Voices from the Past

The Settlement of Egin, Idaho

Interviewee: Frank Mason, Edith Mason Watts, Fred Herbert Mason, Gertrude Eugene Mason Davenport, and Ben E. Mason

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Tape #76

Oral Interview conducted by Lester Davenport

Transcribed by: Latoria Davis April 2007
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Harold Forbush: Through the facilities of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society located on North Center, Rexburg, Idaho. This tape—tape interview of relatives, aunts, and uncles are meant for Lester Davenport. These people are of the Egin Bench area—[inaudible]…to Lester for having done this wire-taping of his relatives in 1948 and to Elmo for preserving the same and making it available now, so we can put it on—so we can place it onto a cassette.

Lester Davenport: Brothers and sisters, Uncle Frank and Aunt Edith, Uncle Fred and Uncle Ben, I've got these folks here to tell some of the early experiences that they had as pioneers and under the third act you tell them to give their full name. Uncle Frank, what is your name?

Frank Henri Mason: Frank Henri Mason

LD: When were you born?

FM: Five minutes to nine, Monday morning, August the 5th 1867.

LD: Where were you born?

FM: Where?

LD: Yes, where?

FM: Croydon, Morgan County, Utah.

LD: And Aunt Edith, what is your full name?

Edith Watts: Edith Mason Wallace.

LD: And when were you born?

EW: January 4, 1872

LD: Where?

EW: Croydon, Morgan County, Utah

LD: Uncle Fred, describe [inaudible] Mason.

Uncle Fred: I was born August 18th 1874, in Morgan, Morgan Count, Utah.

LD: And mother?

Gertrude Eugenie Mason Davenport: Gertrude Eugenie Mason Davenport. I was born on October 12, 1878.

LD: Where were you born?

GD: In Morgan, Morgan County, Utah.

LD: Is it Ben?

Uncle Ben: I have too many names to remember, so I have it probated as Ben E. P. Mason. I was born on December 6th 1883 in Morgan, Utah.

LD: Okay. Well, I'm going to use Uncle Frank to answer these questions, and then if some of these others can think of anything they'd like to say they can feel free to do it. When did you folks come from Egin Bench?

FM: When did we come?

LD: Yes

FM: On the 21st day of May, 1884.

LD: Why did you come?

FM: Because I have a brother, oldest brother, that was up here in the countries that followed before and wrote quite a few letters telling what fine chances he thought there was for farming up here, and father had a large family, without land down there.

LD: Who was your older brother?

FM: James T. B. Mason.

LD: Alright, what does the name "Egin" mean? Egin it is cold. How did it get that definition? How did it come to mean that?

FM: I don't know how it got the definition. I got the name from a lot of wrestling of people and opinions on what they should name it, but I don't know. I don't know where it got the definition from.

LD: Uncle Fred?

UF: Parker camped with the Broadhursts, Winegars, living in a cabin. They got him to draw a petition to have a post office, and they wanted to know what to call it. So in the bidding about that, he got the Indian word that means "cold," and the nearest they could come to it was Egin. And there isn't another town named that on the face of the earth.

LD: You'd guarantee that would you? (Laughter) Well, Uncle Frank what were your first impressions, or experiences in the country; something that you'd like to relate. Any

outstanding experiences you had or something you saw. Do you remember anything outstanding?

FM: I remember how wearisome the yellow color became, because the whole Egin Bench was a blossom of dump wheat and I wasn't particularly fond of the color of yellow and, so it got noticeable to me, and I thought how eloquent that, that was prickly there, 'cause I went barefooted.

LD: (Laughter) were there any trees in Egin Bench when you folks came here?

FM: There were two or three that had just been planted with a stage by Stephen Winegar.

LD: Where were they?

FM: Do you want section lines?

LD: Well, you could say that from, from the Egin schoolhouse there. Go from there.

FM: There were 200 or 300 hundred yards south of the Egin schoolhouse on the opposite side of the road on the sidewalk in front in of Stephen Winegar's home; the first log house built on the Egin Bench.

LD: Mother.

GD: Well, they were just cut down a few years ago, those trees.

LD: Yes, Aunt Edith did you have—

EW: Weren't, weren't there a few trees down at the Coxson place, also?

FM: I don't think so; there wasn't any water down there.

EW: Well, I knew they had their water from nature.

FM: Those trees were native cottonwood and moved up off the river part.

