Harold Forbush: A program of Oral History of the Upper Snake River Valley in Idaho… here in the home of Sara Jane Gillespie and Reginald G. Gillespie who are brothers and sisters, a brother and sister relationship, and they live one block east of the fourth ward church here in Rexburg. And the church is located on 2nd South and 1st East. And your address would be?

Reginald G. Gillespie: 168 South 2nd East.

HF: Second East?

RG: Yes.

HF: And the date is the 21st of February 1983 and we refer to it as President’s Day.

RG: Oh yes.

HF: Because it’s literally a time in the two or three years the federal government and state have worked together in providing for when it’s possible three day weekends: Saturday, Sunday and now Monday. And so we commemorate the birthday of Washington and the birthday of Lincoln today.

RG: Oh yes.

HF: And as we are doing this it’s about 10:00 a.m. Monday morning and it’s snowing outside. Now I have here on my left Sara Jane Gillespie. And when were you born Sara?

Sara Jane Gillespie: I was born the 26th of January 19…

HF: 18?

RG: 1890.

SG: 1890.

HF: And where?

SG: In Salt Lake City.

HF: And who is your father?

SG: No.

HF: Who was your father?

SG: Yes, he was my father.
HF: Who?

SG: But he came up before I was born.

HF: Your father was James…

RG: James Gillespie.

SG: James Gillespie.

HF: Gillespie. But he came to Rexburg before you were born.

SG: Yes.

HF: I see. Why was that?

SG: Well, because the church had send him up here.

HF: To do what?

SG: To take care of the tithing books.

HF: He was qualified to do that?

SG: Oh yes! He’d had his training in Scotland.

HF: What type of training?

SG: Bookkeeping.

HF: Bookkeeping? I see. He was an excellent penman wasn’t he?

SG: Yes.

HF: Is there another name for that, penmanship? There’s still another name for it. What is that?

RG: Let’s see what is that.

HF: One who is skilled in writing, there’s a name for it. I can’t think of the name but he was an excellent scribe.

SG: Yes.

HF: And he had received his training in Scotland. Where in Scotland?
SG: Well he was born in Quarrel, Scotland.

HF: Is that on the coast? Where is that in Scotland?

RG: I’ve never looked it up in the maps.

HF: I see. Was he single when he came to the United States?

SG: Yes, he met mother on the boat coming over.

HF: About what year was that?

RG: Gosh… [tape cuts out]

HF: Now Sara, were you the first child of the marriage?

SG: No, there were two children before me, but they had died in infancy. The oldest one had the pneumonia or something. Mother went working for him, the baby got it too and they both died. It was in a time when there wasn’t much…

HF: Medical help was hard to come by.

SG: Yes.

HF: But your comment is that your father was sent up here by the Church. Let’s see who was president of the Church at the time your father came up here. Could it have been John Taylor or Wilford Woodruff?

SG: I don’t know. I’d have to look that up.

HF: But he came up here in 1889?

SG: Mm hmm.

HF: Now you were born that same year?

SG: No, in 18…

RG: 1890.

HF: You born in 1890 and in Salt Lake.

SG: Yes.

HF: Then your mother passed away?
RG: No.

HF: She didn’t pass away shortly after your birth?

RG & SG: Oh no!

RG: She came up here.

HF: Well, with the baby, I understood, the baby passed away with pneumonia or something.

SG: The two oldest.

RG: The two children…

HF: Oh the two children. Oh I see, the wwo children.

RG: Yes.

HF: Okay now then at a later date you were born?

RG: Oh yes much later. I was born June 8, 1900.

SG: Two before that before him.

RG: Oh yeah there was … oh there were…

SG: Let’s see there were, oh there were three, three before him.

HF: And what were their names or what are their names?

SG: Well the first was James W. Gillespie and then Vernon Valentine Gillespie and Llewellyn Williams Gillespie. Then

RG: Reginald Glenn Denning Gillespie. Then Kenneth Russell Miller Gillespie was the last.

HF: All of you possessed rather lengthy names.

RG: Yes!

SG: Well the first one, see, Jim was named after my father only he had Williams put into it.

RG: Willy. James Willy Gillespie
SG: Yeah, James Willy. Now Willy was after a playmate of father’s. And then Llewellyn Williams was after my mother’s father.

RG: Vernon Valentine of course named… he was born on Valentine’s Day.

HF: Oh I see that’s interesting. Now did your folks live right here in Rexburg? When they came to the valley did they settle right here in Rexburg?

SG: Did they what?

HF: Did they settle here? Did they have a home right here in Rexburg?

SG: Oh yes.

HF: Do you remember… do you know the address?

SG: Well it was where the old … it’s where the high school is now. That was father’s farm. That was the first farm that father took up and then there was a log cabin below the canal. Then our new house was built above the canal just after our youngest brother was born and that was Kenneth R. M. Gillespie.

HF: And what year was that?

SG: 1904.

HF: Did your father make his primary living, was the major portion of his living, derived from being a secretary and a bookkeeper and along that?

SG: He was secretary first of the tithing office and that was where the tithing was brought. And then when the mill was built he was secretary for the mill as well.

HF: The flour mill?

RG: Mm hmm. Rexburg Milling Company.

HF: Now that was up there near where your ranch was.

RG: Uh huh.

SG: That was just a little bit, just looked over the farm, at the east end of the farm.

HF: It was on the east end of the farm.

SG: No it looked over the east side of the farm.
HF: I see. Now they milled various grains like wheat into flour and oats, I suppose into cereal.

RG: I don’t believe they produced oatmeal, but they produced the flour, whole wheat flour. But I don’t recall if they ground any oats for meal, I don’t know.

HF: Can you recall, can both of you recall, seeing the mill?

RG: Oh yes.

SG: Oh yes.

HF: Was it made of rock?

