

Interview with
JOSEPH “JOE” WOODRUFF HOLT

April 20, 1968

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
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JOSEPH "JOE" WOODRUFF HOLT

Joseph "Joe" Woodruff Holt was interviewed on April 20, 1968 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of Voices of Remembrance Foundation. He related his personal history of living in various parts of Utah. His wife, Mary Jane (Morris) Holt, also participated.

FH: Would you please give your full name?

JH: [My name is] Joseph Woodruff Holt.

FH: What is your date of birth?

JH: [I was born] August 25, 1885.

FH: Where were you born?

JH: [I was born on] the Holt Ranch.

FH: What was your father's name?

JH: [His] name was George Albert [Overton] Holt.

FH: [What was] your mother's [full] name?

JH: [Her name was] Nancy Jane (Hunt) Holt.

FH: Can you recall anything from your early childhood?

JH: I will tell you [how] I got my name. Mother and father didn't have much to do with naming me. My name [came] from my grandmother. She had a little boy named Joseph [who] she lost on the plains. He was about five years old when he died. She wanted to have the privilege of naming one child after him. So she named me Joseph after this boy. It was the only name I had until I was going to be christened. Wilford J. Woodruff happened to be in the home at that time. He wanted to use the office, I suppose. [While] he was in our home, father asked him to bless me and give me a name. He said, "What is [his] name?" Father said, "It is Joseph." "Has he a middle name?" Father said, "No." "Well, I will give him one." So he [named] me Joseph Woodruff Holt. That is the way I got my name.

I don't remember too much about my life until I was about five years old. We moved into a little town up here, Gunlock, Washington County [Utah]. When it came Christmas that year, my father was Santa Claus for the whole town. When he came into the church building to distribute the presents around, all the young

children ran for their mothers to get out of the [way]. I said, "I am not afraid of him. [He] is just my dad." [Laughter] That is the first recollection I had [of] recognizing my dad.

I didn't go to school that year, but I was in the town. [James] Amos and George [Overton], my older brothers and my sister, Nancy Mae, were going to school. While we were there, father was called on a mission [for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] from the little town of Pinto [Washington County, Utah] which is a ghost town now.

FH: Where is that located about?

JH: It was located east of the old Holt Ranch. It was about six miles right over the hill.

FH: Is the Holt Ranch near Enterprise [Washington County, Utah]?

JH: The Holt Ranch is six miles east of Enterprise. Pinto is on the east. We moved back to the ranch quite early that spring because he had to leave. I think [it was] in March or April. They planned to have a missionary party for him [one] night at the old town [of] Pinto. It started to rain about a day before this party was scheduled. There was a lot of snow on the ground and [the] rain started to move that snow [very] fast. The next day we took some logs, but we couldn't even make a crossing with a team and wagon. That was the only way we had of traveling in those days. So he had to get on his little horse and swim upstream to get on the other side and ride over the mountain to Pinto. They had this party and the family had to stay home, mother with a little flock of six children from one year up to twelve [years of age].

When my father left, I didn't know whether I would ever see him again or not. I felt so bad. I thought: well, now I [inaudible]. He was going to country where they just killed two Mormon missionaries.

FH: Where was this country?

JH: [He was going to] the southern states. I was trying to remember the name of the elder [who] was killed. One was from over here at Kanarra [Kanarraville, Iron County, Utah]. His name was Berry. I don't remember the other man's name. Anyway, they were both killed out there just [about] the time he was called [to] go out in the same place. You can imagine how the family felt when he left. After he had been out about a year, the little baby [Rosa Angeline Holt died]. The girls had a little swing [and] they were swinging her back and forth, let her drop and [it] killed her. You can imagine how the family felt [inaudible] awhile. I can remember that funeral just as if it was yesterday, because I got off the treadle of my mother's sewing machine. I just lay there and cried like a baby.

FH: How old were you?

JH: I was six [years old].

FH: How long was [your father] gone on his mission?

JH: [He was gone] two years and a half. They held them a little bit longer than they do now-a-days.

FH: Who was the mission president then? Do you remember?

JH: I don't remember. President J. Golden Kimball was when he was out or [maybe it was when] one of my brothers was out. I don't know which one.

FH: That was when your brother was out [on his mission].

JH: Yes.

FH: Was there anything else of interest during your childhood? Would you like to talk about your [education]?

