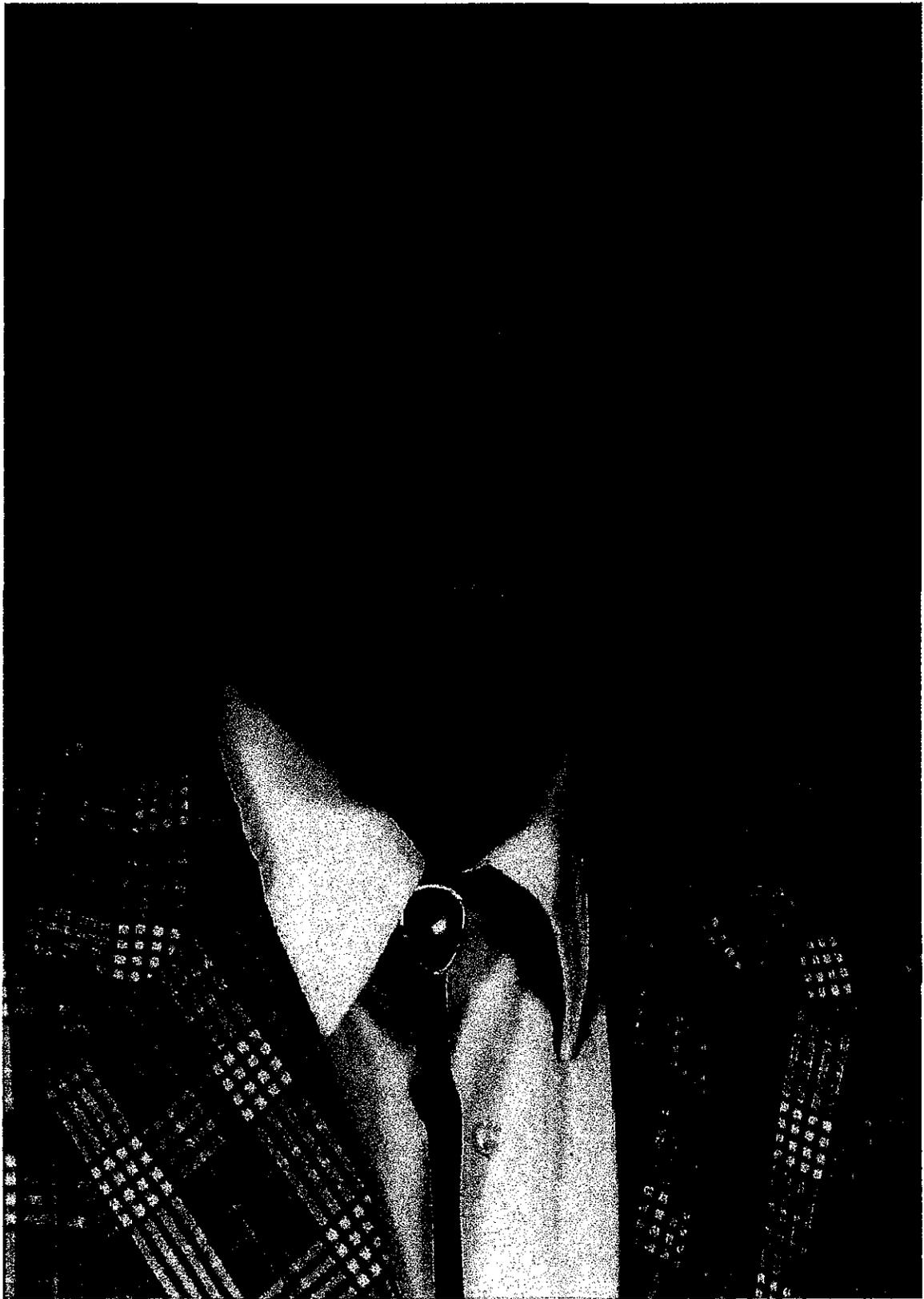


D. Spencer
Kane Co. 1999

Southern Utah Oral History Project

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



INTERVIEW WITH: Dale O. Spencer
INTERVIEWER: Jay Haymond
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 7, 1999-
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: His home in Kanab, Utah
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: Life and experiences in Glendale, Kanab and Kane
County\
TRANSCRIBER: Vectra Solutions/SMC
DATE: November 7, 1999

JH: Tell me first about your family - your parents, brothers and sisters, that sort of thing.

