

Preface

How rare it is to truly step into a first hand account of what is, seemingly, the distant past. With the words of Florence Johnson, though, this rare opportunity becomes a found reality. Mrs. Johnson grew up in, what many refer to as Jungle Town, a rural outskirts of the city of Blanding Utah. Throughout her youth Mrs. Johnson found herself living in what by today's standards would be considered extreme poverty. She spent much of her time helping her mother take care of the family by painstakingly scrubbing clothes on a washboard, or helping other families in order to earn a little money. Although her account may bring up visions of a difficult childhood, Mrs. Johnson clearly implies that she looks back to her youth with fondness. She explains that she indeed enjoyed her youth and makes it a point to tell Gary Shumway, her interviewer, about many of the good times she had and how as a child she and her siblings had fun.

Mrs. Johnson also gives a good impression of the Blanding of old. Although Shumway tries to have Mrs. Johnson explain the different levels of social stratification that were present in Blanding, Mrs. Johnson is unable to paint a dirty picture. Mrs. Johnson was herself good friends with the daughter of the man that founded the city of Blanding. Blanding, through the eyes of Mrs. Johnson, appears to have been a wonderful place to grow up.

Aside from her account of growing up in her quaint little Utah town, Mrs. Johnson also tells her story and gives her perception of life in Mexico before the Mormon Exodus. She explains what it was like to take a covered wagon from Pacheco Mexico all the way to Blanding, Utah. Furthermore, Mrs. Johnson gives her account of life in a polygamous family in which her father had two wives and, essentially, two separate families. If for no other reasons, which there are in truth many, these facts give Mrs. Johnson a unique and priceless view of growing up in the American West.

Without the hard work of certain individuals, such as the entire staff of the Cal State Fullerton Oral History Department, this unique life story, along with many others just as priceless, may have been lost to the relentless grasp of time and age. Although there are doubtlessly many people that need to be thanked and who deserve a mass amount of respect for the quantity of work they have contributed to the creation and preservation of Mrs. Johnson's story, there are two people in particular that need to be mentioned. One must first recognize Florence Johnson and be grateful that she has taken the time to personally share her story so that readers can learn and gain from her experiences. Secondly, one must thank Gary Shumway for diligently working to interview Mrs. Johnson and fighting to make sure that her interview was transcribed and preserved.

Mrs. Johnson, while preparing for this interview, was encouraged to speak spontaneously, as there would be the opportunity to go over and correct any errors. Unfortunately, Mrs. Johnson did not have the opportunity to review the written transcript herself, although the text has been edited. The editor has changed a few words for grammatical correctness, reordered some parenthetical phrases to reflect the intent of the

narrator, and replaced a few words to clarify meaning. In this light, every effort has been made to preserve the original flavor of the documents. However, in recognition that errors can be made in the process of transcribing and editing, and in strong belief that the recordings hold a important value in of themselves, the original tapes have been preserved and can be found at the Cal State Fullerton Oral History Department.

This is the story of Mrs. Florence Palmer Johnson, as told through her own words in an interview with Gary Shumway and transcribed and edited by Shawn Nelsen.

Shawn Nelsen
May, 2006

Florence Johnson Interview

S: This is an interview of Florence Palmer Johnson by Gary Lee Shumway on January, 9th 1982 in Sister Johnson's home in Blanding Utah.

Sister Johnson, I'm glad to see you as healthy, strong, young, and vigorous as you are after as much experience as you've had in life. I've really enjoyed just coming, sitting down, and talking to you for a while. Why don't we start now with the tape on and reminisce about your life starting with what you know of the family life in Mexico. You started to describe what the family structure was like in Mexico. You don't remember too much about Mexico, but why don't you tell what you do know about the family life and then go from there.

J: When I was born we lived in separate families in different homes, but before that we had just one home with there different rooms. They'd all share the kitchen and do the work together, the two wives. My mother and my father's other wife were half sisters and they seem to have got along very well. They did their work together all the time.

I was one of the last ones to be born in the family and by that time we lived on a ranch. My mother and her family lived on the ranch and aunt Merdal [*track 1 1:50*] lived in the town which was about, maybe, a mile, or some such manner, from there. The three of us, the three girls that went, had to go off to school all the time. I just don't remember a lot because I was only seven years old when we left Mexico.

S: Let me ask you two or three things about the life there. Would your father ever come out to the ranch to stay with you out there?