RG: Uh huh.

SG: Yes it was made of rock.

HF: Native stone?

RG: Uh huh.

SG: I suppose.

HF: Was it two or three stories high? Was it a pretty good size?

SG: It was at least two stories. Then there was a saw mill down below. The saw mill was down below it.

HF: How was it powered? How did it get its power? From water?

RG: Uh huh

SG: Yes.

HF: There in the canal?

RG: They also had steam…

SG: Yes. Then there was a canal went north and south of our farm.

HF: There was a canal on each side of your farm? One on the north side and one on the south side?

SG: Yes.
RG: There’s one on the east side they called the waist ditch. The water that powered the mill came around what is now Mill Hollow and went down through a water wheel and turned the mill. Of course they also had steam engine in there for in the wintertime to run the mill.

HF: How late was that? In the 20’s or in the teens?

RG: Well the mill burnt down in 1914 I think it was.

HF: See, that was the third mill that they’d had.

RG: I don’t know.

HF: The previous ones had burned.

RG: I don’t know.

SG: No, I think that was the first mill.

RG: No, I think there were others before. That’s the only one I know about.

HF: Now, it was east of your father’s ranch, father’s farm?

RG: It was just across the street from the north …

SG: No, not east it was south.

HF: It was south of the farm?

RG: Yeah it was the south side of the road of the street and it…

SG: It was the…what’s the street?

RG: Oh, it’s 1st East or…

HF: First North.

RG: First North.

HF: Running East and West?

RG: Yes. And the mill was there at the southeast corner of our farm.

HF: And across the street?

RG: Uh huh across the street.
HF: Was it quite a big yard so that wagons and so forth could drive in there?
RG: Oh yes.
HF: It was quite a big yard so they could transact their business I guess.
RG: Oh yes, it was. Uh huh.
SG: It was a platform where they…
HF: Weighed?
SG: Uh huh.
RG: Well they weighed them on the scales on the west side of the mill and they had a platform on the north side of the mill also.
SG: And on the bottom part below is the saw mill.
RG: I don’t remember about the saw mill.
HF: Was it a block away or just a few hundred feet away from the east flour mill?
SG: It was down under it.
RG: Down under it? I don’t know. I don’t remember it.
HF: You mean the flour mill was on top of the saw mill?
SG: Wasn’t it?
RG: I don’t know.
SG: I think it was.
HF: So there’s a feeling in your mind that the saw mill was on the bottom and in some way they had the flour mill up above.
SG: Yes.
HF: I see.
RG: That’s beyond my memory.
HF: Well now tell me where the tithing offices were located.
SG: Well that was just down two or three blocks down the street from that.

RG: It’s where the Adams school now is.

HF: Now that would be the same street only west?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: About three blocks?

RG: Mmm Hmm.

HF: I see. And it’s where the Adams School is now?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: And where the first ward church was?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: Can you tell me what buildings were on that side. I know that there was a grainery.

RG: Yeah.

HF: A big grainery.

RG: A barn. There was a barn back in there.

HF: Can you recall what buildings were on there, Sarah? There was a barn and a grainery.

SG: I guess so. I don’t remember that very much.

HF: Do you remember them bringing hay and grain there to pay their tithing?

SG: Yes there was a place for the people who came into pay their tithing to put their horses while they were in paying their tithing. I guess it was a stable.

HF: Uh huh. Now how bout the tithing office itself where your father worked? Was it a building all by itself?

SG: Yes.

RG: I think it was. I recall one time my brother, Llewellyn, we called him Lou. And I went down with his lunch one evening. Father had been down there working all day and
he had to have something to eat. I recall, I don’t know how old I’d be there, I might be five and Lou was seven maybe. I might have been four and he was six, I don’t know. But I recall going down there one time with his lunch.

HF: Did you walk upstairs?

RG: No. I think it was just on the ground floor.

HF: You think it was a separate building where the tithing office was?

RG: Uh huh, I think so.

HF: Do you think there were more than one room in the tithing office?

RG: I wouldn’t remember that either.

HF: Do you remember Sarah? Whether there was more than one room?

SG: No, I don’t remember that. I guess there was part where there was places where they kept books and …

HF: And your father, of course, was sent up for that purpose to keep the books and records of the tithing.

SG: Yeah the tithing. And then when the mill was built he was secretary for the mill too. So he had two jobs.

HF: And now where was your home located, with reference to the tithing office or the mill?

SG: It was near the mill.

HF: It was quite near the mill?

RG: Well we lived in a log house down below the city canal. Yeah, the city was…

HF: And then when you built your new home, it was above the canal?

RG: Uh huh, yes.

HF: And closer to the mill?

RG: Yes.

HF: Was it a brick home?
SG: No, it was rock.

HF: The type of rock the mill was made out of?

SG: I suppose so.

HF: Or the tabernacle?

RG: I suppose it was.

HF: It was building rock?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: Kind of a white, grayish building rock?

RG: Uh huh, yeah.

HF: Now the quarry wasn’t too far from there, was it?

SG: No.

RG: It was up a hill four or five miles, I think. Out of a hole up…

HF: Up above Mill Hollow?

RG: Yeah, it was… I don’t know just where they got it. My brother Lou thought or some folks say the rock came for the Ricks school, from up in Sunnydale someplace. But I thought it came closer than that, but I don’t know.

HF: Yeah, well I think some… around the windows and doors…see there’s a contrast.

RG: Oh.

HF: There’s two different types of rock.

RG: Uh huh.

HF: One, I think is a kind of a rock that was used around the windows.

RG: Uh huh.

HF: And doors and so forth. And that came, I think from a different quarry than for the main building.

RG: Oh, I suppose.
SG: And the masons chiseled, you know, and made the front of the building, and the sides, different from the back where it’s just about like the mill. But the masons who built it just chiseled it some so it looked different.

