

Interview with
GEORGE WILSON MC CONKIE, III

November 5, 1968

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
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GEORGE WILSON MC CONKIE, III

George Wilson McConkie, III was interviewed on November 5, 1968 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of the Voices of Remembrance Foundation. He related his personal history of living in various parts of Utah, Wyoming, Oregon and Nevada.

FH: Would you please give your full name?

GM: [My name is] George Wilson McConkie.

FH: [What is] your birth date?

GM: [I was born] June 30, 1909.

FH: [Where were] you born?

GM: [I was born in] Moab [Grand County] Utah.

FH: [What was] your father's name?

GM: He was George Wilson McConkie too; as [well] as his father.

FH: Then you are [George Wilson McConkie] III.

GM: I am George Wilson McConkie, III.

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

GM: [Her name was] Sarah Eleanor (Summerville) [McConkie].

FH: Can you recall something from your early life?

GM: I remember, as a small boy, when we moved onto the dry farm [in] LaSal [San Juan County]. [There were] long wagon trips going back and forth from Moab to LaSal. Usually we took two days to make the thirty-five miles. On our lot in Moab I remember [that] nearly every Easter my mother would take us to the upper end of the lot to a big cottonwood stump. This was one great experience to spend Easter up at this big stump.

FH: [Did you] take a lunch?

GM: Yes, we would take a lunch and spend maybe half a day on the big stump.

FH: Were there any other early experiences you can think of that you want to talk about? Do you want to tell about your [education]?

GM: I don't know of any other early experiences [that would be] of special interest. I remember a lot of them, of course, but I don't believe they are worth recording now.

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

GM: I went through grade school at Moab and LaSal.

FH: Was this a school where [there were] a lot of grades together in one room?

GM: [At] the school in Moab the grades were separate, but [in] LaSal we had two teachers teaching the eight grades in the church house. The church was the school building.

FH: Do you remember [any of] your teachers or anything [that happened] in school?

GM: Some of the seventh and eighth grade boys were much bigger than the teachers and the principal of the school. I remember once or twice when the principal took a licking from some of those rough and tough boys. I remember the trips to and from school in the cold part of the winter. My younger brother [Andrew Ray], my older sister [Ina] and I rode a horse back and forth through the snow; all three [of us] on one horse [rode] through the deep snow. There were no homes in the two miles between our [home] and the school. My brother rode the tail-end of the horse, and often he would find himself in the snowbanks somewhere as he dropped off. [Laughter]

FH: Was the snow quite deep in that area?

GM: Yes, we would have snow [as deep as] two feet. One of our pastimes during recess or the lunch hour [was to] go out in the sagebrush around the schoolhouse and catch rabbits as they jumped out from under the brush. They could not run in the snow and we would [catch] them.

FH: Were the teachers generally harsh disciplinarians or were they easy on you?

GM: As a rule, in those days, they were a little tougher. I remember one especially in the sixth grade. He used to whip the students with a hose. He had a piece of rubber garden hose about three and one-half feet long and it was split into four or five strips. He would use that as a sort of cat o' nine tails and he really laid it on. It was mainly [because] a student whispered and [was] talking to his neighbor. Things were quite different then.

FH: I bet they didn't whisper much, did they?

GM: No, they didn't. But I have seen quite a few whippings because of it.

FH: [After] you graduated from grade school, what happened?

GM: I attended high school [in] Moab. I played football during my high school days. When I graduated there, were thirteen [students] in the graduating class. The fall following my graduation, I [entered] BYU [Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah County, Utah]. I didn't have money enough to go straight through [four years]. I [completed] the first year and then worked for awhile. Then I would go back [to BYU]. I got in a total of about seven quarters at BYU. After which, I decided definitely to go into civil engineering and changed to Utah State Agricultural College [in] Logan [Cache County, Utah]. Of course, many of my [BYU] classes didn't count towards an engineering degree, which required 210 quarter hours of prescribed work. I only [inaudible] at that time. As a result, I never graduated although I attended, I believe, seven quarters up [in] Logan.

FH: In other words, you had a lot more [classes] than would have normally been required for graduation

GM: Yes, I had more college credit, but not all of the required [classes]. At this time, a chance [opportunity] came along [and] I took the examination for a surveyor. I took this test [to] prove I was qualified under a test that was given all over the United States. From this test, I wound up with an appointment for geological survey [work].

