Harold Forbush- College in the development and promotion of agriculture in the Upper Snake River Valley. This is the title of this interview which I am making with Doctor Jerry J. Halterman, H-A-L-T-E-R-M-A-N.

Jerry Halterman- That is correct.

HF- Who is the Chairman of Agricultural Division at Ricks College and this interview is being conducted here at Rexburg in my home on the 3rd day of January this brand new year of 1981. Doctor Halterman, I so much enjoyed your talk as you presented it to the Rexburg Rotary Club some weeks ago that I suppose that this was the motivating factor or the reason why we are here today and I in essence would like to have you review with me for our Historical Society, Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society, the great program that Ricks is involved in, in agriculture and something about the history, etc. And so we will go into that program. I noted from the news item, I think this is correctly stated, that with the selection of a John Brock by our incoming President of the United States, Mr. Brock is to be designated as the Secretary of Agriculture and I believe he is number 21 in the history of the Department of Agriculture of USDA organized in 1862. Now I hope that’s a correct statement to which I got from the radio the other day. But anyway we know that this is a primarily an agricultural area. Our economy is based on agriculture and the production of potatoes, grains, alfalfa hay, pasture, and things of this nature in this Upper Snake River Valley and I guess the big cash crop is potatoes, the famous Idaho potato has its raising right here in the Upper Snake River Valley where we have the proper soil, the right climate, and I guess the abundance of water. Now I’ve given kind of a preface to what we are going to be talking about. Tell me a little about what Ricks College’s role is now, what are they doing in the area of agriculture as of the being of 1981?

JH- Thank you Judge Forbush for the opportunity to meet with you and reflect upon some of what I consider salient and pertinent points related to the delivery of education by the Division of Agriculture at Ricks College. We are excited about the recent developments by the College to upgrade and intensify its potential to deliver appropriate instructions in various thrust of agriculture and so during the past four years especially as intensified efforts have been made to redirect programmatic efforts. The results are gratifying. Included at the present time in 1981 we find heavy emphasis being placed upon curriculums which offer occupational preparation in four specialized fields of Agriculture. These have been titled, “Beef Production Management, Farm Crops Management, Horsemanship and Stable Management, and Landscape Horticulture.” You will note that the word management has been used to characterize these programs and indeed the central focus of entire effort is to provide young men and young women with what we call the “cutting edge” of occupational competency so that they might take their place in the management stream and upon
completion of perhaps five or seven years of service to any particular business or enterprise, they indeed would qualify for a top management appointments. And so upon the completion of the five semester program in these specialized occupational curriculums that associate degree in each of those fields is awarded. I would suggest that approximately 90% of our instructional effort today is focused upon this specialized programmatic thrust. We ought not over look this time the efforts that are being made to assist those students interested in a general agriculture approach, those who might want to return to the farm with a fairly general background, those students who have an interest in transferring to another institute of higher education pursuing baccalaureate, masters, and Ph. D. degrees. And so for these students we offer curriculums in general agriculture resulting in the earning of the associate in arts and sciences degree and we are anxious that such students be satisfied, that the needs be met of those students.

HF- Now would a 90% number of those involved in agriculture be pursuing this five semester program in one of these departments would you say?

JH- Yes that’s almost a numerical ratio as well, not only is it the amount of emphasis given but the number of students reflect about that.

HF- Now let’s see, is this 20 months?

JH- Yes this is five semesters where as the standard two year curriculum, you see, is reflected in four. We ask for an additional semester primarily devoted to what we call an “occupational internship,” experience, a time during which the student leaves Ricks College and is placed under an employment setting, still supervised by our instructor.

HF- Kind of a works studies program.

JH- It’s a works study program but the emphasis is upon education in an occupational setting, minimizing simulation and of course maximizing real world of work environments.

HF- When is this semester, this actual experience, is that towards the end of the 20 month program?

JH- No.

HF- Not necessarily then.

JH- No we have found that mid stream is about the most optimum place for this to be located. Some of our programs, for examples the beef students, we find it necessary for them to leave in March of their first year with us. You see in order to get our students the experience that they need with calving operations, they need to leave when the cows in Idaho and the Mountain States are calving and yet we know that there are some summer activities that are very important for these young people to experience so we split that internship but the horsemanship and the landscape nursery, they leave Rexburg and fulfill
their internship requirements during the months of May, June, and July but it has proving to be so very beneficial to have these students return all excited about the world of work and then it makes a great deal of difference in the commitment and the dedication and the base upon which they complete that additional year of schooling. It’s probably the most meaningful element of the technical program that is the internship.

HF- What physical facilities then has Ricks College provided for the conducting of this program?

JH- During the past five years the Church has endowed our division richly with some of the finest facilities to be found in the United States. The new plant science building, the new agricultural mechanics building, the livestock center with an indoor riding area and attached horse stable, represent an expenditure of three and a half or nearly four million dollars.

