

Interview with
LON and CARRIE HENDERSON

October 14, 2021

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LON and CARRIE HENDERSON

Content Warning: Contains words that are inherently offensive, insensitive and harmful.

Lon and Carrie Henderson were interviewed by Makoto Hunter on October 14, 2021 in Orem, Utah. They related their memories of the Dixie Secession events in the late 1980s.

MH: Alright, this is Makoto Hunter speaking with Lon Henderson and Carrie Henderson, at the Henderson home in Orem, Utah on October 14th, 2021, talking about the Dixie Secession events in 1987 and 1988, and also the Spirit of Dixie. We'll see what we have time for. Again, thank you. Thank you both. Thank you, Lon Henderson, Carrie Henderson.

LH: Thank you.

MH: So, I hope it's alright we start with just kind of personal or family background. Are you or either of you, originally from St. George [Utah], or did you move there from elsewhere?

LH: Neither of us are from St. George. We came in 1984 to bring a New York financial firm to a small city in St. George. My background was in finance and graduated from Brigham Young University and went and worked in Seattle, Washington for a company that later relocated me in Provo [Utah]. And then after being in Provo for a short period of time, I had a goal of starting a new office. And I and an associate of mine decided to go to St. George and start a financial firm. It was originally a firm that was affiliated with a company called Foster and Marshall, later purchased by Shearson Lehman Brothers, and later by American Express. And so, Shearson Lehman, American Express was the company that I think was known then in 1987.

This was a time where I was involved in the Chamber of Commerce. I'd done a few things with the college, and my wife and I had at the time, [turning to Carrie Henderson] what, three young children? And we were eager to get known in the community. The community was pretty much a closed community, meaning unless you were born there, or as they would say, "Worked on the big ditch," which was an irrigation canal, you would never really be accepted in the city. I was told that directly by some of the Dixie and St. George residents. And they wanted me to know for sure, a financial firm, a Wall Street firm, would never exist in St. George, Utah.

So we had a young family, we were very involved, I've been involved with the chamber. But I decided that what could I do to create kind of this spirit, this *esprit de corps* in southern Utah, specifically in Dixie, and get, also, involved in the community? And I've had a community orientation and had a wife who got along with everybody. So why not try?

And the thought came because this was known as "Dixie." This was congruent with the Dixie-Mason line [the Mason-Dixon Line] where we are in the South, the southern part of Utah, it's the Sunbelt. People would come to southern Utah to get a little bit of extra sun. It was, you know, a different geographical, as well as a different place with the people. So, the idea was, why don't we do a community event? And we played on the theme of *Gone with the Wind*, right? *Gone with the Wind* and—

CH: You and your partner right?

LH: My partner Alan Cook, yeah. Did it, and Alan loved theatrics anyway, and I probably love more organization, getting things done. But he was 'Rhett Butler,' and I was just the organizer and got things done. So, we ended up having this idea because I was involved with the city. But why don't I get a representative from the city? Which I did, which was the city manager [Gary Esplin at the time]. Why don't I get someone from the [Washington] County? Which I did. I got a county commissioner. Why don't I get somebody from the college? Which we did. It started with the one who preceded President Alder, trying to think of his name—

CH: Doug Alder.

LH: Yeah, [she]¹ has Doug Alder down. And then there was one other. There was the city, the county, the— oh, and then the school district. Had a very large school district. Superintendent Peterson. So I said, "Why don't we get the school district?" And then, of course, the chamber, the business organization. So, we organized an ad hoc committee, got everybody together, and we said, "Let's have a big event where we basically secede from the nation. I mean, from the state. Let's leave the state for a 24-hour, 36-hour period."

And it started to gain some steam and everyone— It was easy to get the city streets closed because I had the city manager. It was easy to get the campus of the university, which at the time was a college, because I had the school president. It was easy to get the

¹ Interviewer note: At the time of the interview I presented as male and that is how the Hendersons understood and addressed me. The pronoun here has been corrected to reflect my identity as a trans woman.

children out of school because I had the city school district director, the director of the school district, the administrator of the school district. So the strategy was to get everybody involved to get ‘em excited about something, and then do it.

So, we began to formalize. We arranged everything from a day of activities where we brought in, I don’t know how many, in the tens of hot air balloons. I don’t know if you’ve seen all those pictures—

MH: A few.

LH: — but there were hot air balloons going up. We had a park that was totally closed off to the city.