This was as good a job [as] most of our graduates from college were [finding] at the time. We decided to get married and it was probably one of the biggest mistakes of my life, not continuing with the school. The way it looked then, we decided to take the job. I had been working as an assistant on survey crews for quite a number of years [during] my schooling. That was how I made money to go to school.

[George Wilson, III and Mabel (Stephenson) McConkie were married 28 September 1936 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah.]

FH: You had a lot of practical experience.

GM: Yes, I had served several appointments as a temporary transit man on survey crews. I had actually operated the survey crews considerably, so I received the appointment.

FH: During these years, did you have [an] opportunity to do some [activities] in The Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints]?

GM: This was before the days of the college [LDS] wards. We didn't have them [at that time]. I attended Sunday school and church while going to school. During the summers I was out in the hills somewhere and very seldom [was] in town.

FH: [Did] your church activity through your youth [become fairly] well known?

GM: The church did not have the extensive youth programs that we have now. I think [these programs are] wonderful.

FH: [Did] you have Primary, religion class, Sunday school and MIA [Mutual Improvement Association]?

GM: This is right and I attended all of those.

FH: Tell about your father. .

GM: My father was George Wilson McConkie, II. He was born in a polygamist family. His father [George Wilson McConkie] had three wives and [went] to Mexico to avoid trouble. He died some six months after moving to Mexico. My father and mother were both born in Mona [Juab County] Utah. My father was the oldest one in his family [with] two younger brothers and a younger sister. The brothers [were] Oscar W. [Walter] McConkie of Salt Lake City, and William R. [Russell] McConkie of Moab. William R. was a banker in Moab for years. Oscar was a lawyer, a judge and served as president of the Southern California [LDS] Mission for a period of time. He was also the father of Bruce R. [Redd] McConkie.

My father had the least education of the three boys, being the oldest and [because] his father [was] dead. He had [to] work to help support the family and a result, received the least education. However, he [did] serve a [LDS] mission in Texas [and] served in the bishopric. He was a farmer. I remember him working as a laborer on several road construction jobs. For a period of time, he operated a freight wagon between Thompson [Springs, Grand County] Utah, which was the railroad station, and Moab. I recall making several trips with him up there to haul freight. He traveled with Sam Hudson a lot. Sam used to speak of my father as being the strongest man that he had ever known. My father called Sam the strongest little man he had ever known. They had a lot of lifting to do [when] loading their freight. They would drive two wagons with four horses each, hauling the freight. I remember going out [on] one trip; we had a piano on order. My father took me [with him and] we slept out alongside the railroad tracks. I remember [the] train coming in the middle of the night; like to scared me to death! [Laughter] My father died at, I believe, the age of forty-two. His father had died young also.

FH: [Does] that seem unusual?

GM: Yes. He [his father] was bothered with stomach ulcers for years. One [ulcer] perforated on him while he and my mother were making a trip with a wagon and a load of baled hay from LaSal to Moab. He could not get to a doctor in time. By the time he did get to a hospital, it was too late to save him. He was a remarkable man. Oscar McConkie, his brother, told me many times that George McConkie was the best man he ever knew.

FH: That is a good recommendation, isn't it?

GM: I think so. My father never lost an opportunity to teach the gospel. I can remember him, many times, as we were traveling along the road, wagons would meet [and] the drivers would stop and visit. Almost invariably, he would get into a discussion of religion.

FH: Would you like to tell about your mother?

GM: My father was married to Sarah Eleanor Summerville. [She was] also born in Mona. Later both of them had moved to Moab, and my father married her after returning home from his [LDS] mission in Texas. My mother was an outstanding woman. She wasn't afraid of anything. I remember quite a few interesting experiences in her life. [One] time she saved the life of one of our cows by sticking it with a butcher knife. It made an awful hole in the cow's side, but it saved her life. The cow was bloated [and] ready to die. This was a big item when you had no more income than my family had.

