Voices from the Past

Hibbard, Idaho Community

Interviewees: Dewey and May Parker

October 13, 1979

Tape #54

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by: Wendy Crofts November 2006
Edited by: Lisa Thurber September 2008

Brigham Young University- Idaho
Interview with Dewey Parker and his wife at Rexburg on the 13\textsuperscript{th} day of October 1979.

Harold Forbush: I’m happy to have Mr. Dewey Parker and his wife here this morning that we might consider some of the experiences that they have shared in building up, and establishing the way of life that now exists here in the Upper Snake River Valley. And my first question is going to be directed to Mrs. Dewey. I going to have you state your name, your maiden name, and the date and place of your birth.

May Smith Parker: Well, I was May Smith and I was born in Dayton, Idaho; in Oneida County. And I was born on the 10\textsuperscript{th} of January 1907.

HF: Something about your heritage, your parents, where’d they come from?

MP: Well, I like of Nephi of old, I was born of goodly parents and they came from Cache Valley. My father came from England, [inaudible] England when he was a boy, fifteen. His folks, his father and his mother, came across the water with seven children and they were on the water for six weeks.

HF: Do you know which ship they came over in?

MP: No, I don’t know.

HF: Was it with a group of Latter-day Saints?

MP: Yes, it was Latter-day Saints. The missionaries—the gospel is what brought them over. But I couldn’t tell you what ship it was. But I know they were awfully sea sick and they had quite a time getting over here.

HF: Where did they land?

MP: Well, they landed in New York and they were there over in New York for about a year before they came to Richmond, Utah.

HF: Came by railroad I guess?

MP: Yes, to Richmond, Utah. My grandfather was a mason, him and his two boys, the older boys is my dad and his older brother worked, you know, until they got enough money to come to Utah. And then my grandfather, they uh, pretty well to do cattleman, he gave my dad a job and that’s where he met my mother working for my grandfather.

HF: Here in Cache Valley?

MP: Mhmm, for William McCarie.

HF: I see, that is interesting. Dewey, state your full name and when you were born and where.
Dewey Parker: I guess it’s Admund Dewey Parker. I was born in 1898 July the 12th in Hibbard, Idaho.

HF: Now, was that in the Rock Home?

DP: No, sir that was in the old log home, dirt roof log home.

HF: State who your father and mother were.

DP: My father was Parley P. Parker and my mother was Rhoda Lee Parker.

HF: And had they come from a foreign country or had their parents come from some foreign land?

DP: No sir, not that I know of. I think they came out of New York into Utah; the Parker family.

HF: And they, the Parker family, had been here in the United States for quite a few generations maybe.

DP: Yes sir.

HF: Did they come out west because of the church?

DP: I think so. I think they did.

HF: Well, now, when did your folks come into the area, why did they come up here to the Snake River Valley?

DP: Well, I’m not sure. I think it was the church that brought them over here; or not but they heard about this land being for entry up here, so I guess that’s what brought them up here; was to come up here to farm.

HF: Your dad and—

DP: Yes, my dad and his brother.

HF: And his name was?

DP: Fred Parker.

HF: Were they single men at the time?

DP: No, no they were married. I think my father came before Fred Parker a few years.

HF: And they settled there in the community of Hibbard?
DP: Yes, sir.

MP: [inaudible]

DP: No, cause they filed on some land in Rexburg when they first came here and they built a log home in Rexburg and that was over where the Rick’s Academy is now located.

HF: Up here in the hill?

DP: Yes, my father gave them that land for the Rick’s Academy.

HF: You mean your father did?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: How many acres?

DP: Ten acres at that time, I think that’s what it was, may eleven acres.

HF: Is that where the first building was established, maybe, here up at Ricks?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: You know the old—

DP: Old rock building?

HF: Old rock building?

DP: Well, the brick building was before the rock building wasn’t it?

MP: [inaudible]

DP: I was going to school there when the rock building was built.

MP: Let me say something that he forgot there.

HF: Yeah. Okay.

MP: Dewey’s father, the way I’ve understood it. Don’t put this on tape I don’t want to say this. But he sold that ground to the Rick’s, he owned it, but he sold it to the Rick’s College. They have looked into it and they have found that that’s what he did. He sold the ground.

HF: The ten or eleven acres.
MP: Eleven acres of ground he sold to the Rick’s College so they could establish the school there. And that ground up there is all the Parker Edition. You find if you’re making a deed up there, buying a piece of property in there is on the Parker edition yet.

HF: I see, well that’s interesting.

MP: But he sold the ground.