LD: That's what I—

FM: Stephen Winegar had. He carried them up on his shoulder from the river bottom.

LD: And I understand that they were the first ones on the Egin Bench or up on the Bench.

FM: They were being planted the day that we came by there.

LD: Well, what was the soil like when you came here? Was it same as it is today?

FM: No sir, it was much coarser and more like sand; clear sand.

LD: Was there any water out on the Bench anywhere? Any streams of water?

FM: Yes

LD: Any canals?

FM: The Egin Canal reached down a little ways below the west line of Range 40 east, and it was about 10 feet wide, that's—

LD: You mean where you're presently living?

FM: Sir?

LD: You mean where you're living now?

FM: Yes.

LD: Alright, Uncle Ben.

UB: The reason for the structure or texture of that sand is that it's all volcanic sand and is different than eroded sand from other stratas.

FM: I'm glad you were saying that Brother Ben. Tell them that it hadn't lost all of its volcanic heat. (Laughter)

LD: Well, now I know it.

FM: More than once I've, in the middle of the day I'd jump from one gunk weed to another, land on them weeds, keep from burning my feet, and they were as tough as leather.

UB: These folks are all agreeing is what Uncle Frank's just saying, so it must have got pretty hot.

UF: Well, it was tough luck going to primary in the afternoon.

LD: When did the other canals come out? Could you tell us that?

FM: There was a small canal taken out, straight south of Parker, right at the foot of the Bench. It was never any success though.

LD: What was that canal called?

FM: Little England.

LD: And about when was it dug?

FM: In the year 1885.

LD: And which canal came out next?

FM: Saint Anthony.

LD: And then the Independent was last.

FM: And I guess what they call it, Union Road, that's what came out of it before the Saint Anthony Canal did—before the Independence Canal, I mean.

LD: Uncle Ben.

UB: Wasn't it true that the last one got its name last chance still far north in the Saint Anthony Canal.

LD: About, when was the Egin Canal dug? Do you know?

FM: There's been some contradictions on that. It is, it is run down to the point that I mentioned awhile ago for a couple of years; that'd make it about 1882.

LD: Aunt Edith

EW: The water in the, the water in the canal sunk in Bishop Parker's place there, right where he says that the canal went to. The water sank there and there was no water beyond that.

FM: Well, it—

EW: The ground was so sanded it consumed the stream of waters by the time it got there.

FM: It sunk everywhere that it laid. Sometimes it would reach down four or five miles below the Parker place, and maybe the next morning it'd be up two miles above his place. And there it was chasing itself back and forth. No wonder it wore it shoes out.

LD: Well, how did they irrigate their crops up to the time the flood came up?

FM: They had their water pitchers about four rods apart and turned it out on each side, and pushed as hard as they could with the language they had and went and kicked it a few feet and pushed again. It would only run about two or three rods and sink in before it could get any further, and keep on sinking as long as you left it there.

LD: When did the sub first come up on Egin Bench?

FM: I'm afraid you got me on that date. I know where it came.

LD: Where, where did it first come up? Where, where was it?

FM: It first came up on the northwest corner of what was then known as the Andy McMinn homestead. That is a half a mile east of the west line of Range 40.

LD: And whose place would that be known by now?

FM: Dean Orme.

LD: Dean Orme's place. Do any of you others have anything that you'd liked to—Uncle Ben.

UB: One of the other early points that showed up was on the old William B. Carbine homestead; and that's about a mile northeast of the Parker meetinghouse.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: I just wanted to suggest that you might tell us about the first well, Parker's first well. Attest to the well**.**

LD: Did you do that; the first well that was dug there and attempted there?

FM: It was dug about 1882 and sunk 98 feet deep using little quaking aspen to build a curve well and there was no sign of water when they quit going. They were afraid they'd went through on the other side if they went any further.

LD: Uncle Ben?

UB: The first well dug on the old Mason homestead was dug 35 feet, struck solid (inaudible) still no sign of water. The water came up in it a year or two later.

GD: Six months later I believe, brother.

LD: Aunt Edith you had your hands up a few minutes ago, your mother.