My mother also doctored and nursed her family. I remember her filling up several cups with needle and thread. [From] Sears, Roebuck [and Co.] [she] got a pair of forceps and pulled any of our teeth that had to come out. She served as the Relief Society president in Moab for about twenty years. During this time, there was no undertaker services in Moab and the Relief Society took care of those who died. They would wash the bodies, dress [and] prepare them for burial and sit with the bodies until the time of the funeral. In those days, they had a lot of services [functions] that we normally don't consider now. My mother was a widow too [since] my father died at such a young age. She had five children; I was the second [child]. My mother made a living for us [by] baking bread on a wood and coal burning range. Moab is [fairly] hot country too. In the summer, our home was always plenty warm. As children, we hauled the bread down to the store. My uncle, W. D. Hammond, operated the grocery store there. He lives in St. George now. He handled the bread. There were no bakeries in Moab at the time; the only bread sold there was what my mother made. We also had two milk cows. The children in our family delivered the milk around town in little tin buckets. These were the means that she had of raising her family.

FH: I will bet you had a good life, too.

GM: Yes, we did. She not only managed to get us by, but she had saved about \$300.00 out of a small insurance policy that my father had. She hung onto the money, and [it] went toward educating my older sister so she could teach school.

FH: Why don't you talk about your brothers and sisters?

GM: My older sister, Ina [McConkie], became an elementary school teacher and taught in Moab quite a number of years. She married John Young, a carpenter, and they moved to Santa Maria, California, where they have [continued to] live. Both [of them] have been very active in the church throughout their lives. I was the second member of the family.

After me came another boy: Andrew R. [Ray] McConkie, who went into forestry. He received his degree at Logan and served as a [United States] Forest Ranger. At the present time [he is] a supervisor at the forest [in] Vernal [Uintah County] Utah.

Next in the family [was] Ellen McConkie, who became a nurse at the LDS [Latter-day Saints] Hospital [in Salt Lake City, Utah]. She lived a wonderful life and performed such wonderful services for people who had been in the hospital [and] so many people love her greatly. She later married Don [Carlos] Clayton, and they live in Bountiful [Davis County, Utah].

My younger sister, Faye [McConkie], the baby of our family, later went to school at BYU and [married Jesse] Woodrow Westenskow. He [was] originally from the LeGrande, Oregon area and they live in Murray [Salt Lake County, Utah]. They have both been very active in the church there. Woodrow has served as bishop and Faye in a number of Primary and Relief Society positions.

FH: [Did] the brother [Andrew Ray] in Vernal get married?

GM: Yes, he and I married sisters. Of course, I married the best one of the Stephenson family. My brother saw how well I did, so he took the next one, Beatrice Stephenson.

FH: A family like yours must have had a great deal of faith. [Have you] any particular stories that would show a little [of] this?

GM: I remember [that] there seemed no limit to my father's or my mother's faith. I [am] convinced that I have been guided [by this] very much through my life. Through many of the experiences I have had, I am thoroughly convinced that I have had much protection, which probably I didn't deserve, but I have enjoyed and appreciated. I know it was the [Lord's] hand, and I have appreciated what the Lord has done for me.

- FH: Sometimes in your life [have] you wondered just why the Lord has guided and blessed [you] so much?
- GM: Yes. You can't help but wonder sometimes. When I look back over my own life, (and I have told my family this quite a number of times) I don't think there has ever been anything happen in my life that has not been for my good. I tell them that I think the same thing can be true in their lives. Sometimes we don't recognize it at the time, but I think that if we will look at [situations] carefully, we will see in the long run that [it] has been for the best.
- FH: You ought to tell [about] another area of your life. What did you do to have fun when you were growing up?
- GM: I have a cousin, Wayne [Russell] McConkie, who lived a half block from me and [we were] was the same age. Wayne is now a professor at Dixie College in St. George. We were almost like brothers to each other. My own brother was only a couple of years younger than I. The three of us spent a lot of time together hiking over the hills of Moab. [It is] red sandstone country similar to the St. George area. We [fairly] well knew those hills, anywhere [that was] within walking distance. We spent a lot of time swimming [and] fishing together. In the summer our backs were always blistered from the sun.
- FH: Did you ever run into any rattlesnakes in that country?
- GM: Yes. Not only hiking there, but all through my life I have done outdoor work and I have had some close contact with a few snakes, but they never worried me.
- FH: [Laughter] Maybe [it is] good if you didn't worry.
- GM: One time I had been sleeping out on the ground. The next morning, as I threw my bed canvas back over my bed, there was a snake there, [on] the canvas between him and my head, actually. He had spent the night under the bed while I [slept] on top of it. I had one thrown up [at me] one time [along] with some weeds. We were hauling weeds to build a dam, and the man who threw the weeds on the wagon threw a snake up with it. It dropped out across my arms, slid off my arm and was crawling around my feet there in these weeds. I was afraid [that] if I moved, he would probably grab me. Because I stood still, he didn't know the difference. I stood still, worked a pitchfork around him and tossed him off the wagon. They never worried me too much; I see them all the time! [Laughter]
- FH: Steady nerves! [Laughter] Have you enjoyed music in your life?
- GM: I enjoy music, yes, but I don't know a thing about it. Sometimes, I have wondered what all those black spots are on the music sheet. I am glad that my wife knew something about music; she plays the piano. We have seen to it that all the members of our family had a chance to learn something about music. They have