HF: Now you’re talking about the tabernacle?

SG: No, I’m talking about our home!

HF: Your home?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: I see. Was your home a two story home?

SG: Yes.

HF: It was a two story home. I see. And it had what wood shingles?

RG: Mmm hmm.

HF: For the roof?

SG: Yes, uh huh. And there was a basement to it.

HF: There was a basement?

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: Several bedrooms, I suppose.

SG: In the basement, there was one bedroom downstairs and three bedrooms upstairs.

HF: Has that building, has that home been torn down?

SG: It was torn down for the school to be built.

HF: For the Madison High School?

SG: Mmm hmm.

RG: Yep.

HF: Oh, I see. And that’s where it was.

RG: Yep, uh huh.
HF: I see. And that school was built before 1975, '74, '73, '74, along there, when the school was built. Well now, do you remember President Ricks at all when he would come to the tithing office?

SG: He was the president of the Church up here. Well I don’t know what he… I guess he was…

RG: President of the Stakes.

SG: It was Thomas E. Ricks was the president…

HF: President of the stake

SG: Of the stake.

HF: Do you remember him at all Sarah?

SG: Not very much. He had five wives, but I don’t know when the manifesto was when polygamy was done away with.

HF: Do you distinctly recall of ever seeing him with a wife or more than one wife in public, you know, just in public?

SG: No, he had a favorite and he took the favorite one.

HF: Mmm hmm. Now how did he get around? How was he transported?

SG: Oh they all went in buggies.

HF: Do you remember anything about his buggy and his horses?

SG: No, I don’t.

HF: Do you recall…

SG: I remember Father’s. Father had a cart and it was drawn by with one horse, and there were shacks on each side of the horse. And father went from the tithing office to the mill and back and forwards, taking care of the books.

HF: And you remember that?

SG: Yes, I remember that.

HF: How many people could ride in the cart?
SG: Two and a child could ride in it. I guess that some could ride in the back, I don’t remember that.

HF: Do you recall of riding in it? Probably did?

SG: No, I…

HF: You don’t have a recollection of riding in it?

SG: No.

HF: Do you remember the color of the horse and the horse’s name?

SG: No.

HF: Did your mother ever take you kids in that cart and drive?

SG: No she never drove. She was always with father when he went.

HF: When he went? I see. Well now as you children grew up you went to school. Where was the school located?

SG: Oh, it was quite a bit father west. It was ….

HF: Now, there was a church and a school combination where the old pump house is on second…

RG: Just down the street here a ways…

HF: Just down the street here a ways from you to the north of here. Did you go to school there at the First Ward Church?

SG: No. I’ll tell ya, we were so far away from the school that father taught us ‘till we were in the sixth grade and then we went to school.

HF: Where?

SG: Well, it was quite a ways to walk and that was the reason that father and mother taught us at home.

HF: I see.

RG: Well that was … the school was down there where the junior high, where the junior…

HF: Its down there where Food Center is now.
RG: It’s a block farther down, a block farther west.

HF: Further west?

RG: Where the… you see the…

HF: Was it down there where the fifth ward church is, the Fifth and second ward church?

RG: No, it was right on Main Street, just a block west of Food Center.

HF: I don’t know. It could be. Now when you were in… when your folks taught you, you were in the log cabin, I guess. In the log cabin? That was before you built your new home?

SG: Yes.

HF: Mmm hmm.

SG: And about that time also, father took up a, the homestead act was in and father took up hundred and…

RG: Sixty acres.

SG: Hundred and sixty acres, straight up the hill…

RG: Up this street.

SG: About an hour, its an hour…

RG: A mile and…

SG: It’s a mile and a half up the hill.

RG: As far as we know it’s the first homestead that was taken up on the bench here.

HF: About a mile and a half east of here?

RG: Uh huh. East of Main Street, I guess.

HF: A mile and a half east of Main Street and Second South?

RG: Second East, Second East. This is Second East here.

HF: Second East? And so, it would be a mile and a half right straight south.
RG: Uh huh.

HF: From Main Street?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: Mmm hmm. Now that isn’t… Ok so that was way beyond where the college campus was?

RG: Yes.

HF: Mmm hmm. Did he ever build a home on that hundred and sixty?

SG: Yes, there was a home on that, we had to. See with the Homestead Act you had to live on it…

HF: You had to live on it.

SG: So many…

HF: Years.

SG: Months out of the year until it was paid, until we paid for it. But I’ve forgotten how many years you had to pay. And then mother used to go up there with the children and we stayed up there. We came down for groceries and father brought up groceries up to the farm. By that time, father had left the building…

HF: Tithing office?

SG: Church building. He left the tithing office and the …

HF: And the mill.

SG: And the mill and worked for Flamm & Company, Henry Flamm & Company.

HF: I see. As accountant or as book keeper?

SG: Oh sure, he was…

HF: Always as a book keeper?

RG: Uh huh, yeah.

HF: I see. Now Flamm & Company was down on Main Street, wasn’t it? Where the bank now is?
RG: Yes.
SG: Yes.
RG: The Valley Bank.
HF: And did he work for them for quite a number of years, for Flamm & Company?
SG: Well yes until the boys gone… ‘til my oldest brother took up a farm. And that was west or east of where we were. See where was that farm?
RG: Oh about six miles east of…
HF: Up towards Herbert, the community of Herbert?
RG: No it was just about straight east of our rock house there. I think five or six miles. I think…
HF: What would that community be called?
RG: I don’t know it had a name or not.
HF: It was on the bench, anyway?
RG: Yes. I think maybe Summers probably has that farm now. I don’t know who has it. It’s up in that vicinity.
HF: And that was a brother that had the homestead there?
RG: No he bought it.
HF: Oh, your brother, I see.
RG: Uh huh. Jim. We called it Jim’s Place.
HF: I see. Well now as you people were growing up as youngsters what chores did you have? Did you have…
SG: Milking cows.
RG: Feeding pigs.
SG: And pigs and feeding horses because all the plowing and everything was done with horses in those days.
HF: But you looked upon the ranch down there by the flour mill in Mill Hollow as your home place, I guess?