J: That's where he was most of the time because he farmed and aunt *Merdal's* boys used to come out there a lot to work and they stayed at our place a lot as well because they worked on the farm there.

S: What was the name of this ranch?

J: Yes, it was Corellas [*track 1 2:50*] and the town was Pacheco .

S: How large was your ranch there? Do you know how many acres?

J: No I don't know how many acres it was. It wasn't a great big one like they have now days, but it was a pretty good sized one for those days.

S: Would it have been just forty acres, something like that, or would it have been more extensive?

J: I think that it was more extensive than that. They raised cattle, corn, and grains, different kinds. They always raised quite a bit of cane and then they'd make molasses.

S: What kind of arrangement did your father have at this time as far as being with the different families? Would he spend one week with one family and one week with the next, or did he just occasionally go visit the other family?

J: That's what he'd do more. Occasionally he'd go into town after work, at nights, but he was on the ranch mostly because that was where his work was. They had a small store there in town for a while that aunt Merdal looked after. I don't remember much more.

S: Did aunt Merdal ever come out to the ranch?

J: Yes, at times she would come out and stay a whole day.

S: They were actually half sisters, were they, or were they full sisters?

J: Half sisters; they had the same father, but not the same mother.

S: What do you remember about your aunt Merdal? Why don't you describe her a little bit as you remember her, the feeling, the way that you remember her and all.

J: I don't remember the first time I saw her because it seemed like she was always right around there. She was a mid-wife, she was always around and I just don't remember, I always liked her. I was just a kid and we just all played together, her girls used to come up quite a bit, aunt Merdal's girls, and we were there to and they played a lot with us. That was the best place to be for playing and then we all helped. Of course I never did a lot, but I did what I could; we all worked.

S: What was aunt Merdal like in her personality and the things that you remember about her at that time while you were in Mexico?

J: The way that I remember, she was always very cheerful. As far as I know. That's just the way that I remember her. I always saw a lot of aunt Merdal.

S: Was she the kind of person that made you feel that she was friendly toward children and things like that with your feeling toward her?

J: Yes she was. Yes, she was good to us. Sometimes you'd wonder if you knew which one that you belonged to.

S: Do you remember if you started school in Mexico?

J: No, didn't start school until we got out here.

S: Why didn't you start school in Mexico since you were seven years old?

J: They didn't start that young down there and we had to walk a mile anyway. I guess that I was just too young and that they just don't start them as young as we do here. After we came out here I didn't start until I was eight years old.

S: What do you remember about Mexico? Do you remember what the farm was like? Can you describe the farm at all?

J: Well there is a place that we called Box Canyon that we used to go up to, but of course that wasn't the farm, we used to drive the cabs up there a lot in the daytime to feed, we used to just love to go up there, I remember that so well. All of us wanted to go up there when they went and they usually let me go. We could ride horses and we used to play different than the kids do nowadays. There was a big pine tree just to the end of our house, one of those ponderosas, and us girls used to have our play house up in that tree. We were all climbers, we were on the ranch, we were used to doing things, and we had our play house up in that tree. That's the way that we played all the time.

S: How did you get up into the tree? Did you have steps leading into it?

J: No, we climbed.

S: Wow, you climbed a ponderosa!

J: Yes, we were pretty good at that because it had been around so much. Viola [*Track 2, 1:40*] used to have quite a time, but we would help her up there. We really enjoyed things like that. When we did get to play we really enjoyed it because we all had work to do, and we always did it. We really enjoyed our playtime when we had some.

S: What did you have as toys? Did you have a little doll house, or anything like that?

J: No, we put boards out inside *milliums* [*Track 2, 2:15*], we had dolls, but they were just rag dolls; those were the only kind we had, but we thought they were just as good as any kind. We even had dolls that we made out of corn silk. When old corn starts to form on the stalks, at certain times you can chuck them and they'll come off. There's a little on the top and then the silk comes down off them and those were our dolls for a long time. That's mainly what I remember, things like that. I remember one time there was a one man circus that came through there. He had a bear and a monkey. He preformed for us; he had one of those little groaning organs. He would play that and the bear would dance,

and around and around he would go. The monkey, he was always capering and doing stunts. But between my home and my brother Will, my brother Will Palmer, there was a hill, it was just over a little hill and there were wild onions. That monkey would go over there and he would really dig those onions and he would peel them down and eat them. That's what we played for months and months, maybe years after that was there, one would be the monkey and the others the bear and man. That's how we had made our good times, things like that all the time. Kids right now may not think that that was much, but we really enjoyed things like that. That's all I can remember, I think.