CH: Maybe you ought to share how you went up to Salt Lake.

LH: I was gonna to go to that.

CH: Okay.

LH: We were able to organize the— they had the Dixie Center, and we were able to get the Dixie Center, and we scheduled to do this big period dance. It was a ball, a southern ball because we’re in the South, where you had to come dressed up in period costumes. And that was a plan. And then again, we began to work to raise money where each business would have also a donation, or they would have something they would do part of the event. And it was to be this big event.

So the question came, how are we gonna kick this thing off? The only way to kick it off is to secede from the nation— or secede from the state, excuse me. So we, again, we had the right legislative people, so we actually put together a program where we went into the House or to the State Senate. I don’t know, it was one or the other, one of the legislature. And we had it all scripted. And all of a sudden, we all walk in per period costume. And they’re in session.

We walked in on the Speaker of the House as we got an announcement, “What’s going on with St. George?” St. George was getting a lot of attention. It was growing robustly. So basically, we went up to the microphone, and we said, “We want the state of Utah to know that we’re going to secede from the state. We’re leaving the state.” And, of course, they knew that it was an exhibition. So, the speaker got in the house, and he said, “Well, frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn.” And that was one of the great classic lines of Rhett Butler in the movie. He says that the Civil War was coming, and he had other

things on his mind. So it was just a really classic thing to say. And everybody in the chamber laughed, and, you know, we kind of celebrated, and we left.

Well, Channel 5—I don't know if they picked up the first year or the second year, but one of the major state news stations picked it up. I think it was the second year, the '88, is where one of the newscasters, Dick Nourse. We actually got a helicopter, and we'd come over this park, and we would end up dropping things for the children below the helicopter, and it would just spread. There were little ping pong balls and they had things listed on 'em.

It was just a big event. But the whole event was to create this *esprit de corps* in the community and start to create an identity for St. George. St. George was unique in many ways. It had a lot of unique history. How the cotton mill and, you know, call from Salt Lake City with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and what it actually took to put in a community down there in the middle of the desert. So, it was a celebration. It was multifaceted by organization. And later on in '70 ['87] and '88, I think that's when one of our partners, which was Cheryl Vause, came to help us.

The plan was that the Chamber of Commerce president would take it the next year. I did it for two years. I'd served as president. And the next year, they were to take it off. And in '89, I don't think it was much. But in '90, they tried to create this Spirit of Dixie, of which I— my career was running, and I was involved in other things, and I had certain responsibilities in my church assignment, so I wasn't able to continue— but it died after that. It never continued. But it took a lot of work. Everyone said, "Who else wants to do this? Who's as crazy as Henderson?" No one was as crazy. Also, they didn't have as supportive a wife. But Carrie and I had fun gettin' to know the community. And the whole city was involved with it, wasn't it?

CH: Yeah.

LH: What have I missed? I mean, I can't remember.

CH: I think that was pretty much it. You know, I think the whole concept of everybody— it really was. I mean, there was a little dance festival on a stage, there was, you know, a bunch of things at the park where they tried to recreate some of the— maybe the cultural things that were part of that period of time when the secession happened in the South. But it was also just to have a little fun, I think, more than anything, just for the community to have fun. All the schools and the bands— I just remember there was always somethin' goin' on at the park, activities.

LH: They had booths.

CH: Yeah, booths.

LH: The city got involved. There were street vendors, there were merchandise sold, there was, you know, just a lot of activities. And it was also one— part of the reason also, and it was done— what was the date?

MH: March 13th and 14th in '87.

LH: Yeah. And do you have an '88 day?

MH: Also, March, I forget which date, though.

LH: The same period of time.

MH: Same period.

LH: Part of it was in the wintertime. That's a little bit earlier in spring that people were starting to leave. And they were saying, "Could we expand or extend the winter months to keep more people pushing into the summer months?" So that was part of it.

Part of what it generated, it actually got some focus up north to where people started to think about, "Should we do more than a marathon? Should we do—" And it was kind of juxtaposed between the fall marathon. But one is the thought, "Should we do an Ironman, or should we do other things?" to try to keep a little bit of money into that economy.

So, it was called the Hotel Association, the St. George Hotel Association, I think was the name. I can't remember exactly. But they had a budget that was part of the sales tax. There's a tax allocation. And they got involved and felt like it was, you know, beneficial. We never really tried to get capital from other people. We just had resources that could be optimized.