JH: I might tell you a little bit about training horses and milking cows. We had to make our own living on that ranch [with the] two cows we had and [some] chickens. Plus we were on the main highway. Everybody coming from Dixie [St. George] going north had to come by that ranch. There was no other way to go [inaudible]. If they were going over to Modena [Iron County, Utah or] out that way; of course, he [my father] left before Modena was established. The train only came to Milford [Beaver County, Utah] when he left to go on his mission. So he had to travel from the ranch up to Milford to get on the train. We used to sell our eggs, milk, butter and honey to the people who would pass by with their teams..

FH: How many chickens would you have at that time?

JH: Probably about six dozen chickens is all we had.

FH: Were they penned up or did they run loose?

JH: They ran loose.

FH: Did you feed them with your own grain?

JH: Yes. We [grew] our grain and hay.

FH: Did you gather the eggs wherever the chickens happened to make their nest?

JH: We had a [chicken] coop for them in those days.

FH: I am asking you these [questions] because a lot of the things you did in those days were so different [from] what people [today] are used to.

JH: We used to make fresh cheese on an old cheese press. We used to have long poles about ten or fifteen feet long and we would put a rack on the end of [them]. It would come down and press our cheese down for so long a time. That is the way we had of making our cheese. We used to have a little churn that churned up and down. We didn't have any modern churns. We used to have everything old-fashioned.

FH: [Did] you have a regular barrel churn?

JH: We had a barrel churn and a dasher [that] came up and down. We finally [had] a churn that turned around on a little [inaudible], a little more modern churn. The old-fashioned churn we had first was a dasher churn, just pull it up and down. Mother used to go out and help us milk the cows. She was very timid with livestock. She was a [very] small woman and very timid with livestock. She would come out and sit down and milk the cow. One day one of the old cows [was] riled up and went around the corral, came right around and jumped right over the top of the baby. It didn't even touch it. It jumped right over the top of it, so you can imagine how mother [was] riled up. It about scared her to death. I think it scared her [more] than [it] did the baby! [Laughter]

FH: What happened when your father came home?

JH: The [day] my father came home we boys were all out in the field. He came home in the afternoon. [It was] about three o'clock when he [came] home. We boys, all three of us, were down in the field putting in corn. When he came home, it was the first of April. He came home and they were all ready for supper. We were late. We didn't get home until dark. I came running in the house just as fast as I could run, just ran right through the house. When I saw somebody at the table I stopped in the other room, right quick, and got out of sight. Mother said, "Come back here, Joseph." I came slipping back, but I didn't know who it was. When I [looked] in there I didn't know who was in there. It looked like my father a little bit, but I didn't know who it was. He was [fairly] well dressed up [from] what he was when he used to be on the ranch. He had quite a long beard when he came back. He used to wear a moustache before he left, but he had a beard when he came back. I didn't know him. You can imagine how I felt when I found out who it was! [Laughter]

FH: Did the family life settle back down [fairly] fast?

JH: Yes. We settled down and [were] in good shape in a very short time after father [came] back. We had all [fairly] well learned how to do things for ourselves. When he came back, we could milk cows, we could drive horses, we could hitch up a team and plow the ground. We could do almost a man's work when he

[came] back. I worked right along with the rest of them even though I was quite a bit younger. I could do just about as [much as] any of them.

FH: Were you nearly eight years old then?

JH: I was eight years old when he came back. I hadn't been baptized when he came back. I was nearly nine years old when I was baptized.

FH: Where were you baptized?

JH: I was baptized right at the Holt Ranch in the reservoir where we stored water overnight [for] irrigation.

FH: Did your father baptize you?

JH: I think my grandfather [James Holt] baptized me.

[He was baptized by his father four months after his grandfather, James Holt, died.
—Added during editing by Gary E. Holt, grandson.]

FH: Did you go to school up there?

JH: My first school was in Old Hebron [Washington County, Utah]. It is a ghost town now. My first teacher was Zera Pulsipher Terry. He was my first teacher.

FH: How much [education] did you have?

JH: I went to school there one year with Zera Terry. I must tell about a little episode we had that winter. He was [fairly] strict. We had lots of [older] students up in the higher grades. I was the only one in a room not much bigger than this room here. The school building was about twenty feet long and about fifteen [feet] wide at that time. He used to carry a big, long, three-foot ruler around all the time in his hand, I guess, probably to keep it a little quiet. He would use it once in awhile, too. One day I was doing something he didn't like. He came up and he said, "Joseph, put out your hand on that desk there." I put my hand up and he held this big long ruler up. He came down on my hand and when he started to come down I jerked my hand and he came down and hit that desk and popped his ruler right in two. [Laughter] A lot of the students had to laugh, that was all! They couldn't hold themselves! I made him [very] mad, but he didn't say anymore. He just let it go at that and that was the last of the rulers. I didn't see anymore rulers. That was my first experience in school.