S: What was your home life like there in the house on the ranch?

J: It was just a lumber home; it had a porch all along the front that didn't have a top over it; it was just about so wide. I remember that very plainly and it faced the north. Of course it wasn't a very big mansion, but it was big enough so that we got along fine.

S: How many bedrooms did it have in it?

J: It was only about four as I remember.

S: And how many children were there?

J: At the time my older brothers were married, so I would have been about three and that would make about six, there were six of us. That was all.

S: So a four bedroom home was a pretty nice home then.

J: Yes, it wasn't fixed up that good, there were two upstairs, but they weren't fixed up. Not like we have homes nowadays, but we got by and we thought that we had a good home.

S: What was your father like? Can you describe him as you remember him in Mexico?

J: He was quite a stern man. That's all he was and he expected you to do things when he told you, and do them right. He was a worker; he was a hard worker all of his life and he expected his family to be as well; but he was a good father. He was quite a stern man.

S: Do you remember your feeling in Mexico? Were you afraid there, were you afraid of Mexicans, or did you have kind of an apprehension about life. You were growing up in a time that things were kind of scary in Mexico.

J: We really weren't afraid of them and yet we really didn't want to meet them on the road going to school or anything. They weren't really mean. My father had a Mexican working for him and he came there all the time and he'd eat with us there at the table in the home, but he was always very nice and friendly. Most all of them always were, but some of them were smart allecks and we didn't want to meet them going along anywhere. That's the only thing that I remember about the Mexicans at all.

S: Do you remember what the name of the Mexican was that worked for you was?

J: Juan, that's all I ever knew him by was Juan. You see we left there before the uprising, so they didn't bother us too much as long as we were there.

S: Do you know why the family decided to leave?

J: Yes, my father came out to the states and he had an uncle that lived in New Mexico, in Kirtland, New Mexico, and he came out to see him and visit with him after the crops were gathered and everything. My father decided that he wanted to see his uncle because it had been some time since they had seen each other. My father came out and he decided that he was not doing as well in Mexico taking care of his family as he thought he should. His uncle told him about this new place that they were building up here: Graceland. My father decided that he would come and look the place over and see if he could find work, if he could then he would send for his family. That's what he did. He got work out here building roads.

I don't know if you remember or not, but was it Jacobs Hill, around White Mesa, he worked on that. He worked on laying the rocks that they put along there.

S: You can still see some of the rocks.

J: Yes; he did a lot of that, so he sent for us. Aunt Merdal didn't want to come out, she wanted to stay there so he wanted my mother to come. My Mother just left practically everything she had. Of course we couldn't bring much in just a wagon. We had a wagon with two spur of horses and we put what we could in it, our clothes, and food, and that's all we could do. We left there and Mary Ann, my sister, 17 years old at the time, drove that two spur of horses all the way up here.

S: Wow, you didn't have any brothers that came with you that were old enough?

J: We had my older brother Noel and his wife, but they had their own outfit. Delbert was my other brother and he was just a little bit older than I was, so Mary Ann had to do that driving. It was so much for the horses that all of us walked a good part of the way up here; it was just too much for the horses. We would just walk until we got tired; then we would ride for a little while; then we would get off again. I thought that I was just as big as the rest of them so I did walk an awful lot for a little kid. I remember it so plainly that I enjoyed it, walking with the rest of them. We would go as far as we could in the day time, we tried to take it slow and easy, and then we would try and find a place where there might be grass for the horses at night. If we couldn't, then we had a little grass and a barrel of water on us. That's the way we came and we were two months on the road.

I think about now and I just marvel about how Mary Ann drove that outfit all the way up here.

S: Why didn't your mother drive it?

J: She would, a little bit, but Mary Ann could handle the horses much better than Mother could. She handled the horses, liked them very much, and had handled them a lot. One of our horses got sick on the way out here and we thought that we were going to lose him. He was a victory black stallion and we were sure that we were going to lose him. He was so sick that he just laid down and we thought that we were going to be left without a horse, be one short, but mother worked with him and gave him different things. I don't remember what she gave him, but she worked with him and he got well; he came out of it. Of course we had to lay over for a little bit, but then we went on. That's the way that we got out here. We would lay off when we came to *[inaudible Track 3, 3:50]* then we stop on Mother would get up and do the washing. It was quite a trip, but we made it somehow and we got her on the 5th of December in 1911.