HF- The total of them?

JH- The total of them and this together you see with the 130 acre farm out five miles west of town where the livestock center is located and the 60 or so acres of agricultural land which we have been given responsibility and we have called this our Hill view form here on the College campus. You see that approaches nearly 200 acres for us to use as land laboratories for our students and so all together, you see, we have been provided with a very extensive base for facilities and resources in material way.

HF- Now Doctor, let’s take each one of these as you would like to do so of the four areas and describe the facilities as now exist with the productivity, the capability, what they will do for the students and so forth.

JH- The beef program is designed to provide education and practical experience to those students who are interested in ranching with a major emphasis of course directed toward beef production. The basis for our curriculum in this program was derived from interviews with ranchers throughout the Western states and even into Canada and some in the Midwest but the curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of ranchers as identified during these interview sessions. Three or four major core areas have been derived, number 1: we were advised to offer a very strong instruction in practical veterinary medicine skills, number 2: a strong business management of a ranch operation was strongly suggested, number 3: ranch managers and operators need to be fairly proficient in agricultural mechanics, that is how to maintain and service and repair and operate ranch machinery and equipment. And then two other areas include number 4: the farming experience with practical emphasis upon forage and grain production, of course, feed stuffs that are used in the production of beef animals, and number 5: let’s make sure that our students are well prepared in animal nutrition. And so over one half of our classroom time is spent in laboratories and lecture exercises at the Ricks College Livestock Center, previously mentioned as being located approximately five miles west of the city of Rexburg, where corrals and stables and barns and sheds and pens have been provided for our use. The actual operational experiences for and which each student
participates in a feed lot project with each student having the experience to feed out six or seven or eight steers and each student having the responsibility to assist in actual calving, insemination and breeding programs with our cow/calf herd and so with the actual hands on exposure, which these students receive, they are ready to go to work and upon the termination of our program here we’re finding that these managers of beef ranchers are in great demand and we have had excellent placement with these students earning commendable wages upon the completion of our program and that’s pretty much the beef program.

HF- Yes Doctor not too many weeks ago I happened to be with another person out there touring that area, and pursue into my interest, and noted that they were putting the final touches on the area where an animal could be brought in, slaughtered, and the meat from the animal wrapped and prepared. Is this really going to be a part of the facility also, part of the training?

JH- It’s important for students to be able to see on a first hand basis the product which they are concerned with providing to the house wife and so to reinforce the instructions that are given regarding efficiencies of conversion, quality, yield, cut out, and all these factors that influence the pocket book, the amount of money that ranchers and feeders are up to secure with the finished product. We feel the need to have the students become very familiar with not only the wholesale cuts of a carcass but also the retail and for that reason we have provided them with a complete meat processing laboratory.

HF- Just before we leave this particular department, how much time do you suppose or has it been calculated that the average student would spend per day or per week, or whatever, in this rather intensive program as compared with another student at Ricks College in a general curriculum area?

JH- Our students in the beef program are in class, in a classroom setting, either in lecture or laboratory, on the average of 28 to 34 hours a week. This is probably 8 or 10 hours more per week than the average student would be in a general studies type program on the campus.

HF- And in addition if they have this project taking care of a pen of steers and so on, they’re going to have to spend morning and night in some service besides this, right?

JH- Indeed and that’s true. We have just simply found it necessary to indicate to our students that if they are interested in our programs there aren’t very many other kinds of things they’ll have time to engage in and so they make a pretty heavy commitment to the technical program once they are enrolled.

HF- Now maybe I should wait until all four departments are covered but my question really is for the student expense wise how does his enrollment compare with an enrollee in a general academic work?
JH- The tuition and laboratory fees are the same and so of course our program has one additional semester and so there is additional tuition for that semester that is payable to the college. Students are requested to buy the steers which they feed out and of course there is the potential for profit and loss there. Profits are, once they pay the college for the use of the facilities, we keep it at a nominal fee, they can stand to gain whatever money that derives from that experience or they might experience a shortage and loss which has been the case last year for example, when the prices for beef cattle were quite low.

HF- Could you give me a round figure of what it would cost a young man going into the beef program, the twenty month period? Just strictly the registration and fees?

JH- He would need to set aside about $2500 dollars for tuition and fees for that five semester program.

HF- Would that be comparable on that department with the other three departments?

JH- Yes it is.

HF- It’s pretty much comparable?

JH- Yes, very much the same.

HF- That gives us something to look at. Alright now let’s go on into the second department that you would choose to talk about.