DS: I was born here in Kanab, but my family lived in Glendale, Utah. My father was a sheep rancher. I was born in 1937. I had two older brothers, an older sister, and then I have two younger brothers and two younger sisters. I was raised there in Glendale and worked on the sheep ranch throughout my younger years. Went to school in Glendale in elementary school and then down to Orderville at Valley High School for my high school years.

JH: Was the sheep ranching operation off to the east of town there?

DS: North and east, yes.

JH: Alton?

DS: Just below Alton and down onto the Glendale Bench.

JH: What sort of a winter grazing operation did you have?

DS: Dad didn't have any winter range at time, so he would put his sheep - he only had a thousand head usually - he'd put them with someone that had a larger herd and there were a lot of herds of sheep at that time. Then he would go out and spend a winter herding

sheep to pay for running them with the other rancher. He went out with Roland Esplin, with the Heatons, Garn Swapp - many of them that he was working with.

JH: And you got involved in that, I guess, in the summer time?

DS: Yes, I'd usually leave school two weeks early to go out to the sheep herd, and I'd start school a couple of weeks late. That was the summer - that would be the time that I would spend during the summer and dad would try to give each of us one or two days off, either for the County Fair or the fourth of July, or something like that. The rest of the time we were with the sheep.

JH: I guess he was dealing with the Forest Service on permits, at that time.

DS: Yes, we had a little permit up above what is now the KOA, on the Dixie National Forest. The permit was actually for six hundred and ninety head of sheep. He'd go on there; I think it was the first of July and come off around the first of October. It's interesting, that same permit I have it now, and I'm allowed to run twenty-five head of cattle for one month.

JH: (Laughter) Boy they've cut it back, haven't they?

DS: Yes. In fact it was for nine head of cattle for the same period of time, but I convinced them to let me run twenty-five heads for one month because that was more economical, but it still isn't worthwhile. I haven't used it for several years.

JH: When did the change from sheep to cattle take place on that permit?

DS: Well, it was after I got out of high school. My younger brother was out. It would have been in approximately '63, '62, somewhere in there, in the early 60s anyway. Dad sold

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the sheep because there weren't enough of us around to help him take care of them anymore. So he sold them and bought some cattle and went into the cattle business.

JH: Do you remember any encouragement on the part of the Forest Service to make that change?

DS: I don't remember of any. It was strictly dad I think that did it. They were happy when he did it; I know that - going from sheep to cattle. It was a mistake for him to do it because they really cut it back. Even since that time, they've gone in and cut a lot of the timber, put in some roads, and did a lot of reseeded. So the range is beautiful and supports a lot of deer and elk, but no livestock anymore.

JH: Right. So you went to school and finished at Valley High School and then what was the result of your next decision? Did you go to school after that?

DS: After I got out of high school I went over to Cedar City. I went to college there for a couple of years and I studied agriculture. I went right into agriculture when I got out of high school at college. I worked part time over there in order to support myself in school because dad didn't have any money to contribute to help us out to go to school. After I'd been in college for two years, I went into the mission field. Dad did help me there, I had enough for the one year, but he paid for the second year. That was the time when oil exploration was coming in and so he got enough money from an oil lease to pay for my second year in the mission field. When I went out, I had a brother that was a year older than me that was in the mission field at that time, and he came home a couple months after I went out.

JH: Where did you go when you went on your mission?

DS: I spent eighteen months in Mississippi. I went in what was called the Gulf States Mission. So I spent eighteen months down there, and a couple of weeks in New Orleans, and then came to Dallas, Texas which was half-way home and finished up my mission there in Dallas, Texas.

JH: When you go from a sheep ranch or a sheep raising operation, you usually learn things. What did you take into the mission field that you thought was valuable from sheep herding?

DS: Well, there's lots of things I took from being involved with sheep. First of all, I knew how to work. I had learned that when you accept responsibility for something you have that responsibility and you can't give it to someone else. You have to do it. And if you don't do it, you're in trouble, and that's the way it was with sheep. I also learned that you get up early and you put in a lot of hours with them. I also learned you have to take care of them. If you're not there when a ewe has her lamb to take care of them properly, why you've lost your income. You have to watch out for the predators. Back then we didn't have very many predators, but we had a few. We didn't have any coyotes. They were poisoning the coyotes and we didn't have any problem with them. But there were still bobcats and some mountain lions. I learned that, well, you learn to expect things from other people and they did what you expected them to do. My family, you know it was a family operation entirely, and you knew where your brother was going to go, and what he was going to do and you went around the other way and worked on the other end. So you learned to depend on others. That helped a lot in the mission field. I also had learned to take care of myself. There were many summers that I spent alone at the sheep camp with my dog and my horse. Dad would come in every fourth day, bring me some supplies and check to see that everything was all right and I'd be alone again for three or four days. So I learned to cook, take care of myself, and not have to depend on anyone else at that point.