DP: You didn’t understand it. [inaudible]

HF: The—

MP and DP: [a conversation to each other inaudible]

MP: --They did say it. But Sharon looked into it and it was sold. And she thought some of those other men had done things for Rick’s Academy and that Parker had donated it. He had to be recognized above that to the college you know. But she investigated it and she found he had sold it to them.

HF: Now that building, the Spori Building, the rock building, you know, that stands there. I think was built, what, somewhere between 1901 and 1902, or three, or four, somewhere around there.

DP: I think so.

HF: Then they had the old gym, you know, that burnt down.

DP: Yes.

HF: Now weren’t those the only two buildings up there for awhile?

DP: Yes. Yes, they were. They were the only two.

HF: As I understand it and maybe both of them were located on this ten, eleven acre piece of property, you think?

DP: I think so.

MP: That’s right. They were, I just almost sure they were.

HF: Well that’s very, very interesting. MP: You see he homesteaded that all up there. That’s where he first came, that’s what brought him was that piece of property up there and he, then he heard of this Hibbard area after that. He moved to Hibbard after that. They lived in Rexburg here for four or five years, didn’t they Dewey?
DP: Oh yes.

MP: Yeah.

DP: That was an island out there at this time in Hibbard. They had to fjord the river to get over there. That old conduit was nothing but sagebrush, no canals or nothing in there.

HF: That’s true they had to fjord the South Fork and the North Fork to get over into the cattle country.

DP: That’s true.

HF: And it was in that period of time after your folks moved out there that your dad built this big rock home?

DP: Oh yes, yes sir.

MP: They built that in 1905.

HF: In 1905?

MP: Mhmm.

HF: Where did he get his rock, Dewey?

DP: Up at Sunnydale.

HF: How was that transported and how did he get to mine that lot?

DP: Wagon and team. It was hauled out with wagon and team.

HF: Was that in, come out in layers or did they have to go in and blast it out or how did they mine it?

DP: It comes out in layers. Yeah, I think they—it’s kind of a soft rock.

HF: Sandstone?

DP: Well, it’s—not really sandstone, but it’s not a really hard rock like lava rock. It’s kind of a soft rock.

MP: Same rocks in the tabernacle there. What kinds that?

DP: You see they built this woodman building, I think, I think it was built just a little while after Father’s house was built wasn’t it?
HF: The woodman building?

DP: Yes.

HF: Here in town?

DP: Yes.

HF: That served as a penny store otherwise [inaudible] and is that the white, more white or more pinkish?

DP: It’s kind of a white rock.

HF: But there is a kind of pink rock too, I think that they line up in the same Sunnydale area, as I understand?

MP: Yeah, it’s the same rock like the tabernacle there.

HF: Well this, this home that your folks built then is quite a landmark out in the Hibbard area?

DP: Yes, it was.

MP: Yeah, they were the first to have running water in the house and they had deco lights.

DP: Didn’t I tell him about that in that?

MP: No, you didn’t.

DP: That’s why I wanted you to bring that other stuff up.

MP: Well I knew.

DP: [inaudible]

MP: [inaudible]

HF: Well why don’t you go ahead and just comment about the lights how they—

DP: Well they, before, my father built a building there to house a Delka plant. He—this Delka plant had a set of batteries, 32 batteries that—he’d charge these batteries up with this Delka plant, you know, and that’s what made his electricity.

HF: And that was enough to, what heat and light the home.
DP: Oh yes.

HF: And the out buildings?

DP: Yes.

HF: And now, how early was this done Dewey?

DP: Well that was right after he built the house, I guess, wasn’t it? Right soon after the house was built, I’m not sure as to just what time that was.

HF: Now if it were built 1907—

MP: In 1905.

HF: 1905, were some of his family born in that home?

MP: No.

DP: No.

HF: They’d all been born prior.

MP: No, ‘cause she was born in a dirt roof, five room, dirt roof house.

HF: And how long did that particular home stand?

DP: Well it stayed there ‘til this Teton flood came and then they tore it down.

MP: The rock home.

HF: I see. Was it occupied all during those years?

DP: Most all of it.

MP: Oh yes it was.

HF: By the family?

DP: No.

MP: Our son lived in it…

DP: Rigby bought the land and then they rented the house out for a few years after they got the land.
HF: And you commented that, that rock home out in the Hibbard area was quite a landmark.

DP: I’d say so.

MP: Was the first one to have a home out there like that. Hot and cold water, lights, there was a ‘fridgerator—

HF: Now was it a two story home?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: A two story home and while your folks lived there they conducted a farming operation?

DP: Yes, they did.

HF: They grew various crops?

DP: They raised peas and sugar beets and…

MP: Bees.

DP: Bees.

HF: They had some bees, had few hives of bees?

DP: Had a lot of bees. They made more money off the bees than the farm.