JH- Let’s focus on the department of landscape horticulture. This department is the oldest of the four having been established in 1976 and probably required let input to initiate the other three. Doctor Kim Black who is the chairman of this department was a member of the faculty of the Biological Sciences and chose to become affiliated with the agriculture unit and give direction and leadership to the development of this program and so he was the one who conducted the interviews and provided the direction for the establishment of the various courses in the curriculum and give general direction to it. This program is a rather broadly based program as we consider the field of landscape horticulture. The landscape horticulture field is comprised of those specialized fields of study that relate to greenhouse operational management, to floral design, a vegetable production, to fruit production, landscape contracting, landscape design, turf, and lawn care and management, arboreal culture, the study of trees and their care and management, nursery production, and the care of nursery stock. And so, as well as garden center management so you see a very very broad field of study under the umbrella of landscape horticulture. At Ricks College the decision was made to title the specialized degree landscape nursery with the emphasis in three major core areas, plant identification and culture, design and installation of landscapes, and business management skills and so a student may choose to give additional emphasis beyond these three core areas towards becoming more specialized in turf and grasses or trees or upon greenhouse operation and management and the curriculum has sufficient flexibility as to provide for that specialization. In addition, as for other departments in the division there is a fairly heavy emphasis upon
the mechanical skills, that is the care and repair and operation of the equipment and machinery that are used in the specialized fields and so the students are provided here on the Rexburg campus the opportunities to follow up on their lectures and practicum’s, those laboratory settings that are heavily oriented toward green house as well as what we call the field demonstration plots which are in place on the campus. Included in those demonstration plots are extensive planning’s and developments for a small fruits, for vegetables, for vines, and bush fruits, strawberries, and raspberries, and many of those kinds of crops. And so we are attempting to provide the students with a hands-on experience regardless of the direction that they might be moving in their interest in landscape horticulture.

HF- Now from this particular department wouldn’t the people, the husband and the wife who are interested in gardening and plant greenhouse facilities benefit locally, what can be grown, this particular type of strawberry or a raspberry plant. Will that grow and develop well here in the Upper Snake River Valley? Is some of these things that are being done in the laboratory going to be transferred over to me so that I can get a better plant that I can produce? Is this happening here for our valley people?

JH- Yes, we have included in our role and mission that effort to provide the practitioner, the home owner, the local farmer, the rancher, with information as best we demonstrate it and develop it and share through demonstration field days, conferences, public releases, newspaper articles, and the like and so we have excepted this as one of our viable activities in the academic area that we feel the need to develop and of course they go hand in hand with what we are doing in technical and the general agriculture fields but we would want to say to the folks in the Upper Snake River Valley based on our experience for our low temperature hardiness here are some root stocks that we know will do well here and here are some that will know and we have learned that too. We have several new plantings that are exciting in terms of generating this kind of information.

HF- Now I personally have gone up there to the plant science building or greenhouse, or I guess that’s one of them, and selected various tomato plants that Doctor Black has suggested, or let’s see, Mr. Wilson.

JH- Alan Wilson.

HF- I have chatted with him and there’s still another one.

JH- And Jim Long?

HF- And Jim Long about various plants and they’ve allowed me to take some and try them out for the summer and so. Now I have enjoyed this, to go through that area in the early spring when everything else is frozen and see those lovely plants being grown up there, oh, I’m visibly impressed. I go around and feel them and they are very fine about letting me do these things.
JH- We’re excited. We think that that’s one of the little extracts that we simply have to do for the folks in our region and we think that there’ll be a lot more of it that’s made possible for us as we move along, not only in the landscape horticulture but in the farm crops and beef, dairy, and these other areas which we are familiar and doing something about. So that’s sort of a look at the second department. Now a third department and its program, the farm crops management department. The chairman of this unit is Doctor John Walker, a specialist in the field of herbicides and weed control. Doctor Walker came to Ricks College from the Ohio State University where he had served several years at the time that I was the Chairman of Ohio State so I knew Doctor Walker before he left us back there. His father however, of interest historical is Rudger Walker, born here in Rexburg just not very many rods from this residence in which we are located at the moment down in the residence across the street from the court house, kiddy cornered across there. That’s the old Walker residence and John Walker’s father was born there and of course Rudger Walker was the Dean of Agriculture for many years at Utah State and then again down at BYU.

HF- That’s interesting.

JH- So kind of a historical note but the farm crops department focuses it’s attention upon those aspects of crop production which relate to nutrition, soil fertility, irrigation, moisture, plant and soil relations upon weeds and herbicides and chemical reactions of the soil upon insect and pest control, upon planting and the irrigation scheduling for this area under varying conditions, upon harvesting, storage of cereal, field and forage crops. And of course there are many boys from this area who are intending to farm with dad or be involved and included in the development of family farm type operations and we have had excellent enrollments from the South East Idaho Community in the farm crops program and these boys are graduates now are back on the farms and putting into practice those management skills and abilities with which they were provided and equipped in our program and it’s thrilling to see the difference that they are making as they work with dad.

HF- Do you get personal testimonies from dad how grateful they are that they sent their boy up here and what new things are taking place, what improvements?