EW: Oh I was just going to tell a little joke about what Bishop Parker said about the wheat crops then. He said, "Well, the wheat stubble is short and thin, but it has got small heads." (Laughter)

FM: I don't know what Genie said, but speaking of that well, two or three years after the water had been running down in the Egin canal, it started leaking into that well about 25 feet from the surface and Father Parker, then a white-haired man, says, "Frank Mason, you know some of these days that this country will all sub-irrigate". I said, "Well I know

what you're saying, but I don't know what sub-irrigate means." Well, he said, "It'll fill up with water, so we won't have to flood the surface." He said, "You'll live to see it." And he lived to see it.

LD: About when was it that he said that?

FM: That was in 1884.

LD: And uh, when did the sub come up?

FM: It seems to me as if it was about two years later then that, we widened the canal. I mentioned how, about how wide it was; but we widened it again about two years after we came here, and then the water started to fill up the ground.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: Did the sub come at all before the St. Anthony Canal came out and helped to, to build up the water from underneath?

FM: I couldn't answer that point; it was pretty close to the same period.

LD: Uh, from what I've understood in talking to a great number of these people and writing to them, it did come up out more towards the Saint Anthony Canal at first, but I wouldn't say for sure, but it seems like the more I've heard it; it came up first. They first noticed the sub out north of Parker.

UB: It showed very much more bubbly up there and quickly when it did come along the Saint Anthony Canal from—what, the Fletcher Place or the industrial school from there two miles west, it filled up pretty fast in there.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: In my opinion, Frank is right about the first evidence of it showing on Andy McMinn's farm.

LD: That'd be the present Dean Orme's place.

FM: Yeah, Andy McMinn took his place up under the Timber Culture Act when he planted his timber on that corner and throwed a lot of water on it, of course, because timber needed water. And that is the first place that something showed. But it wasn't long after that, when the Saint Anthony Canal was built and showed great breadth of sub-irrigated land.

LD: Can any of you others think of any?

EW: I can remember when they first began talking about the sub coming and the Jonathan G. Crapo place was one of the first ones that they dug a well three or four feet deep and it practically filled with good, cold, clear water. And I remember how the people rejoiced when the water got that high in the, in the land. They said the year after we won't have to work so hard to get our places watered.

FM: That Jonathan G. Crapo's place that Edith speaks of was a mile further west than where I mentioned.

LD: Now it would be down somewhere around the present that Levi Moon place.

FM: Right south of Bishop Miller's home.

LD: Oh. A mile north you meant then.

EW: Yes, on, on the corner, south of where Bishop Miller lives now.

LD: Where did you folks first live when you came here? Where did you move to? Uncle Frank, this is to you.

FM: A little bigger than two roomed log cabin with Mother, Florence, Ruth.

LD: Where was that?

FM: It was—I don't know whether you wanted it mentioned by the section lines or not.

LD: Yes.

FM: Huh?

LD: Well, if you can.

FM: It was under the hill, a mile south of the Heman schoolhouse and a half mile west.

LD: On which side of the road?

FM: South side.

LD: And who were some of your neighbors?

FM: William Powell lived up across the road, north of us. John Powell was living on the same place not claiming it, but lived on it just west of us. George Wood lived across the road from him right at his house just up a little bit above the foot of the Bench. George Greenwood was a little bit west of George Wood, living on the edge of the Bench too.

LD: I understood that Francis Rawson lived down there pretty close too.

FM: He did. He lived, he lived a quarter of a mile east of us and little bit north at one time. I, I don't know hardly which place it was he lived first.

EW: And then there was the Smith family.

FM: The Smith, Smith family lived half a mile south of the present Heman church, just under the hill, under the Bench.

LD: Which Smith was that?

FM: It was Samuel Smith, the father to Samuel Smith; who is the father to our present Braden Smith.

EW: And then there was the old (inaudible) Jenkins, west of us.

FM: Did you want more than that?

LD: Yes, who, who were the people who lived on the Bench at the time you folks came.

FM: There was the Stephen Winegar family.

LD: I understood that he and his sons were really the first family to live on the Bench. Is that right?

FM: Yes, they, they and parts of other families lived in some log cabins down on the bottoms about a half a mile west of the present river bridge going to Rexburg and the water got to handy for them that winter. And then Father Winegar, the next summer, moved his house up onto the homestead that I have just described on the Bench. William Coxson family was here about four miles west…four miles southwest of Winegar's. The Latmins were another mile west of them. Two or three families of Rawson: William Rawson and Frances Rawson, Thelme Rawson, and Sam Rawson, all here,

UF: And Bob Greenwood.