HF: You’re serious in that aren’t yah?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: Is that right?

DP: Oh yes.

MP: Course it was all sagebrush they had to—

DP: They had enough bees at some time to extract twenty-five, five gallon cans full in one day.

HF: Well then what would he do, he would go out—in other words he really made a business of it then, didn’t he?

DP: Yes sir, they did.
HF: Well how would he market his honey?

DP: Uh.

MP: I’m not sure what you meant?

HF: In other words they honey would have to be taken out of the combs and put into cans I suppose.

DP: They extracted into cans.

HF: Into cans, they didn’t do any—

DP: They extract the honey from the frames, you know and it goes into cans. And then they put into these five gallon cans. Now he had to mortgage for it, but I just have to tell you where his mortgage was for it.

HF: The bees would gather their honey from, their nectar from sagebrush?

DP: No, no from alfalfa and sweet clover and flowers of all kinds.

HF: But in the spring of the year isn’t there a sage bloom that they would get some?

DP: Oh could be—

HF: Or is that too early in the year?

DP: I don’t know, it could be, could be.

HF: How about a dairy? Did your folks have a dairy?

DP: Uh, not too much of a dairy, no.

HF: What were some of the real challenges that you can remember, Dewey, while living out there in Hibbard as far as trying to make a livelihood? Now of course, before the days of the tractor and so forth it all had to be done with horses.

DP: Right.

HF: How did your dad manage things like that?

DP: Well us boys done the, all the work with the teams and horses later on when we got old enough to work. And father had a lot of horses and we done all the work with the horses.
HF: What kind of a plow did you use to dig up the ground?

DP: Well we had two bottom plow. Eight head of horses on it and usually pulled—horse usually harrow along side of them. That’s the kind of plow that we used but it was just a two bottom plow.

HF: In other words, the harrow came along the side in one operation in plowing and harrowing, you got your ground in pretty good shape.

DP: Yeah.

HF: How many acres could you plow and harrow in a day?

DP: Oh, I imagine about five acres.

MP: How many horses did you use?

HF: He mentioned eight. Eight head on the plow and the harrow I guess together.

DP: [inaudible] to the harrow.

HF: Mhmm. Now, in those days did they have some kind of a drill or was it broadcast or how did you get the wheat into the ground?

DP: They had the drill. Yes, they had a drill.

HF: Do you recall yourself of farmers ever broadcasting grain?

DP: Well I’d seen Father broadcast alfalfa seed lots of time, but I don’t think he ever did broadcast the grain in my day.

HF: I was in Israel in 1960, 1976 and we stopped by a little community in the Samaria area which is pretty much occupied by the Arab people. And actually, that’s what they were doing; they were actually broadcasting the grain.

DP: Oh yes.

HF: And then they would go along and harrow it in. And you know that’s hard to believe in this day, modern day. But I imagine pioneers had, that was quite common place.

DP: Oh yes, yes. It was sagebrush all over this island out there in them days. And I used to work for my mother’s brother for ten cents an hour grubbing sagebrush; I well remember that.

HF: And how was that grubbed, some kind of a hole?
DP: They called it grubbin’ hole, yes.

HF: And you’d get the root out.

DP: Yep, pile the sagebrush up and then you’d burn it.

HF: And then you’d burn it.

DP: Yep.

HF: Could you do an acre of ground in a day?

DP: Oh, no, certainly not.

HF: It was that thick?

DP: You bet. Yes sir.

MP: I’ve heard Dewey tell the grandkids he’s hid behind them sagebrushes lots of times from the Indians, him and his brother Hugh. Kept seeing Indians coming down the road, they’d hide behind sagebrush.

DP: Yeah, we’re scared of them devils. They’d come up in through the hunting grounds you know, they’d come right up through Hibbard there and go off to their hunting grounds. We used to be scared to death of them and go hide from them.

HF: Now this would be in the early 19—in the teens. 1907 or eight or nine along in that period.

DP: Yes, more than that, yes, six or seven.

HF: Come up a few in a party?

DP: Yes

HF: Would they be walking or riding horses?

DP: Riding horses.

HF: I see, some of the male Indians?

DP: Oh yes.

HF: Did you ever do any trading with them at all, your folks?

DP: No. They’ve came to our place, they’ve came to our folk’s place to eat at various times, to get something to eat at various times. I understand that.
HF: Did your folks kind of inculcate into you kids a fear of them, not to mingle with them, not to—

DP: No, I not most of that. Just when we’s going to school, back and forth to school, you know.

HF: Was there a school out there in Hibbard?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: Who were your teachers?

DP: Let’s see, I could mention—I can mention a few of them. There’s Mrs. Bakemore, and Mrs. White and Mr. William Wittison.