JH- This is one of the real satisfactions that we have derived from our involvement in education because you know very frankly through the years dads have been reluctant to look to quote “formal educational institutions” as being capable of teaching their boy anything that would be useful back on the farm and I would say that it maybe, that isn’t ill founded. Institutions generally in the educational field have been suspect but I am proud to say that with our technical curriculums, the occupational emphasis, and our emphasis on the applied technologies, approved technologies, we are winning dads and families and they are some of our strongest supporters because they are coming in and saying if you can do that for my boys, now help me and so it enhances the value and the strength of our demonstration field days and our conferences for the adults of our community and so it’s a joint effort that’s paying off very handsomely.
HF- Let me digress just a moment Doctor, now is if so that you do have these fields in the various departments where people, dads can come in as well as other interested persons in agriculture and look and see, show that you kind of have a day of show and tell.

JH- Yes we do. We offer field days, at least one per year and in some areas two times each year and we’ve had excellent attendance in this department of which we [are] now speaking, the farm crops management, Doctor Walker has had demonstration field days during the past four years demonstrating techniques and practices that relate to minimum tillage, the conservation of energy, and soil, and moisture, increase production, and the control of weeds through appropriate use of herbicides and other cultural practices and these field days have been very warmly received and we see many of the practices that are advanced during those field days being adopted and used out on the farms. We have now transported our demonstrations from our farms out and for example, this last year we had demonstration plots amounting to over 300 acres with more than 20 cooperators in the Upper Snake River Valley and so using our equipment for planting with what we call minimum or no tillage and this has been a very heart warming involvement.

HF- Has the county agents in the local counties responded to these programs?

JH- Yes we have been working with the folks from the Idaho Extension Service and they have been very supportive here in this area of our efforts.

HF- Excellent. Now your laboratory of course would be the sum 200 acres?

JH- That is true, for the students in this program. And the gravity of practical experience can be reflected for example in the application of an herbicide or a pesticide or the seeding of a crop. It’s just essential for us to have students demonstrate to us before we as a college can certify these students to the industry that they indeed can function properly, the risk is just simply too great to destroy a crop or to forego a successful planting to a student who might not know how to calibrate a drill or the operate it correctly, or to calibrate a sprayer and operate it correctly in a timely way and so that is the heavy emphasis that is given our laboratory studies, giving the student the opportunity to demonstrate to us after he has been properly taught and demonstrated that he too now has acquired those skills and competencies.

HF- Seems to me like in this area of cropping one of the great needs of the future that our students have got to learn and farmers put into practice is find new ways of controlling weeds and insects and so forth without the use of these bad effects, side effects, of pesticides and herbicides and so forth, when our bird life is killed and the other deleterious situations arise from the over usage of this. Is research being done to maybe be able to control other than pesticides?

JH- Yes we’re mindful of the misuse and the unhappy circumstances that have derived from the misuse of some of these very potent and powerful chemicals and yet we know the importance that they bare to the successful production of crops. We have made arrangements with the State of Idaho to come to Ricks College each year and to allow our
students in this program to examine and qualify for the certificates that are offered and under the control of the Idaho Department of Agriculture so that all of us feel comfortable that they know how and they have been certified as qualified to apply these chemicals and most of our students qualify for 6-8 of the 10 or so certificates that are available.

HF- I see. I wasn’t aware of the fact that they actually do have a control by issuing certificates, in other words, you have no right to really use a lot of these things unless you are certified.

JH- That is correct and we are anxious for our boys to qualify themselves and they all do. We just made it a part of our testing program and the Department of Idaho Agriculture people come to our campus and administer those tests as a part of our offering.

HF- Well now I guess we are ready to proceed with the fourth area, or the fourth department that of horsemanship.

JH- Horsemanship and stable management, a program that by title and content you see is not a productive type, there is no food produced, there is some question as to whether it is agriculture but as it has been interpreted and programmed here at Ricks College, we are anxious to provide young people with that interest the competency to train horses and to ride them, to manage stables, to work with breeding programs, and do all that students have the opportunity to do as they take their places on ranches, and on farms, as well as of course the formal horse world itself where the stables characterize, the training stables, riding stables, rental stables, breeding stables and all such kinds of business ventures as these.

HF- Now in this area would some of our boys maybe through this program aspire to become involved with the Kentucky Derby, maybe Santa Ana and some of these other places where they race horses and have their stables and so forth for the management of race horses, are we talking about this area a little bit?

JH- That might be an outcome of a genuine interest that would be developed and built upon, you know, students might gravitate in that direction. We do not include the race animals in our stable at the present time, the Western Training Techniques characterize the instruction that is provided at the moment and yet I know that with some adaptation a young man who has learned a great deal about horses in a western setting could modify those and move toward the race track type of effort but most of our students find placement in the stables throughout the intermountain west and the south, especially in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas, where the horse world of course booms very large.

HF- What, showing horses?

JH- Showing horses, training horses to perform western type activities, roping, cutting horse, trail horse, as well as halter horses in competition, and then of course quite a few
of our students are going into the breeding stables. We have a very fine breeding emphasis in our program as well.