RG & SG: Uh huh.

HF: And in the summertime you would go to this ranch south of here, a mile and a half south of here, and stayed up there?

SG: The boys did.

HF: The boys did. Your mother would go up there and cook for them some?

SG: No. She stayed home with the children and mother baked his food for them to take back and forth.

HF: I see. Do you remember much about Henry Flamm, the man who started the Flamming Company, the old gentleman?

SG: Yes I remembered him.

RG: Oh yes.

SG: But that’s all.

HF: I think before he came up here, you know, he had an accident. And an explosion I think disfigured his face a little bit or maybe pushed out an eye or something. He had...

RG: Oh maybe he was blind in one eye

HF: In one eye.

RG: I believe so. I remember him.

HF: Do ya?

RG: Yes.

HF: Was he rather a big man like his sons are, his grandsons?

RG: I don’t believe he was. No I don’t believe he was anything near as…

HF: Like Russell and Kenneth and what’s the other boy’s name?

SG: Well the first I think was Henry Flamm, wasn’t he the first?

RG: Henry Flam, I don’t think was…
HF: He was the oldest. He was the father to all these boys. And then you started out with Dan, there was a Daniel Flamm.

RG: Oh, Dan Flamm. Yeah.

HF: And there could have been another Henry.

SG: I don’t know about that.

RG: Dan had a brother and I don’t remember his name. Oh, let’s see, what was his name?

HF: Now do you people remember any other names that come to mind like, for example, John Smailey?

RG: Oh yeah we remember him.

HF: Why do you remember him?

SG: He was a liar.

HF: Why do you remember him?

SG: Oh I don’t know, I think, but I remember him.

RG: We heard lots of stories about him. He married a daughter of President Ricks. What was her name? Do you remember?

SG: No I don’t remember that.

RG: Yeah he married a daughter of President Ricks, but what her name was I don’t know.

HF: Well, he had the store there across from the courthouse. Do you remember that brick store, the ZCMI store at all?

RG: I don’t remember.

HF: Across from what is now the courthouse?

SG: Yes, I remember that. There was a store there.

RG: Well, that would be…

HF: And upstairs they had some rooms that they had, that went to Ricks College there.

SG: Maybe they did, I don’t remember.
HF: You don’t remember. Sarah, did you eventually get your schooling and go on to Ricks College?

SG: Yes.

HF: What was the school’s name, at that time?

SG: Ricks Academy.

HF: Ricks Academy. What years did you go there?

SG: Well, it was …

RG: In 1906, seven, eight, no seven ….

SG: I guess it was 1910 when I graduated from there.

RG: 1910. Four years.

SG: And then I went to University of Utah.

HF: You graduated from Ricks. Now at that time Ezra Dalby was the principal, was he not?

SG: Mm hmm.

HF: And was Mrs. … oh lets see what’s her name? Elizabeth Stool?

RG: Yeah.

HF: Was she one of the graduates?

SG: Yes she graduated before me.

HF: Before you did. Well how about her sister, Annie?

SG: She did too.

HF: Annie Kerr. Both of the graduated before you did?

SG: Uh huh.

HF: Who were some of your classmates?

RG: Jim Young, wasn’t he one?
SG: Jim Young was one. Wilford Anderson was another. And Lillian…oh I forgotten her name. I’d have to look it up.

HF: Now you went to school in now what is the Spori Building? There was only one building on the hill at that time, wasn’t there?

SG: Yes and it’s still there.

HF: And its still there. Who were some of your teachers, your instructors, at the time you graduated in 1910?

SG: Well there was Oliver Dalby for one.

HF: Was that a brother to Ezra?

RG: Uh huh.

SG: I guess.

RG: Yes it was a brother.

HF: You remember any others, any women, teachers?

SG: Yes, but I’ve forgotten.

RG: Wasn’t Ezra Dalby one of your instructors?

SG: Ezra Dalby was one.

HF: And Oliver?

SG: And Oliver Dalby.

HF: Was there a Hill?

SG: I don’t recall that. But there were some Mormon teachers there. Oh there was a Lowell. He was one of my theology teachers.

HF: Now after 1910 you immediately went to the University of Utah.

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: At Salt Lake?

SG: Mmm hmm.
HF: Who did you stay with when you were attending the University?

SG: I stayed with my aunt, with my father’s sister, Mrs. Duncan [inaudible].

HF: Had she come over at the same time as your father from Scotland?

SG: No, she came over two or three years after him. And she married a man by the name of Duncan McFadgen.

HF: Were there very many buildings on the campus in those days?

SG: No. No there was only two or three. I don’t remember. There was a gymnasium and the main building. But there weren’t many buildings then.

HF: Now did you spend four years at the University?

SG: Mmm hmm and graduated in 1914.

HF: Fourteen.

SG: With an AB degree.

HF: You took a lot of literature, a lot of history, I suppose?

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: A lot of English.

SG: No my major was Speech and my minor was History.

HF: Oh yeah. You’re a lady after my heart. I love history. Did you have a favorite history? American History? European History? What phase of history did you seem to enjoy the most?

SG: Well I just loved it all. I loved history.

HF: Who was your instructors there at the University?

SG: Well, it’s so long since my memory has left me. My memory has gone with it.

HF: Let’s see. Now Dr. Talmage taught there at the University some, but I’m not sure what years that he taught. Was he on the campus at that time?

SG: I don’t remember.
HF: Dr. Talmage?