FH: How much [education] were you able to get?

JH: I went to school for about five months each year until I was about seventeen [years old]. When I was eight years old I went to school up in Mountain Meadows

[in the town of Hamblin, Washington County, Utah]. That is another ghost town. The teacher at that time was old man [James Samuel] Bowler. He was the father of all these builders around here — Gunlock and all these builders here, a very fine old fellow, [inaudible]. He was a very good teacher besides. He used to try to get me to sing when I was a young [boy]. My sister [Nancy Mae] went up there to school for awhile, but the snow [was] so deep she had to quit. He used to try to get us to sing together. He used to say to my sister, “If you could sing like your brother, Joseph, you would be a very good singer?” [Laughter] Hard to imagine what a good singer I was in those days. After the snow [became] so deep my sister couldn’t come up. She had to stay down at the ranch.

FH: How many miles was that?

JH: It was three miles and a half. [Inaudible] [James] Amos, my older brother next to me, we rode up on our horses. We would ride up every morning and home every night. We stayed up there for about two months before we could bring a wagon up. During that time I used to have my horse and my brother had his horse. I broke and trained my horse myself. I had him well-trained for a [inaudible] horse. One of the students wanted to take a kink out [of] his back for me. After I got him outside later he said, “I’ll take a kink out of his back for you before you get ready to go.” He got on and he gave his feet a big shove into his ribs. He didn’t have spurs [on], but that horse was not used to that kind of work and he ducked his head and threw that fellow off. When he came off, his foot stuck in the stirrup and the horse started running [down the] trail. There happened to be quite a good-sized bush there. We all jumped in the trailer and grabbed that horse before he damaged this fellow. He got his foot out of the stirrup and straightened up. He said, “You can’t ride that horse home tonight. He will throw you off.” I said, “I am not afraid of him.” I went up and talked to the horse a little bit. I said, “I am getting ready to go home now. Let’s get you home.” I put my foot in the stirrup and jumped on and he just went down the canyon like nobody’s business on a lope.

I was at summer school up at Mountain Meadows. The next year I was back with Arlo Higgins again. I had a teacher by the name of Shockman. He was [of] German nationality. He was another very well-educated man, I thought. He was kind of musically inclined, too, but he didn’t try to get me to sing. [Laughter] He was also kind of a doctor, setting bones and so forth. I had one wrist broken while he was there and he set it for me. I also had what they call a carbuncle right on my arm there. The first one came on the back of my neck. I got the blood out of that some way or other. I had one come around the back of the neck right on that big [inaudible]. It was the darndest place to lance. But he lanced it and did a very good job of it. The next one I [had] come on after school was out right on the arm here [and was] about the size of a hen’s egg. My father had to lance that. He did a good job of that. There didn’t seem to be anything there to bother. The next one broke out [and] you can see the scar right there.

FH: [It is] right on your wrist?

JH: [It is] on my wrist. They took me over to Pioche [Nevada] to have that [one] lanced by a doctor over there. I had to go back and have that finger lanced [at the] same place [in] Pioche. He said, "You will have to leave this boy here. He will have to have that finger scraped, have the bone scraped and clean the bone up. He will have to leave [inaudible] have that bone scraped." I said to my father that night after we [went] in the hotel, "I am not staying there. You ask the Lord in our prayer tonight to heal that finger so I can go home." So we went home the next morning and I never doctored that finger. You can see what it is [like] now. It has a big scar. I didn't lose any fingers [and] it was healed.

The next episode was this broken knee. I [was] kicked by a horse when I was about nine years old. I was on the ranch alone when that happened [while I was] taking care of things on the ranch. I only [came] home about once a week.

FH: You were on the ranch alone?

JH: On the ranch alone. I just hopped around on one leg and did my chores with the help of a little stick I picked up. I hopped around on that leg for a week before I went home. I got on the horse and rode home and my leg was so I couldn't walk on it. I got on the horse and rode home and just [inaudible]. There was no doctor within a hundred miles of us. So that was the way that knee knit just like that. You can see what it looks like.

FH: You have a big lump under your kneecap.

JH: My kneecap was broken, I think. You can see where that dent is right there. This bottom part grew out a little bit from this top part.

FH: Were you doing the chores and taking care of the ranch all by yourself?

JH: That is right.

FH: And you were only nine years old?

JH: [Only] nine years old.

FH: We wouldn't think about doing such things now-a-days.

JH: No, we wouldn't even think about it. We were raised [without] father, [who] was not there] and a very timid mother. We had to learn young what to do. We had to make men out of ourselves right from the start.

FH: Was there another episode?

