This is an oral history. I am Jill Rosenlund. Today, November 30, 1975, I am going to interview Allan E. Roselund and Marjorie Williams Rosenlund. The general topic will be the depression.

JR: Mr. Rosenlund, where were you born?

AR: Spring City, Utah.

JR: How long did you live in Spring City?

AR: We lived there about four months then we moved to Fairview. This was about twelve miles away. My dad was a blacksmith and he started his business in Fairview about that time.

JR: Where were your parents born?

AR: My parents, my dad was born in Mt. Pleasant, Utah; and my mother was born in Moroni, Utah.

JR: What was your occupation in your youth? What were some of the jobs you had?

AR: When I was about sixteen, we lived in Fairview, I worked for a man that run a saw mill and he had a truck. I drove his truck, hauled lumber and also there was a lot of coal above Fairview and I would haul and deliver coal for this man, for people. They used to store coal for the winter, then in the summer, everybody would put their winter supply of coal in.

JR: Could you tell me something about your life during the depression?

AR: During the depression, I was probably; it started in high school or junior high when it started. About 32’, that’s when I presume. Things were quite scarce. Dad always had plenty of work to do. There wasn’t any money but he always had a lot of work, people always had to have a horse shod and their wagon repaired. So he didn’t always get money for pay but he would get food stuffs had grain and we had our own cows, and chickens, and pigs. That way we had plenty to eat, and we seemed to get along fairly well during the depression because we always had plenty of work to do.

JR: So you, sort of, lived on a farm. What were some of the jobs you were to do as a child?

AR: Well, I didn’t really live on a farm. We didn’t have a lot of property to farm. Like I say dad traded work for hay and the cows, and grain for the pigs and chickens. He’d just work for that. Course, my job as milking the cows, feeding the chickens and the pigs, also there was lots of work in the shop. I got good experience in working for my dad in the shop.

JR: Since food was sort of scarce, were there times when you thought maybe you’d be starving or something?
AR: Oh, I don’t think that I ever felt that we were in that bad condition. We always had plenty of food to eat. Of course, things were real cheap in those days. We could buy a pound of hamburger for fifteen cents and this kind of thing. Course, the things that you needed money for was your clothing and a few things like that. We seemed to get along, we didn’t have the best of everything but we had a good family life. We had twelve children in our family, two of them died and ten are still surviving. But we had a lot of good times. That was the time, of course, when in the late, well in the middle thirties that all the big name bands were playing and we had dances every Saturday night. We always managed to have a good time and enjoy ourselves.

JR: As a child what kind of recreation did you have?

AR: Well, we lived in Clear Creek for about five years, from 1927 to 1932, and my dad was a blacksmith over there. Course; over there we lived right in the tops of the mountains. We had horses. We had two horses. Course, we also had some cows over there and we sued to sell the milk to the people there at the mining town, Clear Creek. But we used to hunt and fish and swim, and ride our horses. We had a lot of enjoyable times doing this.

JR: Would you say growing up around the 1930’s would have been easier than maybe growing up now or about the same?

AR: Well, I think now we have a little different sense of values. Then we realized there was no money and we learned to save the money that we did earn to do the things that we wanted to do most. I think now-a-days that’s quite a bit different. There’s so much money going around that people don’t seem to have too much respect for money. It comes and goes real fast. I don’t think this is too serious but it’s a different outlook on life. When you go through the depression, you’re always concerned at looking ahead and now I sometimes think if we do that as much as we should.

JR: How would you compare the schools now-a-days with the schools when you were going?

AR: It’s pretty hard for me to tell. All I know is what my own children, what they bring home, but I think that they have a good school system at the present time. I think they had a good school system when I went to school. They had lots of good activities and they had good teachers and I think that there have been a lot of changes in the school program in the last thirty or forty years. On the whole, I think our school system is doing a very good job.

JR: Which one of these towns have you lived in the longest during your youth?

AR: Well, I lived in Fairview the longest. I lived there for about fifteen years of my first twenty.

JR: About how many people lived in Fairview?

AR: It is just a small town. I’d say about a thousand or twelve hundred people. It hasn’t grown much since then, it’s still about the same size.