S: Wow, so it was actually winter most of the time that you were coming.

J: Yes, but there wasn't really any snow. It stormed quite a bit in Arizona, all up there in White Mesa and New Mexico. It didn't storm from where we left so it wasn't too bad until we got on up. It got quite cold a few times I remember. Maybe I shouldn't tell this, but I remember so well: we stopped in Demming over night and Mother bought us some underwear for winter that we had never had to have before. They called them union suited and I thought that that was just the most wonderful thing that I had in my life.

S: What had your underwear been before that, flour sacks?

J: Yes, just made from them, that's what we had; we didn't have a whole lot, but we were happy with what we did.

S: So what was the route that you took coming up.

J: I couldn't tell you exactly, but I know that we got on the wrong road a time or two and that took a lot of time. Once we did and we saw a fellow on the side of the road, he was drunk I think, he said "don't go any further or you'll go to hell." We didn't pay any attention to him and went on, we decided that we did all right. Before very long we came to a place there, it was a solon and Mural went in. There was another man to, a neighbor of ours, that decided to come on up, the Jensens, she was a widow, but she had a grown son, and he and Mural went in this solon to find out where we were supposed to go. We were lost, we didn't know where we were and they went in there. Oh it was a terrible thing, we saw a fight in there. There was one man with a knife that cut another man up. At that point we decided that we did in fact go to where the original man said we were going.

But anyway they did tell us where to go and we had to turn around to re-track a day because we had taken the wrong road.

While we were in the solon a drunken man came out and started to unhitch our big stallion, the one that I was telling you about. He was going to take our horse away from us, the man said he was going to have him. My mother got out and took hold of the horse and said "you let him alone, you aren't taking him" and the man backed off, he didn't take him. We were afraid that we were being watched over.

S: Was this on the state side or while you were in Mexico?

J: I'm not sure, but I think it was in the United States.

S: Were they speaking English?

J: Yes, I think it was in the United States, I don't remember exactly, I was too little to remember all the places.

We either got on the wrong road, or that was the way that it went then, but anyway, we came down a road that came into Bluff.

S: Along the San Juan River?

J: Yes, it came down the San Juan River and we came into Bluff before we got here. We had to cross the San Juan River, get the horses across and in a place or two they had to swim to get across, but Mary Ann handled that outfit across there. That's where Uncle Ace lived, my dad's brother that he had gone to see. We stayed with them there overnight.

S: Over in New Mexico?

J: Yes, that's where we crossed the San Juan. There was a place there where the river was a little lower. The rest of us walked across a bridge, we all made it and got here.

S: And Mary Ann was actually the one that swam the horses across and everything?

J: Yes she drove it all the way, well she made the duration of it.

S: Did you have enough supplies, as far as food, for coming out?

J: We had to buy some things coming along. We had a little money so we could get a little something. We didn't have things like we have to eat now days, but we didn't suffer, we had enough to keep us going. Of course Mother would cook beans and a few other things when we stopped.

S: You'd just cook over an open fire?

J: Yes, I guess it was about like the pioneers, because they came with about the same deal.

S: Yes you really are a covered wagon pioneer. It was a covered wagon wasn't it?

J: It sure was.

S: Boy that's incredible, that really is.

J: I guess it was colder than I said it was because I got my feet frosted. I felt so bad because I couldn't walk then, I had to sit up in the wagon. I didn't feel so tough because I couldn't walk with the rest of them.

S: How did you get your feet frosted?

J: I guess it was from walking, I don't know. It was really cold. I don't remember exactly, but I remember that they got frosted. One especially was really swollen up bad, but my mother took care of it and it got all better.

S: Did you all have good shoes and heavy warm clothes?

J: No, not too much, we all had something to wear all right. Our shoes are what Dad had made for us. He used to make our shoes.

S: You do remember him making your shoes for you then?

J: Yes

S: What were they like?

J: Well, I'll tell you that they weren't too bad. I have one or two of his lace, I guess you call them, that they made them on. They were quite heavy leather. Sometimes they made your feet hurt, they were quite hard on your feet. We went barefooted most of the time.

S: Would the shoe be like shoes are now with a sow on the bottom, or would they be more like a moccasin that just wrapped around?

J: It had the sow on it. If I new where the lace were I would show them to you.

S: I know what you mean by a lace. It is kind of square and has four feet on it, is that what you mean?

J: Well it is shaped just like a foot.