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

JH: The next time my oldest brother [James Amos] was taking the grist to freight to the mill, have it ground up into flour. When it [was] all loaded up, he had a big high load on this double-bed wagon box. He had a big sheet up on top of that. The grain was piled up high clear up to the seat. I had to get up on there to ride a little way so I could say I had a ride on that load of grain. I was younger then. That happened before this other [episode] happened. I fell off that load of grain, anyway. We went across a ditch and I fell off head first right down into the ditch. I broke [my] shoulder. You can see the point sticking up there right now. It never [was] set. The wagon went over that ankle and broke it and [my] grandmother set that ankle, splinted it and patched it up. I was in bed with that for about two weeks before I could walk on it.

FH: Which grandmother?

JH: The only grandmother I had on the Holt side, Grandmother [Parthenia (Overton)] Holt. She was quite old then, but she was handy with bones. She was quite a handy woman and all-around doctor.

FH: Did you have some church activity when you were growing up?

JH: I didn't have any church activity until my father came off his mission and very little then. He was called as the bishop at Hebron just after he came off his mission. He served over there as long as the town [was alive]. [The town] was called to be abandoned and [everyone] moved to Enterprise.

[The stake president wouldn't call all of them to move.

—Added during editing by Gray E. Holt, grandson.]

JH: When they abandoned the town, he was still bishop and he was bishop down [at] Enterprise for quite a few years after Enterprise was started. In fact, he was president of the Enterprise Reservoir [and Canal Company] for years and years and years, overseeing the whole [project] right through from the time it started until it was finished. He didn't have much time to spend with his family. By the time he took care of the bishop [work] and the other work he had besides, he didn't have much time with his family. So I spent most of my time on the ranch.

My brother [George Overton] was called on a [LDS] mission when he was nineteen [years old]. So, you see, he didn't have very much time on the ranch. By the time he [received] his education from [the age of] twelve to nineteen [years old], he didn't have much time [to spend] working.

FH: Did you have more than one brother go on a mission?

JH: Yes. [James] Amos went on a [LDS] mission. I stayed home and took care of the ranch while those two boys were on a mission. When the other boy [came] back, he went right into school and trained [to be] a school teacher.

FH: Did you have a number of years [when] your church activity was almost at a standstill?

JH: [It was] almost at [a] standstill. I passed the sacrament half a dozen times, I guess, in my life. I was never ordained a teacher or a priest. When I [was] ready to be married, I was ordained an elder. I never administered the sacrament until after I was married [for] quite awhile. So you see about how much church activity [was] set up.

FH: Would you tell about your parents? [Were there any] faith-promoting experiences in your life or in your parents' or grandparents' lives that affected your life?

JH: I am going to tell you another little episode about riding horses. When I was about probably nine or ten years old, my uncle wanted me to ride a horse he had. He said, "I'll leave it," [inaudible]. You ride it." So he [put] the saddle on it and I got on.

FH: What was your uncle's name?

JH: His name was Henry Holt. He wrapped the rope around the horn, [I] got on, braced myself in the saddle, and said, "Alright, let's go." We started off and we went a little way. [Soon] something was wrong. The [horse] made a jump forward and jerked the rope out of his hand. It started bucking and [inaudible] was bucking, too. I was pulling leather. [The horse] bucked right out into the reservoir! The water was so deep [he couldn't buck] any further. He hollered, "Stay with him, "Joe." Stay with him, "Joe"." [Laughter] I was pulling leather! He came out in the water and [took] the rope and led [the horse] out. We got out in good shape.

FH: Was the horse alright?

JH: He broke the horse, finally.

FH: [Did] you have something special you wanted to [tell]?

JH: I want to give a little history about my grandfather, James Holt. This happened [when] he was called on a [LDS] mission back at the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was called back to his home town. It was when the prophet was running for the office of the president of the United States ticket at that time. This is a story my grandfather tells.
He said, "On June 27, 1844, I rose to my feet about two hours by sun to address this large congregation. The spirit of the Lord was upon me. I began by preaching

the first principles of the gospel: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. I showed them how the primitive church had fallen away and the world had lain in sin and darkness for many ages and people had been led by self-appointed ministers who preach by hire. I portrayed to them the coming of Joseph Smith, how the Lord had revealed to him the plan of salvation and endowed him with the holy priesthood with power to ordain men to the ministry and send them forth to preach without purse or scrip, depending upon the Lord to help them with His spirit. I also told them how he had been maligned by his enemies, had been driven and persecuted in a Christian country, a land of freedom for the gospel's sake. Quoting the scripture, I was guided by the spirit and opened at once to the paragraph I wanted to quote.

