

Voices from the Past

The Assessor of Madison County

By Benjamin E. Summers

March 6, 1982

Tape #3

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Theophilus E. Tandoh August 2004

Brigham Young University- Idaho

HF- The subject of the interview is that of the years of Benjamin E. Summers serving as the assessor of Madison County. It's my opportunity this Saturday morning the sixth of March, 1982 to have welcomed Mr. Benjamin E. Summers to my office here, that we may interview him concerning the above subject. Mr. Summers will you state where you were born and the date.

BS- Yes, I was born in the Burton, down in Burton, Idaho, August the 10th, 1902 to John C. Summers and Mary Elizabeth Jones Summers.

HF- Were your folks married at the time that they came to the Upper Snake River Valley?

BS- Yes, they'd been, they lived in Uintah, Utah, for some time and they had two children when they moved up here, in 1888 is when they came up here. Wait, 1887 is when they came up here.

HF- And they settled in the Burton Ward?

BS- Yes, they homesteaded that farm down there in Burton where I was born

HF- And it did, that community did have a post office at that time too didn't it?

BS- I believe they did, but I'm not sure about that.

HF- And you've lived here in the Upper Snake River Valley and here in Madison County all your life?

BS- Yes, I've been here all my life.

HF- And now we would like to focus today on your years as the elected assessor of Madison County. And, I would first like to ask you, what are the official duties as the assessor?

BS- Well, here in the state of Idaho the assessors are required to sell license plates and appraise all the property and keep an up to date record of all property in the county, that is real estate, and livestock, and machinery, and all kinds of equipment. The cities, the merchants are required to report their inventory. They did have to invite, they did have to report their inventory, but that was taken off the tax roll while I was the assessor so they just had their furniture and fixtures on the tax roll after that.

HF- Now the assessment you make is very important because the, as I understand it the, the county commissioners place a levy for tax purposes and the assessment you give will have a bearing on how much money is raised from the tax levy is that correct?

BS- That's right, yes, the total evaluation is multiplied by their levy, and that brings the taxes so it's very important that we have a correct assessed evaluation here in the county.

HF- Did you feel that, obviously you felt that you were qualified when you sought this position to perform these duties?

BS- Well, I knew quite a bit about land. I'd farmed for 36 years on the old place in Burton that my father and mother had homesteaded. Of course I knew how to, how to appraise property to that extent. I hadn't had any experiences as assessor or in any way connected to the assessor's office.

HF- The...

BS- But I felt I was qualified somewhat for the job.

HF- At that time there wasn't any formal educational requirements was there?

BS- That's right.

HF- To the position?

BS- No, you didn't have, there was no qualifications at all except that you get yourself elected.

HF- And be a resident of the county?

BS- Yes.

HF- And probably over twenty-one years of age?

BS- Well, I guess that's right, I mean I had to be an American citizen.

HF- Has that particular thing, has that particular item changed?

BS- Yes, while I was assessor the legislature passed a law that we had to have some qualifications to appraise properly. All new appraisers coming in had to pass two examinations that the state task commission put on. They put on a school, and they had to pass two examinations before we could be qualified as appraisers. But my two deputies at that time and myself had already been past the examinations so we were ok when they passed the law.

HF- So you didn't have to go through the procedure of taking the exam?

BS- That's right and we had already taken it and had our certificates.

HF- Mr. Summers when did you become the assessor of Madison County?

BS- I took office on January the 8th, 1963.

HF- By election?

BS- Yes

HF- But you had served a little while prior to that time had you not?

BS- No, no, that is the first time I had to...

HF- That is to say didn't you serve by appointment or something?

BS- No.

HF- Oh, oh I see.

BS- No, I just come right in as a green hand.

HF- I see, and who had been your opponent in '62 in the election year, the election campaign?

BS- Ephraim Wilmore was the assessor at that time, and I ran against him.

HF- And he was the incumbent?

BS- He was the incumbent.