S: No one in the family has one of his shoes that he made by any chance?

J: No.

S: Don't you wish you had a pare of them?

J: Yes I do, but that was a mighty long time ago.

S: On the trip up do you remember stopping in Kirtland with your uncle over there for a while?

J: Yes.

S: What kind of reception did you get?

J: We were treated just right. They were really nice to us. I don't remember a lot, they had quite a good sized family.

S: Was that Ace Palmer?

J: Yes.

S: And then you came to Bluff, did you stop in bluff for a while?

J: No we stopped and spent the night just not too far from Bluff, and then we came right on. Our father was working there on the road where I told you he worked.

S: Oh you saw him as you were coming up?

J: Yes.

S: Why don't you talk about this then, them moment of seeing your father. Do you remember that, it must have been quite a happy reunion?

J: Yes it was, but I don't remember too much about it. He wasn't one to make a big fuss over people. I remember seeing him a lot, we were all happy to see him because it had been a long time since we had seen him.

S: How long?

J: I don't remember that either, but it had been quite some time. Might not have been as long as it might have seemed to us.

S: Could it have been just about three months?

J: No, it was longer than that.

S: Did he come over to each one of you and give you a hug and throw you up in the air, or anything like that?

J: I really don't remember. I know he did something with all of us, but I really don't remember. I guess I was just too young or something. I was just such a kid and busy in other thing and don't remember too much about it.

S: So you're on your way driving up and here is your father working there, your mother probably knew that she would find him working there, she had probably been in touch with him or something. You didn't stay there, but just a few minutes just to say hello?

J: No, if I remember right he came on with us to town. I could be wrong there, but I think that he did.

S: Can you recall then your first days of being in Blanding? You were in this new country that you had never seen before. What were the things that took place that day?

J: Well, there weren't very many homes, it wasn't much of a town. There were mostly just pines and cedars. Do you remember where Arthur Hurst's old home was down here?

S: Yes, where George Hurst lives?

J: Yes. We were going to put it right over there in the trees about where Zeke Johnson built his home latter. He didn't live there at the time, but just over to the waste.

S: Where Middy Johnson had that home?

J: No, where Wesley Washburn lived. That's how it was, we pitched tents and camped right there. That's where we lived for a while after we got here until my father bought some ground. He bought a couple of acres and that's where our home was built. It was just down the street here.

S: Where you lived all these years?

J: Yes. Of course he went back to work whole we camped there. I remember that Hurst lived in that home over there. It was a bunch of land and a big family.

S: Did you say that you stayed by the Hurst's for a day or two.

J: Yes we were there, I don't know for how long, but we were there I would imagine for about a month. I don't really remember how long it was, but we just camped there in the trees. We had the tents. It wasn't cleared then, there were just trees all over.

S: I must have missed something, I thought that you said that you camped where Wesley Washburn's home was.

J: Well we did, but that's just a little ways from the Hursts' place there.

S: Oh, from Arthur.

J: Arthur Hurst there. He's right along here.

S: You must mean where Phil Hurst lived then, not where George Hurst lived.

J: Well I meant their dad. Where their dad lived.

S: O.K. Lets see, he lived right across the street from the church down there, right?

J: George did. Well it wasn't there at all.

S: And his dad's place is down near where Phil Hurst lives.

J: Yes, west.

S: That small little house right there.

J: Yes Carol lived in it a few years back, well that's where it was. Wesley's was right over here so we weren't very far from them, but we were in the trees there. We could just camp there for a whole month. That's what we did until my father bought this ground, then we moved up there, that's where we were. He cleared that whole place just by hand and with his team. That was quite a legend here, that wood pile that he had. My father was just so fussy and particular. It was a huge pile, he would trim the trees up and he would pile them up in a big pile. I remember that I had never seen any thing like that in my life. It was the biggest pile that I had ever seen. Every bit that he cleared off his land was good to have and he put it there to dry. It was our wood, but even with what he had, it only lasted two or three years.

S: He didn't sell wood?

J: No, it was just for our own use.

S: Who did he buy his two acres of land from?

J: Sic Shumway. It was just across the street from where Sic lived all that time.

S: Then you're clear up there in Jungle Town, quite a way out of town.

J: Yes.

S: Why don't you talk about living this far out of town and how you felt about it, the things that you have perceptions of like that.