“In rounding out my sermon I had the spirit of revelation come upon me and I told that the enemies of the church had taken the prophets of God this day and put [them] to death as they had all the prophets of God in all dispensations of the world. I said, ‘You may have this for a testimony of the gospel for that is true Mormonism.’ After I had said this, I looked through the window and the sun was just setting. I told them I had spoken to them longer than I had anticipated, but if anyone wished to ask any questions I would answer them if they were fair. No one had any to say but all seemed struck with amazement and their eyes were filled with tears.”

He went on, “After I dismissed them, [I] went to the door and a man stopped to stop me and said he would like to hear more of my doctrine and wished to make an appointment for the next day. I asked him where he lived and he said he lived near Jackson Schoolhouse about twenty or thirty miles from here. I told him to get out an appointment for Saturday at four in the afternoon and eleven on Sunday morning and I would be there and fill them.

“Next day I went back to my father and told him that the prophet was slain and the church was in difficulty and that I was going home. He said he did not believe anyone could know anything for a certainty at such a distance. I told him that the spirit of the Lord could reveal anything to men that was going on in any part of the world and I knew that God had revealed the truth to me and that I should start for home right away.”

He went on and filled [the] appointments that he had made and bid his folks all farewell and started home. He traveled two days and crossed the Mississippi River. When he [came to] the other side, he said he noticed a man sitting in front of his house reading a paper. He said he walked over to the gate and went in and asked for a drink of water for an excuse. He said, “There is a bucket there and a cup. Help yourself.” He went right on reading his paper. He said to this man, “You seem to have something quite interesting there.” He said he did. It was about the Mormon prophets [who] have been killed. He said, “What are their

names?” He gave the names. He said, “Is there any truth to it?” He said, “It must be. It has [Missouri] Governor [Lilburn W]. Bogg’s name signed to it.” That was the first he had any chance of revealing his testimony. It was a true testimony.

When grandfather [was] old and [lay] on his deathbed, my father and my uncle [Henry Holt] had a horse out about twenty miles on the other desert [that] they had to have to work [and] put in their crops. One of them was going to go out after this horse and [would] have to camp overnight. They made arrangements before he left that if grandfather [became] worse during the night they would build a fire down on the part of the hill so he could see [that] something had happened. Grandfather passed away that evening and when he saw this fire he knew something had happened. He came right back [after] grandfather had passed away. Grandfather had laid out this burial spot in the Holt Cemetery when this little sister of mine [was] killed on a swing. She was the first one buried in that little spot of ground. Her grandfather was finally buried at this time.

FH: During your growing-up years, what did you do for a good time?

JH: I didn’t have too many good times. Like my wife here, Mary, [Jane (Morris) Holt] she said she didn’t hardly know me until she [came] into the family. I guess she never saw me when I was a young man at all. [Laughter] I hardly [ever] came to Enterprise. I stayed [mostly] at the ranch from the time I was a baby until I was married. I went to school some.

FH: [Did] you spend your time working instead of playing?

JH: I spent my time working.

FH: Did you get your enjoyment with horses and riding?

JH: [And from] tilling the soil.

FH: Were there any incidents in your own life that you feel were faith-promoting incidents?

JH: I have a few faith-promoting stories. One was when my father died. I had been down setting up [with him] that night. My brother-in-law [Bart Farnsworth] and about five of us came to a meeting about twelve o’clock. I went on up home and got ready for bed. Finally, I was in bed, [but] I hadn’t gone to sleep. I was lying there talking to my wife and all at once I said, “Father just called me.” I heard his voice just as plain as I can hear anything at the door from outside. He just called, “Joseph.” I got right up and started to get dressed. I [was] partway dressed when Bart [inaudible] came to the door and I heard his voice. He said, “Joseph, your father just passed away.” I [went] right on dressing and went right on down to the house and told mother.

Another instance [was] when my mom was on her deathbed. She was unconscious for about a week or ten days. She had spells of unconsciousness and then a spell when she was quite rational. When she came back rational, she would tell me the things she had seen and where she had been on the other side of the veil. She was, you might say, on both sides of the veil for a week or ten days. She said, "I have just been talking to mother." She was just as rational as she ever was when she told me this. She said, "I have just been talking to mother." She told [about] several persons she had been talking to while she was unconscious.

[That was wonderful, wasn't it?

—Added during editing by Gary E. Holt, grandson.]

FH: That shows how close we are to the other side. Will you tell about your courtship and marriage?