FM: Yes, Bob Greenwood, he lived down about a mile north of what they call the Carter Bridge**.**

LD: And where is that Carter Bridge?

FM: Sir?

LD: Where is that Carter Bridge?

FM: I just didn't get you?

LD: Where, where was the Carter Bridge? Uncle Fred?

UF: It is due west of Rexburg,

LD: And about how far?

UF: Six miles.

FM: It's about that.

LD: That's right across the Snake River, is it?

FM: That's where they still cross.

LD: That's by the ferry? There was a ferry right there by it?

FM: The, the, the ferry was the way they crossed there when we came; there was no bridge.

LD: Well, the ferry is still standing right to the side of the bridge down there and I just wondered if that was the bridge. The ferry is right to the south side to the bridge.

UF: To the immediate west and the south of there was one of the big cattle ranches of this country in those days called the HS Ranch.

EW: Where thousands of cattle starved to death in the winter time because there was no food for them and the snow was so deep that they couldn't, they couldn't find food to eat.

LD: Mother.

EW: While people were hungry for meat, those cattle were dying of starvation in the timbers down there.

LD: Mother.

GD: Well, Bishop Parker lived about a mile north of Winegar's, didn't he?

FM: Yes, because they mentioned he's a farmer of the Egin Bench.

LD: What was his full name?

FM: Wyman Myner.

LD: And sometimes he was called Wymie by some people, wasn't he?

FM: Yes, always by his wife.

LD: I'm afraid I misunderstood. What?

FM: I thought that was his name until just awhile back.

LD: And his son Wyman, lived right where you, approximately where you live now?

FM: Yes.

LD: Alright, mother?

GD: Well, didn't Lane Stoddard live across the street and across the canal from Bishop Parker?

FM: There was three Stoddard families that lived there.

GD: It was Lane Stoddard, and Lou Stoddard and Lon Stoddard.

FM: Ed Stoddard.

GD: Did Ed live there too?

FM: Ed, Lane, and Lon.

LD: Where did each one of these families live? Do you remember?

UB: They had three log cabins. Would be right across the road, now, from George Adam's house, all close together.

LD: On the east side of the road?

UB: Yes. Then Lon, Lon moved his up a quarter of a mile east of there, claiming the ranch that'd later been known as the William B. Hunter place.

LD: Uncle Fred, did you want to…or Uncle Frank said what you wanted said there? Any other—were there any other people living here at the time that you came that you can remember of.

EW: The Broadhurst.

LD: Which Broadhurst would that have been?

EW: Bill Broadhurst and his brother Sam. Sam lived down under the hill; a mile east of the Samuel Smith place, down under the hill.

FM: Dave Broadhurst

EW: I can't give the—

FM: And David Broadhurst.

EW: And Bill Broadhurst lived down here west of what, where Saint Anthony is now. He lived on a, on a little farm down there. His house goes right to the Egin Canal.

LD: Was Richard Broadhurst here at the time you folks came?

FM: No.

EW: He was a little later than the other two.

LD: Richard Broadhurst was among the first ones that came here, and I wondered if he was still here when you folks came.

FM: Richard Broadhurst was an older brother to William and Sam and Dave.

LD: Ok, Uncle Fred.

UF: About the time that Grandpa Davenport had come.

FM: He was here when we came. His house, his house was right about as near as you can tell where George Adams' is right now.

EW: I thought it was near the canal about—it was quite close to the canal and near the road.

FM: It might have been a little bit closer to the canal.

FM: It couldn't be much closer because Fred Davenport's house isn't very far from the canal about—

UB: I'd say it was right, square on the spot.

EW: And Brother Davenport had a tiny, little store attached to his little one-roomed cabin, one-roomed home.

FM: Don't you believe her when she says that, that was Anne Claret's store.

LD: I was just going to ask which Davenport that was, now.

EW: Well that was Edward.

UF: His name was Edward.

FM: Edward W. Davenport was our shoemaker when we first came here.

EW: I was going to say he had a very tiny little store there and he kept a shoe shop and mended people's shoes and he did admirable work.

FM: And we've got the last at our place that he built them on.

LD: And it was Dave Wallace then that took care of the store.

FM: Yes Sir.

LD: And that was a part of their home; that was built right onto their home.