JR: Could you tell us a little about your home and stuff like, was it a big house?
AR: The house we lived in, in Fairview, dad owned a shop across the road and then we owned a creamery, and then our home was in back of this creamery. We were just about a quarter of a block off of Main Street in Fairview. We owned clear through the block. Actually, we owned two homes there, the farmers used to have two or three cows or so and they’d always separate their cream and bring it to the creamery. They would buy their cream and send it to Salt Lake to be made into butter.

JR: What kind of things did you like on Halloween, to cause trouble when you were together?

AR: It seems like there’s been a variety of things that went on, I’m sure everybody’s…One time one guy’s wagon was dismantled and put up on a shed and put back together. We didn’t have trick or treating in those days, but whether that was because of there was no money or it just seemed like everyone was in the process of trying to earn a living. They didn’t have the money to buy candy and treats for everyone and so therefore, I never knew anything about trick or treating until I moved to Layton, actually.

JR: Were there any mines around Fairview or anywhere around where you lived?

AR: Yes, there’s mines up in Huntington Canyon, that was about fifteen or sixteen miles from Fairview. There were several coal mines that catered to trucking trade. There was no railroad tracks or trains that went up in that area because it was such a steep unavailable area. This was trucked out of there by trucks.

JR: Were the newspapers, did they tell like, the whole story and stuff or were they bias?

AR: In those days, of course, we didn’t have a television and our news came mostly from the radio and newspapers. We didn’t get all the news as fast as you get it now-a-days. Sometimes now-a-days I think that we get more news than we should because I think a lot of it is man-made, you might say. Like some of the reporters try to make sensation out of something that isn’t too as important that they’d like to make it. All they are trying to do is sell the newspapers.

JR: During the depression, having to go without a lot of things, do you think it brought your family closer together say than most families are now-a-days?

AR: I think it brought us close together and I think it gave us the realization of the value of the dollar. Sometimes, even now-a-days, in my life, restrictions seem to take hold when I go to buy things I think, I refer back in the back of my mind to the times when we didn’t have anything to speak of. But they were happy days. It takes more than money to make life enjoyable.

I’d like to thank you, Mr. Rosenlund. This tape will be put in the library at Ricks College. Thank you.
JR: Mrs. Rosenlund, where were you born?

MR: I was born in Sunnyside, Utah.

JR: How long did you live in Sunnyside?

MR: About six years.

JR: Where were your parents born?

MR: My mother was born in Emery in Emery County. My father was born in Koossherum, Utah.

JR: What occupations did you have during your youth?

MR: What occupation did I have or what occupation did my parents have?

JR: Did you have during your youth.

MR: As a young girl, I used to go out and help other people in their homes; clean their homes, tend their children. Then I got a job in a combined café and service station and I fixed meals, and I pumped gas, and I sold candy. I stayed there most of my youth and worked in this café.

JR: Could you tell me something about your life during the depression, like the things you could eat and stuff?

MR: Well, I was just a child during the depression so things are rather vague to me. We didn’t have as I remember; money was scarce so we didn’t ever go to the store to buy groceries as such. We raised our own groceries as such. We raised our own groceries. When we would need things like sugar and salt or those commodities we couldn’t raise, we’d take our grain or our eggs to the store and trade them for the things that we did need. It was more a barter system with it because there was no money to be used. As far as eating is concerned, I think we always had our stomachs were full. But we didn’t always maybe have the very best of things. We had just the staples: bread, meat, and potatoes and that’s about the way we ate. In the summertime, we had vegetables but there were no frills.

JR: What were some of the prices of the foods that you bought back then?

MR: I don’t recall prices. I just don’t really recall prices, I was too young.

JR: Did you have to destroy some of your livestock?

MR: Well, yes we did. One summer for a year of two during the depression, we had, there was also a drought and we just couldn’t raise the feed for our livestock and so my father had to have
them killed in order to keep them from starving to death. That hurt us all the more because that was our food supply. It really did hurt when we had to destroy it.

JR: How did the depression affect your family?

MR: Well, the depression really had a great effect on my family because we lived on the farm. Farm produce, you couldn’t get any money out of it and my father eventually had to give up and lease his farm out. He went to the mines to work. He’d be gone all week and get home just on weekends. The chores and what little bit of the farming we did have to do, my mother and we children did it. We had all the chores to do and the cows to milk and the hay to stack. For those just for ourselves, we had those things to take care of because my father was never home. The depression really had a big effect on our family. I don’t think it hurt us any. I think it was there that we learned to work and learned the value of doing a job well-done.

JR: Which town during your youth did you live in the longest?

