

Interview with
MYRTLE (JENSEN) REBER

March 29, 1969

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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MYRTLE (JENSEN) REBER

Myrtle (Jensen) Reber was interviewed on March 29, 1969 in Mesquite, Nevada, by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of Voices of Remembrance Foundation. She related her personal history of living in various parts of Nevada. Her husband, Ralston Virden Reber, also participated.

FH: What is your full name?

MR: [My name is] Myrtle (Jensen) Reber.

FH: When were you born?

MR: [I was born] October 10, 1913.

FH: Where were you born?

MR: [I was born] in Mesquite, Nevada.

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

MR: [My father's name was] John Jensen.

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

MR: [My mother's full name was] Christina Abigail (Abbott) [Jensen].

FH: What do you remember from your early [childhood] before you went to school?

MR: I remember we lived in a [small] one-room house when I was [young]. We had [a] shed [covered with] ivy across the front for shade because it was [very] hot in the summertime. I had a little brother [who] was about four years old. His name was Lawrence [Jensen]. My dad was hauling gravel from across the [Virgin] River and my mother was sewing under this ivy shed [on] her sewing machine. Every little while she would say, "Myrtle, go out and look down the road and see if you can see daddy coming." I would go out and would come back and say, "No, I cannot see him coming." In a little while she would send me out again to see if he was coming. I could not see him coming. Finally, when I went out, I could see a team of horses coming up the road as fast as they could run. I ran back and told her. She came out all excited and said, "I knew it! I knew it!" [Emotional] She thought that something had happened to my dad. Afterwards, she told us [that] this still small voice kept saying something was going to happen. [Emotional]

When this team of horses came to us, it was my uncle [Oscar Abbott]. Mama said, "Is it John?" He said, "No, it is not John. It is your little boy. He fell off the wagon and [was] run over." [Emotional] In a little while, dad came with another man [who] was always down at the river. He had a team and pulled the cars back and forth across [the river]. He had a [small] two-wheel cart that he drove back and forth to his home. They came in this [cart] with the little boy [Lawrence]. My dad had two or three of my other brothers [John Lavon and Altis] with him on this load of gravel. Coming across the river, some way, one of the wheels hit a rock. They figured the boy was probably asleep on the [wagon] and [was] thrown off and the wagon ran over him. He was dead. That is one experience I remember [emotional] when I was [very young].

FH: Your mother was closely attuned to the spirit to be able to know this ahead of time.

MR: She always was.

FH: [What else] can you remember [from] that early part [of your life]?

MR: I remember we used to have to dip the water up out of the ditch early in the morning and put it in barrels. We had gunny sacks around the barrels to keep [the water] cool in the shade or under the shed. We would always try to keep it cool to drink.

We had a lot of red ants around. One day I [was] stung with a red ant under my toes. I remember that did hurt worse than anything in the world. They did not have medicine much to doctor with. Mama put an onion poultice on [it]. She [used] the wet mud out of the ditch. It seemed like nothing helped it. She had [my foot] all done up with a cloth and said, "Go over to Jennie's." Stanley Pulsipher and his wife, Jennie, were neighbors to us. She said, "Go over and see if Jennie has something you can put on that ant sting to make it quit hurting." So I went over. I remember she put some bluing on it, the [same] bluing that they put in the water to whiten the clothes. It seemed like that helped a little bit. I had had ant stings before and after, but it seemed like [it] really hurt extra bad that day. I do not know why. [Laughter]

FH: Maybe it was an extra big ant! [Laughter] Did you go to school in Mesquite?

MR: In those days, we did not have kindergarten. I started in the first grade. This neighbor, a [young] girl, Beth Pulsipher was her name, [we] were in first grade together. We only went half a day. We would walk up at noon about three miles through the sand. The road was all sand. Sometimes her dad would take her horseback on the horse. I always had to walk because my dad was out in the field or gone. My older brother [John Lavon] went in the morning and came home at noon.

- I was always afraid of cars. There were a few cars then that would go up this sandy road. One day I was about halfway to town and I saw a car coming. I was alone that day [and] afraid. So I ran into an old bachelor's place. Amos Burgler was his name. He was from Belgium. I ran in back of his house until the car passed and then I came out and went on. I do not know why I was afraid. I guess [I was afraid of] strangers. [Laughter]
- FH: Someone must have planted a fear in your heart. [Laughter]
- MR: I was afraid of anybody [who] was in a car. [Laughter]
- FH: Tell about the schoolhouse and your teachers.
- MR: We had a lumber schoolhouse. I think the reason we could not go all day was because of the shortage of teachers. My first grade teacher was Miss Helen Kepley. I remember this lumber schoolhouse. I do not remember how many rooms it had, [but] it had steps up the front and the belfry. The bell was above the porch. We had a merry-go-round contraption out in the back that somebody had built. It was a homemade affair that was fun to play on. We had programs. When our first block schoolhouse was built and we moved into there, we really thought we had something nice.
- FH: Did the school classes meet separately or together?
- MR: The first year we went to one grade in the afternoon. When we [were] in the second grade, we were up in the new building. We had two grades together in one room and one teacher. She was Mrs. Emma Abbott. She taught my mother when she was in school. She taught me in the third and fourth grades. She taught school here until she retired. I mean until she [was] too old [to teach]. She was a good teacher, [but] she was strict. We used to always say she had eyes in the back of her head because she could be writing on the blackboard and would call your name out [if] somebody was making a disturbance. [Laughter]
- FH: [Laughter] Do you suppose she knew which one would normally do it?
- MR: She probably did, but she was a wonderful person. She taught a lot of [children] here in this town. My fifth grade teacher was a girl from up around Spanish Fork [Utah County, Utah] or American Fork [Utah County, Utah]. She married Marshall Granger [from] here before she left here. My sixth grade teacher was Charity Leavitt from Bunkerville [Nevada]. We had six grades here and then we went to Bunkerville to the seventh and eighth and through high school.
- FH: That was peculiar to go to Bunkerville for high school.
- MR: That was where our first high school was established. My husband was one of the first to go to high school. He can tell you about it.