all done [fairly] well at it and have learned to appreciate music. It is very important.

FH: Have you enjoyed reading?

GM: I enjoy reading, yes. I haven't read very extensively, not as much as I should, and not in as many fields as I should. I especially enjoy reading about the scientific discoveries that are going on [and] different theories [events] as they develop. Not that I always understand them by a long ways, but I enjoy reading what I do understand.

FH: Tell about your courtship and your marriage.

GM: While I was going to school [in] Logan, my wife — the girl who later became my wife — was also going to school there. She had become acquainted with my younger brother who was also in school —

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

GM: — [inaudible] a little, then we returned to Jackson [Wyoming]. We had been in an auto court [motel] up there [while] I continued with my survey work. I worked for an oil company for about a year and a half with the Geological Survey after we were married. During this time we were [in] Jackson, Wyoming, up around Mt. Vernon, Washington and [in] Salem, Oregon. Afterwards, the land acquisition of that department was closed down and they had to lay off all their surveying crews. Then I transferred to the General Land Office, where I had worked considerably before as an assistant and as a transit man on their public land surveys. I transferred back and continued in [United States] Government service. In fact, after I graduated from high school and started working for the survey crew, practically all of my work since the fall of 1928 has been in government service. [For] about forty years now, and [I have worked] practically all [the time] for the government.

FH: Have you enjoyed that work?

GM: I enjoyed it as a surveyor until about — I don't remember when it [happened]. I glanced an axe off [of] a tree one day and chopped some toes off my left foot. I wondered if I would be able to take the long walks that we [took] in the surveying work. The chance [opportunity] came along to transfer to the Geological Survey on stream gauging work. So I took this transfer and have worked with the Geological Survey for about twenty-seven years.

FH: Where were you living when your first child was born?

GM: I was working with the General Land Office. My wife stayed with her mother's family in Holden [Millard County] Utah when our oldest boy, George Wilson

McConkie, IV was born. When he was six months old, we moved out to the Nevada desert with a house trailer. For the next five years, beginning way early in the spring, we would move out on the desert. As the weather [became] hotter we would go up into the mountains. When winter came, we would move to Salt Lake City and rent an apartment. While the weather was good, we lived out in the open in the house trailer. This is how George got his start, playing with the desert turtles and his collie dog, “Boo”, we had for him. He thought anything this dog did was perfectly all right. In fact, he used to embarrass us a little when we would go in town [and] the dog would bark at someone. George would run along beside the dog, barking at them too. We thought [that] was going a little too far! [Laughter]

When George was old enough, five-years-old, to go to school, he started kindergarten. This was another reason I transferred to the Geological Survey. It gave us a chance to live in town. We moved to Salt Lake City, bought a home northeast of the LDS hospital and George started school there. We were in the home about a year when I was transferred to Elko, Nevada.

This [was] shortly after our next child, our daughter Linda [McConkie], was born. At the time Linda was born, you know how wives are sometimes, they do rather foolish things. My wife decided to give birth to this baby on a night when no cars could travel up the Avenues [in Salt Lake City]. It was snowing [and] slick, so she had to walk to the hospital, having pains all the way. My sister, Ellen, who was a nurse at the LDS Hospital, was with her at the time. They would walk a ways, and then they would rest for awhile, then they would walk a ways further. But she made it to the hospital alright [and] this is how we got Linda. [Laughter]

FH: Where were you?