HF- With quarter horses?

JH- Yes the quarter horse is the breed that we have centered most of our work around.

HF- Do you have some good breeding stock in this area?

JH- Yes we do. We have some very good breeding stock and we’ve determined to build our herd around the quarter horse breed and we are now standing a stallion for public use as well as breeding most of our mares to this male. In addition to that we have found it possible to take our mares to some of the quality stallions whose services have been donated to us by owners.

New tape

HF- Dealing with Ricks College’s role in improving agriculture in the Upper Snake River Valley and I’m interviewing Doctor Halterman who is the Division Chairman of this area at Ricks. Going on with the interview we are talking about the department of showmanship and so forth of horses and I’m finding this very interesting. Ok, Doctor, if you want to continue.

JH- We’re anxious for our students in this program to, upon graduation, to make a meaningful contribution, especially in the Idaho and intermountain communities through their ability to bring to a very higher level of technical competency. In addition, one of the outgrowths that we want from the program is the improvement of the quality of stock in the area and we were importing some very fine blood lines and breeding stock into the area and as a result of our fraternities and sales we are hoping to infuse the region with improved kinds of animals. We want our graduates to be able to train young and rean horses. We want them to be able to teach riding, to care for equipment, to use the practical veterinary skills that are necessary in good herd management, keeping of records as particularly important. We want them to know how to promote riding and riding events including shows and contest and clinics and perform all of the important activities which revolve upon a stable manager.

HF- What physical facilities does Ricks College have to carry out this aim and purpose?

JH- The major facility for stabling horses is a 66 stall horse barn recently constructed and included in the buildings which were dedicated by President Benson when he was here in September. This is located adjacent to the large area building. The area building includes of course an indoor area, temperature controlled, a sizeable dimension, measuring a hundred and twenty feet wide and two hundred and fifty feet long and so we are able to perform all of the different kinds of horsemanship and showmanship type activities that are encountered in the horse world in this very fine arena and so we look to these students for a great deal of importance that they will bring to bear upon the horse world. We know
that there are many and diverse fields of interest and kinds of businesses that you find in
the horse world and we know that we couldn’t possibly attempt to address more than just
a bit of what we are doing in the western training world.

HF- In the Upper Snake River Valley here in Idaho, Doctor Halterman, have there been
many that have gone into this area of raising horses for showmanship and things of this
nature?

JH- Yes.

HF- There are quite a few of them?

JH- There are quite a number and more and more stables are being established all of the
time. It’s one of the very rapidly expanding areas of agriculture in the west, indeed in the
United States. The area of horse production and management exceeds all other
developments in agriculture in terms of numbers of animals, numbers of personnel, and
values as we collected in dollars in these kinds of expansion efforts.

HF- Well, for example, here in the Upper Snake River Valley do you have people that are
catering to the production and rearing of big animals like the Belgium and the
Clydesdale?

JH- Yes, that’s an intriguing area and we have been counseled to include driving, for
example, and harnessing and hitching as important adjuncts of our program and those are
going to be included in the curriculum.

HF- Actual work animals who would maybe someday have to replace the mechanical.

JH- Or stand in support.

HF- That’s very interesting. Now who heads this department?

JH- At the present time I serve as the acting Chairmen of the Department of
Horsemanship and Stable Management. The other faculty members, presently in
department include Dean Kunz, K-U-N-Z.

HF- K-U-N-Z, that’s a familiar spelling of the Kunz’s in the Upper Snake River Valley.

JH- Yes and he is a member of the family coming to Rexburg from Bear River Country.

HF- Right, Right.

JH- Lee Wynne, W-Y-N-N-E, the other member of our faculty comes to Idaho originally
from Oklahoma, a convert to the church and a very accomplished writer and trainer using
the English techniques. So he is more strongly oriented toward that type of training but it
works out very well for us as we have made use of him in Western. Ken Geddes is the
other member of the department and he serves as the technician of horse the horse enterprise for Ricks College and his home is in Preston and has provided us strong support in the horse enterprise project that we have.

HF- Is this area of the four perhaps the most recent to be actually developed and that?

JH- Yes that is true. It is the most recent and we have had only one formal graduating class from this curriculum. We had a pilot program that we conducted sort of as a trial run and we had five or six graduates from that program.

HF- I’m guessing of the four departments from this department would the fewest number be graduated?

JH- Yes that is true at the present time.

HF- Will you be anticipating the presentation of shows out there to the public?

JH- Oh yes, we’re doing that now.

HF- I see.

JH- Yes that is being done now; it’s gradually increasing in size and inclusion of the claim of events that public people will want to participate in.

HF- Now in all these departments under your division of agriculture, do you have news releases, a press where by you can share your findings and make announcements and disseminate this to the various agriculture interest in these areas throughout the Upper Snake River Valley or the West?