JH: Valuable lesson.

DS: I felt that I was quite prepared.

JH: So you came home from Dallas Fort Worth and then what happened?

DS: Then I went back to school. First I'd work in the summer time and then go back to school in the winter. First I went over – it was the College of Southern Utah then. I went for two quarters because I got home in the fall and I had to earn some money first, and then I went to school for two more quarters. So I actually spent all most three years over in Cedar City at the College of Southern Utah. I didn't change my major, but it had changed a lot in the two years that I was gone.

JH: I bet it did.

DS: Then after I finished those two quarters there, I went to Utah State the next fall and spent two years at Utah State University. Graduated in 1963, with a degree in agriculture and a teaching certificate. I also got into graduate school and spent some time there because I had nearly five years of school. I never did finish my masters, but I did work on it. All I lacked was a thesis and one class, but I never did spend the time and money to finish that.

JH: Did you come and use your agriculture degree, teaching school down here?

DS: No, I went to American Fork High School and taught school there first. There was an opening there. There wasn't any down here and so I went there and taught. In fact, I stayed at American Fork High School for six years. Taught agriculture and farm

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mechanics there – a lot of welding because of the steel plant nearby. Then the superintendent from Kane County came and met with me and said there was an opening down here but he needed an English teacher. Well I had taken quite a lot of English credits while I was in college and I said, “Well, if you’ll hire me, I’ll go back to school for the summer and get a minor in English.” which I did up at Utah State again and came down to Kanab and started teaching English. I have been in Kanab ever since. That was in 1969.

JH: Good to be flexible, right?

DS: (Laughter) Yes, I guess so. I’ve taught a lot of different subjects now.

JH: So you’re back home?

DS: Yes. Yes, I could see an opportunity to come back down and raise a family and of course get some of the property that was available from my father’s ranch. Dad was getting older and I had one brother that had already moved back and was teaching school and working at the ranch, you know. So I thought, well it’s an opportunity. At that time I had two children, expecting another, so we moved to Kanab. Bought this home and that’s where we’ve lived ever since.

JH: Great. What are your observations about school children in Garfield County?

DS: In Kane County?

JH: Did I say Garfield instead of Kane County?

DS: Yes.

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JH: Do they measure up with other students when they climb their way into higher education?

DS: Yes. I see many students that go in and do better than those who come from the bigger metropolitan areas.

JH: Do you know why that is?

DS: Well, yes.

JH: You have your opinion?

DS: (Laughter) Yes, I have my opinion. They have learned how to work. They don't have to go in and learn how to work to begin with. Of course things have changed a lot in Kanab, and in Kane County since back when I started. When I started in college, I came from a school where, if you got twenty students in a class, it was a large class. When I started over at college, I was right up at the top. I'd never had any chemistry - chemistry was a difficult class for me, but I really didn't have any problems. I was an honor student most of the way through college. That's true with most of the students that come from these small communities if they'll apply themselves and not just play around.

JH: Sure. Tell me about the attitude that typical students take to higher education. Maybe it's not a comfortable way to put it. Are students going to education because it's going to be an opportunity or do they have some other motive when they go off to school?

DS: I think the majority of young people realize that if they don't get that higher education, their opportunities are really going to be limited. That was the way it was when I was

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teaching school. I've been retired for five years and just about everyone expected that they would have to go on and get some higher education, in order to compete.

JH: Right.

DS: That was just the general attitude of parents, students and everyone.

JH: Sometimes kids from urban areas think it's kind of a... you know they are just going through the motions. Like something's going to be given to them when they get to the other end of the pipeline. But you're saying with the kids from Kane County and other rural communities, that they are more serious about their education.

DS: Oh, I think so. Generally speaking the income level is very low in Kane County -the average income. Not very many of the youth expect to be able to stay here, or come back here and make a living. They realize that they are going to have to go somewhere else.

JH: Right.

DS: So that gives them a different approach than those who are living where they think they are going to be living, and getting an income maybe even from their parents and relatives. Not having to work so hard, but we have to work hard around here.

JH: Sure. Seems like from what I've learned, it has almost always been that way.