FH: Did you go all the way through high school?

MR: Yes, I did.

FH: Do you feel your teachers were good teachers?

MR: I think they were. I know I had a lot of respect for all of my teachers. That is one thing I can say that I never did; [I] never sass'd a teacher or talked back to them. I never dared because my parents were strict and they did not believe in that kind of [behavior]. They always told us: if you get into trouble in school, you will [be in] worse [trouble] when you get home. So we did not dare to get in trouble at school. We behaved ourselves.

FH: In these early years, when you were growing up, did you ever take any trips?

MR: Not until I was in high school. I think I was probably in the third or fourth year of high school and a [Clark] County nurse came and gave us life-saving lessons and first aid [information]. [At that time], we had home economic [classes]. We had a chance to go to Reno [Nevada] to compete with girls from the rest of the state in some special [events] that we could do [very] well. I was chosen to [do] first aid and show them how to put on different kinds of bandages. It was a nice experience for me and was the first time that I ever [had a chance] to go anyplace.

FH: Were you a little bit scared to go?

MR: A little bit. I remember Mrs. Berntsen was our teacher. She was quite a large lady [and] we went in her car. I think there were about six of us besides her. We had a flat tire about every five miles. [Laughter] Going up through Beatty [Nevada] and up through that way they were making new roads and [there were] a lot of detours and [the] road [was bad]. I still have pictures of us changing [the] tires. After we [arrived], we found out that somebody [had] hauled an old lumber building on a truck up through that part of the country and they [had] dropped a [lot] of nails. [Laughter] We picked up the nails in our tires.

I [was able] go to St. George [Washington County, Utah]. My dad took me up in our old Model-A Ford and I [bought a] dress. That was the first store-made dress I ever had in my life. It [had] a black background with orange flowers in it and quite a big collar around [the neck]. I thought that was the most beautiful dress that anybody could ever have. I wore that dress and wore it until it finally wore out. I always did like that dress.

FH: That was a fond memory. Did you take any other trips?

MB: We went on our [school] slough [day] trip when we were seniors just before we graduated. The father of one of [the] boys in our senior class had a truck, probably a ton and a half truck, with an open bed. We all took a bed roll and our grub box

[with] something to eat. We were gone overnight, two days and one night. We went up to Zion's Canyon [Zion National Park]. In those days they did not have a park there. It was just a canyon. We went up in the canyon, parked and slept out on the ground. We walked all up through these places [where] you can still go and hike to these scenic places along the canyon. I remember how beautiful it was because there were ferns growing along the sides of the canyon where the water would come out from the snow. It was a lot of fun.

FH: I imagine it was prettier then than it is now.

MR: I think so.

FH: There are too many people in there now.

MR: We had a lot of fun just hiking and camping out. [When] we came back, all of us sat in the back of [the] truck mostly on our bed rolls. [Laughter]

FH: Did you have any accidents happen to you when you were growing up?

MR: I think I was about nine or ten [years old] and we had cows. We had one corral and the irrigation ditch ran through it. We were doing the chores one evening. I remember my mother and dad were there. There was a bucket in the corral. I do not know how it got there. My mother told me to go in the corral and get this bucket. I guess she did not think about this cow that was in there that had a new calf. We called her "Old Brock." She [had] a white face with brown spots on her face. When I [went] in the corral to get this bucket, she knocked me down. I did not realize she was anywhere around when I went in. She knocked me into [the] ditch and she kind of tromped me in the mud. It knocked me unconscious. She hurt my shoulder. [Inaudible] I did not know anything until they cleaned me up and had the mud off of me.

The first I remember is they [called] Uncle "List" [Lister Leavitt]. He was the man in this town [who] always set the broken bones. He was not a doctor, but he was gifted to set bones. If anybody ever had a broken bone, he could set it. He had set lots of broken arms and legs. My dad had gone up to get him to see if my shoulder was broken. He said it was not broken, but I know I walked for a long time with my arm in a sling. It even hurt me to move. The jar of walking would hurt it. I was lucky it was not broken. If it was, it healed alright because I never had any trouble with it [later].

FH: You were lucky to be alive.

MR: Yes, I guess I was.

FH: I believe an angry cow is worse than a bull.

RR: She had an aunt that was killed.

MR: One of my aunts [Josepha Jane (Abbott) Leavitt] was killed by a cow that had a calf.