HF: Now where was the school located?

DF: Well it was—could I tell yah—it’s where Ferris Robinson’s house is now built.

HF: I see.

MP: It wasn’t the first schoolhouse out there.

DP: Well, no, but that wasn’t for me that was later—first school is right where my house was built.

HF: I see. I know that there’s a series of log schools and so forth. It used to be what, the school, wasn’t one of the schools burnt down in the teens or something, maybe I’m thinking of the cheese factory out there or something. There was a cheese factory.

MP: Well that burnt down [inaudible] didn’t it?

DP: I think the school burnt down, yes, I’m sure it did later on there. Course at my place they had a log building for a schoolhouse, but later on they built a brick schoolhouse where Ferris Robinson’s land now stands, their house stands.

HF: Dewey, it’s been suggested here that you had, that you were an identical twin.

DF: Yes sir.

HF: To a brother, what was his name?

DF: Hugh Parker.

HF: H-U-G-H?
DP: Yes sir. Samson Hugh Parker, full name.

HF: I see. Well, now they’ve commented that there was a close relationship between you and your brother Hugh. Has being a twin been quite meaningful to you?

DP: Oh I think so.

HF: What would you fellows do as twins that maybe other brother wouldn’t ordinarily do?

DP: Oh, I don’t know, we’d fool the girls, I guess, at dances. The girls would think they was dancing with him when they was dancing with me and different things like that.

HF: And you got a big chuckle out of that?

DP: Yes.

HF: I see. And this would also be a source of amusement for your folks?

DP: Well I suppose so.

HF: Your folks of course could tell us apart?

DP: Oh yes.

HF: How’d they do it?

DP: Well, when we was small children they used to have a string around our finger most of the time, something to identify us, we looked so much alike. But later on it wasn’t hard.

HF: Were you born in a maternity home, a place where children are born or?

DP: I think at home.

HF: At home?

DP: Yes sir, with a midwife. I don’t know what her name was, do you? [addressing his wife]

MP: Mrs. Barry.

DP: Mrs. Barry, I believe was the midwife.

HF: Mrs. Barry.

HF: His wife, one of his wives?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: Now James Barry was, of course, the first magistrate or first probate judge and I know he came from Hibbard.

DP: Yes.

HF: And he had—he lost his wife then he was remarried. Now this was probably was his first wife?

DP: Yes, it probably was.

HF: Do you remember him?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: Do yah?

DP: I surely do.

HF: Well that’s good.

DP: I remember the old sheriff we used to have here too, Berto Larsen.

HF: Berto Larsen.

DP: Berto Larsen, yes sir. He—

HF: Did he frighten you one time when he picked you up and arrested you for something?

DP: Yes. [laughing] On Halloween night, we was little too mean, I guess, and tearin’ things up and one thing and another. He tried to have us arrested, but he didn’t get anywhere with it on account of the night it was.

HF: Dark enough so you could scamper away?

DP: Well no, on account that it was Halloween night.

HF: Oh I see.

DP: Yes.
HF: I see. Did you and Hugh—were you together in these pranks, doing these things together?

DP: Oh yes we were.

HF: Did you just kind of hung around each other all the time?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: I see. Well, now I understand that you and your wife met at a dance. I think that I’ll have her tell us just how all this took place, where it was, and when and give us a little background of your early meeting. Mrs. Parker.

MP: Well I was—went to a dance with Lucy, my girlfriend, and she—we danced for awhile and Dewey was there. He was working sugar factory up the street and he came headle-kettle to dance. And my girlfriend said to me, after we’d been there awhile, she said, “Look at that fellow back there. Isn’t he got a beautiful head of hair?” And I turned and looked and Dewey seen me look and he winked at me. And then, I don’t know why I winked back, but I probably did, I don’t know. And he went and got a friend of his and ask him if he knew me and he said he did. And he came and made us acquainted. And then we danced together and we went home together that night. He took me home. I lived in Sugar City at the time.

HF: Now where did the dance take place?

MP: Oh up at the high school building then in Sugar City. They had a dance hall there, you’ve probably seen it.

HF: Upstairs.

MP: Yes upstairs.

HF: That was quite a wonderful place, wasn’t it?

MP: Yes it was.

HF: Lot of people met there and in the dancing and so forth.

MP: Yes.

HF: That was one of the fine buildings in Sugar during those days.

MP: Yes it was.

HF: Let’s see I think it was read, indicated that Dewey had a new Model-T?
MP: Oh yes, mhmm.

HF: That kind of interested you too huh?

MP: Oh yes, I thought that I was getting somebody that was rich, I didn’t know marrying such a poor man.

DP: Tell him about the horse story.