HF- How many, approximately how many years had he served in that capacity?

BS- I think it was around twenty-five years, he'd been in there quite a while, and I must say here though that I think one thing that helped me win the election was the fact that word got out around the county that Eph had applied to be post master of the post office here in Rexburg and that got around the county and of course that helped me win the election, but soon after he lost the election then he was appointed post master, and he resigned as assessor, and the county commissioners appointed Blanch. When, his deputy, to be the assessor throughout the last, I imagine a month or six weeks before we went in the office.

HF- Did you happen to retain her as your deputy?

BS- No, I put it off too long (phone rings) asking her about it and by the time I got around to see if she'd work for me (phone rings) she had already got another job and so I was, I was going in there without any help that had been there any in the future before that so I had to hire all new help.

HF- Do you recall who your first deputies were in the office?

BS- Yes I do, Wilma Bean had been working in the Republican central committee office when I was running for election. I got acquainted with her and I found that she very, very well qualified to be a clerk or a help in an office. She was exceptionally good with a typewriter and taking shorthand and all that and she had had some experience in the department of Law Enforcement in Boise. So, I asked her if she would take the job of being my chief deputy, and after she consulted with her husband, she decided to take the job.

HF- And did she remain with you all the years that you were the assessor?

BS- Yes, she remained with me all the sixteen years and was still there when I left.

HF- And proved to be a wonderful help, didn't she?

BS- She was just exceptionally well qualified for the help, I couldn't ask for anybody any better.

HF- What ah, what, how did you divide the assessor responsibility of yourself and your deputies?

BS- Wilma sort of took over the bookkeeping part of it, and the selling the license plates. And I took over the part of appraising property. There was kind of a division there, and it worked out pretty good. She was, we had, she had a deputy, Barbara Zoree was a deputy that came in when I did, and she was just part-time right when the rush was on. I might say here that in those days, all the license plates in the county come new at the first of January.

HF- And that would be for automobiles as well as trucks?

BS- Yes. And naturally we had a big line-up there to the last day or the first day of the year and the second day of the year to get their license plates. That was changed later on; we can talk about it later.

HF- But that was a fabulous burden was it not?

BS- It surely was. When I first went into office, I'd only been there a week when I was called down to Boise. The tax commission ordered all of us new assessors, there was six of us, met down in Boise for further instructions, and they took us through a school, and we were oriented on the job we had facing us. Then I got back probably after the rush was over in the office. Wilma and Barbara had been plagued with all those people coming in for license plates, and I really got out of that part of it.

HF- Ben, do you recall in 1963 how many license plates were sold in Madison County?

BS- I just don't remember, I wish I had kept track of it, but I didn't. But there was surely a lot more so in 1978, the last year I was in there.

HF- The population had increased fabulously in Madison County. Let's see, you went in as an assessor on what, the Republican ticket?

BS- Yes.

HF- And you continued of course to be reelected every two years on the Republican ticket?

BS- Yes, that's right. I was elected every two years and had opposition until 1969 when we were able to get a law through the legislature to give us a four year term, and then it was put on the

ballet on 1970, and the people voted for it. So, we had a four year term including 1970, and it still is that way.

HF- Who were your opponents during those years?

BS- As I remember, Ephraim Whilmer was the first one and the second one. He didn't stay with the post office and so he ran against me the second term.

HF- Is that right?

BS- Then I had Lawrence Withers the opponent, and young Tim Parvison, and then from then on I didn't have any opposition.

HF- That's interesting. You helped change that statute in the constitution from the two-year period of election to a four-year, didn't you? You and your assessors had something to do with that?

BS- Yes, I was elected President of the Assessors Association down at Sun Valley in 1968, in October of 1968. And I was determined that we were going to get a four-year term and so I took it upon myself to appoint a legislative committee that knew, I thought they knew what they were doing, and they proved to be. So, we went down to Boise, and the Legislature met in the spring of 1979, and we did a lot of lobbying down there.