FH: They are treacherous when they get on the warpath. Did you get over it alright?

MR: Yes, I got over it. I have never had any [bad] effects from it.

FH: Did you go valentining when you were little?

MR: We used to have more fun. We had to make our own fun. We would go and drop valentines on Valentine's Day. We would always make some jerk valentines, extra pretty ones and have a long string on them and hide around the corner or out behind the porch post or somewhere to jerk them when they would come out. In those days, we never put our names on when we would drop them to our friends. We just dropped them and let them guess. They would always try to catch us.

We had some neighbor [children], the Horsley's. They were actually our cousins [and] we used to have a lot of fun with [them]. One night they dropped valentines at our place. One of the boys was Richard, but we called him "Dick." We would always stand close to the door so we could get out and catch them before they [ran] away. This night they dropped the valentines and kicked on the door and ran out across the road. We were right after them. I was after him. On the other side of the street there was a fence [with] a ditch on the other side of it. He rolled under the fence and rolled into the ditch laughing as hard as he could laugh. [Laughter] I can hear him laughing yet.

We used to go out on moonlit nights and play Run-Sheep-Run and Steal-the-Sticks and all those games. I remember when we used to have the threshers [come]. I was as big a tomboy as any of them. I always liked to be outside doing things in the field right along with the boys. The threshers had to have somebody tromp the straw down so it would not get [in] too big of a pile. They always kept the straw to feed the stock in the wintertime. We would get under that old thresher where it would throw out the straw and [we would] tromp. We would get so itchy and hot, but we would have to stay with it until they quit. Then we could go up to "Big Ditch," the canal, and have a swim. Oh how good that used to feel!

FH: Was it worth all the trouble? [Laughter]

MR: We thought it was anyway. [Laughter]

FH: During these early years were you active in [The] Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints]?

MR: We had to walk about three miles when we went to church. My brothers and sisters and I would walk to Sunday school in the morning. Then they had sacrament meeting about two o'clock. We would walk to Sunday school in the morning and then walk home and get our lunch. Then we would walk back at two o'clock and go to sacrament meeting. Then they had MIA [Mutual Improvement Association] Sunday evenings. The older ones who were of Mutual age would walk to MIA. We used to have lots of fun walking especially when [there were] moonlit nights.

FH: That would be bad in stormy weather.

MR: I do not remember of it ever storming when we went. [Laughter]

FH: What do you remember about your father?

MR: My dad was always a hard worker and worked quite a lot on the freight roads. He was always strict. Mama was always like most mothers. They talk too much and do not do much about discipline. We knew enough when he told us to do something we had to do it or else. He had one of these long razor straps like they used to strop their blade razors on hanging in the kitchen. If we needed punishment, that is what we got. He never whipped us very much, but when we [received] a whipping we needed it. [Laughter]

FH: Do you feel like he was a good father?

MR: He was a good father. He lived his religion every day [of] the week. He did not go to church a lot because he was away [from home] a lot, but he taught us our religion by [his] every-day living. He did not believe in going to church on Sunday and then getting up early Monday morning [to] cheat your neighbor or steal from him. He believed in every-day living. That was our religion.

FH: Do you remember anything about his parents?

MR: I do not remember his mother [Bodel Margarethe (Anderson) Jensen Johnson]. She died several years before his stepdad. His father [Jens Christian Jensen] died when he was a little boy. Then grandma married Nephi Johnson, [who] was his stepfather. He was the only father my dad ever knew. He always had a deep respect for him. I remember him. He used to come to our place. He lived with his youngest daughter, Margaret [(Johnson)] Pulsipher. They lived here on the ranch down this lane. I remember he used to walk up to our place almost every day. He would come up the street and then across the field. We had a row of cottonwood trees across our field and I remember seeing him come across the field every day. He would walk up to our place, sit down, talk to us and rest.

FH: What do you remember about your mother?

MR: She was a good mother and a hard worker, but she had time to laugh and enjoy life, too. I remember when we were [young children] she had a one-horse buggy and a bay mare that she called "Nellie." She would get her work done and put us three [children] in this buggy and away we would go to town or up to my grandmother's or clear above town to the Johnson Ranch where my father's folks lived.

I have heard her tell about being in this buggy and going down to the edge of the [Virgin] River to go to Bunkerville to visit. She said more than once she had gone to the edge of the river and the water would be running deep and still. She would almost drive into it, but this still small voice would say, "Turn around and go back. Do not go in." She said that she always obeyed that still small voice because if she had not, if she had ever driven into that river, she would never have come out of it alive with us [children].

Once we were going up to the Johnson Ranch. There had been a flood in the [Virgin] River and it had left a thick mud where the road went [out]. They went up the river, more or less up the river bottom, until they [were] almost up there. I remember this day, I was not very [old], we were in this little buggy and she decided to go [as] it looked dry on top. She decided to cut across [at] this place instead of going around the road. She no more than started across until the horse and buggy and all started to —.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

MR: She never had any great [positions] in the church or anything like that. She stayed home, took care of her family and raised a big family. All of her children, but one were born without an [attending] doctor, just a midwife.

FH: How many children did she have?

MR: She had fourteen children.

