

Interview with
DR. LEROY “ROY” NIELSON NISSON

April 30, 2012

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DR. LeROY “ROY” NIELSON NISSON

Dr. LeRoy “Roy” Nielson Nisson was interviewed on April 30, 2012 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by R. Wayne Pace, a representative of the Sons of Utah Pioneers. He related his life experiences.

WP: Our purpose is to record some stories about early St. George and southern Utah residents. We are not necessarily interested in your personal history, but in experiences that you had [during] your life — every day, life experiences when you were growing up. First, we need to make sure we have your full name or any nickname.

LN: My full name is LeRoy Neilson Nisson. I go by “Roy.” I have had some nicknames in my life. They call me “Fauntleroy.” [Laughter] That creates a little teasing.

WP: [Laughter] Yes.

LN: I don’t know of any others; but that was a nickname that stuck with me.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

WP: Did you have any interesting [events] happen to you during your early years? [In] elementary school or earlier?

LN: Every day living was a different day. I don’t know any particulars, but right off the bat.

WP: It was probably a long time ago. Where did you go to elementary school?

LN: [Inaudible] I was born in Washington [City, Washington County, Utah]. Those were the days when they didn’t have a hospital. They had a little one in St. George [for] maternity [patients]. The old doctor came out to the house in his Model-A Ford and parked it out in the street. Mother had a hard time. It went on for two or three days and I was born [with] a twin. They didn’t know how to judge that prematurely until [the birth]. Unfortunately, the twin didn’t live; and according to the records, I barely lived. I had a struggle because of the hard birth. It was a long story. Dad had my mother’s youngest sister go in our Model-T Ford and take all the [youngsters] back and forth to Leeds [Washington County, Utah] and up to Pine Valley [Washington County, Utah] on the old road — going back and forth. [They stopped] to check and he would say, “Nothing’s happening so just keep going.” That happened all that day. Finally, he said it was okay and “Nina, you can go home now. The doctor’s is there with [her] now. It is all over with.” That was an [event]. I don’t remember, but I have been told about it. I

would like to have had my twin live and [so did] everyone else. In those days a lot of children were born [who] didn't live. They didn't have the prenatal care and they didn't have the facilities that [came] later on. I was born in that little town of 300 people. A lot of houses were vacant because people had moved out. Half of the 300 were my relatives, so I was well supervised throughout my life.
[Laughter]

WP: [Laughter] Did anything happen to you in elementary school? Were you a popular person?

LN: I don't know how you remember these things, but I do remember my Aunt Ruth [Iverson] taught me in one of my grades. I know that. In another grade, a friend of ours, Victor ["Vic" Moses] Iverson, the mayor of the city, taught me. He had a brother in the class the same age [as me]. We had another friend, Paul Nielson, who was my cousin. The threesome kind of ran around together. We were studying one day. There were eight grades and four teachers, so each teacher would take two classes. We were supposed to be studying while they would teach the lesson [to] the next class. I think it was a math class. I don't remember, but we must have been making a lot of noise because all of a sudden a book bounced off of Paul's head, then off of mine and then off of my friend, [Rulon] "Rudy" [Iverson], who was the teacher's brother. That was the end of that book. It scattered all over the floor. That was an incident that I remembered. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter] You tend to remember those things when they happen to you.

LN: I remember the ball team. [Andrew] Karl Larson turned out to be a historian who wrote *I Was Called to Dixie*, *Red Hills in November* and another book or two. He was a [very] good author. He was my teacher in the eighth grade. We had good teachers, which was a blessing. He came to me one year and said, "'Roy," would you like to learn to play a musical instrument?" I said, "Yes, I would like to." There was nothing going on in Washington [City], but in St. George Earl J. Bleak had a beginner band [that met] at eight o'clock in the morning. Karl was a good trombone player. Occasionally, he would bring his trombone to school and play so we could all hear it [and] to try to get us interested in [music]. I said, "Sure I would like to learn." My dad had started him on the trombone years back.