MP: Yeah. Well he had a—he kept telling me he was gonna buy a new car. I was expecting to see this new car he was getting. And it was a real cold night he come up to visit me and my brother and I went to the dance together and when we come home my brother said, “Well you may just as well stay here tonight.” And so Dewey said he would and so he went up and slept upstairs with my brother. The next morning my brother got up and went down early and feed the horses. When he come back he teased me and laughed at my folks and he said, “You ought to go out and look in the barn and see Dewey’s new Model-T Ford he’s got out there.” It was this little shortie horse he rode up there. We believed that he came up every time with that new car. But I never did live that down, but then he was really nice. I thought he really was a sporty guy with that new Model-T Ford and all of our called him that.

HF: Did yah? Did a lot of dancing.

MP: Yeah, went to a lot of dances. Well that was the recreation we had those years, at that time was going dancing.

HF: Now let’s see, your going to the various dance halls? There was one up Freemida or something like that?

MP: Yes. Freemida, uh huh.

HF: You danced there?

MP: Yes, I think we’ve danced all night at halls.

HF: Did you ever get up into the Piney Dance Hall up in the basin?

MP: No, I never went up there.
HF: How about on further south?

MP: Only to Lorenzo went—we always went to Lorenzo to dance if not to Archer we danced out there. And Burton always had good dances.

HF: Hibbard?

MP: And then they had—what’d they call that part down here in Rexburg down there?
DP: Cahoon’s Park.

MP: Cahoon’s Park. And—

HF: That was a good dancing place?

MP: Yes. That was a good dancing place and Hibbard. We went to all the dances.

HF: And that was the main activity that you engaged in when you were courting.

MP: Mhmm, was going to the dances.

HF: How about movie shows?

MP: Oh we didn’t go to too many.

HF: Not too much?

MP: No.

HF: The talkies’ hadn’t come in yet had they?

MP: No, no, no we didn’t go to too many movies. But now and again we’d go, but not too many. But we always had to work, Friday and Saturday was the only time we went, you know because we were working and we always had to work. Had a job and had to work.

HF: Did you work before you were married?

DP: You had a job didn’t you?

MP: Oh I just worked in seed houses you know. I worked picking peas in St. Anthony. I worked one winter in St. Anthony.

HF: That employed quite a few people didn’t it?

MP: Oh yes, about hundred and eighty women worked there and that’s the Johnny Chelan Seed Company up there, that’s where I worked; just one building.

HF: Now those days of course they didn’t have any potato houses like they have now.

MP: No, it was seed houses. Everybody worked. I think there was about four seed houses in St. Anthony.

HF: Any here in Rexburg, do you recall?
MP: Yes, I worked in the Johnny Chelan Seed Company here in Rexburg couple years too.

HF: What would your work be mainly?

DP: Picking out the bad peas.

HF: Picking out the rocks and—

MP: Yeah, and picking out the bad peas and the little rocks. And that was about they all did that, you know. Picked out the—

HF: Then they were sacked or packaged?

MP: Yeah, they put them in boxes and then after we’d get a bushel box full then they just come along, pull out a tin and it’d drop down the sack and then it was ready to be packaged. Of course we didn’t do any of that packaging, we just sorted.

HF: Do you recall the hourly wage?

MP: Oh I made $13.50 a week.

HF: $13.50 a week.

MP: yeah.

HF: And how many days a week?

MP: Six days a week.

HF: Six days a week.

MP: Mhmm.

HF: And this would mean just—oh my golly that would be around two dollars a day. And how many hours a day would you work?

MP: Oh we’d go to work at eight and get off at five that would be about eight hours wouldn’t it?

HF: Tremendous wasn’t it?

MP: Then I worked in the cannery factory down in Smithville, Utah one summer too. I made better wages down there than that but—
HF: Well in those days you could what, go out and buy a good pair of shoes for a day's wage?

MP: Oh yeah, what a dollar and a half, two dollars, no more, you know. Money went farther those days.

HF: What was gas in those days, Dewey, do you remember, did you get it for ten cents?

DP: Nuh, I think it was about a quarter wasn’t it?

MP: You could get it for quarter couldn’t you?

DP: Yes? Twenty-five cents I believe.

MP: Cola was about was only about ten cents a gallon wasn’t it?

DP: Huh?

MP: Cola was only about ten cents a gallon wasn’t it?

DP: Yeah, Cola was cheaper I think. Maybe twenty, twenty-five cents a gallon on the gas.

HF: Mhmm, as compared to almost a dollar now.

DP: Yes, it is a dollar now.

MP: Yeah.

HF: Well now you people had a nice family. Tell us their names will yah, Mrs. Parker?