GM: I was on a stream gauging trip out in Nevada at [the] time. I wasn’t home when the baby was born. Of course, this is one thing that my wife has never quite forgiven me for, too. She didn’t tell me when it was going to happen.

UV: [Inaudible]

GM: [Laughter]

FH: [Laughter]

UV: [Inaudible]

GM: When we [have] little ones come into our family, we don’t realize [what] is going to happen later in their lives. We can’t [foresee future] possibilities. [When] we saw George playing with [the] turtles out there and his closest pal, the dog, we never suspected that later on he would be the valedictorian of his graduating class at BYU and that he would eventually gain his PhD. At the present time, he is a

professor of education and educational psychology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York and also the [LDS] branch president there. We are [very] proud of what he is doing.

FH: Tell about his life.

GM: Yes, we don't want to miss [that]. George married a very fine girl from Salt Lake City, Orlene Johnson. They are very happy in Ithaca [and are] the parents of four little girls. The only thing we feel bad about is that they are so far away. We are very proud of the whole family. Orlene is also very active in the church, along with George and helps him considerably with his work.

Linda married Donald "Don" Brady. He is working on his PhD in biological chemistry at Cornell University. Linda obtained her degree in education and taught one year before she gave up teaching and started raising her family. They have one little girl now. We are very, very proud of both of them. Linda and "Don" are both [very] active in the church.

Our next child, Donna [McConkie], was born [in] Elko. Donna graduated from BYU and obtained her teaching certificate in elementary education. She spent last year as an intern teacher in Tooele [Tooele County, Utah]. This year she is teaching in the Provo [school] district. Donna is very active in the church and very faithful. We couldn't be prouder of her. She married John Chamberlain last year [1967]. John is continuing his education at BYU. [He is] a very fine young fellow and we are very happy to have him in our family.

Our youngest child, Paul Thomas, was born in Elko. He was a year old when we [moved] to St. George, Utah. Paul is now serving in the [LDS] British Mission in England and has been there one year after completing one year at Dixie College. We are very proud of Paul and the way he is doing his missionary work.

FH: What mission is he in?

GM: [He is in] the British Mission in London. At the present time, he is located in Norwich [England]. He is Assistant District Leader in the Norwich District. He sends us good reports and is very enthused with his missionary work there. We are certainly proud of him.

FH: [Did] your work [bring] you to St. George?

GM: Yes. After we had been in Elko some five-and-one-half years [working] on the stream gauging, the district engineer asked me if we would like to move to either Richfield [Sevier County, Utah] or St. George. I told him I would like to come to St. George [and that] is how we wound up here. We certainly enjoyed the years we spent in Elko. We were both active in the church there. My wife had been in the Mutual [Improvement Association] Presidency and [was] very active in the

Primary and the Relief Society. She had three quite small children at the time, until the fourth one came along. During this time I served in the Sunday school superintendency and as the superintendent and as the Stake Sunday school superintendent. I served in the bishopric and the High Council. I was a stake missionary to the Indians in the area for, I think, about a year and one-half. We had enjoyed all of these assignments very much.

FH: It looks like it has kept you quite busy.

GM: Yes. Anyone [who] would accept a job out there would keep busy, alright. [Laughter]

FH: Have you enjoyed your work here?

GM: Yes, I've enjoyed it here. Soon after we came to St. George, a Stake Conference was held. It was announced that there [was] some Indian handiwork in the basement of the tabernacle [that] they would like people to see. Being interested in Indians, I dropped down in the basement and met Lucy Graff. The first thing I knew, I had some Indian work [to do] here too. All together, I [have] spent about ten and one-half years working with the Paiute Indians in Elko and here. My wife was also involved in the Indian work [for] about the same length of time.

FH: What kind of work was it? What do you do?

GM: For awhile we were assigned as missionaries [to the Indians]. We were under the [direction of the] Stake Mission leader. Then I was Sunday school superintendent at the reservation for some time. Later, when it [the LDS church unit] was made a branch, I was made branch president out there. We enjoyed it very much and we had many Indian friends. A few of them still drop in to see us for a visit. Lots of them come in when they have trouble and need a little help. [Laughter]

FH: [Did] you have another way of serving in your home?