One of the big believers was a man named Karl Brooks. He was a past mayor. And I could almost say anything, and he would be willing to support, because he was just such a great, just one of those unique people who supports people's vision and knew that it would help. Yeah—

CH: And because there were a lot of people moving into that area that felt kind of like we did, you know, "How do we integrate it into this community that's been very built on the

pioneers there?” So, I think it was really nice to have those little experiences that did bring a lot of people together. A lot of new people that infuse some of their— that they brought from other places. So, that was, I think, a really good situation for the city. They really were happy to have that.

LH: Yeah, that’s a great point. Yeah, a vibrant growing community that needed an element that was not just so myopically focused on those who have been in that community for so long, because the dynamics were changing. It was being diluted every year by all this influx, where the fastest growing cities west of the Mississippi was St. George, Utah. I’m sure it’s probably somewhere fast-growing today.

So that was our intent: community-oriented. That’s who was involved. It was as much of an outreach as possible to be inclusive. It was a very inclusive activity. And the results were great. The results were great. It actually was something that we believed in the community. It was actually a foundation and a base for our involvement that went on for many, many years, and our involvement of our children with people. So, it was kind of the very first entrée into St. George. Yeah.

I don’t know how complete that is.

MH: It’s a lot. Thank you so much. Yeah, I hope it’s alright if I just take a moment to collect myself and consider what I’d want to ask more about, if that’s alright.

LH: Yeah.

MH: But thanks that’s— I’ve already learned a lot that I couldn’t just get from—

LH: Newspapers?

MH: Yeah. Newspaper articles, documents.

Let’s see. I mean, I could want to ask about almost anything. You mentioned Alan Cook was Rhett Butler. So you mean— there was a little newspaper clipping about that storming of the legislature. So, Rhett Butler was Alan Cook then in that?

LH: That was Rhett. Yeah, he had a theatrical propensity, and he loved those kinds of things. And so he was, we elected him to be Rhett Butler. And he loved it. I’m trying to remember who Scarlett O’Hara was. I can’t remember.

CH: If I saw a good picture.

LH: Do you have a picture?

MH: Unfortunately, no.

LH: Okay.

MH: No, the clipping just says it's going to like— it's from Thursday, and it says that, "Tomorrow, this is going to happen."

CH: Okay.

MH: And I'm glad I got to hear from you because I couldn't help but wonder, "What is going to happen? What do they mean, Rhett Butler's going to show up?" Interesting.

LH: Well, we had all those in the cast, if you want to call them the cast, dressed some period. But in the actual chamber, there's some upper seats where people were standing. And, of course, they had a little spot on the news that was captured. It was fun because one, I don't know a politician who doesn't want some attention. So, it played to a politician's attention. Not to speak negatively about the role of a politician, but they were eager to do it. Plus, in a cold winter, when February–March is still pretty icy up there, it gave a little bright spot to talking about St. George. And then years later, they didn't want to tell the St. George weather too much because they kept losing people from northern Utah! But it played well.

MH: You mentioned having the right legislative people to do that. Could you expand on that? Like, who were the people to help you make it happen?

LH: Yeah, I can't remember who—I want to say — the one whose mother passed away?

CH: Oh, Watson?

LH: Yeah, I think David Watson was, I can't remember. But David Watson may have been, and he was wonderful and very helpful.

CH: Isn't it that the one guy who was from St. George that— taller— I can see his face, but I can't remember his name.

LH: And the House side, Lyle Hillyard was the speaker. I think he was back then. We had a business relationship with him. But there wasn't, like, any one person. So, it wouldn't be

like someone can say, “I remember this.” It was like, this is what we want to do, and we hit four or five people who say, “Oh yeah, let’s do this. This will be fun.” And it’s great because sometimes the business of the day doesn’t always provide a little bit of humor. Normally, it’s always pretty heavy, but they agreed to do it.

Trying to remember who the governor was.

MH: Norman Bangerter, right?

LH: It was Norman Bangerter. It probably was. Yeah, it probably was Norman Bangerter. Yeah. I thought it’d been earlier than that. But that’s probably right. And they’re just all supportive. I think Norm had a property in St. George, too, at the time.

CH: Well, that’s how you got Dick Nourse to come, because he was a big news anchor on Channel 5 TV. And he’s the one that came down and emceed a lot of the events.

LH: He did emcee the event.