FH: Tell the names of those children.

MR: The first child was a boy. His name was Vivian J. [Jensen]. He only lived to be about a year old. He had some kind of a sickness. They took him to the doctor in St. George. One doctor was all they ever had [there]. They had to go by buggy or wagon to St. George to the doctor. I have heard her tell that they took him to the doctor to see what was wrong with him. The doctor gave them some medicine to give him. They never did know what really was wrong with him. I have heard her say that this medicine was so strong that if any of it spilled on his clothes or on the blankets it would eat holes through the cloth. I have heard her say that she thought that medicine killed this child more than the sickness he had, whatever it was. He died when he was about a year old.

The second child was John Lavon Jensen. He grew to be a big, strong and healthy young man. He is still alive and retired now. He has worked for the [United States] Government since he was out of high school. He went to San Diego [California] and started to work building airplanes.

I was the next, the oldest girl. I had a brother next to me, named Altis Abbott [Jensen]. He is still living.

The one [child] next to him was the one [who was] killed when he was about four [years old]. His name was Lawrence A. [Jensen].

FH: Is this the one [who] fell off the wagon?

MR: Yes. Then next to him was a girl, named was Gussie [Jensen]. She lives in Las Vegas [Nevada] now.

Then came two boys, Derald and Melburn [Jensen]. I had a sister named Margaret Bodil [Jensen]. She was named after my Grandmother Jensen.

I had a brother, Omer K. Jensen and] then a sister, Gertrude [Jensen]. The next [child] was Andrew [Jensen]. He died about three days after he was born. He was what they called a blue-baby in those days. I remember when he was born and what a pretty baby he was. I remember my Grandmother Abbott was there taking care of mama [when] he was born at home. After he died, they had him laid out on the top of our sewing machine. In those days, they made their own caskets out of lumber and the Relief Society lined them. I remember it was lined with white flannel and covered on the outside with white flannel and lace around it.

The next [child] was Nephi [Jensen]. He was born in St. George [and] was the only [time] mama had a doctor.

FH: Were all the rest [born] with midwives?

MR: Yes. My last sister was Laberta [Jensen] and she was born at home. I think mama had a doctor for her, but he was living here in town. There was a doctor here then, if I remember right. She was the baby girl. She is not alive now. She died about three years ago [January 9, 1965 from] a brain tumor.

FH: Has this family of your parents scattered all over? What has happened to them?

MR: Most of them are [living] close around here. My older brother lived in California all of his married life. He first lived in San Diego. Then he moved to Oakland [California]. He lived up that way until he retired. I have one sister [who] lives in Las Vegas. My baby sister lived in Logan [Cache County, Utah]. She graduated from [Utah State] College and married a boy from there.

FH: It is remarkable to have that big of a family and have them [close]. Do you believe in prayer and having your prayers answered?

MR: Yes, I do.

FH: Have you or your parents had any faith-promoting experiences you would like to tell about?

MR: I remember this one [experience] especially when my brother, Omer, was [very] sick. He was sick in the summertime with some disease. The doctor never told them what it was. They thought [at] first [that] maybe it was typhoid [fever]. Then they called it some other kind of a fever. He had a [very] high fever for weeks and weeks and they could not seem to break it. The doctor did not know what to do for him. He was eight or nine years old. I remember how sick he was. My parents and all [of us] prayed and prayed for him to either get over this awful disease or for the Lord to take him away because it was like he was burning up.

In those days, we did not have any electricity, refrigerators or any ice. I know my folks would send to St. George every day for the mail [driver] to bring us a little ice to cool him. Finally, somebody suggested why not put some bags of ice on the back of his spine and see if that would take the temperature away. The doctors had told them that if his fever ever did break too suddenly it would kill him. So they prayed and they prayed about what to do, whether to put this ice on him or not. I remember my dad said, "Let's put it on." He felt like this would be the right thing to do and so they did. In just a little while that ice would melt like it was on a red hot fire, but it broke that fever. I remember how he was like skin and bones and burned with that temperature [for] so long. We always felt that it was the Lord's hands that saved him and brought him out of it. I know it was a long time before he could walk; he was that sick.

FH: [Did] he have to learn to walk all over again?

MR: Yes, he did. After he [was able to] get around and eat, he [became very] fat. It was so funny. He went from one extreme to the other. Later on, he slimmed down.

FH: Were there any other experiences that you felt strengthened your faith?

MR: Our second boy was about five [years old]. He was run over with a wagon load of hay. He fell off from a horse is what happened. The horses ran away with the load of hay and he was riding the horse. His dad was pitching [the] hay and driving the horses up to each pile. The horses [were] frightened. The neighbors had pigs over the fence. They made a noise and frightened the horses and they started to run. My husband tried to catch hold of the boy's leg as the horses lunged, but he never could get close enough to him. He could catch the back part of the harness, but he could not catch the child's leg. He fell between the horses over the tongue of the

wagon. Then he fell onto the ground and the hind wheel of the wagon load of hay ran over his legs and pelvis. He had a [very] bad bump on his head.