GM: We have taken four different Indian children into our home at different times, one at a time. [We] tried to help them out a little. Sometimes it seemed to be quite effective and other times not. Two of these [children] we took on our own, and the other [two] we received through the [LDS] church placement program. The boy we had last year is attending BYU this year. We are very happy with [how] he is doing and anxious to see him make the most of his life. He seems like one of our own [children].

FH: Is this Jonathan?

GM: Jonathan Probashini. He came from down in the Gallup, New Mexico area. He is a fine boy [and] is looking forward to [serving] a [LDS] mission. His objective is to become a school teacher in the Gallup area.

- FH: He will be a fine influence on his people. Would you like to venture as to what you would like to do the rest of your life? [That is], if you had your choice.
- GM: I haven't thought much about it. I have reached the point where I [would] retire if I could afford it, but I can't see myself as being retired. I think I would just as soon keep working for awhile yet. In fact, I expect to for the next six or seven years if my health stays good. At the present time, I have an assignment down at the information center at the temple. We are meeting people as they come in, both members and non-members, and try to explain the gospel to the non-members. I [don't] think I have ever had an assignment, out of all my church experiences that I have enjoyed as much as this [one]. So maybe this points the way for the future.
- FH: That is an enjoyable [experience]. Have you learned any lessons from life?
- GM: I have learned some of my weaknesses, yes. I know some of the ways I have fallen down. Too often I find myself unprepared when an opportunity comes around. When [an] assignment comes along, I am not [very] prepared to fill it the way I should because I have procrastinated, or haven't prepared myself. The only advice I could give my children would be, probably along this line: that they get on the ball and be prepared for [events] as they come. You never know exactly what is coming, but we have got to be prepared to some extent in many ways, to meet whatever does come. We have had a good life together. I have never been out of work [nor] have I ever had to hunt a job. So, in some ways, I don't even know what these things mean. I think these are just some of the blessings that have been given to me, deservedly or undeservedly. This is the way things have gone in our life, and I am very thankful for it. We are certainly proud of our family, every one of them, and of those who have married into our family, [we feel] the same way.
- FH: Sometimes in the telling of a story, we miss a few [events] that we remember later. Are there some of these that you would like to [speak about] now?
- GM: Perhaps I should say more about my father. At one time, he served as the city marshal in Moab. He had the reputation there of having no fear of anything that came along. Being a physically powerful man, nothing worried him at all. For instance, [at] a dance down there one time, one man pulled a gun and was going to kill another man right there in the dance hall. He threatened to do it [and] he was drunk. They said my father just walked out on the dance floor, placed his hand on the man's shoulder, pushed him to the floor and took the gun away from him. That was all there was to it. There was absolutely no fear. His brother, Oscar, said, "George McConkie didn't have the slightest idea of the meaning of fear at all."

Perhaps I should add also a little more detail on the occasion of my father's sickness when he finally passed away. He had been weakened by [ulcers and an] appendicitis operation and had been laid up nearly all winter [because he] didn't

heal too well. He finally got so he could do some work again. He went to LaSal, some thirty-five miles away, [and] was bringing some baled hay to Moab. My mother had been impressed that she should go with him on this trip. They came within eight miles of Moab, it [was] dark and they camped for the night. During the night he was taken with severe pains, so bad that he was helpless. My mother harnessed up the team, hitched them to the wagon, managed to load him on top of a load of baled hay and drove on to Moab. But it had been so long since the perforation by the time they were at the hospital. Although the doctor [who] operated did the best he could, my father never recovered. He died that night.

FH: This was an ordeal for your mother.

GM: Yes, it was. She had things [fairly] rough in her life up until then, too. She could take it [fairly] well. My father and mother were very close together; she never even considered the possibility of remarriage at all.

FH: How [did] you make your way through college?

GM: While I was in high school, my brother and I did the janitor work at the ward chapel. We received \$22.50 a month for doing the janitor work. We had a chapel to keep in shape and the furnace to fire up and [other chores]. Out of this \$22.50 and some of my summer wages, I had managed to save some [money]. I will never forget when I opened my first checking account. [It was] about my first year of high school. I was paid \$30.00 for a month's work and, boy, that was a big pile of money! I took it down to the bank and opened up my checking account. From then on, I managed to keep an account there and kept adding to it, along with a small savings account. I left Moab to go to school [and] I wasn't around very much anymore. I was either in school or working on a surveying party for the General Land Office. My brother, Andrew, took over the janitor work and continued to work at that. This is how I saved the money for what [education] I [received]. I would miss part of a year of school while I was working. As soon as the surveying season would end, I would try to get in some more [classes].