JH- Yes, Denton Burton, who is the public relations specialist and his office of communications on campus, is very active in representing us to the public so all of our relations are canalised through the office which he controls. Now of historical significance, I think, Judge Forbush, would be at least an indication that approval has been provided Ricks College by the Board of Trustees to offer an associate degree in dairy production management and we will start that with students and facility in place August of 1981 and so this year we will see the initiation of this new program.

HF- So that will be department number five?

JH- And that will be another unit and we will pattern out curriculum along the same lines as we have observed in forming these other units and that is the occupational preparation of young men to take their place in the dairy industry as mid-management type personal with the cognitive skills predominating in there qualification. So we are looking forward to that, we are excited, we have some very fine facilities that we can access and make use of that are at out livestock center now and we have a very high level of interest expressed
currently on the part of students and prospective candidates for the faculty position in dairy and so we are anxious to see this program move forward.

HF- Now this is kind of a loaded question but could you give me a rough estimate of the budget for these four departments? Your overall project?

JH- The annual operating budget figure perhaps would reflect, as well as any figure might, the size of our operation but it’s approximately $150,000 dollars, annually operating budget for just the department and that does not include personnel.

HF- That wouldn’t include the faculty and salaries?

JH- No these are just what we call operating budgets without personnel, so you see that’s the supplies and the equipment, the travel, the material that you need to conduct the educational program by the people who are in place.

HF- Has nothing to do then with the facility, the purchase, or the interest?

JH- No, the capital investments and the expenditures for capital outlay and all would be in addition to this.

HF- Let’s see, you indicated the capital investments of these programs?

JH- About three and a half million dollars.

HF- About three and a half million. That’s tremendous. How many members are there in the faculty?

JH- There are twenty-one members of what we call the faculty and staff of the division of agriculture, sixteen faculty members and five staff.

HF- And how many enrollees students?

JH- It varies a bit but we have this fall 265, what we call agricultural students with a heavy emphasis, you know, as a major type thrust in agriculture.

HF- Pretty much signed for the five semester program?

JH- Yes that is true.

HF- Well that’s been mighty interesting and this will give the listener to this tape an idea of just what the school is now doing and what it intends to do in this particular area. Now just for a few moments Doctor, let’s go back and see what Ricks College has done in the past and examine the history of its involvement well from wherever we can, we know that the college was begun in the Fall of 1888 and we know that there have been times when it’s had its real challenge to continue and so on but we’re all proud now of Ricks
College, this tremendous institution up here on the hill and what a fantastic impact it has on our community in the Upper Snake River Valley. Now if you’ll drive into that historical aspect.

JH- Historically we look back to the early 1900’s and agriculture in one form or another has been included in the curriculum with the attempt being made to address the needs that were particular to the day and to the setting and the structure of the college and as you know this has been reflected through what we would call now, kind of a high school type of organization, maybe the normal school, the commercial business type school, the four plus two, the community college type six year effort, the four year college and back to a two year setting and so with various patterns expressed through the years you would expect the role and mission would vary slightly but I have tried to capture these perhaps and maybe a logical patterns as they were reflected. From about the 1900 to just as the World War I period seemed to concluded, the 1917-1918 period we see reflected there a fairly limited number of offerings in agriculture, more of a few courses here and there to students who were primarily going back to the farm, included there would be most of them from here in the Rexburg area. In the 1917-1918 we see a tenure period initiated in which agriculture was given quite an impetus here. It was placed on a twelve month per year basis. A gentleman by the name of George Maughan whom many of our listeners would perhaps know because he was the head of this program for ten years. He piloted this new program, much of it was reflected in the federal legislation of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 in which the FFA program was initiated, the study project on the home farm was given official recognition and part of the school type program. Extension type courses were woven into the offerings by the school to the adult constituencies in that area and so under George Maughan…

HF- How do you spell his name?


HF- Thank you.

JH- So under his leadership we see quite an intense program being developed and moving right on through that period until 1927-28 and by the way taking note that the name of Ricks College being changed or given that name in 1923-1924. George Maughan resigned in 1927 and ’28 and so we entered sort of another period from 1928 through ’31, of course those were depression years, and those were tough and naturally would have an impact on the offerings by the school. Some of the men who had helped George Maughan were still in charge at that time, Ray Davis aided by Golden Bingham, B-I-N-G-H-A-M and Nephi Christensen gave leadership and direction to that work through that five year period and then in 1931…

HF- Now would they actually have taught classes specifically or just sort of supporting classes that would maybe be helpful in the agricultural area?
These were specific agricultural courses. Now that the instruction offered through this time was all pretty much done under the opuses of other departments, however? The department of agriculture even through this point had not been established and I’ll refer to that in a moment but we see coming on the scene in 1931 a gentleman who is still in our community Doctor Hugh C. Bennion. Now Hugh Bennion was made chairman of the Department of Biology and Agriculture, so at least it became a part of another department at that time and Hugh Bennion was involved in the development of agriculture from that point on for many years.