FM: Their, their little store was built in by itself, a little bit of a board house home with logs; a log house.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: Well, I've got to keep out of this, personally (laughter).

LD: Uncle Fred just telling that me was my great grandfather, Edward W. Davenport. There's another store here, owned by Mr. Stanford. Do you know when that was built?

FM: I don't, do you?

UB: No, I don't know how soon after he came, but they were there. They were here a year after we were.

LD: They came a year after—

UF: That's Bert Stanford. I was still going to school in that school house down there on Sam Smith's place.

FM: Did you want to ask Fred where that store was? Somebody disputed me talking to you about it.

LD: Well, not very much. Did you want to add anything on to that, Uncle Fred?

UF: Well, I don't know who is the present owner of the property, but it—for years it was the Johansen's place.

LD: That's the Stanford store you're talking about.

UF: South of where the Egin store is now, and down by the edge of the Bench.

Unknown: (inaudible)

LD: Do you happen to know which one of those stores was built first? If there's a Davenport.

UF: Oh, the Davenport Store.

FM: I told Lester a long while ago the Davenport store was the first one built in this part of the country and somebody else told him no, the Stanford store was.

UF: They're wrong.

GD: The Davenport store was the first one. The Stanford store was a year or so, at least.

FM: Nobody lived on the Stanford side when we came up the Bench.

LD: I remember that Henry Powell told me about coming to the Stanford store—or to the Davenport store in his early childhood. So it was certainly one of the first ones.

FM: William Tell family was here when we came, I forgot to mention that.

UF: Well, I thought they lived in Camas.

FM: Huh?

UF: I thought they lived in Camas that time. They moved over.

FM: Well they had a claim down under the hill west of Father Jenkins's place and there was a—Do you remember a half a mile of cedar post barbed wire fence right along with side of the road when we drove in here? And that was his fence, but he was at Camas working on the railroad.

LD: Did you folks homestead your first place?

FM: Sir?

LD: Did you homestead your first place?

FM: No, Sir.

EW: Father did.

FM: Uh…

EW: Oh I thought he did.

LD: I understood that that was only John Powell, pardon me, John Powell.

FM: Father, father homesteaded the, the place where we lived. He got a relinquishment from a man by the name Ralphel and then he filed on it, and later turned it over to John Mason, our brother.

UB: The facts are that our most first places were taken. The Homestead Act could not been passed by Congress, but they were taken up under what was called Preemption Act in Timber Culture and nearly all of them were taken up under that first claim. Then the act of the Homestead Act was passed by Congress, then the same ones had to go and re-file. They still had the squatter's right claim upon their land, but they had to go and re-file under the Homestead law. I remember a good deal of disputation about it. I remember that one man even threatened Frank's life with an ax because they were—he wanted to drive him off of our homestead.

LD: I wondered why Henry Powell spoke of the tree claim.

UB: That was the Timber Culture Act. Then there was another one called the Preemption Act, which was really a squatter's right. The man on it first could preempt the claim and hold it until it was thrown open by government, act, and survey, to be filed on at homestead. You'll find that in their Congressional Records.

LD: About then was Debt Act brought about?

UB: Oh that was a long time later in my memory. The Debt Act was added to the Homestead Act and very enlarged into the enlarged Homestead Act and they allowed them to take more than 160 acres.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: And I'd like to suggest that our father made his entry when he rode a horse down to Oxford to make the filing.

EW: Oxford was then the capital of—the capital of Oneida County that had recently been cut from Owyhee and that took up all the eastern and south-eastern part of the state of Idaho; county of Owyhee and Oneida.

FM: Wasn't it just two days after we landed here that Father went back to make that filing?

EW: It was just a few days, I don't know just how long.

FM: That water that Edith was speaking of that had (inaudible), due to the, (inaudible) was just up to the hub, just about, well just in front of the hub (inaudible) when crossed. Two days later when Father went back down there with one of our horses he had to swim it. He got wet up to here.

LD: Well Uncle Frank when did the—where did the first settlers settle here?

FM: First what?

LD: The first settlers, the Winegars and most people, where did they first live when they first came here?

FM: Well I answered that once.

LD: That's right you did.

FM: Father Winegar and one or two of his sons; the John Powell family—that meant wife and all—and Harry Smith, they called bachelor Harry, Frank Parker, Tom McMinn.

EW: Wasn't Jim Smith there then?