JH: I was coming home on the train when I met my wife. She had been up to school and I was coming home from school. I met her on the train at Provo [Utah County, Utah]. I didn't know her. She was a sister to my brother [George Overton's] wife. When I got on the train, some of the girls [who] knew me went to her and said, "You have a brother on this train. Your sister's husband's brother is on this train." She wouldn't believe them. The girls [came] and took me back on the train a way. I met her on the train. She had a young fellow bringing her home to spend Christmas with her friends at that time.

I suppose it must have been love at first sight. I don't know what else you would call it because she quit school and I quit school, too. She came home and I came home and we started courting right from that time on. We courted for about a year and [were] married.

[Joseph Woodruff and Mary Estella (Adams) Holt were married October 2, 1907 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah.]

FH: Where did you set up housekeeping?

JH: On this old Holt Ranch. That is where we started out — on the Holt Ranch and [we] raised our family there.

FH: Did you build a house?

JH: I had a good house there.

FH: Did you already have a house?

JH: I built the house before I was married.

MH: [It was] a nice big brick house

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JH: I tore one of the old brick houses down in the old ghost town of Hebron and hauled [the bricks] over there and put them up the second time. It made a right nice house, I think.

FH: [Were] the houses torn down in Hebron because of an earthquake?

JH: I think [the 1902] earthquake came and took it. The Lord did that. [Laughter] It was hard moving. There were a lot of [folks who] didn't [want] to move out of that old home town. That helped a little bit to get them to move.

FH: Tell about your marriage and the names of your children.

JH: We lost our first baby. I named him Joseph Adams, after my wife's maiden name and my first name. We felt [very] bad when we lost that baby.

FH: What was your wife's name?

JH: Her name was Mary Estella (Adams) Holt. Joseph Adams was our first child and Howard Adams is our second child.

FH: How long did the first [child] live?

JH: Just a few hours, just long enough to name him, give him a name and a blessing.

FH: What was the third [child's] name?

JH: Nellie, then Fay, Alma, Woodruff, Josephine, Marion, Laverd, Maxine and Enid Ferrol. Enid Ferrol was the youngest. Five are still living.

MH: They are all alive.

JH: There are ten of them still living.

FH: What happened to these children? Did they all get married and have families?

JH: They all have been married in the temple, but the youngest child.

MH: She is a mongoloid.

JH: She doesn't have all her faculties, you might say, [but] she is still alive. She is up in [the Utah State Training] school in American Fork [Utah County, Utah].

FH: Do you want to talk about the children a little more and about your home life with them?

JH: Our family is very attentive to [their] father and mother, very thoughtful, always very thoughtful and still are very thoughtful. They can't do enough for me now-a-days.

FH: Are they scattered all over the United States now?

JH: They are [fairly] well scattered. I have five girls up around Salt Lake [City] and one girl in Los Angeles [California] and one in Enterprise. The boys are all in Enterprise and St. George. The boys are all together and see each other every day [as they are] working together.

FH: Is there [anything] you can think of [as a] special note that you would like to say more about before we come to a conclusion?

JH: I want to tell them to live the commandments as near as they can. I remember when I was a young man I [started] using a little bad language. I never profaned any. I will have to say I did take the Lord's name in vain once. I got down on my knees and told the Lord if He would forgive me this time I would never do it again and I never have to this day.

When I was a young man, my uncle [Henry Holt] used to be around me quite a lot and heard me using a little bad language, damn it and one thing and another. He said, "Joseph, I wish you would quit using that word. That is a bad word to use. You will be using something that goes along with it that makes it [very] bad." So I took his advice and watched myself [fairly] close from then on.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

FH: How old are you?

JH: I will be eighty-three August 25, [1968].

FH: I am your neighbor and I see that you are working every day.

JH: I am well out [most] every day. I haven't spent many days in the house yet.

FH: You don't have any lazy bones.

JH: [Inaudible] lazy bones.

FH: I heard you went to the auction today to sell some pigs.

JH: They didn't do much out there today. It didn't seem like anybody wanted to get out today for some cause or other.

FH: I guess that wind was kind of bothering [everyone].

JH: It slows things down.

FH: It is remarkable that you are so well and [that] you are able to go like you do.

JH: I am mighty thankful that I hold up us as good as I do. The Lord has been really good to me and I want everybody to know it.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

FH: You talked about the time you lost your wife, but you haven't talked about what happened to you after that. You have a wife here [today].

JH: [After] my wife passed away, I thought I would spend some time down at the temple. I didn't know what else to do. I thought maybe I could content myself more down at the temple than any place else. So I came down to the temple and started working [there]. I worked steady there for the year after she died. To date, I [don't have] a count [of] all the names I have done, but I have boxed up there about 2,000 names. I didn't keep a name the first year I worked down here which is the heaviest year I had. So I just don't know exactly how many I have [done]. If I ever get a record, or count, of it I will have to go down to the temple to get it.