He was unconscious for several days. They took him to St. George to the hospital. We prayed continually for him because we did not know whether he would come out of it or not. It took the hair and the hide off of his head when he hit the ground or else when one of the horse's hoofs hit his head when he fell. He still wears that scar. It is about as big as a silver dollar now. He has to wear his hair long enough to cover that up on the back of his head. It was months and months before he could walk. He had to learn to walk all over again [because] his pelvis [was] cracked. It was not broken. They did not put him in a cast, but he had to lie quietly. We always felt like our prayers were answered in his behalf at that time.

FH: What did you do to have fun growing up?

MR: We had lots of fun, but we had to make our own fun. We did not have cars to ride in and [to] go places, so we would play games at night, have parties, candy pulls, and make molasses and honey candy. That is about all we had.

FH: Did you ever like to dance?

MR: I started going to the dances when I was in high school. We would have our Christmas parties, Christmas dances for the [young children]. I always liked to dance. We would have Halloween parties. I always liked to go to Halloween parties because we could dress up and have masks on. I remember this one special time. My mother had a long black skirt. I found the ugliest mask that I could. It looked kind of like a witch mask. We had a Mutual Halloween party and I went dressed up in this long black skirt and this witch mask. Nobody knew who I was. Some of the boys kept trying to pull my mask off so they could tell who it was. I would not let them pull it off. [Laughter] They never did find out who I was during the dance.

I used to like to ride horses. My dad had a white horse; it [really] was a dapple-gray. I used to like to ride because I had a girlfriend [who] had a horse and sometimes on Sunday afternoon after church we used to ride to Bunkerville and back on our horses. The faster her horse would go the faster mine would go. It seemed like we would just fly on these horses. I liked to ride horses.

FH: Were the things that you did for fun, the things you found to do yourself?

MR: Yes. We had to make our own fun.

FH: Do you think you had as much fun as the [children] do now-a-days?

MR: I think we had more fun. [Laughter]

FH: I would not be a bit surprised. [Laughter] Did you [participate] in [any] sports activities?

MR: Yes. We used to play baseball. We would contest with the elementary schools up at least to [the] sixth grade in Bunkerville. We would have Steal-the-Sticks [and] races. My dad was quite a foot-racer when he was young and we [children] thought we could run pretty well. I was always strong and always tried my best, anyway. [Laughter]

FH: Have you enjoyed music in your life?

MR: I have always enjoyed music, but I have never had any opportunity to learn to play [an instrument]. I have sung some in the Singing Mothers. My sisters, especially Gertrude, always sang a lot. She has been the MIA music director in one of the stakes in St. George.

FH: What kind of music do you enjoy?

MR: I enjoy good singing and good instruments. I like to hear bands.

FH: Do you like the modern music?

MR: No. I do not care much for all this modern [music]. I do not think there is anything to it. There is no tune to it and there is nothing to the words. They get half a dozen words and they just sing it over and over and there is actually nothing to it. I love the old songs and the old music that they sang in the 1920s and 1930s.

FH: [Do] you like music with a melody?

MR: Yes, with a melody to it.

FH: Do you like to read?

MR: I do love to read. I have not read a lot in my life. I like to read good stories. I have never read many novels in my life because I never had time. I always read my Relief Society magazine, the *ERA* and the church magazines. I love to read the histories [and] the lives of our church authorities. I love to read Matthew Cowley's life experiences, his missions and faith-promoting stories.

FH: Tell about your courtship and marriage.

MR: [Laughter] My husband [Ralston Virden Reber] played the violin. They [had] him and one other fellow here in town play with the piano in Sunday school. They would play the hymns on their violins with the piano accompaniment for the congregation. One Sunday I was walking home from Sunday school and he was ahead of me about a block from where we had church before we built our new

church. He stopped and said, "If you want to walk with me, hurry up." I was only about seventeen [years old] then. So I walked with him. His home was a little more than a mile from church. I walked with him to his home. He said, "Come on in. Maybe we can find some pie or something to eat." So I went in and his mother had made pie for Sunday dinner.

FH: Do you suppose he knew that? [Laughter]

MR: [Laughter] So we had a piece of pie and then he walked me about a mile and a half down to my home. I remember everybody [who] passed us was gawking and looking back as they passed us. [Laughter] Then we started going together. He would come and get me to go to Mutual or to church or once in awhile to a school dance. I was not out of high school yet.

We went together almost a year before I [was] out of high school. I stayed home because my mother was going to have this last baby sister. I stayed home and helped her. I did not go on to school or work out. Once in a while I would work for my aunts, clean house, iron, or something like that [to] make a little money.

We went together almost two years. That was [during The Great] Depression years and there was not much money floating around or many jobs. He kept saying, "We will get married as soon as I can get some money." Sometimes I thought he never would get any money. [Laughter] We finally had \$20.00 to get married on. My dad and mother went with us to St. George and his dad [Samuel Reber] was already in Santa Clara [Washington County, Utah]. That is where [Samuel Reber, Jr.] was born and raised. We had to pick [his father] up in Santa Clara and go to St. George and get our license that morning before we went to the [St. George] Temple. I remember his father saying, "When you go in the temple you are supposed to give a little donation. They do not ask you, but you give a little." I remember he did. I remember how frightened my husband was. He was old enough to know better; he lacked three days of being thirty [years old]. I was eighteen [years old].

FH: Were you scared?