DS: It has. Yes, I look at living conditions now compare to when I was a youth with my family, and we live much better than back when my father was trying to exist.

JH: Right. You know I've talked to quite a few people since we started this project nearly a year ago, and we've talked often about it being a struggle for survival. You know the environmental conditions are quite adverse. You know live in a semi-arid climate and land doesn't really produce until it's been persuaded with good crops and good tillage practices.

DS: And water.

JH: And water. Especially water. That's agriculture. The country's turning from agriculture to something else. How will we survive with this new format, so to speak, do you think?

DS: I wonder. Back when I high school, I was in the FFA, the Future Farmers of America, and I entered a public speaking contest. I remember my speech at that time was on the vanishing farmer. Because back then we were talking about one farmer feeding little over twenty people. Back before that, you know, why there had been farmers - just about everyone was a farmer. And now, you know, I don't know how many people one farmer will feed. But the population . . .

JH: Maybe a hundred?

DS: Close to it, I don't think there's more than three or four to the hundred. The age of the farmers is much higher than it used to be too. So, it's kind of scary to me to see so much of the good productive land that's down in the valleys and around the water where it can produce, is going into other uses because that's where the homes can be built, that's where industry comes.

JH: Close to a freeway.

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DS: Close to freeway, railroads, or whatever. I don't know, but on the other hand you look at those others that have been involved in agriculture and have that property and you say well, you better not sell it because it will go into development. But where's the money to come from for those of us that have some property?

JH: You have to live.

DS: We have to live, and that property is very valuable if you put it into a subdivision. It's a lot more valuable than for someone to buy it for a farm.

JH: Right.

DS: If I could buy property for what it's valued for a farm, I'd buy a lot of property. But that's not what property is valued at anymore. That isn't what we pay taxes on anymore.

JH: Right. I talked to a gentleman yesterday about a four hundred-acre farm up in Garfield County and there was some price being asked at the time. Then the announcement came for a Monument and he and his partner got to talking and thinking maybe that it would be an even better deal to go ahead at that price to get a four-hundred acre ranch. The person I was talking to called the realtor up there and the price had been improved three times. So - he didn't name a price, but let's say it was a hundred thousand. Now it was three hundred thousand.

DS: And he was considering purchasing it?

JH: Well, he had it in mind, but I don't know what he really did. You know they put that price up there because they thought that somebody would pay it.

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DS: Oh yes.

JH: I wonder, you know. I remember thirty years ago going to Escalante and some of those places, and thinking of four hundred acres, ten thousand maybe, would have brought that into somebody else's hands.

DS: Oh yes.

JH: That's a remarkable thing that's happening to land. Somebody realized that there's nobody making land anymore.

DS: That's true. That's very true. There's not any more. There's only what's available, and the government owns so much of it out there in the West that those of us who have some private property - it's becoming valuable. But there again, not for agriculture.

JH: What I've heard you describe is a way to survive in what is otherwise a harsh environment. Will that be a true statement?

DS: Oh, I think so.

JH: And if I asked you to describe that process of survival, would the first thing be on your list, hard work?

DS: Yes, I think it would. Hard work with the understanding that you'd have to be very frugal with the funds you have.

JH: What else? There are several ways of approaching - let's use the word life. Beyond hard work, what would you say that it takes?

DS: Well, you have to have a love for the country. You have to want to do the things you're doing.

JH: Did you say land? You said the country.

DS: Love for the land, to me country is this land right here. (Laughter)

JH: I just wanted to make sure that I put it down right.

DS: I think we must have a desire to improve upon what we have, and that means not damaging our environment, but use wise conservation practices. Conservation back when I was going to school was a little different than it is now. They taught us that conservation was the wise use of our resources. Not just to put them aside and look at them. There's quite a difference there.

JH: Yeah.

DS: Wise use means that we get the best use that we can. If there are valuable resources there, use them but don't abuse them. And we must consider how they are going to be replaced. We don't cause erosion, take the soil away, because that's not wise. You don't overgraze because that damages not only the environment itself, but also the animals that are on it. You can't make a dollar off of a dead animal that died from starvation.

JH: For sure.

DS: So that's pretty important to me- to see that we leave things better than they were when we started. I saw what my father did back when I was a kid. He was constantly starting

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fires. I thought, "Dad, sometime you are going to get hurt or something." I remember when the dog walked through the ashes and it laid around the house for a couple of weeks because it burned its feet. And I thought, "Dad, why did you do that?" but then I realized there was so much rabbit brush and sagebrush that was taking away the places where grass and weeds could grow and he realized that so he'd light a fire which was the way they did it back then.