FM: No, Tom, Tom McMinn, and I think one or two others, lived in that four or five little log cabin group the winter of 1879. Father Winegar came here in July 1879 and those others came along there about 10 and most of them were thinking about trapping. Winegars were trappers.

LD: And that was what brought them here, rather than raising crop.

FM: Yes. Father Parker was the first one to really start the motion going on farming.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: And had quite a section. It was all fenced at the time we came.

LD: Well, I was just going to ask you, how many of the streets were fenced when you came here? Uncle Fred?

UF: Besides that farm, the little fence around Stephen Winegar's lot was the only other one.

EW: Wasn't there a little piece around—

FM: Coxson's way down there.

EW: Wasn't there a little piece around Wyman Parker's place? Brother Jim was putting the posts in on the west side of the Wyman Parker place.

FM: He was digging the hole, digging the post hole.

EW: Digging the post holes the day we arrived here and he was watching for us down the Bench as we came up the Bench while he was between digging post holes.

LD: I understood that Uncle Jim helped to lay that road, is that right?

FM: Yes

LD: Alright, so how did the weather compare to when you first came up here to what it is now here? The winters and summers.

FM: Well, it wasn't all alike. The first winter we were here was about the next to the mildest winter that we've ever had. We ran wagons all winter getting our fencing in about 10 inches of snow. There was about eight inches of it when we moved up to Parker in March, wasn't it?

EW: Eight of March.

UB: We picked a side hill to get some bare road and out of the snow.

FM: And it was a very mild winter and this winter that Edith is speaking of awhile ago when there was so many cattle that died, was an unusually hard winter. It was most years the cattle could reside nicely down around in that country that gapes west of the Egin Bench; but that winter was a heavy snow and cattle died by the thousands.

LD: Aunt Edith you were telling me a little story about when you were coming up to Egin Bench, about the river, would you mind telling us that?

EW: When we left, what was known then as Market Lake, now known as Robert's, we came a few miles just side of there. The river was so much over flown that it, it covered the road that we should have traveled on and we had to go out on the brinks to a half broken road; a very rough road through the lava rocks and sand. When we got up a little aside of the Buttes, this back water stream was so deep that the cattle didn't want to enter it and the folks had to get behind them and push them in. They pushed them in, in different positions to find out were would be the best place to attempt to cross with the wagons. But we moved in and they had somebody take a horse off the vehicle and ride the horse through in two or three places in order to find the best place to cross with the vehicles.

LD: Well, how did you cross the river?

EW: We didn't cross the river then—oh we crossed at the Old Fork at Idaho Falls at the old bridge.

FM: Cold Bridge.

EW: Pole Bridge of Idaho Falls and came up on the northwest side, we came up through Market Lake.

GD: Eagle Rock

EW: It was then known as Eagle Rock.

LD: Idaho Falls.

EW: Yes, it was then known as Eagle Rock they didn't call it Idaho Falls, it could be years later and we came up from that side and by way of Market Lake we were on this side of the river. I say this side, I been used to living down in Egin.

LD: You crossed the river again at the Market Lake then, did you?

EW: No, we didn't cross the Market Lake at all, we went—

FM: No, when you cross at Idaho Falls, with this part of the country we stayed on this side of the river all the way.

LD: On the west and north side, I see.

UB: And might I say that, that, that bridge was known as the Sawyer Bridge, at Eagle Rock. And that was the first one ever built across the North Fork of Snake River.

LD: And Uncle Fred, you were telling about your impressions of the sand when you drove up along through there. Would you tell us that; the wagon, the steel-tired wagon running through the sand?

UF: It was Arly and me back of the covered wagon. And he was toiling up that sandy road. I don't have to shut my eyes to remember the sound of the wheels grinding in the sand, making a squeaking grind all the ways.

LD: Uncle Ben.

UB: No wonder, some fellow remembering that wrote the famous song, *Wagon Wheel*.

LD: How did you sell your crops, when you'd leave them? How did you get them to Market? Uncle Frank.

FM: We didn't have any crops. (Laughter)

EW: It was some years before we were cropping enough to sell, what little they did sell they took to Market Lake through that lava rocks and sand.