MP: Well I had Max Dewey, he died at birth. And then their was Katheryn, the only girl we had. And then there’s Hugh Smith and Gale Lamore, and Lynn Smith and then there was Brent.

DP: You got to talk a little louder.

MP: Brent and Grant.

HF: It’s okay.

MP: Brent and Grant is our family.

HF: Now I’m sure each one of your sons and daughter have been a real supporting influence and you’re proud of each one of them. And I’m sure that your son whose a bishop now, Hugh, is proved himself. I think it was commented that three of them served missions—
MP: Yes.

HF: And so on, but if you don’t mind, I just like to have you Dewey, tell me a little bit about your son who decided that he wanted to become a professional jockey. That captivates my interest in that here we have in our midst here in Rexburg in Madison County a young man who became a professional jockey, as an occupation. And was recognized over the United States, I think that’s just really intriguing. How’d that come to be? How’d you see that he was going to be a jockey?

DP: Well, we had a fellow down here by the name of Ross Covington.

MP: No before that Dewey.

DP: Well before that, Gale, he was awfully interested in horses. He was always riding everything he could get. And when he as a little bitty fellow—how old was he, ‘bout eight or nine years old?

MP: Seven, eight.

DP: He’d get out and get on a dog gone horses or cows, whatever he could ride and he was just interested in riding horses at this time. And later on, why, he met a fellow by the name of Ross Covington, which wanted to take him on the race track. So he signed a contract with Ross Covington to go riding for him and he left here and went to Long Acres race track in Washington. With Ross and—

HF: Now, when was this?

DP: This was—

MP: 1930—no, the year Grant was born, 1949.

DP: About 1949.

HF: And how old was Gale at that time?

MP: Gale was sixteen.

DF: Gale was about sixteen. So he signed a contract with Covington to ride for him for five years. And wherever he went, why, Covington would take Gale with him. Gale he rode over to Long Acres and then they left there to Mexico, down to Tijuana, Mexico and they rode on what you call a caliente race track.

MP: You forgot to say that’s where he got an apprenticeship.

DP: That’s where he got his apprenticeship for riding race horses.
HF: Did he complete his five year contract with Ross Covington?

DP: No, he didn’t. While he was riding at caliente race track in Tijuana, Mexico, he met a fellow there by the name of—what was his name May?

MP: Jenkins.

DP: Jenkins and he wanted to buy his contract off of Ross Covington, so he traded Ross a racehorse for Gale’s contract. And Ross Covington’s horse wasn’t good enough to race on San Anita racetrack at California. So he got the contract and then Gale went up to San Anita Racetrack and rode there.

MP: For Jenkins.

DP: For Jenkins.

HF: San Anita, now that was also in California?

DP: Los Angeles.

HF: I see and what—was it a much better deal for him, Gale?

DP: Oh yes, lots better.

HF: And how much later was this? What was he, maybe in his twenties by this time?

MP: No, he was just still young, about seventeen.

DP: No, he was only about eighteen, seventeen or eighteen.

MP: About a year after Ross got—

HF: How much did he weigh at that time?

DP: About 100—

MP: He weighed seventy—I tell you I’ve got a letter back home where he weighed seventy-six pounds. And he had to carry so many pounds of lead before he could ride; he was that small.

HF: Only seventy-six pounds and that’s about what he weighed when he first started, when he was sixteen?

MP: Yeah, uh huh. And he had to carry so much lead to get his weight, you know, so he could ride. He had to put that much on.
HF: For heck’s sake. How tall was he?

MP: Oh about five—four, five feet, he wasn’t that tall.

HF: Awfully slender?

MP: Yes, real thin, mhmm. Just a little boy.

HF: And well as time went along of course, he got as little heavier.

MP: Yes he did, he’s got too heavy now.

HF: Well yes, now but I mean for year—how many years did he race?

MP: About twenty-eight.

HF: Well Dewey, have you been with him when he’s been in some of these big races?

DP: Yes, I have. I got my picture taken—before—the race—the horse race—when it win in Florida. And in Rhode Island, and Phoenix, Arizona, California, Washington, all these places.

HF: Can you recall some of the winning horses, their names?

DP: Gosh, I doubt that. I’ve got a picture of them I can show them to you.

MP: Every race he ever won.

DP: He got a stack of pictures, oh, a foot high.

HF: I guess he has.

DP: Out at my place.

HF: Who were some of his competitors?

DP: Eddie O’Carol and Johnny London.

MP: Willy Shoemaker.

DP: Willy Shoemaker. He was riding on the same track that Willy Shoemaker when he started riding. Gale was riding right beside him.

HF: Shoemaker and your son are about the same age?

MP: Yeah.
DP: Yes sir.