He said, "Why don't you get your cousin, Paul." Paul's father was teaching in St. George. He would drive all around St. George in that 1935 "Chevy" [Chevrolet] he had and [come] back to Washington [City] every night. "Why don't you tie your bikes on [the back of] that "Chevy," go to St. George and take that band class at eight o'clock. You get out of school at nine [o'clock] and I will allow you an hour to [ride] back." So we would peddle five miles back over the ridge all year. The two of us took band from Earl J. Bleak. [We] got up in the morning, did our chores, milked our cows, fed the horses, put our bikes on uncle's car and went to St. George. We went to the class at eight o'clock. At nine o'clock we hurried and got [on] our bikes and peddled back to Washington [City]. Most of the time

we [were] back by ten o'clock. Sometimes we were a little late and [were] chastised for it. Sometimes it was raining and it wasn't too pleasant.

WP: [Laughter]

LN: My dad arranged for the delivery of the mail, so when it was raining he would give the mail to us to deliver. We would go over [to] the [United States] Post Office. He would hurry, get in his truck, take the mail to Leeds and drop us off at school. That went on and it was a great thing because we [were able] to play those instruments. That stayed with us. We played in the band all through high school and college. It was a great blessing.

WP: What instrument [did you play]?

LN: I played the trumpet. Paul, my cousin, played the trumpet too. His dad owned one. I traded a bicycle to Jasper [Louis] Crawford, who became a ranger in Zion [National] Park [Washington County, Utah].

WP: Yes, I know him.

LN: He [has] written a lot about Zion. Jasper was in school at Dixie College. I traded my bicycle for his trumpet. Paul's dad had a little short trumpet, a coronet. Later, Earl J. Bleak, the band leader, started Paul on a baritone. He [played] the baritone and I [played] the trumpet all through school.

WP: Did that continue into high school? Where did you go to high school?

LN: That continued through high school. I went to St. George High School. We rode the bus over. Then I went the first two years at Dixie College. The high school and the college were [combined], so you went four years there. We played in the band all those four years.

WP: Did they have a marching?

LN: Yes, they did. It was great because we [were able] to go to the El Dorado in Las Vegas [Nevada] every year.

WP: Wow!

LN: We would go to different places like Kanab [Kane County, Utah] and Delta [Millard County, Utah]. We were kind of used to influence other [young people] as a kind of promotional [activity] to get them to come to town. So it was a good thing for us. We [were able] to follow the basketball team, too, once in awhile. We won the division so we went to Salt Lake [City. Salt Lake County, Utah] and played at the University [of Utah]. It was a big [event] for me!

WP: Did anything interesting happen during your [trips] to Salt Lake [City]? Were you well behaved [students]?

LN: We had a lot of noise on the bus, of course. [Laughter] But I don't know of anything in particular that happened. We [went] to Kanab and were playing that night and during the day. We had a rehearsal and were excused until the performance. Jack Reber and some of us in the band went out through the fields, down one of the roads. There were some ropes hanging there, lasso ropes [and] some bridles. Jack said, "I need some of these. I will take them."

WP: [Laughter]

LN: I still remember that. Yes, he stole those. I don't know how he brought them back. I just remember him taking them. That stuck with me all my life. It should not have happened.

WP: No, it should not have happened.

LN: We had instances like that. In the seventh or eighth grade in Washington [City], in our junior high [school], Karl Larsen, our teacher, developed a baseball team among us. I [was] the pitcher. I rotated as pitcher of the team with Lee Evans. That was a great experience. Lee was a better pitcher than I was.

WP: [Laughter] Did you travel with the baseball team?

LN: We didn't travel a lot.

WP: Who did you play against?

LN: [We played] here in St. George a time or two. I remember they [came] over to Washington [City]. We didn't travel much then. The roads weren't that good and we didn't have the money. It wasn't like it is today, but we had a great time. I wouldn't trade my days here for anything — even the milking of the cows. I had to get up early in the morning and milk cows before I caught the bus.

WP: [Did] you hand milk the [cows]?

LN: Yes! We didn't know what a milker [milking machine] was. I remember an ancestor you might be interested in. My dad was away teaching school in Hurricane [Washington County, Utah]. He was [the] principal of Hurricane High School.

WP: Is that right?