SG: Well that’s what I tell ya, I’d have to look these things up.

HF: Well you’re doing great. Now you graduated in the Spring of 1914.

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: You know Coach Packer up here at Ricks he was going down there about that time.

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: Maybe just a year or two after.

SG: He was there when I was there.

HF: Was he?

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: And he was a quite a basketball star, wasn’t he?

SG: Something, mmm hmm.

HF: Yeah, do you recall any Romneys or…

SG: Romneys?

HF: Any Romneys down there?

SG: Yes…

HF: At that time? Well now Sarah you graduated in 1914 and did you commence to teach school that fall?

SG: Yes, I went to the BYU and I taught there one year. But you see I hadn’t had any physical education. Now President Brimhall was the President and he said my play would go down in history. But my physical education was none. So then I went back to school and built up on physical education. And then I went out to Tooele and I don’t know, was it Tooele? Anyway, I was out there… no I went to Snow and to… I was down there, I was at Snow one year, and that was in Ephraim isn’t it?

HF: Yes.

SG: And there was another one.
HF: Price?

SG: Oh, Murdock Academy. But I wanted to get to Salt Lake to teach. So then I went out to Tooele and I taught there three years. Those were all church schools at that time. And then I got into Salt Lake as a substitute, and then I stayed there ‘till I had to come home to help mother because her health had failed.

HF: The interview will be continued on the other side of this tape on track two.

[Part Two recording]

HF: Continuing the interview with Sarah Jane Gillespie and her younger brother Reginald G. Gillespie. Now did you teach school here in the upper valley? Here in Rexburg?

SG: Yes.

HF: What years?

SG: Well lets see, I was there… now see I was at Ricks three years before I went on to Tooele. Tooele isn’t a church school.

HF: So you had come back…

SG: No I did my first five years were in church schools.

HF: And Ricks was one of them?

SG: And Ricks was one of them.

HF: Uh huh.

SG: And then after I wanted to get to Salt Lake to teach in Salt Lake. And so then I went out to Tooele after that and taught there three years. And see and then when I went out to Tooele I had to teach English. So I had to take night school to catch up on my English. ( HF: You wished that it had always been History, I guess.

SG: No I never did get to teach History.

HF: Didn’t you really?

SG: No.

HF: Your favorite course and study and you never got to teach History. Isn’t that something?
SG: Well, no Speech was my best, was my major.

HF: Oh, I see. Speech. Did you do any drama with that Speech?

SG: Oh certainly, that’s what I did.

HF: Drama and Speech…

SG: Put on plays.

HF: Yeah. And debate? Any debating?

SG: No, I didn’t do much in debating.

HF: Oh, I see. But your thing was doing plays and drama.

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: I see. Well now you came back to Rexburg when your Mother’s health commenced to fail.

SG: Mmm hmm.

HF: And how many years did you teach here in the Rexburg schools?

SG: I didn’t teach after that. My mother failed and then I had to help with the boys on the farms.

HF: And would that have been in the 20’s? About what year did you come back?

SG: No, I…

HF: The thirties?

SG: I guess it was in the thirties or in the forties. I’d have to look that up.

HF: Where were you living? Where were your mother and father living at the time? Was your father still living when you came back?

SG: No, I came back to his funeral in ’36 and it was after that that I came up to help other when her health broke. So it was in the forties, sometime in the forties.

HF: And when did she pass away?

SG: Fifty-four.
HF: In 54. Well now let me just suggest, Sarah, that you rest a minute there and I’ll pick on Reginald here for a little bit. Where did you start school Reginald?

RG: Down in the school house down there on, what is…not Center Street, on First West.

HF: Mmm hmm.

RG: Yeah, First West there in the Rock building on the lower floor. Let’s see, Lou I know he’d been to school a year before that. Anyway, we both were in the same grade in 1906. See, I was born in…

HF: 1900?

RG: Yeah in 1900, June 8, 1900. And lets see, I was six years old when I started school.

HF: Mmm hmm. Who was your school teacher?

RG: I think it was a Miss Brinton, I believe.

HF: Miss Brinton?

RG: I think so.

HF: Mmm hmm. Ok now did you continue going to that school for the next few years?

RG: Yeah.

HF: Was it a brick building?

RG: Rock building.

HF: A rock building?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: Now you are saying that it’s on First West.

RG: Uh huh. Right there….

HF: South of Main Street?

RG: It was on the north side of Main Street.

HF: Well, in other words it was in the southwest corner of that block then. Where the… see now Washington School…
RG: That was the Washington School. It was the name of the school was the Washington School.

HF: Ok because that was built in 1904, 3 or 4.

RG: Yeah, uh huh.

HF: It had just been built then. It was a new building.

RG: Yes, it was.

HF: And you were on the ground floor.

RG: Yeah. Well it was in sort of a basement. You see there was a basement floor, then the first floor and a third floor.

HF: I see. Any other teachers you recall their names?

RG: Oh there was a Miss Langton. I think she was the sister of James Langton who was the principal. I think Langton was the principal at that time.

HF: Now there was a Langton or a Langley. Langton?

RG: Langton.

HF: Maybe L-a-n-g-t-o-n.

RG: Uh huh.

HF: Langton. Do you remember the names of your classmates? You mentioned your brother.

RG: Oh yeah, there was Clyde Adams, was one. And Harvey Woodmatsy. I’ve got the picture of our eight grade graduation class. Let’s see I want that out. Sister Ard who died here, Mabel Ard, who died here…

HF: She was a Numphrey.

RG: She was… no she was… her daughter was a Numphrey… No, she was …

HF: Ok, she was a…

RG: She was a Westover.

HF: She was a Westover, right.
RG: A Westover, yeah, she was a Westover.

HF: Yeah, yeah. And she was in your class?