MP: Shoemaker has been in our home lots of times. We went to California and spent three months with Gale when he first went away. And we just thought he was too young to go so we went down for three months with him and Willy Shoemaker and Gene Gifford and there was about seven different jockeys that would come to our place each night, well nearly every night and watch television because Gale was about the first to have a television in that area. He bought a television and those jockeys would come over and eat popcorn and spend the evening with us.

HF: Now were these fellows married?

MP: No, they were all single.

HF: They were all single and this included your boy too. He was single at that time.

MP and DP: Yes, oh yes.

HF: I see. How did they compare in size, they were all about the same size?

DP: About the same, they got to be small to be a race rider.

HF: I imagine.

MP: Then Gale got married and had a pair of twin girls and they were born her in Rexburg at [inaudible] Rigby’s hospital. They got here on a Tuesday night and Wednesday at two o’clock in the afternoon he had a pair of twin girls. And they only expected one baby. And then they got a pair of twins and that if that wasn’t a circus…

[laughing]

HF: And it was. Well, I think it’s really exciting though to know that we’ve had out of this community a professional jockey. Could you share with us an idea what their earning might be in an ordinary year?

DP: He never did tell us much about his financial deals though.

HF: I see.

DP: ‘Course I’ve been with him when he’d win a lot of money down at Caliente track down in Tijuana, Mexico. He used to win two and three races every time we’d go down there see. He’d ride at San Anita in the weekdays and then on Sunday he’d go down to Caliente track and ride there. And he’d win two or three races everyday and I never known him to come out of there with less than five or six hundred dollars in one day’s ride.
HF: Yeah isn’t that really something. But he didn’t—did he have an assignment to ride for, say, certain owners?

DP: He had to have an agent engage his races for him.

HF: He did?

DP: Yes.

HF: Now I know on the big races now certain agencies, there’s certain people on a, you know a horse, and they usually get the same rider to go from one race track to another.

DP: Yes.

HF: Did he do this?

DP: Oh yes, definitely did.

HF: I see.

DP: Yeah, they ride there ‘til the meets over with, then they go someplace else, see.

HF: To participate in other races.

DP: Yes.

HF: ‘Course, I guess, those tracks are used about everyday, aren’t they, or every week?

DP: Well just while the meet is on, you know. They have them six days a week. Most of them like San Anita. They ride there six days a week.

HF: Any particular race in which he was involved in which you were an eye witness that was especially memorable to you?

DP: Yes there was. Maybe you’d better tell about that or I could tell about it.

HF [and MP in agreement]: Oh go ahead, you go ahead and tell it.

DP: We was at San Anita one time and he said that he was going to win this race. Dad get your money, all you can afford to put on it, see, on the race.

MP: ‘Course his name was Burance Mann.

DP: You tell it May, please.
MP: Oh, that’s alright Dewey you can tell it. I was just gonna—that’s the winter we lived down there with him. And Gale’s agent—Gale had won this race and it was a long shot he got in. And his agent said, and this had been hard for him to do it again, in the race again. And he said, “Now you ladies go get your hair fixed.” He said that to me and his wife, he said, “cause your mans gonna win tomorrow and we’re gonna wine and dine and shine.” And so we took what little money we had and we didn’t have much but we put it on the horse and this horse came. And when the time come for it to come in it came just in a few feet from the finish line and it just quit.

DP: Let me tell it. It was a mile and a quarter race. He was in lead three or four lengths all the way around the track and they had to go around twice. They come back, just coming in on the straight away in front of the grand stand why the horse for some reason or another kind of slowed up or something. He said that the blinds on the bridle caused the trouble. But it slowed up and he come in second but he figured on coming first and boy we sure would’ve cleaned up a lot of money if he had come in you know. But…

HF: Did he have to—do jockeys use a stick or a strap or a whip or anything like that on their mount?

DP: You bet.

HF: They do.

DP: They do whip them, yes sir.

MP: Sometimes.

DP: Sometimes they do to make them go.

HF: I see.

MP: And some of the owners don’t like it a bit and they’ll disqualify them because they used a whip on them. They don’t like them to whip the horses. Some of them…

HF: Now what was he racing, pretty much, two, three year olds?

DP: Oh yes, a couple of eight years old.

HF: They were thoroughbreds?

DP: They were thoroughbred, yes sir.

HF: Well that’s really something, that’s really enjoyable. Now, you people, yourselves, have lived in the Hibbard Ward all your lives, all your married lives.

DP: Yes sir, practically.
HF: Farmed?

DP: Farmed, yes sir.

HF: There in Hibbard, at Mud Lake?

DP: Yeah, we farmed out there awhile.

HF: What did you have out there, Mud Lake?

DP: Red hay and grain.

HF: Did you live out there or just—

DP: Yes, we lived out there in the summer time.