MR: Well, I spent all my youth in Emery County from about six or seven years old and on. I grew up there and that was during the time of the depression. I spent all my time there.

JR: Did they have any mines around in Emery County?

MR: There are lots of mines in Emery County but for the most part, they weren’t being used at that time. The mines that my father worked in were in Carbon County. However, I remember as a child when the depression got really bad, my father leased a mine from the government and he tried to work it before he left home. He had a partner and the two of them tried to work this mine and make a go of it, but they soon found their venture was just too expensive for them to keep and so they gave it up. That’s when my father finally went to the mines.

JR: Did the depression seem to make your family grow closer together?

MR: I’m sure it did. When a family works together as we had to work to make a livelihood, you can’t help but grow close to one another. I recall very vividly one night it was cold winter night and my mother was out trying to milk the cows and I was still only about eight years old but I was to hold the lantern for her to milk. I remember the cold winter wind blowing in around us while she milked and I thought I’ll surely freeze to death before she has that cow milked. I’ll always remember that night. But it did make our family grow closer together.

JR: What did you think about President Roosevelt and what he was doing?

MR: Well, we felt President Roosevelt was a great president. He’s the one that initiated a number of government programs to help the people that were really in need. They had the WPA program which was really a boon to the people in our end of the country that really needed money for just enough to get along on. It was called WPA which is Public Works Project. They’d set up these different projects and then the Government would pay the men for doing it. They even had the women working on it. I remember my mother helped make mattresses. I
went one time over and watched them and the women would make mattresses on this WPA program, just to help make a livelihood.

JR: Did you have any difficulty in keeping your farm?

MR: I guess that’s the main reason my father finally went to the mines to work because when he and mother first married they had bought this farm. Course, they had payments they had to make on it, I don’t recall what the payments were, but I know there was one time where they were afraid they were going to lose the farm. I’m going to work in the mines; it made it so he could keep it.

JR: Would you say you had very good school systems back then?

MR: I think we had an excellent school system considering the isolated locality we lived in. We had tremendous teachers, I felt. We had a well-rounded program. They taught us all the basics that we needed. I learned to love to read and to love knowledge. I have always had a real eager desire that was instilled in me when I was a child. I really feel, yes, we did have a good school system. We had to go fifteen miles to school. After the eighth grade, we’d travel by bus, morning and night, but that didn’t hurt us.

JR: Some people had to leave their homes like usually the older son, so they wouldn’t be a burden to their family. Did you have anything like this in your family?

MR: No, we didn’t. I recall my father did. My father had to quit school at the eighth grade and go away to work in order to help his family out. But in our family, no, our parents were very eager for us to have an education and they put everything into that, to see that we had the best education that we could get.

JR: Did you have a very big house? How big was your family?

MR: We had a nice home. My father was a veteran of World War I and right about the time of the depression, the government gave all World War I veterans, I think it was a thousand dollar bonus. So my father used that bonus money and built us a home, which by today’s standards, a thousand dollars doesn’t seem like much, but in building most of it himself we had a nice home. We had two bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen, bath downstairs; and then we had an upstairs with two more bedrooms. We had a basement that was more just a storage room for fruit and food stuffs.

JR: Do you think the kids now-a-days are spoiled just because they don’t have to go through all the things that you did?

MR: Well, I think children in this day and age have a different challenge than we did. Our challenge was to make ends meet and to just try to make a go of it. This was our big challenge. Where I think the kids today have a challenge in another direction. However, I think one of the most valuable things anyone can learn to do is learn to work.
MR: Well, as I said before, we operated on the barter system. There was very little money to spend. When my father would get a little cash, usually he’d allow us a nickel a week. That was even when I was in high school. I recall going down to the store in high school and we were allowed five cents a week to spend on a piece of candy or whatever. We just didn’t have money to spend. When we needed clothes, we’d take our old cast-off clothes and turn them inside-out, press them, and then use them inside-out. We’d take the flour sacks and make underwear out of them. My brother always joked about his underwear with the print on the seat.

MR: Oh, I think to each his own. I’m glad I grew up when I did, I would have missed the experiences that I had in my life. I thoroughly enjoyed them, but now I’m at the age I like to look back on them. I enjoy this day and age, I live it through my children.

JR: I’d like to thank you very much, Mrs. Rosenlund. This tape will be put in the library at Ricks College. Thank you.