RG: Uh huh when we graduated. Now, lets see, there was Leeland Winters was in a class of mine. I don’t know whether he started…he was, I think, he was about two days older than me. Clyde Adams, Harvey Woodmatsy…

HF: Now you were living then over near the mill?

RG: Uh huh, yeah.

HF: And so you would walk back and forth?

RG: Mmm hmm. Run most of the time to get there on time.

HF: That was a quite a few blocks!

RG: Yeah about eight blocks, seven or eight blocks.

HF: Yeah, that was quite a run you had to do. Now your dad had chores for ya?

RG: Oh yes, I’ll say.

HF: What were your main chores?

RG: Oh, milk the cows. Well I didn’t start milking cows, I guess, until I was eight or nine I guess. But I helped feed the pigs.

HF: What would you separate your milk?

RG: Well before we got a cream separator we used to put them in big pans and let ‘em stand in the basement of the house and skim off the cream. It was a little tin thing that had holes in it. We’d skim off the cream and…

HF: And you used the cream to make butter?

RG: Oh yes and we churned butter.

HF: Where would you take your… maybe used the butter as trade with Flamm & Company or some other store?

RG: I don’t know whether we consumed all the butter or not. I think we did later on when we got more cows. But I think probably the first, first few years we probably consumed all the butter that we made.
HF: Now when you were growing up then your income, your family income, largely came from your father’s employment.

RG: I think so.

HF: As a book keeper.

RG: Yeah, and the farm.

HF: And the farm.

RG: Mmm hmm. He employed a man by the name of Dave Jenson.

HF: As a foreman?

RG: As a farmhand.

HF: Uh huh.

RG: And I guess, well, before that it was Tom Evans. We rented the old log house to Evans, Tom Evans. And I believe somebody else before that, maybe.

HF: By that time you had built your new one?

RG: Uh huh. I think the foundation for the new house was laid in the Fall of 1903 and completed a year or two later. I don’t remember.

HF: Now did you get a chance to go to Ricks College, Ricks Academy?

RG: Yeah I went three years, I believe.

HF: And what year did you finish there?

RG: Let’s see it was 17… might have been 1917.

HF: Was it called Ricks Academy at that time?

RG: Uh huh. Well, I don’t know, I believe they called it Normal College, Ricks Normal College at that time, I believe when I…

SG: You went to business school at…

RG: Oh yeah, and then I went down to Henninger’s Business College in Salt Lake.

HF: After you finished here?
RG: Uh huh.

HF: Who was the head of the administration when you finished here at Ricks in 1917?

RG: Romney, George Romney.

HF: I see.

RG: Yeah.

HF: Well now Coach Packer was teaching here at that time.

RG: Uh huh…

HF: Wasn’t he?

RG: Yeah. Then it was Christensen who was the principal before Romney. Yeah, I think he was the principal when I first started at Ricks. A.B. Christensen.

HF: A.B. Christensen. C-h-r-i-s-t-e-n-s-e-n?

RG: No, C-h-r-i-s-t-e-n-s-e-n I think it was.

HF: S-e-n. Oh, ok. Now later on there was Oswald Christensen. That’s a different man.

RG: Yes, uh huh.

HF: Oswald taught, what, math and so on? What did he teach?

RG: I was never in any of his classes. H.M. Warner was an instructor I had.

HF: Now by that time they had the gymnasium built.

RG: Yeah, they built that while I was going there.

HF: To Ricks?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: I see. Did you have classes in it? Or wasn’t it used until after you’d graduated?

RG: Oh it was used during Sarah’s tenure there.

HF: Oh up to 1914, I see. Well now…
RG: Wait a minute now…I don’t know, but I remember it was being built while I was going there.

HF: Now what was your aim then in going to Henningter’s?

RG: To learn business. I took a business course.

HF: Following after the footsteps of your father?

RG: Yeah.

HF: Tell me something about James Gillespie. Was he a larger man?

RG: Yeah, he was about six feet. Yeah, he was taller than any of his sons.

HF: The boys resembled more your mother?

RG: I guess.

HF: Was she a shorter lady?

SG: Oh yes.

RG: Oh, much shorter.

HF: She was a small lady.

RG: Uh huh, yeah.

SG: But he was tall.

RG: And straight.

SG: And as straight as a stick.

HF: Did he have an ability to control his emotions?

SG: Pretty good.

HF: Did he ever spank any of his kiddies? Only when they needed it, huh?

SG: Uh huh.

RG: He was a disciplinarian, I’ll tell you that.

HF: He was a disciplinarian?
RG: Yeah.

HF: He had you boys disciplined to get up early in the morning and get out and milk the cows?

RG: Yeah.

SG: Yeah.

HF: Or feed the horses?

RG: Yeah.

HF: Was your father active in the community life?

RG: Oh yes, they regarded him as kind of a radical. He was a progressive in politics.

HF: Let’s see, it was in the teens that they did have the Progressive Party, wasn’t it?

RG: I think it was in the teens.

HF: And he was a member of the Progressive Party?

RG: Uh huh.

HF: I see. Is that where Llewellyn got some of his ideas about technocracy?

RG: I think so.

HF: Well let me ask you one or two more questions about your father. Was your father quite a churchgoer?

RG: No he kind of lost out of the church when he was tithing clerk. You see that was quite a job keeping track of all the produce that came in as tithing and changing it over to dollars and cents.

HF: Mmm hmm.

RG: It really worked him hard and he had a nervous breakdown. And they had quite a squabble and he finally left it.

HF: He left that and also the mill?

RG: Well I don’t know, he kept…
HF: He kept going to the mill later on?

RG: I think he kept the mill books for quite a while after that.

HF: Oh, I see.

RG: I don’t know whether he was keeping the mill books the same time he was working for Flamm, I don’t know.

HF: And he died quite a number of years earlier than your mother?