HF: And of course you had modern equipment then to operate your…?

DP: Well it wasn’t quite this modern like they got nowadays, no sir.

HF: What did you have then Dewey?

DP: We had anti-hay balers and the worst part of it; it took three people to keep it running. You had to thread the needle and push it through the bale; the other guy would tie the knots on the other side see. But nowadays they don’t have that kind of hay baler.

HF: Hay baling was just coming into vogue as an acceptable way to store the hay, was that the idea?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: They hadn’t perfected their balers very well huh?

DP: Well it was a good baler. We had four hundred and fifty acres of hay. But we had to have a crew of men in there, ten men all summer long to handle the hay.

HF: And you just resold the hay?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: What, from the field?

DP: No, we stacked it all.

HF: Stacked it.
DP: Yes sir.

HF: And sold it through the winter.

DP: Yes sir. I hired a crew to stack it while she cooked for all of them.

HF: Did that prove to be a money making business?

DP: Yes it did, it done very good.

HF: Did yah?

DP: Yes sir.

HF: Well now, one of your sons has become the bishop out there. Has Hibbard been a good place in which to rear your family?

DP: I’d say it was.

MP: Very much so.

HF: The spiritual environment and the people you associate with are good high class of people?

MP: You bet, the best, the Latter-day Saint people.

HF: It’s been a good choice place to rear your family?

MP: You bet.

HF: Now they just recently divided the two wards, divided Hibbard into two wards.

MP: Yes.

HF: Was your son—was the bishop of the entire Hibbard area?

MP: Yes, they called us one Sunday morning and told us they were going to divide the ward and for us all to be to church that morning. So we went down and then the Stake President got up and said we’re gonna divide our ward. He says the road that goes past the church house from the Teton River to the Tetons will be the dividing line.

DP: North and South in front of the church was the dividing line.

HF: I see.
MP: And they said, we’re going to release Hugh Parker as bishop of the Hibbard Ward. So we just figured then that he would be out of the Bishopric—

[Break in interview, end side 1]

HF: This is side two of the interview with Dewey Parker and his wife, May Smith Parker, being done on the 13th of October 1979. Now as the other side came to an end you were telling me, Mrs. Parker, I think you were relating about your son. Now when they released him as the bishop of the Hibbard Ward, did he get back in as one of the bishops?

MP: Yes, he is the bishop of the 2nd Ward of Hibbard now.

HF: And so the same day that they dissolved the one ward and made the two your son was retained as the bishop of the 2nd ward?

MP: That’s right, yes.

HF: And you people have continued to live in his ward?

MP: Yes. He’s still our bishop.

HF: He’s still your bishop?

MP: Yes.

HF: How does this feel to have a son be a bishop; to be the father of a bishop, Dewey?

DP: I don’t know that it makes me feel any different but I’m quite honored to have him as bishop, I believe.

HF: As we come to the close of this interview I’d like each of you to make a brief comment about your years that you’ve spent in Hibbard rearing your family, making your livelihood. First Mrs. Parker has Hibbard been a good place in which to rear your family?

MP: A very good place. We’ve always brought our family up in the church and we’ve been active in the church all of us and it’s really been a blessing to us. We have many good friends, many good neighbors in Hibbard.

HF: Now Dewey, has Hibbard been a good place for you to provide a livelihood for your family?

DF: Yes, it surely has. I’ve enjoyed Hibbard and I’ve enjoyed the association with the people that live in Hibbard. It’s been a very nice place to live I think.

HF: One more personal question, with your brother, who was your twin. Has he continued to live and you continued to have association with him up to his passing?
DF: Yes sir, I have, right ‘til the day he died.

HF: What um—

DF: I’ve really missed him. We went fishing together an awful lot and [inaudible] together a lot of the time. Wasn’t every day, but what we’d either call each other up or associate together.

HF: Well people, I appreciate the opportunity of having you come to my home on this 13th day of October.

DF: Thank you.

HF: Of ’79 and doing this interview. Now, I would like to extract that little assurance that you and your wife can bring me a picture to put in this packet of you and your wife; maybe in conjunction with your Golden Anniversary. Were some nice pictures taken that day?

MP: Yes, but they were just on slides, you know. But I could get one, I think, taken off. We had a lovely Golden Wedding.

DP: Don’t you think it would be nice to have her read this piece of paper on the tape?

MP: No, he’s, he’s, no. He’s got more [inaudible] on that thing.

HF: Well, no I think we have most of it.

DP: We could have a little more, we could think it over.

HF: I feel real pleased though, with the result. Then we have the copied material on tape and the material on writing too. I think between the two, why, it’ll provide a good account of you and your wife.

DP: Yes, thank you.