HF- You mean '69 don't you?

BS- Ah, '69, yes I misstated that, in '69 when the legislature finally got around to vote on it and passed it.

HF- Now Ben, we just mentioned about the assessed evaluations, and how important they were. Who worked with you in making the real estate assessments? Did you have a deputy specifically to assist you? Maybe one or two of them?

BS- I had just part-time men help me a little there until 1970, then I hired two men. I'll tell you why that was. The county hadn't grown too much. The assessed evaluation was less than 7 million when I took office, and the county wasn't growing so fast so I undertook to do all of the appraising with just part-time help that I could gather up. I remember Joe Howard was the custodian at the court house, and he would help me in his slack time though, and that was quite a help. Then Weldon Neff helped me a little in his part-time until 1970 when the legislature passed a law that we had to reappraise the whole county, the whole state of Idaho. All the 44 counties had to reappraise their counties, and so I had to hire two men to help me. I hired Delyn Edstrom and Jay Davis, and we started to reappraise the county. It took us five years to get the job done and in the meantime Delyn quit for a better job, and I hired Eli Smith, and Eli and Jay did the whole thing and were still my deputies when I went out of office.

HF- Did the legislature provide guidelines, new guidelines for you by 1970 in appraising?

BS- Yes, the legislature gave the task commission the job of implementing the appraisal, and it took them a little while to figure all that out and give instructions to the counties. I remember they sent men up here to our county to help us to get oriented and know how to go about it. The idea was, I think the Legislature had was to have all the counties appraised on the same method and be somewhat of a uniform assessment when we got through with it. And that's why it was all done through the task commission. So we would all do it the same.

HF- Now there is a, and so these guidelines, one has to keep in mind I suppose the so called market value, a value which a willing seller would be willing to take for his property, and what a willing buyer would be willing to pay for that property. Then you go out and make your assessment, and your assessment is a certain percentage of the market value. Isn't that the way it works?

BS- That's the way it did, yes in those days. We had to do a lot of preliminary work before we started appraising because we had to do just like you say. We had to find out the costs and the selling price to of all the buildings around the city and Sugar City and all these little towns out here. And we had to kind of take an average in different districts for what property was selling for. Like here in town, we would have to take one section of town and figure out about the selling price was of buildings and lots in that section, and then we would have to take another section and do the same thing with it. We found that in some sections of the town, that property was selling for less money than it was in other parts of town. Then we had to do the same things with the buildings out in farming country, but we did appraise the farm land different. We appraised that on the income approach. We had to take the income and then it was quite a problem to figure all that out just what the income from a farm would be. We would be taking the three years previous, and figure out what the certain district like Plano, what their production was out there, say on wheat. And about what market price was during those three years, and then we had to come up with a price on the ground raised wheat and the same with potatoes and oats and corn and all those things and it was quite a thing. We finally got it all figured out and went ahead and reappraised the whole county and got along pretty good with it.

HF- Now the system of classification of the farm land or the ranch land or whatever, was important too, was it not? For example, classification and a high productive potato ground and we'll say grazing land, strictly grazing land, or waste land or whatever.

BS- That's right, that all had a bearing on the total value of the property alright. The sum of the dry farm way up on the bench wasn't appraised as high of course, because it's strictly dry farm. Down below on the lower foothills here they sprinkled on it, and that was another problem. To figure what the value of that land was. We had to take in consideration the selling price of their produce, but we also had to take in consideration the cost of pumping that water. The deeper the well of course, the more it cost to pump it, and it was a little problem to figure what was just and fair in that.

HF- On the farmstead itself I suppose the house, the dwelling home was considered differently than the outbuildings, the barn or sheds or whatever.

BS- Yes, we had an appraisal sheet we used on all those things. The house on the farmland, the farmstead was appraised just the same as a house in Rexburg or Sugar City or any place else. But the farm buildings and farm barn and all that had a special formula to figure out the value of those buildings.