CH: He was kind of the big celebrity kind of presence. And then, he ends up buying a property and now lives there. [Laughter]

LH: And he was the one who was with me. It was he and I that were doing the helicopter drop. Dropping the little ping pong balls. And so, everybody got involved in some way. That’s what made it so special. And then they all came in the evening. And they have a real formal dance. I mean, it was formal. I mean, it wasn’t just let’s get out a dress, but most everybody came in period costume. I don’t know if you have any pictures of that, but—.

MH: Just a couple.

LH: Yeah, but we have some. I wonder if we can find ‘em. I don’t know what you’re going to say, but they’re just big period dresses with the old tux of the 1800s.

CH: And the hats.

LH: Big top hats.

MH: If you find any of those photos, would it be alright to just to ask to see some?

LH: Sure.

MH: Thank you.

LH: Sure. I think we might see if we can find a little that was saved.

CH: I do have some on my computer.

LH: Okay.

CH: [Inaudible]

LH: We have pictures of all the hot air balloons, and pictures of going to the dance. We had a really nice old formal brass band that was there. It was really quite an event.

MH: I saw a photo of Elaine Alder, Dr. Alder's wife, her in period costume. And there's a few, kind of, grainy newspaper microfilm photographs, as well.

LH: Yeah, she'll have some digital photos.

MH: That's really neat. What else? You mentioned Dick Nourse kind of being an emcee or celebrity presence. One of the *Washington County* newspaper articles said that Wilford Brimley was going to be there.

LH: Yes, Wilford Brimley was going to be there. He's an actor. You know, Wilford Brimley?

MH: Mm.

LH: I can't remember— that was I think the first year. I'm trying to remember, between year one, year two— but there was something, you know. He's faith-based in our religion. But there was something that happened that— I don't think he came. Can't remember.

And it was, trying to get a big celebrity, tried to— but when the city got behind it, they could care less. It was on, it was going. Yeah, that's my memory. There were so many things I can't— maintain.

MH: I mean, no worries. You certainly remember it better than I do.

LH: Well, yeah, [laughter] 'cause I was there.

MH: Interesting.

You talked about this being like a community kind of development, of building up *esprit de corps*. Some of the newspapers talked about it as a fundraiser. Was that part of it?

LH: Yeah, there was—actually, I can't remember what the purpose was— yeah. Yes, there was a fundraiser, and there were a couple of special projects in the city that we were trying to accomplish. They had to beautify the city or— in fact, there was a— part of the money went to a waterfall area that was at the very end of Bluff Street, the very west end of Bluff. That was used for that.

And that has been some of the things that I've done for the city. I will— talk about an oral history. Back in early 2000, St. George went through a horrendous flood and took out about forty-three different homes. And that was a project I spearheaded, and, again, I called Doug. I said, "Doug, we got to document this history." And Doug said, "Okay, I'm your man." He was no longer the president [of Dixie College], but that was also an incredible thing that was done. And we raised money to save those people whose homes were destroyed. Because they had a mortgage and no piece of ground. It was destroyed. It was taken away. They got to have forgiveness for the monies that we raised. It was a pretty big deal.

But no, that has been a big thing that we've done, is raise money for special events.

MH: On the flood, I think I saw a book about that, with the photographs.

LH: Yeah, that's a book that we did.

MH: I can't remember the name of it now, but—

LH: It was called— something like, "From disaster to faith." We've got the book. We got all that stuff.

You're not doing Southern Utah history? You just chose this project for— Is this for a Master's, for—

MH: So, this is for my undergraduate capstone. So the goal is a twenty to twenty-five-page paper, specifically about those events.

I guess something else I'm curious about... Sorry, that question did not get out of my head.

LH: It's okay. Let it out.

MH: Can you tell me about some of the slogans? Like, when Alan Cook was Rhett Butler, he talks about secede from anything in the cold, the fog, the phone, and there were a few other things. How did you come up with these?

LH: Yeah, my memory's not good there, but we would sit down and think how to play— a lot, again, was to play on getting people in southern Utah. There's fog up north, there's cold up north, so we would take some of the lines from the movie, you know, and just play on words. But it was more just to get their attention, to be clever.

You'll remember more because you've read some of the recent information. If I read some recent information, I am sure that I would probably really be tweaked, because we had buttons and we had some shirts.

MH: Got a few. I should have probably printed out more. These were some of the items they had in the archive.

LH: This is in the Dixie College archive.

MH: Yeah. Dixie State [Utah Tech] University. So, they've got the button there.