HF- And what date was that?

JH- In 1931 and ’32, the school year there. In 1938 and ’39, when Doctor Bennion took a leave of absences, a gentleman by the name of J. Wendell Stucki came to the college and of course his tenure extended over a longer period of time than anyone else had been affiliated with agriculture, indeed until 1977 and ’78. So the name of J. Wendell Stucki as an institution at Ricks College were as endeavors in agriculture and so through the ‘30’s and into the ‘40’s under Bennion and Stucki, the agriculture program moved forward, was becoming very well established, of course upon advent of World War II and by 1942 and ’43 the program was very much reduced, of course, but Brother Stucki continued to provide that leadership as best he could. Brother Bennion again had taken another leave of absence to work in defense and work on endeavors. Following the war, with Brother Stucki then at the helm, many of the men that are still on the faculty at Ricks College including Melvin Griffith, Laurence Pearson, Marian Forsize, Dan Hess, George Patterson, David Allen, and Sam Brewster, Ken Scott, have all had a part in teaching agricultural courses but it was Brother Stucki who stayed steady at the helm during that period. Now in 1976, February, the division of agriculture was established and the four departments to which we have earlier given description were included in this organizational structure and from that point on of course we have then sort of tied into the record as we have now rehearsed.

HF- President Henry B. Erying, of course, was here at that time. Through him and through others, I suppose, this historical thing came to be. Could you give me just a little background, or the record a little background as to what actually brought it about? What actually stimulated the creation of the department?

JH- Well I’m not entirely sure that I know all of the promptings and the motives and the movements but as I became involved in 1975, I recognized in President Erying and in 1975 I was engaged as a consultant to this group from the position that I was serving then at Ohio State University but I recognized in President Erying with his Harvard background and his experience at Stanford, in the business world a strong orientation to the practice of a profession, the hands on, and his, of course, had been primarily post-graduate and high level professional experience in the business world but he reasoned logically that with Ricks College being supported by the very broad strong agricultural base that it is and in the Idaho community, it could do no less than to, sort of, address itself to the needs of that manpower force and so he talked with me and had reported to him that we were doing some things in Ohio, similarly as we had done in California that
prepared young men and woman to go to work after two years of experience in higher education and he arranged a visit with me and he came to the Agricultural Technical Institute in Ohio.

HF- Where is that located?

JH- At Wooster, Ohio. W-O-O-S-T-E-R, where a branch of the Ohio State University is located and he liked what he say and determined to pattern the agricultural program, as it would be reoriented, similarly as we were organizing and directing our program in Ohio at that time. So that is about what I knew of how Erying’s thinking and I’m sure there’s a great deal more that goes with it, but I’m sure that his associations and interfacing with the brethren in the board of trustees and in the church in general gave a lot more impetus that I have not captured.

HF- Can it be assumed then, Doctor Halterman, through that contact and you serving as a resource to President Erying, would this explain why you were called as Chairman of the Division?

JH- Yes, it would. They extended the invitation to me in 1975 to come and join them at Ricks but my situation in Ohio was just such that it was a bit premature and I, in good conscience, could not accept the offer and at the time then the situation became much more acceptable which it did in 1978 and then I quit and took that position.

HF- And so you came to Ricks College to head the department, to head the division of agriculture in the fall of 1978.

JH- That is true.

HF- I see. What background have you had to qualify you for this very important assignment?

JH- My experience and affiliation with agriculture began in a little farming community of Parowan, in Southern Utah, where I had extensive boyhood and young adult experiences on irrigated and general crops farming as well as animal agriculture. My academic preparation included work at the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of California at Davis were I received my Masters and Baccalaureate Degrees. It included experience in teaching in the Vocational Agricultural program in California for several years and then moving to the Community College system in California and of course a state, which I think has no rival in terms of the excellence of its delivery and two year education and of course it has for many many years been involved in that kind of experience and so I was head of a department in a community college for eleven years in California. I conducted for the State Department of Education the first man power studies relating to the needs for and the educational preparation of agricultural technicians for all aspects of the agricultural community in California under the man power, development, and training acts the late ’50’s. Following that work I went to the Ohio State University, I completed my advance degree at the Doctorate level and then we turned to initiate and
build for the Ohio State University an institute of agriculture technology. It was called the Agriculture Technical Institute of the Ohio State University. Included in that experience was the opportunity to blue print the physical facilities, the campus, all of the academic curriculum, the student personal program, all of the budgeting, and, I was the only man on the project for three years, at which I guess time to blue print all that. I set in motion and was given excellent support by the state of Ohio and the University, there having during the eleven years that I was there, made available to me over eleven million dollars to set this new campus in place with a new instructional program and upon my departure, we had a new campus with an enrollment of 875 students in one of seventeen programs in agriculture, a facility and staff of a hundred and five people, fully accredited by North Central Association of Schools and Colleges and firmly established in the Agricultural community so I thought it was a good time to leave.