HF- Do you fellows work in unison? Would two or three of you go out and work together on the matter?

BS- Well when we started this new appraisal, I bought a new Ford van and we made a little office in it. We fixed up a little place in there where we could put our pencils and our pens all that kind of thing and then we had to get an aerial photo. We had to get aerial photos of all the whole county. And we would have to take them along with us and then we would use those aerial photos and we would go up on the bench say for instance. And locate our little van on a certain section and then we would appraise that whole section. We knew where the section lines were and we would appraise that whole section and use those aerial photos in our little van to guide us.

HF- Did you have to arrange for the photograph work, or did you buy aerial maps that had already been done?

BS- Yes we bought them. We got them through the ASC committee out of Salt Lake. And we had to pay for those, the county did, and they proved to be a great help in appraising the county because we would have right before us the way the section looked. Then we could go out and walk over it and make a lot better appraisal of it.

HF- Now of course, all of the total land in Madison County would not be deeded land. You were only interested in the deeded land?

BS- That's right.

HF- You didn't have to worry about any public domain or forest area or BLM land or anything like that did you?

BS- No, just the taxable land is all we had to deal with.

HF- You know Ben, one of the great challenges that came to us all, including you as the assessor is when the Teton dam burst, North and East of Rexburg on June 5, 1976. What calamity did this bring to your office?

BS- It caused us to have a real problem in our office. The courthouse didn't get too much water in it. It didn't happen to destroy any of our files and we were sure thankful for that. The water got in the courthouse enough in our office to just get on the carpet and they had to replace the carpet, but all of our files are left intact and we weren't hurt too much that way, but soon after, oh I would imagine about a week after the flood a bureau reclamation man came in the office and he said that on the account of the great destruction that happened in the county that he would have to have a copy of all of our appraisal sheets of each piece of property that had been destroyed by the

flood or been hit by the flood. And that of course created a problem. He said he would like to send two women in the office with their copying machine and copy all of our records. And of course that was alright. I told him that that would be perfectly alright, that we would try to make room in there for him, but of course he really crowded us up. We were already crowded. But the two women came in and brought their copying machine and copied all of our records and it took them quite awhile. Garsh, that was quite a problem in the first place. Then we had to go out and survey that whole flood area because all that land had been hurt and a lot of the houses gone and we had to go out and take a good look. And just as quick appraisal of all the damage that had been done by the flood. And then the bureau man just kept coming in there of course all the time. They were sometimes four or five times a day. Some of those men would be in there, they would want to look at certain files and they wanted to check the files they had with ours and it really caused a problem and we were short of help anyway. But we got along pretty good, them men, they were good and realized what the problem was and we got along pretty good. There did happen to be a few that were dissatisfied with our appraisals. Some of them thought we didn't have their house, the square foot of their house big enough. Before the flood it was too big, and after the flood the house should have been bigger.

HF- Of course that made a big barrier on what saying they could present.

BS- Then there was a few people that had finished up their attic and they had a second story out of their house that we didn't know about till the time we appraised it was just an attic and nothing up there so it wasn't appraised and when the flood hit they had their attic all finished. Of course they wanted to be reimbursed for that attic and then we had to do a little figuring there to figure just how to please the Bureau of Reclamation on that. They weren't for sure they wanted to accept our suggestions on what to do on a situation like that, but we figured it out pretty good so that the people I think were pretty well satisfied and we encouraged the BOR to give them a little extra for the situation like that.

HF- Ben, I've heard of instances where the old chicken house that hadn't been used for years, suddenly became a pretty found chicken house and the old barn that was all dilapidated, why it was there and there should be a value placed on that and they came in and I guess some individuals were quite demanding weren't they?

BS- Yes they were and it caused quite a little commotion. But we didn't really have too much of that, but we did have some and we were able to work with the people and the BOR, that's the Bureau of Reclamation. I think we pretty well figured it out so they were happy about it.

HF- How would you evaluate the honesty and integrity of the people, generally?