FH: You will have a lot of people happy to see you one of these days when you get over there.

JH: I hope I will have a lot of people be glad to see me.

FH: How did you happen to marry this wife you have now?

JH: I married [this] lady in the temple when I came down about a year after I had been [working] at the temple. I met a lady in the temple and married there. She was a temple worker.

FH: What was her name?

JH: Her name was Martha Wood when I married her. Her maiden name is Martha Bradshaw. She had a lovely family and they treated me just like they were my own children. They thought just as much of me as they did their own father. She seemed to think just as much of me as she did her first husband, I think. If she treated her first husband any better than she did me, why she must have been an angel.

[Joseph Woodruff and Martha (Bradshaw) Wood Holt were married June 7, 1955 in the St. George Temple, Washington County, Utah.]

FH: How many children did she have?

JH: She had five children living. She lost three children, two girls and a boy.

FH: Was she from St. George?

JH: She was from Hurricane [Washington County, Utah]. She spent her childhood days in Mexico.

FH: In Old Mexico?

JH: In Old Mexico.

FH: How long were you married to her?

JH: [We were married] close to two years.

FH: You thought this was a happy time of your life.

JH: It was a very good time. We both worked in the temple all the time. Everything she wanted to do I wanted to do and everything I wanted to do she wanted to do. She would go wherever I wanted to go and I would go where she wanted to go.

FH: Is there anything else you want to say about that particular part of your life?

JH: I [will] say she was a very congenial woman [and] she had a very nice family.

FH: How did she die?

JH: She died [from] the same problem my first wife died of, a stroke. My wife had three strokes and this last lady, Martha, had two strokes before she died.

FH: Where do we go from there?

JH: I have plenty of places to go if I start off on one of them.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

JH: When [Mary] Estella was alive, we used to have the deer hunters from California come and stay with us. They were a bunch of doctors, nearly all of them, and high officials like [that]. They used to take care of the [inaudible]. I went out hunting with them and showed them a good time. We had a lot of sociability with them, conversation and the like. One of these doctors found out I had a hernia. He said, "You come down, Mr. Holt, this fall and I will fix that up for you and it won't cost you one penny, only a hospital bill. You will have to pay the hospital bill, but the operation won't cost you one penny if you come."

He came up the next year. I [hadn't] gone down. He said, "Mr. Holt, I want you to be sure and come down this year. You need that taken care of." I said, "[Dr.] Nichols, there is one condition [that] I will go down and have [it] taken care of. If you will agree not to put me off with any drug, I will come down." He said, "I [have] never done that before. I don't know whether I better tackle that or not. You come on down. I know what you can stand. You come on down and I will take care of it." So I went down the next fall and he took me in [to the hospital]. He gave me a few shots around where he was going to cut, like he was going to pull a tooth. He [started] cutting and I laid there and talked to him all the time. He had the nurse there with a bottle. I guess she was going to drug me, but I didn't need any dope! [Laughter]

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

JH: The sad part of it was, he kept me in the hospital in bed ten days before he let me out of bed. That was the old-time method. When I [was] out about the tenth day, I got in the car and rode from Los Angeles to Enterprise. I had a place to lie down in the back of the car like a bed. That night when I came home I came down with milk leg or phlebitis — whatever you call it. I wrote down to him and told him about it. He wrote me back. He just felt [very] bad. He had wanted me stay down there two or three [more] days. I was so anxious to get home I thought I better come home. He wrote [a] nice letter, "Mr. Holt, don't let anybody operate on that leg to try to take that vein out or something of that kind. Don't let anybody operate on it." So I saw the doctor up in Cedar City [Iron County, Utah] and the first thing he wanted to do was operate on that leg. I told him no, I wouldn't have it operated on. I went around on crutches for about six months with that leg before I could walk on it. When he came back the next year — he didn't come back that fall — I was going around on my leg. He thought I would be [walking] around with a cane. He didn't have any idea I would be [walking] around without a cane.

He brought up a new doctor that fall. He said to this new doctor, "You go with Mr. Holt. He has a bad leg and he can't walk very far." [Laughter] So I went out with this fellow and we made a big drive. He got a deer, a [very] nice big deer. When he came back that night he [went] into camp. He said, "You said Mr. Holt couldn't walk very far. I would hate walking [with him] when he could walk!" [Laughter] We had really quite a nice time with those doctors. They kept asking us a lot of questions about Mormonism and we tried to answer everything we could for them. We thought a lot of them and they thought a lot of us. We haven't seen them for a good many years. They have gotten old and I have gotten old, too.

