I had not wanted to be a school teacher, but my dad had always wanted me to be a school teacher and my mother had always wanted me to be a teacher. She said “If you teach, you’ll always be learning,” so I thought about it and thought, yeah, that’s pretty good, and maybe I’ll teach for a few years. I kind of wanted to go to law school too, and so I went ahead and got a teaching certificate along with it, and while I was doing my student teaching, somebody said “Have you ever thought of teaching Seminary?” I said “No. I never have,” and they said “Well, you might be...” so I went in and talked to them and they said, “Yeah, take this one class,” and that was about as formal as it was, and then they said “When you go to do your student teaching, we’ll arrange for you to do one hour a day in the seminary,” so I went down to Nephi and did my student teaching, and I did one hour a day in the seminary, and they came and

observed, and when I got through, they called up and Brother Packer offered me a job, so I went to that, and then the longer I was with it, I liked it and enjoyed it. I spent five years up in Ashton, and then when I got the job in Hawaii over there as the head of the religion department, that was a nice opportunity, so I stayed there six years, and then was invited to go to Ricks. It turned out I never applied for a job my whole life. I just never did fill out an application for anything. Somebody just called and asked would you come. Yeah, I guess, so I went. I've had a good career with teaching. Like I said, that's the last thing I ever wanted to be.

JH: I wanted to ask about your experience at Ricks. Where you there when the dam blew?

JR: You bet I was. It broke on my birthday. I'll say I was there. That was 1976, June 5, and we had been down here to Escalante on a little vacation, and we had just gotten back the night before. My wife and I were planning to go out that afternoon for my birthday to have dinner, and I said, "Well, I'll haul up little dirt and fix this flower bed," so I was out working in my yard, and when I was out there, my daughter came out and she said "Dad, it's on the news. The Teton Dam is breaking." I said "No, it couldn't be. You must be hearing things." "Well that's what it said." I said "Well go listen again." Just then, my neighbor drove down the street and he said, "Hey, got word that the Teton Dam is breaking." He said, "I'm going out to Sugar City to see if I can put my mother's cattle up onto higher ground," and I said "Well I'll go help you," so I jumped in his truck and we went off and I didn't even think to tell my wife where I'd gone. I just jumped in the car and went, and we went out to Sugar City and drove her cattle up onto a little higher ground, and we said, "Well, the flood probably won't be more than a foot or two. They'll be alright here," so we pushed those cattle up on there, and then I came back home, and by that time it was about 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, and we then rode through Sugar City in his truck telling people they better get out. By that time the radio was broadcasting that it looks like it'll be a foot of water in streets of Rexburg. Well, it was 6 feet, is what it turned out, and so we came back then to town, and then I got my family together, I was up on the bench so we could stand up, and I watched that flood come down the valley. It kicked up a cloud of dust ahead of it, just that big rush, the wind from that, and it was just a big cloud of dust, and then all of a sudden you see the head of this flood and it would hit a house and you'd watch that house and it would just kind of

shudder for a few minutes, and then all of a sudden just disintegrate and go with the flood. It just moved everything in its path right down the valley, and by night, the whole valley was just inundated and then all that electricity was out and there were no lights down that valley. We had electricity up where we were, and telephones, but it was all dark and it was the most eerie feeling to step out on my front porch and look over that valley and not hear a sound or see a light or anything. By night, the flood water was all through. I remember going down by the high school and watching, and it came up and started lapping, and one woman came by and started crying. She said "I didn't get anything out of the house. I only have one diaper for my baby." So we went through, and by the next morning we could walk down and see the fish lying in the gutters in Rexburg and see the water lines where it had gone through, and it was higher than my head. I'd gone down to a friend, I was in the Stake Presidency then, and one of the bishops, he was a plumbing salesman, and he was in my ward, so I'd gone down with him and we stacked some sandbags against his door a foot high, and he said "Well, this should do it." Well, it just wiped him right out. Then, very quickly, people started coming in to Rexburg, and the church moved in and we set up a command post and started pushing things out, and then I worked up there in the station and gave out shoes, and people began donating things. I think one of the saddest days, that I remember about that, I was watching a lady, she was a very elegant lady, she was on the faculty at Ricks and a musician, Sister Barrus, she was very elegant; that's the only way I can describe her, but she had lost everything, and there she was going through this clothes hamper trying to find a dress to wear. When I saw her doing that, it just about broke my heart. I thought, oh my gosh, I wouldn't have thought she would have to rummage through anything for her clothing. I remember that very well that day.