BS- Well here in Madison County, I rate them very high. I was very well pleased with the program we had to go through. The flood and all that, you see the evaluation sheets we'd already sent them out and people knew what we had their evaluation at. And then the county commissioners had to set the levy that fall and there they were half the year they had their house and the farm was in good shape. And half the year it was all tore up. And so we had a meeting with the county commissioners, all of us in the courthouse and we decided that the only thing to do where the county needed the money and the school districts needed the money, was to ask the

people to pay that tax for the nineteenth for that year, 1976. Even though they didn't have their house for this last half year. We didn't have any kick about to speak of at all, people paid their taxes.

HF- For the full tax for 1976?

BS- For the full tax, and I thought that was a wonderful thing that we didn't have more commotion about that. Of course the next year then we had reappraised the property of the land where the house was gone; we had to take it off the tax roll. Some of them had a new house built and then we had to reappraise that. All-in-all the people in the county were very cooperative and very good to work with. I surely enjoyed my work there as assessor because the people were so cooperative.

HF- Now there is a rule, is there not about real property. If a home isn't in existence on the property, by the first or second Monday of January, then that property, and say that home is built two or three months later. For that whole year that property is not listed.

BS- That's right.

HF- It has to exist as of January, second Monday of January isn't it?

BS- That's right. That's the policy we followed up all the time I was in the assessor's office. And we didn't attempt to put a, if a house was half finished on the second Monday, we didn't attempt to put it on the tax roll at all because we would had to went out and reappraised it. We just didn't have time to reappraise everything twice.

HF- Now, Ben, how about those homes that were just damaged by the flood. Did you go out and determine the damage? What the amount of damage there was?

BS- Yes, we went out and reappraised every one of those that were damaged and that they thought, well on the second Monday of January of 1977, if a house was really damaged so they couldn't live in it, but they intended to fix it up, we took it off the tax roll for that year. Then when they got it fixed back up and moved into it. We reappraised it and put it back on the tax roll. We tried to be fair about that with the people that had really a lot of damage.

HF- And I suppose there were some instances when the BOR appraisers determined that the house that's damaged, maybe it was damaged so badly sometime in the middle of year or something why they decided to give or put an R on it, a red R wasn't it?

BS- Something likes that.

HF- What was that, was that a red R? Meaning that it was to be destroyed.

BS- Yea, I think so as I remember. But we took it off the tax roll if they condemned it. And if we had already had it on there and it was condemned then we would have to have it taken off the tax roll by the commissioners.

HF- Was it quite a large portion of the farm land in Madison County damaged by the flood and had to be reassessed?

BS- As far as the whole counties concerned it wasn't a big percentage because of the Rexburg bench.

HF- This is side two continuing the interview with Benjamin E. Summers pertaining to the years that he was the assessor of Madison County. We were talking about your years as bishopric, as a bishop of the Burton ward who had been your predecessor as bishop of that ward?

BS- Bishop James A. Johnson was a...

HF- Did he serve though quite a few years?

BS- He served thirteen years and I was his second counselor all those years.

HF- You know, it's amazing, in those years the bishops were asked to serve a lot longer than they are today.

BS- That's right the Bishop ... Bishop Johnson was with Bishop Conrad Walz and he served for twenty-nine years.

HF- How do you spell that name? k..o..n..

BS- C o n r a d.

HF- Conrad Walz.

BS- Yes.

HF- Conrad Walz.

BS- Yes.

HF- And now who followed you then in the bishopric?

BS- Emo Maith was next bishop.

HF- Now when you ceased being bishop did you ah continue to remain in the ward?

BS- Yes, yes I remained in the ward, was active...the bishop Maith only stayed in about four and a half years about like I did and then they released him and put Charles Tomason in there and decided to put the Independence Ward and the Burton Ward together; make one ward out of them. And Charles had been born in the Independence Ward and now he lived in Burton Ward

so I think that includes the Stake Presidency to put him in as bishop to try to bring harmony between the two wards.