LN: [This] is what they did: he would stay there and board in someone's home. Mother and I were at [our] home. We had to take care of milking the cows and

everything. I was a young fellow and mother helped as much as she could. She had a big job taking care of everything. We had two [LDS] missionaries come live with us one winter — not very long, maybe a month. They were from Veyo [Washington County, Utah]. They lived with us and were [proselyting] different people. I enjoyed that, especially one of them. I can't remember his name right now, but he opened the pool up in Veyo — the warm springs pool in Veyo. He owned that pool. I remember [most] about him, more than anything else, [was that] he would get up in the morning and help me milk the cows. We had to chop wood that we got from Pine Valley in the summer. It was logs and we had to cut up and split [them] for cooking and warming the house. That was my job, too. So I thought he was a pretty good missionary! [Laughter] I would do anything for him.

WP: [Laughter] Did you know many non-LDS people in this area?

LN: I didn't have that experience. I knew a lot of people who should be non-LDS. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter]

LN: They liked Dixie wine and cigarettes. They were LDS, but they strayed a little. They were really good [people], but they needed straightening up and become active in the church.

WP: What did the missionaries do?

LN: [They] were proselyting. I don't know how successful they were. I was too interested in other things. That was during my first or second year of high school. Later on, when I finished high school and went to college — we had the same group from Leeds, Hurricane, Delta [and] Gunlock [Washington County, Utah] all came here. The ones that were out that far came here to live [and] most would rent a room. [Leland] "Lee" Hafen was the coach of the basketball team at both the high school and college.

WP: Did he have two teams?

LN: Yes, he had a high school and a college team. I wasn't good enough to be on either of them. [Laughter] I played M-Men [basketball — a LDS group]. That was about it. Wayne Esplin was the star. Later, he became a star at BYU [Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah County, Utah]. He was a good basketball player. They were our friends. All of those people lived in one room. I don't know how they cooked, but they had access to the kitchen. I don't know if they had access to a little hot plate or what they did. But we were friends with all of them. It was a really great experience.

WP: Do you recall anything that happened during your high school years? Did you have anything special happen to you?

LN: No, I just had a lot of experience in plays. I remember I was in one play in particular. I am a little bashful. I am really bashful. I am kind of afraid of my own shadow.

WP: [Laughter]

LN: You can ask [my wife], Janice [(Schmutz) Nisson]. I was until I went into [military] service. Shields was the football coach and his wife came [and] did activities like this. Janice was in this play, but I wasn't going with her. They asked me and a girl from Hurricane to do this one particular act. We went through this one single [act] together. I think they picked me because I have bowed legs. It made everything funny. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter]

LN: It wasn't that I was such a good actor or a good dancer. I think [it was] that I had the bowed legs. I remember later, after we did that play, the whole class thought it was good. This girl, I am trying to think of her name, wanted me to come with her to Hurricane and perform there with her, just this one act. I said, "No way. I am not going to make any more fool of myself than I already [have]." [Laughter] Later on, we graduated from high school, went to college and that was when all the fun began.

WP: What was the difference in high school? Did you just go to a different classroom? [Were] all [the classes] in the same building?

LN: Yes, it was all in the same building. We just had different subjects. The next subjects after high school, I guess, I don't know.

WP: [Did] anything happen in class?

LN: I remember one [incident]. My dad was [very] upset with me on this. By that time he was teaching in [the] St. George Elementary School. This was after he moved from Fredonia [Arizona] to Washington [City], to Mesquite [Nevada] and to Bunkerville [Nevada]. He taught history, but he taught everything. He was musically minded. He could play a [bunch] of instruments. He organized a band when he went down to Bunkerville. He was there with Romney. Romney was the principal. Later, [as an architect] he designed the [St. George] Tabernacle.

WP: Really?

LN: He designed other buildings. Dad taught with him. The next year he went to Mesquite from Bunkerville, just across [the Virgin] River. The reason he went over there was because they offered to pay him \$5.00 a month more. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter] Mercenary! Go where the money is best.

LN: Arizona and Nevada paid higher than Utah. That is why these teachers would go out there. My dad taught in Fredonia for a year or two and lived with the Jensen's out there because he made a little more money. It was tough to make a living. A lot of people worked in the mines out in Pioche [Nevada] and other places around. We struggled to [get] by, but it was a cooperative activity. The Gordon's milked cows, had butter and cream and made their own bread.

WP: You dad was a history teacher. Why didn't you follow that?