FH: You worked your way right on through school.

GM: I started out at \$60.00 a month plus my board and within two months after I started they raised me to \$75.00. [This] was the highest [wage] that any of the assistants were getting on the crew. We were living in tents in the camp out there, so we actually had our board and room, or board or tent, and money was more or less clear. We saved most of it; nearly all of it, in fact.

FH: After this lifetime of wonderful experiences [and] a good life, I think it would be fine if you would like to leave counsel and advice to your descendants. Maybe you would like to bear your testimony to them if you feel inclined.

GM: I would hate to give them advice, because I feel each one of them is already doing much better than I did, or would do even if I were to do it over again. I am very, very proud of the way my family is doing.

FH: That is [inaudible].

GM: I can't really see how I can give them counsel [on] how they can improve themselves under these conditions. I do know that if they will stay close to the church and in the line of duty as they are doing now, that their lives will be rich, they will be happy and they will be blessed. We have seen it in the lives of every one of our children so far. I believe that they have all reached the same conclusion already; that nothing has ever happened in their life but what it was the very best for them. The Lord was watching over them and this is the way their lives have been going. Not one of the four children has had plenty of reason [not] to see it this way, and I believe that all of them do.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

GM: Perhaps I should have added a little more about my mother. She developed leukemia [and] became —

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

GM: — became very ill. My older sister had [mother] move to California. My two younger sisters [Ellen and Faye] who were still living at home went with her. I am very grateful for what my older sister [Ina] and her husband [John Young] did for our family at [that] time. My mother suffered quite acutely with leukemia for two or three years. Ellen was very helpful to my mother. She was very loyal and did all she could to make my mother comfortable. I believe this is when [Ellen] developed her desire to go into nursing.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

GM: After my mother died, Ellen entered nursing school at the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake [City] and became a nurse. I have always felt that she was an outstanding nurse. My wife can vouch for this, having spent time in the hospital there, [and] had Ellen's assistance. Ellen was tireless and worked overtime hours much of the time just to help some of the patients.

Another item I should have mentioned about my father was the great respect that all the men seemed to have for him. People who were some of the roughest and toughest characters in that area still respected George McConkie, [II]. My dad did a little blacksmithing on the side. He had a blacksmith shop in Moab and, as a boy, I watched him out there working with the iron. Quite often, some of these people who were considered some of the roughest and toughest of the area and

had the reputation for having killed a man or two would stop and visit with my dad. They always spoke well of him.

My dad always insisted on standards that he thought right and never permitted anyone to smoke in our home, for instance. If some of them were there visiting and thoughtlessly pulled out a cigarette and started to light it, he would say, "Let's walk out on the porch while you smoke that." He would go outside and talk with them out there, no matter what the weather, until they got through with their smoke. Then they would come back inside. I don't know how well this would work now-a-days, but this is the way he worked it then. I have always admired him for his stand on this. He didn't want his home smelling of cigarette smoke.

These are just a few of the items that show the character of the man and why he was so well respected. No one criticized him for these things and he was respected by all for it. Some of his best friends were people who did not hold to the same standards that he did, but they respected him all the way because of what he did.

Some overlooked thoughts: I should say something about my wife's family, the family I married into. I think her parents [Simeon Thomas and Emma Louisa (Ashby) Stephenson] are some of the most wonderful people that I have ever known. There is not one member of the family who isn't top notch. [They are] some of the very finest people. I admire each and every member of the family. Her dad was a man who absolutely lived up to the very highest notch of honesty. He wanted everyone to know it. There was never anyone [who] dared question his honesty in any way. If there was ever any indication that anyone might, he wanted that straightened out, right now. I think this has carried through all his sons and daughters [because] every one of them is about the same way. My wife's mother was certainly an outstanding woman. She didn't have an easy life [and] she raised a big family [of] nine children. They had it rough, but she took it all and was one of the most outstanding women I know.

[END OF RECORDING THREE. END OF INTERVIEW.]

UV – Unidentified Voice