HF- I have to shake my head and wonder why did you come out here and I don’t think you have to tell me. It was basically the church of course and too, was it not?

JH- And my family.

HF- And your family.

JH- It’s violent, you know when you have attachments to your family, your children and your grandchildren and you just do not see them more than once a year or if even that often and I just, I just had to get closer to my family as well as the challenging work that represented quite in a different scale of course what I had accomplished out in Ohio. We had many of the same obstacles and goals and achievements which were possible here and of course that’s the work we are engaged in now, much the same.

HF- Now I left a little bit baffled as to what I should say, I just hope that there is not other time or attracting forces out there that will want you. I hope we could keep you, I hope people and I hope Ricks College Faculty and Administration appreciate your significance, your importance of you being here on campus. As we come to a close of this delightful experience, I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it. Let me ask you a few little personal questions about your family. First of all where were you born and when and who were your parents?

JH- I was the seventh child in a family of eleven born to my mother and father Robert L. Halterman and Bertha Butella Rasmussen in the little community in South West Utah, Parowan, P-A-R-O-W-A-N, Iron county. I was born May 7th, 1922, and have many brothers and sisters of course from that large family to whom I am closely associated.

HF- And to whom were you married and when and where?

JH- I married my next door neighbor Ruth Adams in Fort Lauderdale, Florida during World War II, May 16th 1944. That was a war time marriage of course and had all of the strains and trials and tribulations and rewards of course that come from that kind of a setting.
HF- Sounds as though this could have been a childhood sweetheart?

JH- And it was.

HF- Isn’t that interesting.

JH- We’ve had for our children, a son Robert, three daughters, Susan, and Debra, and Karen. All of these children, the first three are married and away from home and Karen has just completed her baccalaureate degree at BYU and she is hope with us temporarily.

HF- Now those who are married, do they live in the inner mountain west?

JH- Robert is a medical doctor with a practice in Prescott, Arizona. Susan lives in Rexburg, Idaho to our extreme delight with our three grandchildren and of course her husband…

HF- To whom is she married?

JH- She is married to Wayne Davis, a teacher in the Lincoln Elementarily School. Our middle daughter, Debra, is married to Jim Taylor and they live in Orem, Utah.

HF- Well isn’t that wonderful. You came out here to be with your family didn’t you? Well that’s tremendous. Well would you have any further comment to make in your role, aspiration, goals here to bring this agricultural division to its ultimate creation?

JH- Well I think Judge Forbush that our work will not have been completed at Ricks College until we can do more to follow the Prophet’s admonition to ‘lengthen our stride.’ We have set off in this direction, we feel good about our full time day program. The association that we have with the agricultural community as our practitioners out here in general in Idaho, we are going to do more and we need to do more. We have established a very strong working relationship, a linkage, an interface with the office of Central Welfare Services in Salt Lake City and have sponsored several short courses for managers of welfare production units, that is farms, dairy enterprises, and beef ranches and we are continuing to do that. We have established a linkage with the office of management of the cooperate farms of the church but out of it all comes the realization that until we’re helping individuals, personal family preparedness, you know move forward with greater vigor and I will not have been satisfied that we are answering our stewardship for educational leadership until, you know, that’s accomplished and we are going to work toward that end more and more as we move along.

HF- Now one more question and it’s comparing, I suppose, with what we have and we’ll have with what the Brigham Young University has. Now I understand that a few years ago, two or three or so, they created a chair, I think was it anyway, Brother Benson.

JH- They have the Benson Institute.
HF- Ok, tell me what that is and how it compares with what they’re doing and is there an overlap?

JH- Well I think not, no. The Benson Institute is intended for a vehicle enabling the church to reach out in several ways to do even basic research, certainly applied research, and to disseminate the information more to the total church constituencies throughout the world, they are moving into the Latin American countries, and South America, the Islands of the Pacific and so forth as they attempt to correlate and articulate, coordinate a great deal of the educational mission of the church and so I see them as a vehicle to enhance and help us to enrich our settings. We would not have that much of a resource and foundation on which to build and the BYU department and college in which agriculture is offered there, the College of Biological and Agricultural Sciences has a limited offering in their two year program and for those students who live nearby but their main emphasis is upon the Baccalaureate program and they have a very fine instructional program in agriculture and so again that’s quite different from what we’re doing and we see it as again another step on the continuum.

HF- As you’ve used the phrase ‘hands on’ practical is what we are trying to put across.

JH- That’s true.

HF- And to prepare our young men and woman to go forward. Do we have a few women involved in this program?

JH- Yes indeed, in horticulture and in horse, primarily in those two areas.

HF- Well this has surely been a delightful experience for me and I thank you so much for being willing to share.

JH- Thank you for inviting me to be here.