JH: I was thinking, as you said you helped your neighbor push the cows up onto higher ground, that your cowboy experience was returning...

JR: I guess. We were on foot. Let me tell out about that. His mother came up, and his house was right next to mine, and he had a balcony at the time. She watched that flood come down, and she said, I could hear her now, she said "It's taking the cattle," and then she said "There goes our house." She just stood and watched the cattle and the house and

everything go out, and totally helpless, could do nothing about it. It was a traumatic day for the people in Rexburg, all the way through.

JH: Well, I think it was for the region. I think...

JR: Oh, the whole region.

JH: There was a shudder that went through everyone's heart when that happened. One of your neighbors up there, I've been trying and trying to remember his name, he's an author, and has written quite a few popular books.

JR: Oh, uh, okay, you've got me too. He's not there now.

JH: He didn't go back after the flood.

JR: Yeah, he didn't go back. He's written a lot of novels. It'll come to me in a minute. I know who you're talking about.

JH: But you know his career at Ricks.

JR: He was not at Ricks, he was at the high school, and he was a seminary teacher at the high school, but he never did teach at Ricks.

JH: I misunderstood.

JR: No. Not Jack Weyland. Jack Weyland is up there now, and he is on the faculty now, but he came there after I left. It'll come to me.

JH: Me too. I've been racking my brain to try and haul that name out. He was in a class at BYU that I taught for the department. Well, let's not really skip over your career, because I think you'll go back and refer to it from time to time as we go on, but all this career and living in places like Idaho and Hawaii, and then you come back to Escalante, tell me about that.

JR: Well, the truth of the matter is, I never intended to come back to Escalante, ever, to live, and things like that. I hadn't planned to stay in Rexburg when I retired either because all the kids had gone from there and it's colder in the winter. I loved Rexburg, and it's a wonderful place to live, but I didn't plan to stay there as a retiree. I wanted to get to a warmer climate, and then my wife passed away in 1985, and so I still had another eight or ten years to teach if I was to stay there, and planned to finish out up there. Sheree had lost her husband about three years earlier, and we had had contact, as friends all our life. We were in the same ward in Provo, and palled around together as college kids and things like that, so we knew it, and then her daughter was married to my nephew, and so

we ended up at the same place on Thanksgiving, and got married a year later, but we hadn't planned to move back here. We planned to move to St. George. We thought about building a home there and maybe building a summer home some place else, and as we were driving down the lane over here, I said "Gee, it would be nice to have a summer home over in there," and then we said, "Hey, why not build one?" Then we started looking for property, and we found this 30 acres for sale, so we decided to buy it and thought maybe we'd just build a summer home here, and then as we started thinking, we thought, well, do we want a home there and a home here and have half of your stuff there and half your stuff here, and so we finally decided to just build our permanent home here. Since she was from here, she had close ties too, so it seemed to be a natural situation for us to come back here, and we've been as happy as we can be here. We couldn't ask for a better retirement situation than we have right here. We're not land-locked because we have a car that we can travel in, and we can even go anytime we want, and we do. We do a certain amount of traveling, but it's been great to have the winter to do some writing and do some of those things that we want to do, so it hasn't been a hard transition for us to come back at all, I don't think... has it dear.

JH: What about your work?

JR: Anyway, we've just had a great time coming back because we haven't had to get acquainted in a new ward like if we had gone to St. George. You sit down there and you're just another retiree, and after we got married, we had planned to come back, so we got our house built here; started building it in 1989, and got it almost ready to move into, and planned to retire in 1993, and then we got a call from President Hinkley and wanted to know if we'd [chuckle] serve as a mission president. So we went to Sacramento for three years. We had lived in this house only about three weeks before we went out there.