HF- Charles Tomason.

BS- Yes.

HF- T...O...M...

BS- Tomason.

HF- S...O...N, Charles Tomason.

BS- Yea, and then they started to build a new chapel, and ah as they built the chapel they ah I was put in as chairman of the finance committee so you see I was still active, ha, ha.

HF- And that was quite an undertaking and a task wasn't it?

BS- Yes it was because we didn't know how we would ever build that building but ah Silo Spaulding wound up being the bishop when the ward, the building was finished and he told me the day that he got the last bill for the ward that he had the money to pay it and so the building was paid for just as soon as it was finished. We felt good about that.

HF- During all these years you were running the farm, the old farm on which your father and mother had homesteaded. Where was this located?

BS- Well this is located about six miles south west of Rexburg here and about a mile west of the Burton church house, it's built there. And ah of course I was born there and I lived till I graduated to the eighth grade in nineteen...what was it? Nineteen...sixteen I think it was. Then we moved to Rexburg where I could go to the Ricks Academy there for four years and during that time though the Ricks Academy became Ricks Normal College and then it became Ricks College. So when I graduated from Ricks I graduated from Ricks College. I have a diploma that says Ricks College on it although I just went to high school and have never been in college and I never had any college education. But, that's quite a thing I've told a lot of people I've graduated from Ricks College back there in 1920 and they think I was a college student. Ha, ha.

HF- Well isn't that something. Now um was this quite a large farm on which you were born?

BS- It was one hundred and sixty acres that my folks homesteaded. While I lived there I became the owner of the place and ah and then I added eighty acres on the north that I got from Gutlet Weber and then I got another sixty acres from Danny Hillam on the south side of the place so it about turned into a pretty good sized place.

HF- All under cultivation was it?

BS- Well there was some waste the slough ran through there the Texas Slough ran through it and things like that of course the road took a chunk of it so we didn't exactly have the full three hundred acres. But we had some good farming ground and during that time I lived on there during the thirty-six years that I farmed the place. I scraped the whole thing except ten acres. Leveled it all up and redone the irrigation system and when I left the farm and sold it to my son Ross in 1970. Ah, he had a lot better farm than I did when I started. It was one of the finest farms in Burton now because it was all... it was pretty rough when I and my father homesteaded it there was a swale that runs digs eye right down through the place and it had a lot of grass on it and I think that's why my father homesteaded it because he had a lot of grass for his cows, cattle. But when I got it and tried to irrigate it then I discovered it was pretty rough and it needed some leveling up and ahh when Lotmans brothers got to scraping around here with their big carry-alls. Why I was able to get them into our field and we leveled up practically the whole thing there.

HF- Now there was quite a lot of that during those years, what in the late thirties maybe?

BS- Yea, that's right.

HF- Middle thirties, late thirties.

BS- And forties?

HF- And the early forties.

BS- Yeah.

HF- And it was about this time of ah the century that electricity was made available too, wasn't it?

BS- That's right, we didn't have it. I moved on the farm after I was on my mission in 1926. We just had the coal oil lamps at that time and we didn't get the electricity for about five or six years later when the electricity came down that way.

HF- One of your neighbors...Jensen...what was his first name?

BS- Wilford.

HF- Wilford Jensen had a lot to do with getting the REA in there.

BS- You bet he did. He spent a lot of time and he was a real faithful promoter of that project. We were on the Utah Power and Light. Sammy Howell finally got a, he had money enough to help the Utah Power and Light get the electricity down to his place and he was a little west of me so when he got it, then I was able to get it over to our house too. So, we were really pleased to get the electricity. That was a wonderful experience.

HF- Has the farm always had a good water right to it Ben?

BS- Yes, my father was especially careful about that, he had thirty shares of water in the Texas Slough Irrigation Canal Company and that was plenty of water for our farm. And then when I bought the Weber eighty, I got another nineteen shares with that and then I had forty-nine shares and then when I bought the Danny Hill place, I think I got eight more shares, so we had plenty of water.