RG: Yes, he did. He died in 19…

HF: Thirty-six I think she said.

RG: About ’36 I guess it was.

HF: And her in ’54 so that would have been, oh, what 18 years…

RG: Oh, something like that.

HF: Before your mother.

RG: Mmm hmm.

HF: But his health was good, wasn’t it? All the way pretty much?

SG: Pretty much.

RG: Pretty much. They had some illnesses.

SG: But he saw things in a different light and many of them see them now and he just finally gave up.

HF: Did he manage to get all of his sons and daughters into school and graduating from college?

RG: Well he didn’t get them all through college. Both father and mother saw to it that we got to go to school and they never did keep us out of school for working on the farm. Education was their main objective.

HF: Right, yeah. They were both united in that effort?

RG: Uh-huh. Yeah.

HF: I see.
RG: They surely were.

HF: Did you get the most schooling, Sarah? Did you get the most schooling of your brothers and sisters?

SG: Well, I guess I did because I went back to school after I got my Master’s and my…

HF: AB Degree.

SG: AB Degree. I went back twice or three times. I had to go back for English and physical education, but anyway those were the subjects I was taught to teach so I had to go back.

HF: Well that’s interesting. Now did some of the family follow the characteristics of your father in being a skilled writer, a scribe a Penman?

RG: I guess Jim got to be a pretty good penman, but I didn’t.

SG: But all of the younger ones joined Technocracy after us.

HF: Did they?

SG: Yes.

HF: Tell me about that. What kind of a movement was it?

SG: It was a movement…well you tell it.

RG: Well Howard Scott, he resisted this America becoming the arsenal of democracy as he called it. And I think it’s ruining…

HF: He didn’t want…

RG: We’re still want to…we wanted to destroy us a whole earth in order to save the European civilization or the European setup.

HF: And so he felt that they were just spending too much of the national wealth on arms and…

RG: Yes.

HF: And that didn’t lead to peace.

RG: Absolutely not.
HF: It led to war.

RG: Yeah.

HF: And he was against…

SG: Yes.

HF: And the movement was against arming America to the teeth, as it were?

RG: Yes. He proposed that the common North America rebuild itself for the people of North America and not for the rich people to gobble up the earth.

HF: Whatever happened to this, what was his name, Scott?

RG: Howard Scott.

HF: Hyrum?

RG: Howard.

HF: Howard Scott.

RG: He died in 19… I think on New Year’s Day 1970.

HF: Was he an American?

RG: Oh, yes.

HF: But wasn’t the movement quite pronounced in Canada?

RG: Yes. Yeah.

SG: And then Ivy Scott, Ivy took it over after Scott.

HF: Howard Scott?

SG: Uh-huh.

RG: No. A man by the name of Wilton Ivy…

SG: What’s Ivy’s first name. Wilton Ivy.

RG: He didn’t take it over. He was the main writer for Technocracy for years.

SG: And he was killed.
RG: He was run down by a truck. He was a scientist. He was an arachnologist, that is he studied spiders. He went all over the North American continent studying spiders. But he wrote some wonderful articles for technocrats.

HF: Did they publish a little magazine?

RG: Well they published three of them for a number of years.

HG: What were they? What were their names?

RG: Well there was Technocracy Digest and the Technocrat and the Northwest Technocrat.

HF: Were most of their followers and disciples in the United States?


HF: And Canada.

RG: Uh-huh.

HF: Did the movement get started at all in Europe?

RG: No.

HF: England?

RG: No. It was strictly a North American movement or organization.

HF: Where were the headquarters?

RG: Well they were in Savannah, Ohio. 44h74.

HF: What do you have in your hand? What’s that called?

RG: Technocracy. Technological Social Design. And there’s the map of it, the North American Continent. The continentalism is what we abdicated.

HF: Does it have the focus on natural resources, the preservation of natural resources?

RG: I’ll say. Yeah.

HF: That’s one of their big focus.

RG: Absolutely.
HF: The EPA, the Environmental Protection Association, it would believe in technocracy I suppose, wouldn’t it?

RG: It should do.

HF: Because it focused attention on preserving our natural resources.

SG: Yes. But that’s it.

HF: Well did it advocate no hardly any arms and defense at all or?

RG: Oh, yes. Defense…

HF: Enough to protect yourselves?

RG: Absolutely.

HF: But not for us to send armies overseas.

RG: Absolutely. We wouldn’t send anything overseas.

HF: Were there many in Rexburg that joined this movement?

RG: Just in our family. Just four of us I guess.

SG: We’re still at…

RG: Four or five of us.

HF: Isn’t that interesting.

RG: Our brother Lou who died here last August…

HF: August of…

RG: He was Howard Scott’s foremost disciple and it supported a country.

HF: Is that right?

RG: Yeah he spent his time distributing literature and telling people about it. When he was taking care of the Smith Park he told everybody that came around there told us about technocracy.

HF: Did he go out and preach the doctrine and the movement in other communities?
RG: He didn’t do much preaching; he distributed the literature.

HF: Did he?

RG: In Northern Utah and from here...

HF: Southern Idaho?

RG: In Southern Idaho.

SG: It was in Utah, too, you see. Technocracy was in Utah.

HF: Was it?

SG: Umm-hmm.

HF: Well, both of you people have lived here then in Rexburg all of your lives other than when you were teaching school in Utah. Reginald, you’ve lived here all your life, I guess.

RG: Oh about two-thirds of it, I guess.

SG: You worked in Salt Lake.

RG: I worked through the International Smelling and Refining Company for 15 or 16 years and let’s see…

HF: In what capacity?

RG: Ore Settlement Clerk.

HF: Ore Settlement?

RG: And Sarah and I had an apartment together…

HF: In Salt Lake?

RG: And Sara taught school?

HF: Oh. And that was one reason why she wanted to get back to Salt Lake to teach so that you could have your apartment.