MR: I was not frightened nearly as much as he was because he was trying to remember everything. When we [were] through, nobody told us where we were supposed to go. I thought that was all there was to it. After we [we were in] the celestial room, we were standing there alone and did not know where to go. So I thought we had to go back the way we came. [Laughter] We started back that way. Somebody stopped us and said, "You are not married yet. You have to go over here to this room to be married." [Laughter]

FH: Your daughter is listening. She will not make that same mistake.

MR: They did not tell us much in those days. [Laughter] They expected us to know, I guess. We had a [very] nice day. After we [left] the temple, we went [to] town and he bought me a new dress with some of his \$20.00. It cost \$5.00. It was a pretty blue silk dress with lace.

FH: I think you were pretty lucky to have \$20.00. [Laughter] I know how that compares with a lot of people who have told me.

MR: [Laughter]

RR: [Inaudible]

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

MR: Then we went to the grocery store and bought some food: bananas, sweet rolls cheese and a few [items]. We went out [to] some grass under a tree and ate our lunch. It was in April. Then we went down to my home. We were going to live in one room of his brother's [Leonard Reber] house that he was building. It was not finished yet. So they let us live in this one room. I had what few belongings I had in one of these old-fashioned trunks. We loaded that in the car and went home. [Laughter] We lived happily ever after. [Laughter]

FH: What was he doing to make a living at this time?

MR: He was farming on his dad's farm. He did not have any property of his own. His father was old. He had always worked for his dad and helped with the farming and helped keep his family up until then. He just continued working on the farm and we lived like the rest [of the family] did. We raised a lot of the things we needed. In those days you could buy fifty pounds of flour for \$1.00 and a sack of salt for \$.10.

FH: Things are a little different today.

MR: I say they are! [Laughter] We started out with nothing, but we worked and bought land. First, we bought ten acres and paid for it. Then we bought a few more acres. Then we built this home. We had four children when we moved into this home. We lived here one winter before we had the walls plastered. We had the roof on, the outside walls and the windows and doors in, but we did not have it plastered.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

MR: He worked for the [United States] Government and drove a school bus here [for] four winters. He made \$47.00 a month driving [the] school bus. That is what we [used to] buy the material to build [the house]. We made the adobe blocks [and used] those for the outside walls. We used the \$47.00 a month to buy the lumber and the materials that went into [the house].

FH: Is this where you had your children?

MR: Yes.

FH: How many children were there?

MR: [I had] seven [children] — four boys and three girls.

FH: Tell about those children one at a time.

MR: We named our oldest son Dennis Ralston Reber. He was born March 23, [1934]. When he was born, I thought: he is the ugliest baby I have ever seen. [Laughter] He was so poor. He was quite a big-boned baby, but he was [very] poor; it did not take him long to gain weight. I breast fed my babies and it did not take him long to grow [into] a big, husky, healthy boy.

FH: What happened to him?

MR: He grew up and went to elementary school in Mesquite and high school in Bunkerville [and] graduated from high school. We sent him to two years [of] college at Dixie College [in St. George]. When he graduated from there he went on a [LDS] mission to the Eastern States Mission for two years. He took part in the Hill Cumorah Pageant both years he was there. He came home and finished his [education] at BYU [Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah County, Utah] and graduated [with a degree] in science. He met a girl at BYU from Santa Cruz, California. Her name is Jacqueline Howard and they were married the summer before he finished school. They went back [to Provo] and he finished. They had their first child while he was still [in] Provo. Her name is Robin. She [weighed] about four pounds when she was born. Her mother is a [very] small girl, real tiny. But [Robin] grew and she was a [very] healthy baby.

FH: How many children do they have?

MR: They have six children, three girls and three boys. When Robin was a baby, they left Provo and went to Santa Cruz. He worked there and went to school part-time. She did typing at home for one of these companies [where] he worked. She helped him through school so he [could get] the rest of his [education]. He taught in [the] Santa Cruz High School for several years. Then he [received] a scholarship to go to Oregon State and [study for] his master's degree. He graduated with [very] high marks. He [received] straight 'A's' in all of his classes. Mathematics and science is what he [studied]. A year ago this June the church hired him to go to Western Samoa to teach there. So they are in Western Samoa now and really enjoying it. He is in the bishopric in the church there and teaching in the church school in Samoa.

Our second son was born about fifteen months after the first [child]. He was a healthy baby and grew [very] fast. It seemed like he was [of] a different nature, a different personality. He was always smiling and laughing. If there was any mischief to get into, he was the one. If anyone [was] hurt, he was always the one [who was] hurt. His name is Glendon J. Reber. He was a small boy [and] short. Dennis grew up to be about six-foot-six and two hundred pounds. Glendon is about five-foot-seven or thereabouts. He is a [very] fine looking boy. They both have black eyes and dark hair.

Glendon went to elementary school here and graduated from high school. After he graduated from high school in the spring, one of his cousins was working in California. He talked him into going there and getting a job. So he went [for] the summer. Then we talked him into coming home in the fall and going to college. We started him in college at Dixie College in St. George. He was a little bit late, about two weeks or so, registering. He went for awhile and [then became] discouraged. He thought he had missed too much or he did not like school or something. I do not know what the trouble was. He decided he did not want to go to college so he went back to California.

