Crowder, Dr. David L. Oral History Project

Dale Randall-Experiences of the Depression

By Dale Randall

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Box 2 Folder 29

Oral Interview conducted by Danny P. Moon

Transcribed by Sarah McCorristin February 2005

Brigham Young University- Idaho
This is an oral history. I am Dan Moon from Rupert, Idaho. December 7, 1975, I am going to interview Dale Randall on the topic of the Depression.

DM: Mr. Randall, where were you born and how long did you live there?

DR: I was born in Bountiful, Utah. Lived there one year and then moved to Centerville, Utah in which place I was raised.

DM: How long have you lived in Rupert?

DR: I've been in Rupert, Idaho for approximately eight years.

DM: Where were your parents born?

DR: My parents were both born in Utah.

DM: What is your occupation?

DR: I am a custodian with the LDS church here in Rupert.

DM: Mr. Randall, I was wondering, what year was you born in during the depression years?

DR: I was born in 1919 which during the depression years, 1930, would have made me eleven years old.

DM: You was just a young lad then. I was wondering, can you remember quite a bit of stuff back then?

DR: I remember quite a bit of the period of time during the condition because of the situations under which we lived, the area where we lived and the hardships that were brought on some people and certain circumstances that were created where we lived.

DM: You lived in Rupert during the depression?

DR: No, I lived in Utah during that period of time. I lived in Centerville, Utah.

DM: What kind of, did they have back there, like the weather and storms and stuff like that?

DR: At that period of time our weather situations were a lot different than they are now. We had winters then with the average snowfall of a foot and a half on the level. In our particular area, we used to have some extremely strong winter winds which created a problem of getting around. We didn’t have the oiled roads as we have now, as we know them today. Our streets in the town where I lived, were all dirt. It did create some
problem in transportation and, of course, we didn’t have the modern transportation that we have now. Our means were in 1929 Fords, ’30 Fords and cars of that vintage which you don’t even see anymore. A lot of the transportation was done with horse and wagon.

DM: How did them kind of cars and stuff get around? Or did you drive sleighs and stuff?

DR: At that particular time, inasmuch as our discussion deals with the period of the depression, I remember then that the job situation was such that if you wanted to go out and find a job, there just wasn’t one available. This was the period of the time. One of the jobs that I remember most vividly in my mind was the construction of the roads in our town. They being all gravel or sand. They used to haul the sand from the sand pit east of town on wagons or horses. The Government provided the money to pay the men to work on this project. It was all loading the wagons by hand and I think they could put a possibly, a total of maybe two, two and a half yards on a full wagon and then haul it down to the streets and then dump the wagons and go back. Then in the sand pits they’d have to load them up. It was all done by hand work. There was none of this modern fast machinery. What it took us two months to do; they could probably do today in an hour and a half. But it was a work project. Then they also had and I remember, the food lines which they had and the government supplied the food and you went and got from the WPA or from the Government the necessary commodities to keep you alive. There wasn’t a flush situation. You ate beans for breakfast, dinner, and supper or you ate what you had available and was mighty glad to get it. As far as the activities that we done, me being a young lad at the time, why I didn’t really feel the pinch as much possibly as my mother and father did and the sacrifices which they made to let the children in our family kinda get along with a little more happiness and not let us feel it as bad as they did. But I remember all through the depression years up until the advent of, almost, of World War II. When things started to brighten up financially across the nation and things looked a little better in the financial picture, why ten cents in my pocket made, I felt like I was a millionaire.

DM: Did you raise beef or anything like that?

DR: Yes, we had a farm, we milked a bunch of cows. Then we had work horses, we had a row crop of farm where we use to farm. As far as this type of commodity was concerned, we raised our own. We didn’t buy anything; nobody had any money to buy anything with. I was a little more fortunate perhaps than some of the others because my father happened to run the grocery store. But we also raised our own pork and our own beef and our chicken and eggs, vegetables that we sold at market.

DM: Did you have any problem raising them?

DR: Nothing other than all our work was hand work. We didn’t have tractors or machinery to do it with. It was all hand hoeing and down on our hands and knees weeding the rows and then bunching the carrots was all done by hand. When we dug
them, we dug them with a fork and sugar beets, we dug with a plow and topped them by hand and threw them up into the wagons.

DM: I was wondering how did you get along in your schooling and education?

DR: I think our schooling and education was on a par of what it is today but we basically had to walk to school. We didn’t have any transportation problems. Of course, in the little town where I was, everybody was within a mile of school anyhow, a mile and a half and, so we just all walked to school.

DM: Did you have any problems with your teachers, I mean, you know like there was plenty of teaching equipment and stuff?

DR: Oh, yes. We had plenty of the necessary things for school in those days. We didn’t have any questions or any problems with them. We had some good teachers and good equipment. It wouldn’t compare with what we have today but it was good equipment for then.

DM: Was there like one building for so many grades?

DR: We just had one big school house and it had the first eight grades in it.

DM: What grade was you in back there? What grade did you attend during the depression?

DR: Oh, where would it be? I was eleven, twelve years old that would be sixth, seventh. I don’t think we got past the seventh grade during the depression. Eighth grade possibly towards the latter part of the depression.

DM: Do you think if it wouldn’t have been during the depression, like if it would have been any other years, would you have learned more or less?

DR: I don’t think so Dan. I think we’d had a pretty good chance for education, as it was known at that particular time. The basics we got plenty of.

DM: So you had a pretty good education all your life then, counting the depression years?

DR: Yes, over all I can’t complain of my education opportunities. I can’t say that I’ve taken advantage of the best of them but they were there.

DM: Your parents have a hard time, you know, like raising the family like how many was in your family?

DR: We only had three children in our family, and like I said earlier, I think that mother and dad sacrificed probably more than I realized then to see that we had an education and
the necessities of life. I’m sure that there was many a times that they went without when we had what we needed or what we had to have to get along without the excessive.

DM: What kind of church life did you have back then?

DR: We had a real active church life during that period of time. Basically because this was where we lived and this was the center of our entertainment. We didn’t have the money for a lot of travel and the means for a lot of travel and so we just made up our own activities. All that we done was centered around the church and church activities.

DM: How was the big city life like around Salt Lake?

DR: Well, the city life during that period of time, there was some pretty hungry people around there, but there always seemed like there was food around that everybody could live. I have seen some instances in Salt Lake where there was some problems over food but they got enough to get by on. There wasn’t a lot of money; there wasn’t a lack of food. There was food around there just wasn’t money to buy it with. We had some good crops and good production but there just wasn’t any money around. For example, during those periods of time you could buy a fifty pound sack of onions for a dollar and things like that. But a dollar was awful hard to come by. So out where I was, more or less out in the country, a small country community, why we lived off the ground and didn’t depend on the other guy for our food. I know many instances where dad was running the store that credit was a real big thing and many, many times that people went for two or three and four months before they was even able to pay their grocery bill for one week. Dad had to carry them on the books during this period of time.

DM: Thank you very much, Mr. Randall. This tape will be placed in the library at Ricks College for use of further researchers.