SG: Uh-huh, together.

HF: Together. And during those years then you were the clerk. And in other words, you used your schooling there at Henninger’s…

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RG: Uh-huh.

HF: To hold down this job for her.

RG: Uh-huh. Yeah.

HF: I see. Well what induced you to come back to Rexburg? Your mother’s health, the same…?

RG: Well I drafted into the arm’s services in 1942, I guess it was or ’43, and stayed there for about 18 months.

HF: Where?

RG: I first went to Texas for a while and then went to Chinook Field in Illinois and Roosevelt went out and saw a lot of old guys in their forties that they didn’t look like they would make very good soldiers so they just said everybody that was 43 or so could get out. So I told them I’d come back and work with my brother on the farm. So they let me out.

HF: Now that would be Llewellyn you were working with?

RG: Uh-huh. Yes.

HF: I see. And so you came back and worked on the farm?

RG: Yeah.

HF: Well what have you been doing primarily than since 1943? Working on…

RG: We worked on the farm until, I think it was ’47 when we sold out and then I worked for Ralph Parker for a while and as a…

HF: Abstract?

RG: Abstract and selling insurance and stuff like that for a year and a half or so. Then…

HF: Didn’t you like that?

RG: Oh, yeah. It was pretty good. And I…

HF: Did you learn how to abstract?

RG: No, I didn’t…

HF: Titles?
RG: do too much of that idea. I helped him with his…

HF: Insurance?

RG: Insurance and typing and stuff.

HF: Was that over on Main Street?

RG: Yeah on Main Street.

HF: Did you know Leonard Kingsford then?

RG: No.

HF: The attorney, Leonard Kingsford?

RG: No.

HF: He worked for Ralph Parker about 1950-55.

RG: I guess he may have been in there then. I don’t remember his name.

HF: He was a lawyer. A short, heavyset fellow.

RG: Uh-huh. Yeah, I guess that was who it was.

HF: Well what happened after you finished there with Ralph?

RG: I got a job as a custodian down at the school and worked over there for two or three years and turned the job over to my brother, Lou.

HF: Now that would be which school?


HF: Oh, oh, I see.

RG: And then he got to selling cultivators and I worked with him on that for a few years.

HF: Well as you look back, both of you, into Rexburg’s history is there anything that’s taken place in Rexburg’s history and its attitude that you didn’t particularly like or were there some things about Rexburg as a community where you enjoyed living?
RG: Well, it’s been a pretty good place to live. We have as good an atmosphere as you can find any place. Now for instance, we have very good water and good air, something that’s not found very much any place.

HF: Both of you obviously have held and had good health.

RG: Yes.

HF: With the longevity. Let’s see, both of you are well in years. Of course, your mother was rather elderly, too, wasn’t see when she passed away?

RG: Ninety-three I think.

SG: She was 94.

HF: Ninety-four.

RG: Close to 94.

HF: That’s really quite remarkable.

RG: Father was 79 and Sara’s 93.

HF: Well that’s quite remarkable.

RG: I’m 82.

HF: Yeah, that’s really quite remarkable. Well now as we go back just a minute in recalling any particularly historical event that you seem to recall, Reginald? Do you recall any particular historical event that seems to catch you now? That’s a very poor question that I’m putting because I should be more specific.

RG: Yeah, let’s see now. Nineteen-ninety, I think that’s the year we got into World War One.

HF: Nineteen-seventeen.

RG: Yeah, well. Oh, yeah, I guess it was 1917.

HF: Now you didn’t get into that war. Is that correct?

RG: I registered for it.

HF: Did ya?

RG: And I think it was… yeah in the fall of 1919 I think I registered.
HF: Did Llewellyn get into the service?

RG: No he registered. We both registered, I think, the same time but it ended that November so we didn’t get into it. Yeah, that was…

HF: Are there any historical events that come into your mind about the Rexburg area Sara that you can recall?

SG: No. They don’t come to my mind.

RG: Our brother, Jim, got in the service in 1917.

HF: Did he?

RG: And they sent him to Fort Riley, Kansas and he worked in their office there. He tried to get into the Air Force but they wouldn’t let him into it but they kept him there in Fort Riley, Kansas. And Vernon, he went down to Logan in I guess 1918 maybe. But he didn’t get into it either.

HF: Now are these two brothers still living?

RG: Both dead. Yeah.

HF: Of the original family then how many still survive?

RG: Let’s see, three of us.

HF: You two and…

RG: And Kenneth.

SG: Our youngest brother is in Maryland.

HF: Kenneth?

RG: Kenneth, uh-huh.

HF: No sisters?

RG: No it’s only one sister of nine. Let’s see what it was, nine, eight or nine. Eight I guess and one sister.

HF: Well I thank you sincerely, both of you, each of you, for the contribution that you’ve shared with me this morning.
RG: Well, we sure appreciate your…

HF: I think that will be, that’ll give us some ideas about… well there’s two primary subject matters I think that we talked about. The tithing office, it’s facility down there on Second North and a little about the subject of Technocracy. Now there’s some fill-ins there touching on educational systems in Rexburg, particularly of the Academy. See, it was first referred to as the Academy.

RG: Uh-huh.

HF: The Bannock Stake Academy, then the Ricks Academy.

RG: Uh-huh.

HF: Then what, Ricks Normal?

RG: Uh-huh, yeah. Ricks Normal and then Ricks College.

SG: That’s a four year college now, isn’t it?

HF: Pardon?

SG: It’s a four year college now, isn’t it?

HF: No. No at one time in the fifties they granted four year degrees for two or three years, but then they went back to it being a junior year college. So it’s a junior two year school.

RG: Uh-huh.

HF: Thanks to both of you so much.

RG: Well, we sure appreciate…

[Tape ends]