LN: I don't know. I always thought growing up that I would be a teacher, but I just didn't get into it. I was really interested in [farming]. We had a little farm and every summer we would work on the farm. We didn't take vacations. We didn't know what a vacation was, dad didn't anyway, —

WP: [Laughter]

LN: — we would go down and work on the farm. I was interested in agriculture and forestry. I was planning on being a forest ranger. That is probably what I would have gone into if [World] War [II] hadn't come along. What interrupted [my plans] was 1941.

When we graduated from Dixie College everybody here went into the service. They drafted everybody. This draft board was really hard on the [home fellows]. They drafted everybody. Anybody that could pass the physical was gone. I stayed [away] from the draft board because after I graduated from college, we bought 2,000 turkeys and put [them] down on the farm. I was going to stay out of school that winter, raise those turkeys and sell them in November to get enough money to go to school at BYU. That was the plan. We bought the turkeys and were brooding them out in our little granary. Representatives from Lockheed [Aircraft Corporation and Douglas [Aircraft Company] came down here looking for young fellows to work in [their] factories. So I left the turkeys and dad had to take them on. He slept down there with the turkeys. He slept down there [and] did two jobs. He was teaching school, running the farm and doing the turkeys. I left him in a mess, but he said go ahead and try it out. I went down with some of the Dutchmen, Jack Reber and Floyd Ansel, and hired on there at \$.41 an hour. That was big money!

WP: Big money! [Laughter] I was making more money than my dad. He taught school for twenty-five years. I worked in electrical on a half-boom of a P-38 [airplane] and then rendered the skins on the uprights. I did that.

[Swiss people living in Santa Clara, Washington County, Utah were referred to as Dutchmen.]

WP: Were you a high school graduate?

LN: No, I had graduated from college.

WP: Was that Dixie College?

LN: Yes.

WP: Were you twenty or twenty-one [years old]?

LN: I was twenty-one years old.

WP: How did you get to Los Angeles [California]?

LN: Jack Reber had an old "Chevy" with jump seats in the back. We loaded everything in it and the three of us went to Los Angeles. That is how we got down there. I didn't have a car. I thumbed my way everywhere [I] went [and] I walked. During the last two years of college, Janice had been going with a young fellow from Hurricane, but I liked her. From the time I met her years back, I like her, but I was too timid to ask her out. I think they were going pretty steady the last year of college. Then he was called on a [LDS] mission. The last year of college, I got my nerve up to ask her out. It took three or four times before she said, "Yes." I finally persuaded her to go with me. We [were] pretty serious by the end of the [school] year, but she wouldn't give me an answer until this other young fellow came back.

In the meantime, she became [Homecoming] 'D' Queen at the college. They were going to have this big dance. I said, "I would like to take you to the dance." I couldn't get an answer. He [did] come back and she went [out] with him once. Then she came to the history class in the lower level of the old [college] building. H. L. [Hyrum Lorenzo] Reid was a historian, good man and a good story teller.

WP: Yes.

LN: I was in his class. A knock came on the door and Janice was there. He went to the door and said, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" Everybody knew what was going on.

WP: [Laughter]

LN: He said, "Janice is here. Class, should we let "Roy" go out?" Everyone said, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" So I went out and she said, "I would like to go to the dance with you." That was a great experience. Later on, after working for awhile, she wanted

to get away from home. She worked as a telephone operator in St. George.
[Inaudible] Everyone in Washington [City] had three lines.

WP: Party lines.

LN: They knew the news before you did. [Laughter] Anyway, we decided to get married. She came down to Long Beach [California] and I got a little apartment. We rented it furnished for less than \$30.00 a month. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter] How did you get into dental work?

LN: [Inaudible] She eventually [found] a job at Lockheed [Aircraft Corporation] so we were both working there. We were really [reeling] it in! We were making about \$60.00 a month, about \$.43 an hour. I took a job working nights because it paid \$.02 an hour more.