LH: Yeah, yeah. The rise of Utah's Dixie, that's right. The Dixie Secession— that was ours! Yeah, I remember well. Nineteen eighty-eight.

Yeah, and there's Doug. And this, actually, this here was the weatherman. [Reading the newspaper] "We had hundreds of people from Washington County and throughout the state travel to St. George Friday and Saturday to participate in the Dixie Secession activities."

"Clockwise: President Douglas Alder, greeted by a couple of his friends. Michael Harker—" Yeah, Michael Harker is one just a local guy who was playing with Paul.

"Bob Welty takes a spin on the dance floor." Bob Welty was the Channel 5 weatherman, and he came down, I remember that. Followed by— some things. I can't read that, it's too small.

MH: Was is Dottie West?

LH: Dottie somethin'. "— performance with his nationally-known band." Yeah, it must have been. "The—" something, [Tragideers], or whatever. "Martin Joseph. St. George serves delicious— Amber Christiansen." These were just participants. Most of these are just participants. You can see the balloons, you know, greased flagpole, horseback riding.

Yeah, these are all the sponsors, merchants for big discounts. So, everywhere you went in the city, there was to be some kind of benefit, and these were some of the great businesses, too.

MH: One of the ads mentioned— so, if I wore the pinback button—

LH: Yeah, you'd get a discount. Yeah, that was good. These are activities at Worthen Park.

A lot of work on it. Okay. Here's your committee. Okay. Name of— no, no, that's not right. Yeah, Pat Lewis. No, some of these were people who, these were slaves. These were slaves to be sold. So, that was another thing, that you could actually buy this slave. Pat Lewis was a county commissioner, Karl Brooks was the mayor, Royce Jones was the paid chamber executive. These others were just good people. But let me see if there are any accountants, head of real estate guys.

The guy who owned a clothing, I mean, sports store— I can't believe those names. I haven't seen those names. Yeah, there was a lot of publicity— that actually captured some more of those memories. Yeah!

MH: I remember there was a newspaper article that mentions Royce Jones, like he gets "sold," and he'll mow your lawn.

LH: Yeah, yeah. And it was 'cause he was in the city as the director of the chamber and he could be seen doing a lot of service stuff that [inaudible] fun things, silly things. Yeah.

MH: This is a small question but one of the *Daily Spectrum* pieces said there were going to be ice sculptures. Did that end up happening? I couldn't see anything else about it.

LH: Yeah, I think that was the concept of— there may have been. We may have done a small thing with an ice sculpture, but people to think of ice in St. George was kind of the— it was again, "Hey, all the ice is only up north." It was again trying to say, "We know what you have up north, but it's better down south." You know, why would you not live in the South? Why wouldn't you come to the South? Why wouldn't you secede and enjoy? Because we have everything you have up north and even more without all the problems. So that probably was again a little bit of a gag but I think we did. We might have had.

CH: Mike Andelin.

LH: Did Mike do that?

CH: Yeah. He was a part of it.

LH: Okay.

MH: Sorry to ask, but he was—

LH: Mike Andelin, A-N-D-E-L-I-N. He owned a local restaurant, the only five-star restaurant in Southern Utah, called the Gable House, G-A-B-L-E House. And did some interior design work. Dear friend. Yeah, Mike, he's been gone for many years.

Honey, we're going to have quite a reunion on the other side. Think of all these people we love. We had an influence on their life.

MH: So, you did the '87 to '88— that was while you were president of the chamber?

LH: I'm trying to remember if I was president of the chamber, or I was the president-elect, or whatever. But for some reason, I brought the idea. And they said, "Who do we [have] do it?" And I said I'll do it. So I did it.

MH: There was this *Washington County* news piece. And it mentioned something about how they were trying to do a fundraiser, and they started with the coupon book. And then you brought in the idea of the fair. I don't know if any of that rings a bell.

LH: They had done every year kind of a "Shop Dixie," or whatever. And so whether that was the impetus— I don't remember that being the impetus — but they had done those kinds of things. But we wanted to not take it just to the chamber. I want to say, how is there a way to actually take an event, and somehow stake all the main stakeholders into the event. And those were the main parties, from commissioners to presidents to whatever.

And just having that meeting. You know, for a while, it was once a week, but— "pre" it was just once a month. But just to have that meeting, to get that busy schedule, and each one of those key administrators was kind of a joke. But they were there, and the good thing about it is they always took their assignments, and they always knew they could delegate to people to get it done. So it worked.