JH: What was his timing like on those fires?

DS: Whenever it would burn the best.

JH: Really?

DS: You bet.

JH: Not in the fall?

DS: No, whenever it would burn the best because he wanted it to go and go as far as it would because then it would do some good.

JH: Yeah.

DS: Now if somebody starts a fire, why, it's immediately put out. It's illegal to start one a lot of the time anyway. If those ranchers back then hadn't started some fires and burned areas, there would have been a lot less feed than there is now. Now we're having the pinion-juniper trees and the sagebrush encroaching upon the grasslands and you don't see very many animals that'll eat a cedar tree or a juniper or pine tree. They just don't eat them. Deer will a little bit in the wintertime, but not very much.

JH: They get starved down.

DS: Yep.

JH: Anything else you think ought to go into that formula?

DS: Oh, I can't think of it off hand. You may prompt me a little, but... yes there is one thing more. I don't think there is a better way to raise a family. It's difficult. The children don't like it to begin with, especially, but it creates good people. There's just no way you could have a better environment of good people than with good hard work and having to exist off the land when it is not easy.

JH: Yep.

DS: I'm going to a funeral the day after tomorrow -a lady that lived for ninety-two years. I got to know her here in Kanab, and when she got older . . . well, her husband passed away and then she moved down to California to live with her daughter. She's a real close friend. I got to know her by visiting her in the church as a home teacher. They asked me to speak at her funeral, even though she's been gone from here for ten years, I guess. Gosh, she's a good close friend, just a great woman. Her husband was a great man. So, you get to know people like this, and they didn't have life easy either. In fact, she was raised over in Glendale. It's just a good area because no one has it easy. You learn the value of things. When I was a child, you wouldn't think of taking someone else's belongings because you knew the value of them and how hard to work to get them. Now people . . .

End of Side One Tape One

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Begin Side Two Tape One

JH: I was going to add one other element to this list, or suggest it.

DS: I will too here in a moment. I thought of another one.

JH: The one I was thinking of is the quality of hoping. In other words, you go through life with a sense of hope and if you don't have hope, you don't do anything much, especially on the land. So I see hope operating everywhere I turn when I come into the rural part of the State.

DS: Well, I'd use a different term there, I'd call it faith. (Laughter)

JH: Okay.

DS: You have faith that things are going to be better. You have faith that there's going to be some moisture when things are really dry.

JH: Yeah.

DS: You have faith that next year the prices are going to be better than they were this year, and so on. Just one thing right after another. You have faith that the seeds you are going to grow when you plant them, whether it's rangeland or for a garden, or whatever.

JH: Sure.

DS: There is one other aspect also that has made things more difficult for us in the rural area, and that's government. Many of us would qualify for Federal assistance just because of

our low income. When I was teaching school, my children qualified for free lunch, even though I had almost five years of college. In fact at that time, I had the equivalent of five years of college, and still my income here was low enough that my children qualified for assistance from the government on lunches. I thought, this isn't right. There is just no way that we as tax payers should have to assist people when they have a college degree, and they have what I thought was a good job, and I was making so much more than my father did, but still here's the Federal government saying you have such a low income that you qualify for assistance. Something is wrong when we are in that position. And then I'd see so many families that would get started on welfare, as we call it, and they never get off.

JH: Habitual.

DS: Why should we get off, when we are on welfare and do better than those who are working so hard, and living on, as I said 'faith' hoping for something better and you might just as well be taking it from the government. Maybe that's not a good attitude, but I've seen it so much and it just bothers me. Then when the governments comes in, and well, for example, I paid five hundred dollars for each unit that I got to put a cow on government land. That was the value when I bought it, five hundred dollars. And I run cattle, over two hundred head of cattle on the government property. Still I have to lease it, but if they decided that they don't want me to have it anymore, they take it away and I don't get anything out of it. Now I borrowed money from the Farmers Home Administration to purchase that, which is a government agency. They put the value on it as to what they would loan. Still another agency of government could come in and take it away, because they say I don't own it.

JH: If it weren't so sad, it would be funny.

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DS: That's right, and if it wasn't so expensive for all of us - I mean it isn't just me. If I lose it, like they put the Monument now, and those of us that have property in the Monument know that eventually that's going to be a Park and no longer will our livestock be allowed to graze there. In fact, right now they are telling us that no longer will there be control of predators. If the predators aren't controlled, what do you do to survive?