WP: [Laughter]

LN: In the meantime, my brother was teaching at BYU. He had been there about seven years as a teacher. His neighbor was a dentist and he got him [my brother] interested in dentistry. Franklin S. Harrison was the president and told him what he would like to do. He didn't know if he could make it financially or not. He was a teacher, but he had also been a ranger at Yellowstone [National Park, Wyoming] in the summer. He was [a] biology teacher. He knew the plants. He saved his money and had the nerve to break away, go down and enroll at USC [University of Southern California, Los Angeles]. The first day there, he paid his tuition and it took all his money. That is another story. [Laughter] That is how we got interested.

We would go down and see him on weekends. We would take the old trolley car from Glendale [California] down to Los Angeles. [World] War [II] was on. The only reason I could stay and work was because they deferred you because of the critical nature of the job. They needed you. There were thousands of them. Boys from back in the Midwest; they were good [fellows] too. There were several hundred of them working on the P-38 airplanes. They were turning them out, just bang, bang, bang and sending them overseas. War hadn't been declared yet, [by] us, but England was in [the] war and they were getting beat up pretty bad. The United States was furnishing them all the war materials.

One time, we went down by USC and he was working in a little laboratory that he had set up. He was waxing inlays and dentures. I got interested. He said, "'Roy,' you have a great opportunity. Why don't you go back to the 'Y' and get all your [classes] finished up." I only had two years and needed a few more subjects to enter USC. He said, "President [Joseph Kelly] Nichols [who used to be the president of Dixie College] is there and is the head of the ASVP [All Star Volunteer] Program — V-12. I think there are openings. I will telephone him." He

knew [J. K.] Nichols. He said, "Yes, we have a few openings. If "Roy" can get here by a certain Monday, I think we can get him in." Janice and I talked it over and decided that was what we would do. We terminated [our jobs] at Lockheed. [At that time], when you terminated they turned it in to the draft board. So we had to do this in a hurry or they were going to draft [me].

WP: [Laughter]

LN: So I did that and went [to Provo]. There was a job opening that I [was hired to] at Fort Douglas [in Salt Lake City.]

WP: Did you have an automobile by then?

LN: No.

WP: How did you get [back and forth] to Fort Douglas?

LN: I borrowed my brother's car. He let us take it. Janice stayed in St. George, [as] we couldn't find a place to stay. They didn't have dormitories at BYU. Most of [the classes] were on the lower campus. There were three buildings — the library, Joseph Smith and Maeser Buildings. I stayed there. Janice joined me when I finally got a place down in the basement of an old fellow's home. [He] knew my brother. It wasn't finished off. It was just the furnace there that [gave] us heat and an old shower. Later, I worked at [the] school and [was paid] \$.25 an hour [for] sweeping out the girls gymnasium. So I did go shower there and took Janice over there. She worked at Geneva Steel [Works in Provo during] the daytime and I worked out there at night. We would pass each other in buses as she would be going out and I would be coming in to go to school. In those days, it wasn't easy.

WP: No.

LN: There were 130 or 140 of us in that V-12 program. That was where they trained young men to be officers.

WP: Was there ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps programs] then?

LN: They had the [United States] Navy program [going], but our group [was] called up to go to Fort Sill [California] to go into the infantry. [Laughter] I [rode] the bus [while] working in the plant [at] Geneva [Steel Works and] for two or three days the [fellows] kept [asking], "Haven't you [received] your call?" "No." I thought I was really going to go and would pass them coming and going. Finally, I [was] so interested I called Selwood. He was the lieutenant [who] was over us for [the] regular [United States] Army. I went into the office and said, "I haven't [received] my call to leave." He said, "You should not have. You and eight others, there are nine of you, have been accepted into professional schools." I had [submitted] my application to USC [earlier] and they had accepted me. [Inaudible] What a lucky

break! Some went to medical school and some of us went into dental school. So that is how I got into dental school. They paid my way for one year and shipped me down to Fort McArthur in San Pedro, California. We stayed there for a month or two doing kp [kitchen patrol], digging “ditty” holes and doing other [tasks]. Finally, they shipped us up to USC. Otherwise I wouldn’t have been a dentist.

WP: [Laughter] It was just a lot of [incidents].

LN: It was [events] that happened in [my] life. What a blessing it was for me. [Inaudible] Eventually, I graduated. I received the Operating Award, which was the best award at the school. That is where I [went] into practice. Eventually, one thing leads to another.

WP: That is true. I wanted to return back to Washington [City]. Did they have any grocery stores or anything like that [here]?