MH: And that was the planning committee you met.

LH: That was the organization committee. Yeah, that was the leadership.

MH: And so, by the time of the 1990 Spirit of Dixie, you were no longer on the lead of that?

LH: No. And they thought, “What’s a way that we can create it?” There was a little bit of pushback that seceding was a little, y’know— It wasn’t much, but it was just like, “Is there another way to do it versus leaving the state?” And it was some pretty good attention. I mean, it got some really great, you know, traction, and so on. The idea was that we just have a unique spirit here, let’s call it “the Spirit of Dixie.” And it was a great idea.

But I was no longer there, and Cheryl is also a dear friend. She’d had a husband who was injured, had gone through a stroke, or something, but was wheelchair-bound. And she did with what capacity she had, little miracles. But I was unable to continue to help. And I don’t think she had the capacity to drive it further. When I came out, the question was, because this has created so much revenue for southern Utah, because of the success, would this actually be a thing that we should pay someone to do? And when you pay somebody to do an activity that is filled with so much fun, you start to question the motive. And I think the way that it was organized was probably faulty from the very beginning. But yeah, I didn’t get involved.

MH: You said it was just a little bit of pushback. Was that like, as early as ’87, or just—

LH: No, it was after. They said, “Should we restructure?” But if you had started to get— if you’d have had some energy, it would have still gone. I mean, today you look at where we are with even the name “Dixie,” or— Things have changed dramatically. So, that might have been the precursor.

MH: Thanks again for this interview.

LH: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Let me just look at what other questions I have.

You weren’t involved in planning the 1990 events, so you might not know. I was kind of curious how you got the Tabernacle Choir down to St. George. But you might not be familiar then.

LH: No, we got the Tabernacle Choir— I'm trying to remember— [To Carrie] Hun, do you remember that? We got the Tabernacle Choir. We later then were very heavily involved— We have not been part of this history by design —but we got pretty involved in 1994 when the Tuacahn Center was opened. That's the Heritage Art Center. We had, actually, President Gordon B. Hinckley come down to dedicate the facility. And then, also to bring the Tabernacle Choir there.

CH: So, they sang in the theater amphitheater that had been built too— had they come earlier?

LH: Yeah, they did.

MH: They came in 1990 as well.

LH: Yeah. We got them in 1990. And I'm trying to remember— that was part of the thing that we did. But I wasn't— I don't remember. I remember the Spirit of Dixie, and I remember Cheryl.

CH: Cheryl. Yeah, I don't know.

LH: I think, actually, the thing was just to get him to come down with— was his inauguration— did he do something in 1990, President Alder—

MH: Not 1990. President Alder got inaugurated in 1987.

LH: What was in 1990?

MH: Just the Spirit of Dixie event, I think. They just were there. There was the Tabernacle Choir in February, Southern Days in the Park, Western days in the Park. They still did the ball. At least this is what all the newspapers say.

CH: Yeah. That would have been after—

LH: Yeah. It slowed down, but I think they were trying to— because they missed '89. They said, "Let's re-surface this thing." They didn't have the infrastructure. But the papers were behind it and everything else was behind it. But it wasn't a big deal.

CH: It was different. They had kind of restructured it after some other people took over.

LH: Yeah, sorry.

MH: No worries. I was just curious. You mentioned getting kids out of school... Sorry, jumping back to '87 and '88, you mentioned getting kids out of school. I mean, kind of what were the guests like?

LH: Yeah, they had activities. Just the children participated. They brought their school bands, they had competitions— in order to make it a community event and celebrate something that was meaningful. The school district was very supportive.

CH: They kind of made it like an extracurricular activity event, kind of thing, if I remember right. And most of it was, the schools would bring all of their performing groups, and they would be plugged into the layouts of the park, the performing times, more than the kids were just out, free.

LH: They had some, you know, again, it's just all the activities you'd have in a park. So children were very involved.

MH: Wow. It's all really neat. Thank you.

LH: You're welcome.

MH: Let me try to see if there was any other— You talked about the whole community being involved. Was there any particular source of volunteers, like a club or churches or—?

LH: No. We would pull and request from everyone in the organization. So, if it was a school district, there were some of those, perhaps, whether it was teachers or the PTAs got involved with certain things. If it were the Chamber of Commerce, there are certainly businesses who [we] would ask to come and bring things from their place of business. So, no. I leveraged the organization. I didn't have to create new people, I just, you know— The one who was not involved but found themselves everywhere was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because we didn't need them as a formal structure. That's such a faith-based community, they found themselves in every one of the communities. So, no, but the others were represented via their organization.