JH: Right. Go out there and camp with them.

DS: You still can't. If you are raising cattle you cannot, you just cannot protect those calves because the cattle scatter. If you're raising sheep, you can camp with them. If you're willing to stay there all the time, but you can't afford to do it. That's why there are no sheep in this country anymore. When I was a kid growing up at home in Glendale - I was counting up the other day - there were over thirty thousand head of sheep in Kane County that I knew of. Now, one man has eleven hundred head of sheep. The largest bunch other than that in Kane County is forty head of sheep.

JH: My word. I think you could say that same thing all over Utah.

DS: I think so too.

JH: Cause the herds out in Tooele County is just zero.

DS: There's still a pretty good little bunch over in Iron County. I just can't even . . . I would have never thought that this country around here - because it is extremely rough country, much of it and it's better for sheep than it is for cattle. You cannot raise sheep. My brother raised sheep for a few years and then they just started disappearing and then he found out that predators were killing them faster than they could have offspring. So you

just cannot compete. And then the price of wool is so low anymore, and the price of lamb has dropped considerably the last couple of years.

JH: Consumption just isn't there?

DS: Well, there's still quite a lot of consumption but they can import it so much cheaper than they can raise it here in the United States that it's just not worth it. See there's a lot of New Zealand and Australia sheep that come into the United States. Wool, the government was paying my father a dollar a pound at one time as a subsidy when he was raising sheep. Last year I had fifteen head of sheep that I took over to the shearers. I paid the man who had the sheep there that was being sheared, he had the herd, and I just took mine over with his. I paid him a dollar a head to get my sheep sheared and then gave him the wool. The year before, I paid for the shearing and asked him to sell my wool with his, only separate. It didn't pay for the shearing, so I thought why fool with it, just let him have the wool and pay him for the shearing.

JH: Economics have really changed that situation. Amazing. So amazing. So, let's go back to your own personal life. You moved down to Kane County and taught school. You had a family started, two children you said?

DS: Yes. I moved here and, well of course, we kept having children. I got involved with the ranch and started buying property. Then my father formed a corporation, a family corporation so that the children would have the ranch. He didn't want it ever to be divided up, he wanted it to be one ranch. So he formed a family corporation, and all the children, all eight of us, were members of this corporation, equal in shares. The corporation started in the cattle business and you know took it over when dad got too frail. He had a stroke and couldn't run it and so we were running it. And because I was here, I was running most of the cattle operation. In fact two of my brothers sold their

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shares in the corporation to outsiders, because they didn't want the responsibility because they were here. I stayed with it. I had four or five head of cattle that I had with the corporation, but I did it for probably for two or three years. I could see that I was not going to benefit from it. So I told them that I wouldn't run it anymore. I wasn't getting any income from it and I couldn't afford to do that. I told them to do what they wanted with it and so they knew they had to sell it because there just wasn't enough income to hire someone to run them. So I offered to buy it for the value of the property, you know, at that time. So, they appraised it and I purchased the cattle, the private property that was down on the southern end of it, and the government leases. So I bought . . . it cost nearly two hundred thousand dollars, and I bought it, and I am still paying for it.

JH: Are we talking about Forest permits, as well as BLM permits?

DS: Forest and BLM and State leases. Then I picked up a little more, too as we've gone along. Now we're running nearly a hundred head more cattle than we were at that time. Done a lot of improving. The BLM, in a cooperative agreement, came in and burned, and I run the fire lines, and I did the reseeding and everything. They brought helicopters in and burnt two thousand acres. It's beautiful now, with grass on it. That improved it. Didn't get to run more cattle on it, but improved the range considerably. We've done a lot of water development, things like that, so it's a lot better range, but like I say, I got the same permit that I had back then, but they didn't cut me back which they would have done if I hadn't put in my share to improve it.

JH: Right. What sort of cover burned? Was it more than rabbit brush?

DS: It was sagebrush and cactus. It had been used for many, many sheep and goats, wild horses, as well all the rabbits and everything that were out there in the early days. There's no question that the range was abused back when the pioneers were here in early times,

because there were too many wild horses as well as too many sheep and goats. You could see on the points where they had camped with the old milk cans and such that were still there when we burned it, why you could see it. And many, many cactus. The cactus were invaders that came in. There just wasn't anything there for the cattle to eat.

JH: Does the cactus propagate by wind blown seed?

