

TETON ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
Ricks College  
Idaho State Historical Society  
History Department, Utah State University

TETON DAM DISASTER

Stephen William Rogers

Interviewed by

Mary Ann Beck

June 23, 1977

Project made possible by funds from the

W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Idaho State Legislature through the  
Idaho State Historical Society and  
National Endowment for the Humanities

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY & RICKS COLLEGE

HISTORY DEPARTMENTS

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT THROUGH LOCAL HISTORY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWER AGREEMENT

In view of the historical and scholarly value of this information contained in the interview with Stephen William I, Mary Ann Beck (name, please print) Rogers (interviewer, print) knowingly and voluntarily permit the Milton R. Merrill Library at Utah State University, the David O. McKay Library at Ricks College, and the Idaho State Historical Society at Boise, Idaho, the full rights and use of this information.

Mary Ann Beck  
Interviewer's Signature

6/23/77  
Date

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INTERVIEWEE AGREEMENT

You have been interviewed in connection with a joint oral history program of the History Department, Utah State University, Ricks College, and the Idaho State Historical Society. The purpose of this oral history program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview has been made by the interviewer. A verbatim typescript of the tape will be made and a final typed and edited transcripts, together with the tape will be made and a final will then be filed in the Milton R. Merrill Library Special Collections, David O. McKay Library at Ricks College, and the Idaho State Historical Society in Boise. This material will be made available according to each of the depositories' policies for research be scholars and by others for scholarly purposes. When the final transcript is completed, a personal copy will be sent to you.

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In view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, I, Stephen W. Rogers, do hereby assign full  
(please print full name)

and all rights of this material to the Merrill Library at Utah State University, to the Library at Ricks College, and to the Idaho State Historical Society at Boise, Idaho, for scholarly purposes according to each of the institutions governing policies.

Stephen W. Rogers  
Interviewee's Signature

6/25/77

Date

*I, Marva R Rogers, permit Stephen W. Rogers to be interviewed.*

ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Stephen William Rogers

INTERVIEWER: Mary Ann Beck

DATE: June 23, 1977

TETON DAM DISASTER

B: Stephen, where were you born?

R: In Rexburg, Idaho.

B: How long have you lived in Rexburg?

R: Six years.

B: Would you spell your name?

R: Stephen.

B: How many were living in your family at the time of the flood?

R: Ten.

B: What was your address at the time of the flood?

R: 261 East Main.

B: Do you still live there?

R: Yes.

B: Stephen, how did you hear about the flood?

R: On the radio.

B: Where were you?

R: At home.

B: What did you and your family do when you first heard about the dam breaking? Were you scared?

R: Yes, and I started packing clothes upstairs. Then I started packing my bike upstairs and my little borther's trike, 'cause I was afraid it was going to get destroyed.

B: Did your family pack anything else upstairs?

- R: They packed powdered milk and wheat. We got the wheat up to the main floor but we didn't get it upstairs.
- B: Did you give a prayer?
- R: Yes, we said a prayer and I asked to help it stop ruin, destroy and I asked that it might not get over six feet.
- B: Did you try to save any pets?
- R: Yes, we saved our two ducks and two geese and we put them up in this cage and then after we did that we thought they wouldn't get destroyed and so we left.
- B: Did you have any dog and cats?
- R: No, we had two rabbits and we took them up to John Barnes. Then some days after, John Barnes told us that they got out and ran away and one boy said it was theirs.

After the flood, Jerry and I found the ducks and geese on the truck. My brother, Lynn, came home and said to hurry fast out in the car 'cause it pushed the car off the road and it was in Rexburg.

- B: Did you go over to your Aunt Fern's in the afternoon and watch TV?
- R: Yes.
- B: How long were you over there?
- R: All afternoon, then at night my mom and dad came and got me. Then we went up to our dad's shop where the water wasn't and it was up on a hill. We slept as we were getting ready and this man came, Mr. Todd came and said, if we'd like to go over and so two of us stayed in the shop. Then my mom and dad and me and my brother, Daniel went over there and slept that night.
- B: How long did you stay at Todds'?
- R: A week, a whole week.

B: Then you came back to your home?

R: I came home to see the house and my brothers and sisters.

B: Then did you go to your grandmother's?

R: After that I went to my grandmother's and stayed there for another week, a whole week. On Saturday, we were so homesick that we begged Daddy to come and get us and after that we stayed in the trailer house, Grandpa and Grandma's trailer house. The little trailer house was in front of our house.

B: How long was the trailer house there?

R: It was there all summer. We were living in the camper and one night, my mom went down and all my brothers and sisters except me and Daniel and my sister Marie then as they were gone, a big truck came and it brang us mattresses and beds and it brang us a stove. They brang us a refrigerator and a couch. Then my mom and dad just came home as they just got all the things out.

I felt happy because now I can live in my house, then when our family home teachers came, she said next time to put in our new refrigerator she'd bring some pack of butter. That was the first thing I got to put in the fridge.

For a long time, me and Daniel were afraid another flood would come but it never did.

B: Aren't you happy?

R: Yes.

B: What did your dad have to do after the flood, did he have to clean anything outside like the garage?

R: Yes.

B: What did he do in the garage?

R: Clean nails.

B: He did?

R: Yes.

B: Did you dad have a root cellar?

R: Yes, and he took buckets of mud out of the root cellar and put it in the trailer to go and dump it.

B: What is in a root cellar?

R: Right now?

B: Yes.

R: All the stuff I can't think of, like oranges and grapefruit and lemons and half a case of eggs and lots of other stuff because we cleaned it out.

B: Do you have a garden this year?

R: Yes, and we have squash in our garden, different kinds of squash, like summer squash and we planted radishes. Then after radishes we plant a few other stuff like carrots.

B: Then it didn't bother the ground did it?

R: No. It brought us compost and silt.

B: What is that?

R: Straw and sticks and some little mud.

B: That make for a good garden?

R: Yes. It makes this garden, it makes it grow faster.

B: What did you do last summer, did you play with any of your friends last summer?

R: No.

B: Because your friends were gone?

R: No. Because they wouldn't take me over to any of them at any time. We just didn't have time to.

B: Then you just helped your parents mud out then?

R: Just helped them clean the whole house up.

B: What did you lose in the flood?

R: I lost cars.

B: Trucks?

R: Trucks, my little tractor and I don't remember anything else.

B: Thank you very much.