LN: Yes, they had one. It didn’t amount to much, but they had a general store where they sold food, shoes and candy. Cal Hall ran it — it was his store. Then Al Jones bought it. Later, my cousin, Quentin [Nisson] bought it. That was where they had their start. I was in there one time, when a fellow came in. He had had a little too much to drink. He [might have been] a shepherd. I think he might have just been paid. I don’t think he had too much money. Anyway, he came in to get a pair of shoes. He found a pair and the clerk didn’t want to sell [them], but he wanted those shoes. The clerk said, “Well, okay.” He paid \$3.00 for the shoes. Then he said, “I don’t want these damn shoes” and he threw them out and broke the window. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter]

LN: They had stores along Highway 91. People would come through and stop once in awhile. I remember [another] incident. Hobos would come through. It seemed like the [hobo] before would mark the gate if it was good or bad. We lived right on the Boulevard, right on the street. Dad was a school teacher and a bishop. He had a very tender heart for these people. Both mother and dad did. They would bring them in [the house] and feed them. I remember one time [a] colored fellow came in. [Inaudible] I had never seen one before. [Inaudible] He asked us for a place to stay, but my sister was having a party that night. She was seven years older than I was. Her friends were coming over. They were teenagers, probably fifteen, sixteen and seventeen years old. Dad said, “We can’t put you up at the house because there is a party going on, but I can [give] you a quilt and put you up in the barn.” “Oh, yes,” he said to my father. So he did [and] mother fed him. The next morning he came in and mother gave him breakfast. He said, “That sure was an enjoyable night. I listened to those people sing and watched them dance. It was sure enjoyable.”

WP: Did you have any experiences during your last couple of years going to Dixie College? Anything?

LN: I remember one time my dad was very disappointed with me. Later on, I was [disappointed with] myself. I was a member of FFA, Future Farmers of America. The class ahead of me had a president who was [a] Hafen. The teacher was P. D. Spillsbury. He later moved to [inaudible], California. Hafen nominated me to be the president, but I was a timid little [fellow], so I turned it down. My dad was teaching over there, so Spillsbury turned to my dad and said, “How come your son didn’t want to be president of the class?” That really disappointed my dad. If I had it to do over again, I wouldn’t have turned it down. I would have gladly accepted, but my friend “Rudy” Iverson accepted it. I was the vice-president. He was gone all the time, so I acted as the president. It was incidents like that. I just remember all the good times.

WP: What about relationships in The Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints]? Did you have a ward or stake in Washington [City]?

LN: We had one ward. I remember [that] it looked big. By today’s standard it would be small. The church was rock building. It is too bad [that] they tore it down, because it should have been an historical monument. Anyway, that is where they had church [meetings]. There were about twenty stairs to get into the main area. Underneath, [there was] a basement [for] the elementary school. They used the basement for Sunday school classes.

I remember one [incident]. I had an uncle named Vernal, a cowboy. His older brother was Israel who was a different story! He was a school teacher and kind of up in the ward [and] taught classes. Vernal never did get involved in that. He was kind of the black sheep of the family, I guess. Good [fellow], a really good [fellow]. He was intoxicated once and was on his horse out in front of the chapel and rode up those steps. [Laughter]

WP: [Laughter]

LN: He was going to ride into the chapel. His older brother was there and got a hold of him. There was a little confrontation, I remember that. People who had beef could hook them up above the chapel. We had ward parties occasionally, and they would dig big holes in the ground. They would put the beef in, cover it over and have barbequed beef. Boy that was really good! They would have a social and men would put the beef down in the charcoal and wood shavings. It was really wonderful! I remember having a party like that and lightning [struck]. It was raining — one of the few times it rained in southern California — and the lightning hit a big mulberry tree right next to the beef. It didn’t hurt anybody, but it shook a lot of people up!

WP: Did you have a Boy Scouts [of America] program?

LN: We had a good Boy Scout program.

WP: Were you involved in the Boy Scouts?