DS: No, they have the thorns that stick in - they stick into an animal and the animal carries it, brushes it off, and then it takes root if moisture comes, you know, eventually. It can dry way up and still take root and start to grow.

JH: Very thrifty in tough conditions.

DS: Yes.

JH: Well, go ahead with your story. Sorry to interrupt.

DS: Well that's all right. Anyway, that's how I got into the cattle business and started that. I purchased some private property. My brother had a little bit - two of my brothers, up above Glendale. Course I had the Forest permit and the BLM permit up there also. Then my great-uncle, he had some property and he sold it to me, so we put in a trailer up there and put a roof over it. So we have a summer place up there too. That property up there has been in the Spencer family for over one hundred years. In fact, I'm a member of the Century group- it's a century ranch. Back in the centennial year, we participated in that program and now have the sign showing that it's a centennial ranch which we are pretty proud of- that's it's been in the family that long.

JH: Yeah, I'll bet.

DS: And the Spencer Ranch family still owns that, it's still a corporation. I have a little less than one seventh of it and so I lease that property and run on it also with my cattle. So it's still there and we are trying . . . the corporation has tried to sell it and none of us have been able to purchase it because we couldn't afford to pay the price that those that live outside of this area want for it. We're still trying. Maybe my son will be able to buy it. He's trying, but he'll have to sell a lot of it in order to pay for it if he does. That's where we are at now. I have one son that live up in Orem. He's in the computer business, he went to school up there and got involved in the computer business and he's a computer programmer now. My next son is over in Beryl, Utah, over by Enterprise working for Crossroad Equipment as a mechanic there. He'd like to come back but can't do it. Then my daughter, she graduated from college in education, got her teaching certificate but never did teach. She married a boy from over to Cedar City and now they live up in Orem also. He manages a store up there, Inkley's. They have four children. Then I have another son, he's the one that's down working on the furnace making all the noise. He went to school and graduated in agriculture. And because I am at the age where I would like to go on a mission or do other things, you know, why he's come back and helping run the cattle operation. I got to where I told him I don't want to do it alone. So this is his first year of being here to run it.

JH: Does he like it?

DS: Yes he does. He'd like to take over and have it, but we've a lot invested there and the other children can't just let him have it. He's going to do what he can to try and purchase it, as much as he can, and run the operation. Then I have twin boys. They got home from their missions a year ago. One of them is in Alaska, living with my sister up there and working up there. He went on his mission in Alaska and so he went back up. They pay good wages up there.

JH: I heard that.

DS: He's not making a lot of money, but he's enjoying himself there. He plans to come back and go to school this fall. The other son, the other twin, he went to Washington, D.C. on his mission, came back and he's going to school up to Orem - wants to get involved with the computers. He's living with my other son up there. Then he'll be back and work here or go to Alaska and work this summer and go back to school next fall. They'd like to work at the ranch too, but I can't have everyone.

JH: Right. I'll say.

DS: But I can't complain about the way things have been. All of my children have done really well, I feel like. They haven't made a lot of money and they aren't going to make a lot of money, but they are good men and women. They are doing well in the world. I feel like we are pretty wealthy to have the children we have and the grandchildren. We have ten grandchildren now. I can't complain about the good life that we've had.

JH: It looks to me like the workings of forces outside this community are shaping the future. The job of those people who live here and still love it are to find ways still to survive. Would that be fair?

DS: Oh, very much so. To exist, to survive. There are some that will make a lot of money on the tourist business, but the ordinary common folk here will never make much money on the tourist business. There will be a few that have got a good start or come in and hire the local people for low wages, and they do well. But there is just no opportunity for the majority of us to do well on the tourist business. And that's what it's going to be, is a tourist business if the government has all the property.

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JH: I hear rumors even about something comparable to the Grand Staircase south of the border here between here and the River. (Colorado River)

DS: Oh, it's not just rumors.

JH: Really?

DS: You can listen to the talk shows on the radio. My FM radio went out and I was listening to AM, and I don't think there's much question about what is going to happen out in the Mount Trumble area. That area from Utah down to Lake Mead, it's a desolate rough area, but there's a lot of livestock on it, and it will be another Monument. I don't think there much question about it because the government is talking of it. The secretary is talking of it, and once he starts talking then things happen.

JH: That's true. Well that's interesting how it's sort of become a cascade, hasn't it?