JH: Didn't want you to get too comfortable.

JR: Too comfortable, no. So we locked it up and went out there and now we've been here since 1996 and have thoroughly enjoyed it because we know everybody. The Bishop's my best friend. It's been nice to be back.

JH: Beyond that, and we talked a little bit earlier about the idea of familiness, I mentioned the word tribal, but there's a feeling that is a sense of responsibility and caring. Have you gotten to that point, do you think, that care in this community?

JR: Caring about each other? You mean like we did when I was growing up?

JH: Yeah.

JR: Yeah, to a degree, but it has changed. It's not the little tiny small town community because there are so many people moving in that I don't know, and they don't know me, and so there isn't the same sense of the close-knit community I think it was when I left in the 1950s. There's not the sitting on the back porch and visiting like there used to be, and those kinds of things.

JH: I was thinking of you wandering from house to house and sitting down, and if you're timing was right, have three or four suppers in a night.

JR: Could do [laugh]. No, you wouldn't do that today. That is gone, and I think that's gone even amongst your relatives. Now we have some close relatives and I feel comfortable about going to their home, but I will knock today, where I didn't knock as a kid, but I would knock today. I walk into one house, and that's my sister's, but it isn't the same as just walking in and feeling like that's an extension of your house and your own family.

End Tape 1, Side B

Tape: 2

Side: A

JH: We're talking about his growing up years in Escalante and then moving back to Escalante.

Let's talk about what retirement means. You dropped a word in that other tape of what you'd been doing. You said you'd been doing some writing. Let's talk about that a little bit.

JR: Well, this has been a nice winter. We've done two or three projects. I've re-written some histories of my great grandfather, his autobiography that I got a hold of. It hadn't been paragraphed, punctuated or anything, so I went through that and edited that out and rewrote it and got it so it's in good shape, and then Sheree's mother wrote a book called "*Sagebrush Mary*" that is about her great grandmother who was the first woman to set foot in Escalante. Her mother wrote it for her fourth-grade school kids, so she wrote it on

a lower level. That got printed and published for the family, but it needed to have a lot of corrections in it too, because she passed away before she got a chance to edit it, and really refine it, and so we've had a chance to spend this winter going through that and editing it out and adding in dates that she had not put in. She wrote it like a historical novel. It was a novel, but it was history, and so we put all of those in and just got it ready for publication. We took it to BYU press this Monday, and it's at the printer now, and then I'd always been interested in the history, and as a young student at BYU, I remember being in a class- I don't remember if it was Dr. Hafen's class or who it was- but it was a Western American history class, and they talked about the explorations of John Wesley Powell, and the fact that Escalante had been discovered and some of his men were in this area, and of course that peaked my interest and I thought, some day I'd like to go back there and research that out, and see if I can find their camp sites, and do all those things. Then I never thought any more about it, and when I came back and I got interested in history, so I started picking up Nethella's book and Edison's book, and no one had really written the account of the early explorations from 1866 to 1876. Nethella would make references that Thompson was in here in 1972 and 1975, but it was a paragraph, and that was about it, and I wanted to know more about it, so I started trying to find the diaries, and hit a bonanza by calling back up to Ricks College to a friend of mine, and he took it over at the inter-library, and this lady up there started sending me all the Utah historic quarterlies that had all of the diaries of Thompson and Vandevere and all of those men published in them, so I've been through those all winter, pouring through those diaries, and so I've written a history of all of the explorations of Escalante and pushing it through.

JH: What have you done with the Indians?

JR: I haven't done anything with the Indians. I haven't really concentrated on the Indians. That was a pre-history. I started mine with the history of 1866 with the first white man to come in here, so I haven't done anything with the Indians at all.

JH: Returning, briefly, to your childhood, what do you think the attitude about Indians was when you were growing up in Escalante?