He started working for [the] California Container Corporation. It is a corporation that makes the pasteboard boxes. They have a factory in Los Angeles [California]. Then he met Marlene Dietrich there. He went with her awhile. We did not know there was anything very serious until one day he called and said, "Mom, I am going to get married." I said, "For land's sake, who are you going to marry?" He said, "This girl. Her name is Marlene and she is a good Mormon girl. We are going to go to Mexico and get married." I said, "No, you are not. You are coming home to get married." He only had so many days off. We made arrangements with the president of our stake [which] then was in Las Vegas to marry them. They came up and we met them in Las Vegas. He was not of age so we had to be there to sign [for them] to get their license. We went to my sister's home and [Thomas G.] Myers, president of the stake, married them. They came here and we had a nice reception for them. They [received] a lot of nice presents, went on their honeymoon, came back [to get] their wedding presents and went back to California. They settled there.

They moved around from one place to another several times. They owned several homes around Los Angeles. He has worked for this corporation ever since and has worked his way up, until now he is the manager of a new plant over in Corona [California]. He is the first one in the history of their corporation that has ever held this office without a college education. He started at the ground and he has worked on every job in their plant. He is a [very] good mixer and easy to get acquainted with.

They have two little boys. They went through the Los Angeles Temple, [received] their endowments and were sealed. Then they had the one little boy, Randy. Randy J. is their oldest [son] and Ricky J. is their second boy. She had [some]

trouble and could not have any more children so they adopted a baby girl when she was three days old. Her name is Pamela. She is smart, sweet [and] fits right into the family.

Next we had a daughter, Darlene [Reber]. She was a beautiful baby when she was born. She was plump and as pink as she could be and as cute as anything you ever saw. She grew up to be a healthy girl. She went to school here and graduated from high school. She met this young man, Kenley [Reese]. His folks were from around Orderville [Kane County, Utah] and Mount Carmel [Kane County] Utah. They were married in the St. George Temple. They have four [living] children — two girls and two boys. Their baby is adopted also. [Darlene has] Rh-negative blood and lost two babies. She has had five of her own and two that had to have their blood exchanged when they were born, but they are all healthy. This little one that they adopted is the sweetest little [baby] and smart as a whip. We sure enjoy them.

Next we had “Sam.” His name is Samuel Alvin Reber. Samuel is my husband’s father’s name. He had an uncle [who] was named Alvin so we named him Samuel Alvin. He went to school in Mesquite and graduated from high school. His last year of high school he met this lady teacher [who] was here teaching in high school. They were married. Then they went to Reno [Nevada]. He went to college up there for a year. We were in the dairy business then and my husband and I were trying to run the dairy, the farm and everything together. We [were] so deep in the mire that we could not do it all. We talked him into coming home and going in with us and doing the work.

They were here for a couple of years [working] in the dairy. They finally decided to sell out. The inspectors were getting too close. We would have had to build a new dairy barn. They did not want to go in debt that much so we sold out. They have lived here since. They have four children — three boys and a girl. He is a neighbor to us here and takes care of the farm work. He also works for another farmer. He milks cows for another dairy man.

Then we had Grant [Reber]. He graduated from high school [here and] went to Dixie College [for] two years. Then he went to [Utah State College in] Logan [Cache County, Utah] and went to school [for] two years. Uncle Sam called him into [military] service. He has been in the service almost three years. He was over in Okinawa for a year and a half. Now he is [at] Fort Lewis, Washington. He is not married yet. He will be [discharged] this summer. He wants to go back to school in Logan and finish and [then study for] his master’s degree. He wants to teach art in college. He is an artist. We are looking forward to him [finishing].

Mary Alice [Reber] is our next child. She has dark eyes and dark hair. She is a very pretty girl. She went to high school and [obtained] all her [education] here. Then she went to Dixie College for one year. She decided she did not want to be a school teacher so she took a beauty course in Provo [at the] Hollywood Beauty

College and graduated. She worked about a year in [a] beauty shop in Provo. Then she and three of her roommates saved up money enough to go to Hawaii for two or three weeks. They went over and had a big time. When they came back, she stopped in California [and stayed] with our second boy [Glendon]. She worked at two or three different jobs. She managed a wig shop and then she worked in [an optical shop] where they made [eye] glasses. [This shop did the] grinding [of] the glass and made glasses for people.

She still had not found her a boyfriend. She was afraid she was going to be an old maid. [Laughter] She went with a lot of boys, but she never found one that was quite the right one. We talked her into coming home for awhile. We worried about her down in California running around. [Laughter] She came home and worked a little here. She did hair for all the friends, neighbors and relatives. Then she worked a little while here in an ice cream shop.

One day this boy came along that she had known when she was going to college in St. George. She had met him and had a date with him one time. She had forgotten all about him. He happened to come along one day. He worked in Las Vegas and was on his way home in St. George. He and his friend stopped in there to get a cold drink. He said, "Have I seen you someplace before?" She said, "What is your name? I thought I knew you." He said, "My name is Jim Andrus." "Yes, I remember you." He had an old Rambler car that he ran around in. Girls think these old Ramblers are not much. You should have one of these sporty cars. [Laughter] So she did not think too much of him. They [started] talking. Every time he came back and forth, he would stop in there and they would talk. He asked her for a date and took her out a few times. They decided they were the right ones. He had been on a [LDS] mission, graduated from college and was working in [a] business in Las Vegas. They married a year ago this July [1968]. They are living in Las Vegas now and are [very] happy.