J: I've always liked where we lived. It was a long ways from where we had to go to school and we had to walk. That was the only way we had of getting anywhere those days, but we didn't mind, we were used to walking places. We loved it, we were used to being on the ranch out where there were trees and everything. Of course we were used to big ponderosas, we were sort of up in the mountains down in Mexico, but I always liked it up here. The town kids didn't think that we were up to much, they called us Jungleites

all the time, this was Jungle Town, but we didn't mind. We thought that we were all right. I don't think that I can tell you much more about that.

S: Now you were living in this tent, your father joins you and he's living there in the two tents, right?

J: Yes.

S: Your Aunt Merdal is still in Mexico at this time?

J: Yes.

S: Can you remember what your family life was like during this time when Aunt Merdal was still down in Mexico? What was your father like, was he more relaxed and affable, or what perception do you have of that?

J: I haven't thought of it that way. I don't know. He was pretty goon natured most of the time and all right. I think he was pretty worried because she was still down there, the rest of the family was. I wouldn't really know what to tell you because I haven't thought of it in that way. I was just growing up, I was just a kid. I turned 8 just after we came up here, in July, we got here in December.

S: Aunt Merdal now comes up after a while doesn't she? After how long?

J: I don't remember how long it was, but it was at the time of the Exodus, I guess that's what they called it when they left. They were all driven out. Of course she had to come live with us, they had to move in, everyone did. I don't remember how long it was after we got here, but it was quite some time. After she came up she moved in a house that's where Calvin Black built a home down here. There used to be an old lumber home there that George Johnson lived in and that's where Aunt Merdal lived a good many years after she moved out here. It was just across the street and around the corner from where we lived.

S: As Aunt Merdal came and joined with the rest of the family here, how did your father work out this arrangement? Both families were here close now. Did he alternate between the two homes?

J: Yes. Everyday. And Aunt Merdal, of course we mover her off, and she got to where after the town built up a little, she was real busy, she got all the babies that came into the world here. There was so much at the time here that she didn't get her things done. She would start washing or something then she would have to leave. One of her daughters would have to go off and finish it and do things for her like that.

S: Washing then meant scrubbing on a scrubbing board?

J: That's right. But times were hard. We managed to get by, then later on Joe helped his mother build that home down there where Clarence Perkins lives now. I don't think that everyone in the family wasn't as close. Some of us were quite close as we grew up, Joe and *[inaudible Track 4, 18:55]* it seemed like. We went places and we young people were together a lot. Guy and Ken, I was with them quite a bit to. I used to get along with them fine. I thought a lot of Guy and Ken.

S: Did there come a time when your father decided to live with one family instead of the other one?

J: He stayed with mother more after Aunt Merdal got her home down there. She got to where she was quite cranky with him for some reason, I don't know why, but he stayed with mother a bigger stay of the time because Aunt Merdal resented him.

S: What was the resentment over, do you know?

J: I really don't know. I never did know exactly what it was, but she was that way, and she didn't like it all because he stayed with Mother, but it was really her doings. She acted like she didn't like him to come down there. He wanted her to build her home down in the second acre that he bought, since he had two acres right there together, but she wouldn't do it. She wanted to go down there, I think that it all started then, but I really don't know what it was. They didn't get along that well so he started to stay at our place more, all the time. He would go down there quite a lot, he still thought a lot of her, I knew that.

S: Which one of the wives was the older?

J: Aunt Merdal.

S: Was your father the one that made the living or did you mother work?

J: My mother worked. She hadn't done much, just really hard work, she just worked her self to death. That was the thing that I never did like after I got older, cause it just seemed like she just had to make her own living for the family. I always kind of resented that, maybe I shouldn't have felt that way, but I always did. Sorry. She just worked so hard, of course dad worked hard to, but it just seemed like it took everything that he made just to feed his horses and take care of them. He farmed, he had a farm out here.

Aunt Merdal wasn't so bad. She was a mid wife and she made more money. It wasn't quite as bad as what mother did. Mother just took in the washings and did things like that. She had a very hard life.

S: So she didn't have any skills beyond washing, so that's what she did.

J: Yes.

S: How much would she make a day for doing washings?

J: She would just get so much for the washing. Sometimes she would get a dollar for one and a dollar and a half for another or something like that. They were big washings, it was hard work. I know that I helped her before I was married. We did the washings everyday of the week. Sometimes on Mondays she would go to somebody's home and do their washing and I would go to another home and do theirs. On the other days they would bring the washings to our home and that's where we did it. That's what we did for a good many years after I was old enough. Of course I started working, doing hard work like that, before most kids do now days. We had to for a living. I never did get to go to high school at all. I got married instead.