FH: Do you correspond with them at all?

JH: I did for quite a few years. They kind of dropped it off. One of them, well, two or three of them are dead. Dr. Hall is dead and I can't give the names right off. I don't know whether Dr. Nichols, the one [who] operated on me, is still alive or not. I'm not quite sure about it.

FH: Where was he in California?

JH: He was right in Los Angeles. That is where I was operated on — right in Los Angeles.

FH: What have we left out?

JH: I have to tell a little about Aunt Mary and [my] courtship with her. When I started going with Aunt Mary she was going with Jesse Jeppsen up here. Do you know Jesse?

FH: I have heard of him.

JH: I don't know how I got in. I went to the door and told her I had come to talk with her a little bit. She invited me in. I hadn't been in there very long until here comes Brother Jeppsen. He sat there a little bit and [soon] he [stood] up and turned it [her] over to me. He said, "It [she] is all yours." [Laughter] We courted along for a few months and then decided April Fools Day to go up and get our license. So we [had] an April Fools license! [Laughter]

MH: We didn't pay for it. [Laughter]

JH: [We] decided we didn't pay because it was April Fool's. Turn it over. But we have been getting along very good. We are getting along very good.

FH: How long has that been?

JH: We have been married two years.

[Joseph Woodruff and Mary Jane (Morris) Holt were married April 5, 1966.]

FH: I think that is a fine arrangement.

MH: I am still working in the hospital all the time.

JH: I go to the temple, not so often, but I go.

FH: Are there some things you want to say more?

JH: I had a little heart attack in the temple about a year ago or a little over [a year ago]. It kind of slowed me up. I kind of feel a little bit timid when I go to the temple some way or other. I just can't take it quite as good. I [don't want] to have anything happen in the temple again. I am just a little bit timid about going to the temple like I used to [be]. I got so I would rather go to the temple than any place

else when I was going regularly. I felt better there than any place. I [was] closer to the Lord there than any place I have ever been, right in the temple.

FH: [With] all this lifetime of experience behind you, I am sure you must have some counsel or advice to hand [down] to your descendants that you would like them to hear.

JH: The first thing I would like to counsel with them is to listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. That is the first thing I would like to tell them. If they listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, they won't go very far astray because they will always get a prompting that they know that it is right if they listen.

FH: If they don't know how to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, they better learn.

JH: They better learn how to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Anything that is not of light is the devil, the darkness, you might say. Anything that is of God is light and knowledge, pure knowledge. The spirit will always give you pure knowledge. If they listen to the Holy Spirit they will never go far astray.

Another thing I would like to tell the young generation is try and keep the commandments as near as they possibly can, and *The Word of Wisdom*. Leave tobacco alone, leave liquor alone, strong drinks of any kind. I will have to say of my boys, there isn't one of my boys, I don't think, [who] has ever smoked a cigarette or taken a strong drink in his life. I will have to commend them for that. I am [very] proud of them for it. The next generation coming on is the one that will have to be taken care of, watch their steps. They have more temptations now-a-days than they had when I was raising my family. [There are] more temptations and worries in the world. It is a harder world to live in now than it was when I was raising my family. There is more money. When you have more money you have more evil. Money is the root of all evil, if it is not used right. If it is used right, it can be used for good advantage. If it is not used right, it can be used to the detriment [and] make the ruination of your whole family.

FH: Would you like to bear your testimony to them?

JH: I am going to sing a few lines before I bear my testimony to them.

*"Have I done any good in the world today?
Have I helped anyone in need?
Have I cheered up the sad and made someone feel glad?
If not, I have failed indeed.*

*'Tis noble of man to work and to give,
Love labor has merit alone.
Doing good is a pleasure, a joy beyond measure,*

A blessing of duty and love.

*Then wake up and do something more,
Than dream of your mansions on high.
Doing good is a pleasure, a joy beyond measure,
A blessing of duty and love.”*

Now you have heard all these testimonies I have been giving here tonight of Grandfather Holt and some others that I have mentioned, all [have] been led by the spirit of the Holy Ghost or the spirit of truth. I told you about the Prophet Joseph Smith and all. I can bear witness to all these testimonies I have read here tonight. I can give you a testimony of my own that I know that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I know that Grandfather Holt was inspired when he made that statement back in his home town. I leave my blessing with you all and I pray the Lord to be with you and bless you. I do it all in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

[END OF RECORDING THREE. END OF INTERVIEW.]