JR: Well, my dad and mother talked a lot about the Indians, and there were a lot of Indians around here. Unfortunately, I don't think the attitude of the people was as kindly toward

the Indians as it probably should have been. They felt like they were a lower class of individuals, and they begged for food and things like that, but they were kind to them, and my dad talks about a little Indian friend that he had that he used to wrestle with a lot, and they played together, and they had a good feeling toward them, but felt like they weren't as industrious as they should have been, and weren't as clean as they should have been, and things like that. I think those kinds of feelings persisted with the early Indians, and then as a kid I remember when they were still coming up across the river and bringing their blankets and camping outside of town. My dad would always go out and trade horses or something with them. We traded a mule one time for a saddle and some blankets and different things, and I remember going to the Indian camps with him.

SR: You were afraid too.

JR: And I was a little nervous out there. One of the things they would say to the kids "Now you better be good or we'll give you to the Indians." Boy, that shaped you right up. My dad talks about being very frightened about the Indians, going out on his little pony and meeting a group of Indians out here outside of town, and how frightened he was. In his

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autobiography, he talks about seeing them and working his way to the edge and then hitting that little pony and making for town as fast as he could because he thought they were going to take him off with them, and so the attitude was that. The first 24th of July celebration they had here, one of the men says “We ought to invite the Indians to the celebration,” and the women didn’t want to because they said they didn’t smell too good, but they finally invited them and they had quite a group of Indians to the first 24th of July celebration in Escalante. There were certain Indians that you hear names of. There was one called Old Mustache and Sally Ann, and things. They would beg. I’ve heard stories where Sally Ann just came up and sat down in the front kitchen and waited for them to feed her and things like that. Mustache would come around and tease the kids, so there were things like that, but I don’t think it was a relationship where they welcomed them in as a brother and wanted to take them in.

JH: You know, I can vaguely remember hearing references to that idea of being carried off by the Indians, almost as if the Indians were related to Lucifer or some similar opposition force.

SR: The Indians use to steal children and sell them into slavery.

JR: Not the white children, but the Indian children they sold.

JH: I think there was an attitude about poverty, and so the children were sold to help their family survive, to some extent. I don’t have an exhaustive knowledge of that situation.

JR: Yeah. What she’s talking about is in the early days when Brigham Young first came in and the Spanish and the Indian slave trade was going on, is what she’s talking about. They sold the Paiute Indians to the Spanish for slaves and things. That’s what she’s talking about. They did sell children. I guess that connotation come with “We’ll give you to the Indians, we don’t know what they’re going to do with you.”

JH: Well, let’s pursue your writing on the history of Escalante. What’s your goal of this project, or did you say all you wanted to say?

JR: Well, my main goal when I started was to get the early explorations written up, because I think a lot of people don’t know anything about the first explorations of Escalante. You talk to people around town who says “How did Escalante get its name?” and they say “Well, I guess it was after Father Escalante,” but don’t know much more about it. The goal wasn’t to write a history of the people of Escalante, per se. That’s never been my goal. I want to document who the first white men were that came in and what they did

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when they came here, and then I want to bring it up to date by writing a chapter about how it's changed over the years and then I've got a chapter on the CC camps, because I found that's almost becoming a lost history, even though it only happened 50 years ago.

JH: Yeah, get Ken down here...

JR: Well, he came down, see, and he wrote his dissertation on the CC camps, and I got a copy of his dissertation, and that's why he came through here and we spent a whole night together just talking about the CC camps, so I've got a lot of information on that. He did it on the whole Utah, and so he's got bits and pieces on Escalante, but nothing comprehensive on Escalante, so that's what I'm trying to do.

JH: Did he guide you on the records of the CCC?

JR: No. We didn't get into where the records are.

JH: Where will you go to get records on that CCC period?

JR: Well, I don't know where I'm going to go to get actual dates and things unless I go back up to the blood papers and some of those areas on that one, but I'm trying to do a lot of interviews like you're doing with me today, I'm going around to the older people and trying to interview them, and then I've got letters that my dad had written to Ken with some dates and names, and so I'm slowly piecing it together of what happened in this area.

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