MH: Sorry, again, sentence fell apart a little. Kind of just to close, I guess maybe, where we began. So, you all came to St. George as a family already. Married—

LH: Yeah, with three children.

MH: Where were you all before that? If it's alright to ask.

LH: Northern Utah for a couple of years. We were just a part of a year in Seattle, where I started my training for the business I was in. Carrie was born and originally in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Moved here as a young child and went to BYU, Brigham Young University, or I should say that her parents taught. Her father taught at BYU. Her mother was a school teacher in the Alpine School District. But she grew up with her three siblings, and this was home. So, she was an Oremite.

I met her at BYU. I was from, originally, Pocatello, Idaho. I served a mission in Germany. And then after that, came here to school. I originally thought I was going to come to— I went to school at Rick's, played football, and I was going to come here and, who knows, just do something. But I just got into education. But then, we married and went through school pretty quickly.

CH: Just built a home in Orem, and he came with this idea, like, "Honey, what do you think about St. George Utah?" And he had a whole slide presentation about the beauty and everything, and then he also was going to open up a satellite office for his company. And he said, "There's all these banks, but no financial firm?" And so we just need to go for a year.

LH: I don't remember that part.

CH: I do.

LH: Okay.

CH: And then thirty-four years later— so we've been in St. George thirty-four years total. So, it was great.

LH: The end of our St. George stint, we were called to serve a mission. So we served a mission in Australia for three years. And then after that mission, came back, and the firm that I later— I had founded a firm back in 1993, March 7th, 1993. And that firm has now grown throughout different parts of the country. And we've now liquidated that, and we own a *de minimis* amount of it.

But we've continued to build and do things. And so, we decided to come up here to help that firm that we had left when we served the mission. And then, that— went on to sell it and start another enterprise. But the relocation of northern Utah has not changed our enthusiasm for starting projects, like the Dixie Secession.

And our children are now all over the country, primarily here and in Texas. Two of the six of our children are in Texas, but there's a lot of memories in these type of activities. A lot of memories.

CH: It was a great time.

LH: Yeah. After that would have been '90, and I started— I was in the bishopric probably from the '90s.

CH: Just got too busy to do. You were in the Rotary Club for a while.

LH: I was in the Rotary. We brought the national championship football for the junior college to—

CH: He was also a trustee at the college.

LH: I was a trustee at the college. I forgot that. Yeah. You have a good memory.

MH: That is pretty busy.

CH: Yeah, he did a lot of things down there in St. George.

LH: We had a big development that's down there, about 500-acre, 450-acre development that was down there. And then we had our other business. We still had six kids that all participated in high octane scholars, as well as great athletes. Every one of our children was in student government.

And then, Carrie was a coach at the local high school there, track coach. And she ran everything that was needed to be run. Did it for me. She just did it— there to support.

CH: There to grab things and help out because that's kind of what it was at the Secession.

LH: She's amazing.

CH: I remember, it was like, "Oh, we need this!" "We need to have"— back before you had Amazon or even cellphones, really.

You were out doing things, and making things, and building things; and putting up red, white, and blue things; and just wherever.

There were hot air balloons above the city was spectacular, and people just couldn't believe— This is kind of the first big event like that, that they had done, I think, for the city. It made him feel kind of special because people loved coming to St. George.

But then, also the golfing. Did you have a golf tournament with that?

LH: I think we might have! I can't remember.

CH: I can't remember if you did.

LH: We did have a race called the "Fox and the Hound" that was you'd have one air balloon go and the others would try to follow it and chase it. They had different elements, not just, everybody get in the hot air balloon. And then, later they had tethered rides where they'd have places where people get in, go up and see the scene, come down. Second year, we had someone hit a powerline, and they were okay.

CH: [Laughter]

LH: We had accidents, and we had police out. I was on the walkie-talkie. We were talking to people and going and making sure that everything was in order.

CH: Penny Kirchausen was big. She's the one that ran the ball every year, and I think she continued on with that because she was Miss dance lady.

LH: She was later, also a city councilor.

CH: Hansen and Penny—

LH: Not Kirchausen.

CH: Kirchausen, they were ballroom dancers.

LH: Oh yeah. I was thinking of Penny—

CH: Oh, Penny Shelley.