DS: Oh yes. Well we already have so much - so many parks and monuments around us. Even before the Grand Staircase National Monument was put in with Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks National Monument, Zion Canyon, Grand Canyon, and then of course the Great Lake, and all the recreational area out there, Lake Powell and that recreation area that they put in that locked it up also. So we were pretty much surrounded long before they even considered the Grand Staircase National Monument. As a livestock man, I have to look at it in the respect that you cannot control any predators in these monuments and parks. See there's no hunting.

JH: It becomes a refuge for them.

DS: They go there. I used to hunt deer up on what is called Kolob, which is right against Zion's Park.

JH: Yeah, I know.

DS: I had a close friend there, worked for him when I was in college, Wendell Jones, and he had sheep up there. He was just constantly having those mountain lions come in and some bears and just devastate his herd of sheep.

JH: Would they come off Cedar Mountain?

DS: No, they'd come up from Zion.

JH: Zion?

DS: From Zion, right up through. See he was right on the border of Zion Park. They would come in there. When I was a kid there was bounty on cougars; cougars, coyotes, bobcats. I remember catching a bobcat once in a trap. I think it was five dollars I got for bounty on that. I was just a kid. Now they're protected. I started trapping in order to protect my calves. I'm only allowed, well now they got it up to seven bobcats that I can catch and I have to buy two licenses in order to do that because the season goes over from one year into the next. It's crazy. The pelts aren't worth enough - it's just not worth catching them. This past year I got almost sixty dollars out of a bobcat pelt and six dollars out of a coyote pelt.

JH: Can you market these through at a furrier, or something?

DS: The Utah Trapping Association has an auction each year. We take them to that auction and these buyers come in and they bid on them and buy them there.

JH: Well what have I forgotten to ask you?

DS: Well, if I'd do it over again I guess. (Laughter) I don't know. My ancestors came into this area. My mother and my father both were raised here in Kane County. My great-grandfather came down to Orderville back when it was United Order. The family's been here a long time, helped settle it. We are just following in their footsteps. It's a good area, even though I've been many places where I could have make a living much easier. When I was in Mississippi I looked at that beautiful country down there. There were so many areas down there where you could have put livestock and never have to irrigate or do anything but fence them in and let them graze. And it was very cheap property then. That was back in the sixties, early sixties. No, it was in the late fifties, early sixties. I thought, you know I could come back here and buy property and do really well with my knowledge in agriculture and livestock. But I thought what a lazy bunch of people. (Laughter)

JH: (Laughter) You've seen people scratch on the hard scrabble, that's what you've compared it to, sounds to me like.

DS: Yep.

JH: Well, that's interesting. It's interesting how land changes value with the change in perspective. The land is highly treasured for it's scenic beauty by a growing population in these large urban centers. Maybe there, the way they see it, the land is more valuable than it's value to those who would like to use it for agriculture purposes. Because they

sure seem to be bidding the price up, but they are doing through government rather than on the open market.

DS: That's true. Very true. If we lived in a metropolitan area where an acre of land is worth millions of dollars, even in Salt Lake City, and then you come down here... when I purchased the ranch, I purchased part of that property for forty dollars an acre. There's quite a difference. Still the value of much of my ranch is between two and three hundred dollars an acre. So if I was living in the city and I wanted to come out and buy a small, you know, twenty acres- and I could sell twenty acres and make a big profit on it because people are doing it. I have a neighbor up at my ranch; he traded and got some Forest Service property, a section of Forest Service property, and subdivided it into ten-acre parcels.

JH: Cabins?

DS: Well they are putting cabins, or just pull a trailer up there and have a place to go even just for a picnic. I had a man come through my gate up there that was locked. I found him, I said, "How did you get in?", he said, "I know how to go through these locked gates." He'd taken it and tore it off the other side. He said, "I'm looking for some property I'm considering purchasing." Then I said, "Well it's not up here on mine." He said, "The man told me I might have to go through a locked gate." An attorney had told him where it was, and he was looking for it. Were talking, you know, of twenty thousand dollars or somewhere in that neighborhood for property like that because it was subdivided and marketed properly.

JH: Amazing.

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Dale Spencer

DS: And I could do that, but then it's gone. It's no longer a ranch. To them it's a ranch, a twenty-acre parcel, but to me it is not.

JH: Well I thank you for spending time with me here tonight, I know your time is precious here tonight. (Jay chuckles)

DR: It always is. (Laughter)



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Date of interview(s) April 7/99

Primary Subject One of last (or the last) to make a living at running cattle. (History of this)

Other topics Change in land value over time / family.

Number of tapes _____

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