[Next] we have Helen [Reber]. She is our baby girl. She graduated from high school and has gone two quarters to [Utah State College in] Logan this winter.

FH: I would say she was a pretty baby if you call her a baby.

MR: [Laughter] She has always been pretty ever since she was a baby. Her dad had an accident on Thanksgiving Day and broke his leg. So our expenses have been quite high. We did not have the money to send her back another quarter. We sure would have liked to have done [that]. She is home now and trying [to] get a job [to] help out and save up so she can go next year.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

She is writing to a boy she went with while she was in Logan. Now he is going on a [LDS] mission to Denmark in a little while. She is going to Salt Lake [City, Salt

- Lake County, Utah] in a few days to see him off on his mission. She thinks maybe she will wait for him.
- FH: That could be serious.
- MR: [Laughter] It could turn out to be serious. He is a nice boy.
- FH: While these children have been growing up, have you been doing the normal things at home? Your husband has been making a living at different kinds of jobs here.
- MR: While he was off working winter months, I was here milking the cows and feeding the pigs. With the [children's] help, we took care of the farm. He worked mostly [during] the winter months when there was not too much farming to do. We were three miles from town, part of the time, without a car. During the week he would have the car with him. We would have to walk to town.
- FH: Was he working in [Las] Vegas at this time?
- MR: Yes. The boys helped me with the chores and the milking. We had our own milk [and] eggs and tried to raise a garden.
- FH: Have you made several trips down to California during these years?
- MR: Yes. Since our oldest son moved to Santa Cruz, we have gone down there once a year at least, usually in the summertime or in the fall. We have driven our own car down and would usually stop at our second son's [home] on the way down or else on the way back. We would go around by Los Angeles and come back that way.
- FH: It is nice to have an excuse to go on those trips.
- MR: Yes, it is. It is getting so now I do not fancy the driving very much because the freeways are getting too crowded. The freeways kind of mix me up. [Laughter] We have never had any trouble getting there. We have been lucky to turn off at the right place and get back on the right place. [Laughter]
- FH: You will have to let them come and visit you most of the time.
- MR: I think that is what it will be from now on or else we will have to fly. Our second son called us a week or so [ago] and asked us why we do not come down, but I cannot get my husband on an airplane. I would have to do like they used to do in the olden days when they had these balky horses, blindfold him and back him on. [Laughter] I have ridden on one [airplane] and would really like to go again.
- FH: Did you do a stretch for the PTA [Parent Teacher Association]?

MR: Yes. For one year, at least, I [served] the PTA as a secretary. I took the minutes of the meetings.

FH: It is hard to get out of that [group] when you have children.

MR: Yes, it is. [Laughter] We had them in school so [I] had to be interested in school affairs.

FH: Would you like to change your life if you could do it over?

MR: I probably would not. I grew up [in] a common home. I always worked in the fields when I was a [child] at home right along with my brothers. I love the outdoors. I would rather be outdoors digging and out on a tractor, even right now, than I would in the house. I have done a lot of farm work in my life. I could say I [have done] some of everything that has to be done on a farm. I have milked cows. I have delivered calves. I did everything. I hauled hay, baled hay and I have raked hay.

FH: After this lifetime of experiences and with your background, you are well-qualified to give counsel to your children, your descendants and the future generations to come along. Tell them what you feel about living.

MR: I feel you [should] live close to the Lord, have faith and pray about the things that trouble you and your sicknesses. Let your conscience be your guide. Everybody has a conscience. Sometimes you wonder if they do. I think your conscience can do a lot for you in your life. Always be the best you can even though sometimes it does not seem like very much. If you work as hard as you can and do the best you can, there is an old saying; angels could not do better. So that is what I have always tried to do. All my life I did the best that I knew how under the conditions that I had to do with. I have learned to save, never throw anything away, be friendly and congenial and always be a friend. I have never been one to hold grudges. I have never believed in holding grudges and being mad at somebody. If I ever did anybody wrong, I believed in asking their forgiveness and then forgetting it and not holding grudges.

I think we [should] live close to our church and [be] active, although I never held any high offices or anything like that in church. I believed in taking care of your family. I believe your family comes first. A mother should always make the family come first, [providing] the things that they need first. I have never worked out, until just recently, on any job. I have always worked in my home and on our farm.

FH: Is this job you have now a blessing to you?

MR: I like it real well. I get tired sometimes and think maybe it is not worth it. There is plenty I could do yet if I could stay home. We did have to have this [money] coming in because we did not have anything else.

FH: This [inaudible] you were fortunate to get it.

MR: I'll say.

FH: Do you have a testimony of the gospel?

MR: I certainly do. I have always believed in the church and believed in prayer. I have had a few things that strengthened —.

[END OF RECORDING THREE.]

FH: That is fine.

[END OF RECORDING FOUR. END OF INTERVIEW.]