LH: Penny Shelley.

MH: Two different Pennys.

CH: Yeah.

LH: Penny Shelley actually was on the committee. She was at the chamber, secretary of the chamber.

CH: Yes, she was involved with all that. But the Kirchausens were over the ball and did that. They were kind of big names down there for— Their kids were dancers and—

LH: Supportive was the city manager, who was Gary Esplin. Gary Esplin was very, very helpful to get behind us and say, “Yeah, let’s get this done.” Pat Lewis. I don’t know if Pat Lewis is alive. He was the county commissioner. Pat just was incredible. Wade— what’s his first name? Alton Wade.

MH: That was the previous president.

LH: Alton Wade was the previous president who actually bought into it. Alton liked this, and he wanted to make this happen. That would have been in ’86. And then as we got into ’87, President Alder, Doug Alder became the president, and that was— he was different than Alton. But more as a historian, and more in a—

CH: He and his wife came dressed up in quite the attire, with the hat and—

LH: They came. He and Elaine, Elaine and he came, and they were supportive. In fact, on a side note, later, I was called to serve on a high council in the college. And it was actually Doug Alder who set me apart as a high priest. We loved Doug, and we loved all those people.

You’ve triggered some memories that will be interesting. It will be interesting, and we’ll be interested to hear how it’s recorded and read through it. Maybe that will prompt a few more things but—

CH: I can look for the pictures, too. ’Cause we did take hundreds of pictures of that whole thing.

MH: That would be amazing to see. Thank you.

LH: She has ‘em. She’s quite a photographer.

MH: And then, kind of like the last question, I think. I guess the two last questions would be first, is there anything else that you wanted to share that you haven’t gotten to?

LH: I'd have to read it and that we'll tweak it. No. Do you have anything?

CH: Mm-mm.

MH: And the other thing is, do you know anybody else that you would recommend I talked to, like, if I was trying to learn more?

LH: Do we know who you've spoken with besides Doug?

MH: Just the Alders and Cheryl Vause. I called her.

LH: Talked to Cheryl? Did she have much? She wasn't involved in '87.

MH: No, she had more to say about 1990.

LH: Yeah. She was involved in so many—

CH: Alan Cook. He was a big part of—

LH: Could say Alan.

CH: He could at least maybe fill in some other texture about the whole thing, but he was the one that was your partner in the business that they were scheming together, the whole idea.

LH: Yeah, Alan would be good.

CH: Alan Cook. Unfortunately, a few of the others have passed away. Kirchausens, who did the dancing part, the ball, the big ball. Yeah, he was your right hand.

LH: I'm trying to think. Gary Esplin could be.

CH: [Inaudible] city manager.

LH: Yeah. Gary Esplin does no longer work in the city. He's retired, but they're still in St. George. Yeah, he could be one in St. George.

I don't think Pat Lewis is alive, is he?

CH: He passed away.

LH: He passed away.

CH: And Karl Brooks passed away.

LH: Karl Brooks has passed away. Royce Jones, he's more of the Chamber— Carrie Henderson, she was there.

CH: [Laughter] No, but there was somebody that— That just really kind of did a lot of the pedaling for the— got the school, communication system, kind of things.

LH: Who? There was Brian Tenney. But he— I don't know if he would— He was kind of a little bit later. I don't know if he'd remember.

CH: We'll think about it. We have your email, and we can think about it.

LH: Nadine Anderson was the one who helped.

CH: Yeah, of course. She was his secretary, and she really did do a lot. Do you have all the articles and everything?

MH: As much as I can. I've read through all of February and March from the *Spectrum*, from the *Washington County News*. So, that gets some glimpse, and there's, of course, the Chamber of Commerce papers.

CH: Okay. I was gonna say we do have copies of all those somewhere in a box but I [don't] have to look for it if you didn't need any of that. But maybe they'll be in the pictures, I'm sure.

MH: Awesome.

LH: I haven't— Carrie has been very good. I haven't really cared about documenting and keeping trophies and records of things that have been done. It hasn't been a real skill of mine. I'd rather do it than sit and look back and praise it, you know.

MH: Living in the present. That's a fair attitude.

Thank you both.

LH: Thank you!

MH: There's the archival collection at Dixie State [Utah Tech] but that can't replace memories. It's a human perspective. So I'll close the recording now.

LH: Okay. Good.

[END OF RECORDING. END OF INTERVIEW.]