LN: Yes. I was a member of the Boy Scouts with all of my friends from Washington [City]. We had two good scout leaders, Ralph Lund and [someone named] Vincent. Vincent drove the school bus. [Inaudible] Later, they took all [of] us to the dam. We stayed overnight several times [working on] merit badges. We hiked up [to the] top of Sinob-kiab. That was [a] big mountain over there. Sinob-kiab means holy place [according] to the Indians. One time we hiked straight up above Washington [City] and ended up on Pine Valley Mountain [Washington County, Utah]. [We] camped there for a day or two. They taught us to cook.

I remember going up there and all the [scouts] in front of me [were] going up this cow trail. I was in the back with the scout master, Ralph Lund. All of a sudden he said, "STOP!" So we stopped and looked. There was a rattlesnake coiled up. It was early in the morning and he was curled up and not active. These darn scouts ahead [had] stepped right over it! [This] was in 1932 or 1936.

WP: [Laughter]

LN: When the World's Fair [was] in San Diego [California], I think, it was in 1932 [1935-1936]. He said, "I am going to take you to the World's Fair." Nobody had anything, but he confiscated an old school bus [from] somewhere. [One] that [someone] had gotten rid of. He fixed it up and took twelve or fifteen [scouts] to San Diego. He also took a friend of mine along, McKay Nielsen, who later became a dentist. He was older and was one of our supervisors. Flora, his wife, went along to cook. We would stop alongside the road and cook. We broke down in Barstow [California] and had to stay there overnight. I don't know how he did it, but he got [the bus] fixed and we went on to the World's Fair. What an experience that was! Great scoutmaster. We had a good time. Later I graduated as a dentist.

We went to Lake Powell [Arizona] with our boats. We were there the first year [1972] that it opened. I had a little boat. We were there every year after that. One time we went there and we had our tents and tried to put them up. The wind was blowing and we couldn't set the tents up.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

[RECORDING TWO: NO AUDIO.]

LN: [Inaudible]

WP: Yes.

LN: I remember [the price of] gasoline [on the scout trip]. We went [to] San Fernando Valley [California] where he had a friend [and we] stayed in his back lot. I remember I filled the tank up with gasoline and it was \$.10 a gallon. There are a lot of other stories like that. [Laughter]

WP: I know [about] that! [Laughter]

LN: Washington [City] was known for its truck gardening. They grew radishes, carrots and [green] onions. There were dozens of [garden] patches in the whole town. In the spring, when they were ready, all the young girls and a lot of the men and women in the ward would go down and “bunch” the [vegetables]. They [received] \$.10 a dozen for bunching the carrots. This was in the spring [when] the [vegetables] came on before Salt Lake [City’s] did; because the weather is warmer [here]. They would put them on a jobber’s truck and ship them to Salt Lake [City]. That was how Washington [City folks] really made their living for years.

WP: What about the cotton?

LN: That was before my time.

WP: When was [it]?

LN: The first Cotton [Mission] people were called and they came in 1857. Two groups, thirty-six families, came there. They immediately [put] the water out on the land to plant cotton and food. They had to plant [what] they ate. They fought the [Virgin] River. They had to pile-drive the river, but [water] would come out of there once in awhile. So they had to hurry and keep the water out and keep the cotton from burning up. They were pretty successful for awhile. The first four years were really tough. They had to build homes, too, and there wasn’t any feed for their animals. Everyone was leaving after four years, —

WP: Yes.

LN: — so Brigham Young called 309 families from the pulpit. [He] told them to come down and help these families pull [the mission] out. They came to St. George and settled.

WP: What was the status of the building when you were growing up?

LN: The status of the Cotton Building?

WP: Yes.

LN: When I was growing up it was in disarray. It was deteriorating pretty badly. After I went away to school, a lady came from California and she had a little money and

tried to restore [it]. She spent about half-million dollars restoring [it]. But that didn't get it to [where] it is now. She must have spent all her money, [but] she lived right there and saved the building [until] she ran out of money. Hyrum [Wayne] and Gail Smith came in, bought it and restored it to where it is now. They eventually sold it to Star Nursery, [who] did more work on it and restored it pretty well. The Cotton Mission was successful in that they developed bales of hay and shipped it to Salt Lake [City]. Later, they built the cotton mill so they could get the cloth and do everything right here. They had a store [at] the front of it so they could use their script, trade back and forth, so they could make a living.

WP: Thank you for [your time].

[END OF RECORDING THREE. END OF INTERVIEW.]