S: Who's washings did you do?

J: Anybody's that needed it done. We used to do the Hursts' an awful lot, sister Hurst.

S: Arthur Hurst's wife?

J: Yes. We did hers, but other than that I couldn't tell you, we did so many.

S: Were there certain people that you did week after week?

J: Yes we did the same ones.

S: So it wasn't that you were working with the more affluent hole-in-the-rockers, because the Hursts weren't hole-in-the-rockers actually.

J: No. We did some, I don't remember exactly who's, but we did some. It was mostly up here in this end of town that we did peoples washings.

S: So your mother actually maintained the family with the money she made on the scrubbing board doing washings.

J: Yes.

S: And ironing? Would she iron also for people?

J: Yes sometimes. They didn't always want their ironing done, but sometimes they did. That was the main way that she made a living for the family. Of course what help we could give, the girls, Jen and Ellen both worked out in homes and I did after I was about 15 years old. I did quite a lot to.

S: Who's home did you work in?

J: Mostly I worked for my brother. I also worked for several different people when they went and had their babies. I'd go and do their work for them while they were in bed. They used to keep them in bed for 10 days in those times. I usually worked about two

weeks, Ellen used to do that quite a bit and so did Jen. Jen and Mary Ann both worked for Sister Bayles a lot, Brother Hanson Bayles's wife.

S: This was the old Hanson Bayles?

J: Yes, in the big home down there.

S: Which brother did you say that you worked for?

J: Ben. I worked for them when one of there babies was born. I also worked for Mrs. Hawkins. I think you know Mrs. Alma Hawkins?

S: Alma Hawkins lived here at that time?

J: Yes. I worked for two or three different ones. I don't remember the other ones right now.

S: Then you start going to school. Can you start talking about school in Blanding and your experiences with that?

J: To think about it now, it seems kind of funny, but I had Brother Harris, Joseph B. Harris was my very first teacher when I first started going to school when I was eight years old. I also had Brother Albert Lyman and Marion Jones and I had Elmer Dawning, before she was Jamison then and Lewis Redd. That was just about all that I had because I just went through the eighth grade. I graduated from the eighth grade.

S: It was Lewis Redd that you had?

J: Yes.

S: It's so incredible that most of the teachers that you've mentioned are teachers that I've had also.

J: Yes. I know that Dwain had Lewis Redd two different years.

S: Was she Lewis Eliot when you had her?

J: Yes she was Miss. Eliot. I had a good time going to school, I really liked it. Brother McAlister was our music teacher, Richard McAlister. I always liked him a lot. Most people didn't like him, but I did, I got along fine with him.

S: Did you like to sing?

J: Yes.

S: Did you play an instrument?

J: No, I didn't ever play an instrument, but he wanted me to take singing lessons. He thought I'd have been quite a singer if I had, but of course we didn't have any money for me to do anything that way. He was honest and good to me and he wanted me to do things that way. Cassidy Lyman and I used to sing quite a bit together, we went in different classes and we'd have programs. We sang a lot together. She always sang out, she took the lead and we used to have real good times.

S: Did you ever have any operettas, did you have a part in those?

J: Yes, several times we did.

S: Did you ever sing in a singing group or anything like that?

J: Not very much, only in the choir. I used to sing in the choir all the time until I got to the point where my voice wouldn't let me anymore.

S: And that's just been recently?

J: It's been two or three years.

S: What do you remember about going to school? You were from really quite a poor family, struggling along, did that make any difference? Did your living in Jungle Town, or your being from Pacheco make any difference? Did it give you a feeling of any kind of difficulty?

J: Yes, sometimes, but there wasn't any of them that had too much money at that time so it didn't make it as bad as it could have been. Some of the kids were kind of on you cause you were from Mexico, or from Jungle Town. They would try and tease you and make fun of you about it. It used to have kind of a class structure, but I didn't have much trouble, I got along just fine. Once in a while I wouldn't get along with some of them, but I had other friends so I wouldn't mind.

S: From your perception, if you were classing the different class structure that there was in Blanding, can you list who would have been on the top and move your way down. You don't have to be accurate, it's just from your perception. Who would be in that top class, the elite?

J: I don't know, in the group that I was with an awful lot there was Betsy Shumway, Cassidy Lyman, Lennel Poole, after they came you know, Leanne Rodgers, so they were just from all over. I really don't know. I guess it was just latter on when they were that way.