HF- Did this water have it's origin out of the south fork of the Snake River?

BS- Yes, south fork and well it was all natural flow water which was a good decree. And then our canal company did buy some land in the Palisades reservoir when it was built and that was owned by the canal company, but it was available to all people that owned shares in the canal company.

HF- Now you didn't have or you weren't under the Fremont-Madison irrigation?

BS- No. No, weren't under that. We were out of their district.

HF- And first of all of course you diverted water through the canals and into your ditches and it was kind of a surface pushing the water around on your place.

BS- Yes, we surface irrigated all the land there. In fact everybody in Burton, at that time, used surface irrigation. But now, I noticed some of them using sprinklers down there.

HF- But there are still a lot of them that use the surface?

BS- Yes.

HF- As we close, I want to have the record to show your family of the first marriage. Your children and so forth.

BS- Ok, we had seven children before my wife passed away. Earl was the oldest, then Lois, John, Ross, Lyle, Paul, and Leah. Leah was eight months old when her mother died. And then 5 years later I was previous to get me another wife and that was June Hendricks Davies. She was a widow, and she had three children. And that was Arlos, Don, and Connie Davies. And so we had a family of ten children and I had my one daughter Lois was married at the time we got married, and so we only had nine children, but everyday we sat up to the table and there was eleven of us around there and it developed into quite a challenge for my new wife.

HF- Wouldn't that be a tremendous undertaking?

BS- You bet. She was very good. She had come from a big family and seemed to know how to handle a bunch of kids and we got along fine.

HF- And you continued to live on the farm of course?

BS- Yes, we lived there until 1963 when we moved up to Rexburg.

HF- Did the thought of becoming the assessor prompt the move or what prompted the move?

BS- Yes I'll go back and say this much that in 1962, Wesley Stewart was a member of the Republican central committee here in Madison County came into our place and asked me if I wouldn't like to run for assessor. He said that they didn't have anybody to run on the Republican ticket. I was so flabbergasted, I didn't know. I knew that my work was getting pretty hard for me; I was 60 years old at that time. I told him that I would like to talk it over with the wife and kids. We did talk it over and decided that maybe I would try it. That's when I first decided to run for assessor was in the spring of 1962 and then of course I was elected on the primary election and again in the fall on the general election and you might know that I was quite surprised that I made it through the election.

HF- And you moved into town after that then?

BS- Yes we moved into town in June of 1963 after I had the job as assessor. And we lived there ever since. It's 170 South 1st West, Rexburg.

HF- And all your family of course is married.

BS- All of them are married and have families and all seem to be getting along pretty good.

HF- And how many grandchildren do you have?

BS- The last count, we had 43 grandchildren, and 33 great-grandchildren.

HF- Isn't that remarkable.

BS- So our families large when we count all of our in-laws too. We have a family reunion every year around the last part of July or the first part of August and we have over a hundred members of the family.

HF- Are there other Summers—S-U-M-M-E-R-S—in the upper valley that are not related to you?

BS- Yes, there is a Mrs. Summers that runs the postery on 2nd West. She spells the same, but we can't find any relationship.

HF- Now Roy and those fellows are relatives?

BS- They are my nephews.

HF- Then there a lot of S-O-M-M-E-R-S?

BS- Yes, you know my wife's sister married Ed Sommer and so now through her we are relation to that bunch.

HF- And so it goes, it has been a pleasure working and being with you this morning Ben. Now as we close are there any comments that you would like to make to your family?

BS- Well, to my family I hope they'll all be good faithful Latter-day Saints and good citizens of this good country. I love this country and I love my church and I hope that we can continue on to be an asset to this community. I appreciate the fact Harold that your trying to collect all these histories and the time and effort into it. I congratulate you for doing that, and I'm proud to be a part of it.

HF- Thank you so much Brother Summers.