S: Now here is Cassidy Lyman, the daughter of the founder of the town, and yet your not expressing that there was any real barrier between you and her.

J: No there wasn't, not at all. We always got along just fine, she and I did.

S: Was there any family in town, or groups of families in town, where you did feel that there was a barrier between you?

J: I can't think of any right now, when I was smaller like that. I guess not, I probably didn't have anything much to complain about.

S: Many of the people that live in Jungle Town have expressed this feeling of there being some animosity of something between them and other people. I've tried to find out what the difference was. Who would you think of as the enemies of the Jungleites? Who were the people that would call you Jungleites, that made the most problems for you?

J: It would have been some of the Adams and, come to think of it, some of the Redds.

S: Would these Redds be some of the old Redds that have been here a long time, or were these the Redds that came out of Mexico them selves?

J: Some of them would have been the ones that came from Mexico, but they had money after they got here and that made quite a difference.

S: As your father and mother got older, some of your family has expressed the feeling that you father was rather severe in the disciplining of his children. What is your perception there? Would that be how you would characterize him?

J: He always has been. He didn't get along to well with his boys, a lot of his boys left home when they were younger than us. I don't know why it was. Some of them didn't think about him like they should a father, but I think probably that a lot of it was my father's fault as well as theirs. I don't know why it was, but there was quite a bit of them that did leave home, I do know that. I know that there was one or two of Aunt Merdal's boys that wanted to leave home. One of them started with one of my full brothers but he didn't have as much motivation for leaving.

S: In other words, because your father wasn't in that other home he didn't have the motivation to leave. Was it because your father wasn't driving him out?

Tape drops dead...

Index

Adams, 18	Black, Calvin, 13
Arrival in the States, 10	Blanding, 11
Bayles, Hanson, 16	School, 16
beans, 8	Bluff, 8, 10
bear, 4	Box Canyon, 4

camping, 11
Carol, 12
cedars, 11
choir, 17
circus, 4
class structure, 17
clearing trees, 12
cooking, 8
Corellas, 2
covered wagon, 8
Dawning, Elmer, 16
Demming, 7
dolls, 4
Dwain, 16
Eliot, Lewis, 16
Ellen, 16
Exodus, 13
family life, 13
Family Size, 5
Father, 5, 6, 12
 Children, 18
 disciplining, 18
 Family, 13
 reunion, 10
 Work, 6
Father's uncle, 6
frosted feet, 9
Graceland, 6
Harris, Joseph B., 16
Hawkins, Alma, 16
Hell, 7
hole-in-the-rockers, 15
horses, 4, 6, 7, 8, 14
Hurst, 11, 15
Hurst, Arthur, 11, 15
Hurst, George, 11
Hurst, Phil, 11, 12
ironing, 15
Jacobs Hill, 6
Jensens, 7
Johnson, Middy, 11
Johnson, Zeke, 11
Jones, Marion, 16
Juan, 6
Jungle Town, 12, 17, 18
Jungleites, 12, 18

Kirtland, 9
lace, 9
Lost Traveling, 7
Lyman, Albert, 16
Lyman, Cassidy, 17
Mary Ann, 6, 8, 16
McAlister, Richard, 16
Merdal, 2, 3, 6, 13, 14, 18
 Father, 14
 Mid Wife, 14
 Working, 13
Mexicans, 5
Mexico
 Childhood Play, 4
 Farming, 2
 Feeling, 5
 School, 2
mid wife, 3
monkey, 5
Mother, 7
 Work, 14
Mural, 7
New Mexico, 6, 7, 8
Noel, 6
operettas, 17
Pacheco, 2, 17
Palmer, Ace, 10
Palmer, Will, 5
pines, 11
pioneer, 8
Polygamy, 2
Polyigamy
 Family arrangement, 3
ponderosa, 4
ponderosas, 12
Poole, Lennel, 17
Poverty, 17
Ranch
 House, 5
Ranching, 3
Redd, Lewis, 16
Redds, 18
San Juan River, 8
school, 4, 5, 12, 15, 16
scrubbing board, 15
shoes, 9

Shumway, Sic, 12
sick stallion, 7
singing, 16
Stealing Horses, 7
Traveling from Mexico, 6
underwear, 7
Viola, 4

Washburn, Wesley, 11
Washing, 13
White Mesa, 6
wives, 14
wood pile, 12
working, 15