FM: Father Parker had his crop in, of course, in May it was up. He said, "Jim if you want to take care of that wheat and oats there the rest of the season, you can have half of it." And Father says, "That's a bargain." And we had water ditches about four rods apart running both ways out of that ditch. Half an hour after you've shipped it to another place you could drive across it with a wagon without cutting in. And the, the water sunk that fast and we irrigated that drain seven times and then we got 10 bushels of wheat to the acre and12 bushels of wool. The chickens ate that, I guess, before they settled in Market.

LD: Well, then after crops were raised, they were hauled by wagon to Market Lake for sometime, were they?

FM: Yes.

LD: Alright, and what did you folks eat in the winter, at kinds of times when you didn't have all the things that the modern store had, how did you live? What did you eat? Uncle Frank.

FM: You do without.

LD: Mother.

GD: Well, we hadn't, we ate lots of rabbits, didn't we. We didn't have much else.

FM: We trapped them too.

GD: Yeah, trapped rabbits.

LD: Fred.

UF: We did have potatoes. Sometimes we had onions and I remember when we didn't have anything to put in to flavor them with, we used to cut up the raw onions and the boiled potatoes and mix them up together. We'd like to have some bread with it, but we didn't always have it.

LD: Uncle Ben.

UB: I recall one of our severest winters, when it was impossible to get the first mill that was ever built in this country, to get any flour and we were out. And it was so cold that the potatoes froze in a little cellar under the kitchen floor and then we had nothing to eat for a few days, but there was potatoes and they were frosted until they were sweet.

LD: Mother.

GD: Well, Aunt Mary and Aunt Millie went to Camas and lived in the morning houses over there in that railroad town, and borrow our flour for several winters and a little bacon to go with the flour; small amount.

FM: When we'd raised a little grain to have flour, the people in on the Bench here had been without for some days, we were snowed in. There were no tracks out anywhere except the cattle track to the river where they went to get a drink and I made up my mind that we'd been without flour long enough and I was going to go to Rexburg and get some. My neighbor Harry Simpson says, "I'd pitch my team on along with yours and put a little wheat in your sleigh and with yours and I'll go with you." There wasn't any bridges then. We crossed on the ice straight down south of Parker, and—

HF: Side one of tape two. Continuing the interviews with his aunts and uncles, done by Lester Davenport; pertaining to Egin Bench in Fremont County. The tape will be concluded on this cassette.

GD: Well, thank God it didn't carry you away. It was a lynx.

LD: A what?

GD: A lynx.

LD: Does that remind any of you other folks of anything that you'd like to tell here? I still, I can still put a, put a few new minutes on here.

UB: I remember distinctly when the deer and antelope and elk, used to roam all over the country and I was a little bit of a kid and I can still see some now at sunset and they were on a little raise just west of our own house and north of John Davenport's old house towards the sunset. And it made such an impression on me that I've never forgotten the thrill of that silhouette. And never have I forgotten in all the tens of thousands of miles that I have traveled over the earth, the silhouette of the old Juniper at sunset. And the most inspiring thing that I've ever seen upon the face of the earth was my earliest recollection of the Teton Peaks against the morning sunrise. They are the grandest of all temples in this earth in my memory.

GD: Well, when we lived at the same old, little house, we went out one afternoon, we saw an old deer and her two little fawns running up through the country about where Lonnie Miller's house now stands.

LD: Well, I've got about an hour and half time and an hour of school, so that's pretty good, but I'd just like to say in closing that I wanted to get the Mason family together, and as many of them are available and record this as a family group. And just for the record this is Lester Davenport speaking and I certainly enjoyed this interview and I wish that I'd asked more so that I could describe all of these people who could think of and who were able to tell, but this will give some of the experiences of the early pioneers in this county.

UB: I wished I had mentioned when I was U.S. Patrol we'd go to [inaudible] with them and I said we'd used, very largely, cedar wood that some people had grown up with some

very winding ideas or lack of knowledge that cedar growing as big as it did. 'Cause it was cedars out there in those groves it was over three feet through.

EW: Our first house that we built there in Parker had cedar logs for foundation logs that held the house for 24 years before they rotted and gave out.

UB: I've got one of them home yet, that isn't rotten.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: And right in the nearest sand hills where the road goes through, we call, the red road, that blowed down. There were groves of cedar that a young person would have gotten lost in and that's what the people (inaudible) can see.

UB: I've been out there after a load of wood when I could hear ax's and turn to that direction and couldn't see anybody.

LD: Uncle Fred.

UF: Referring to the molasses meal just briefly. A friend of mine, Scott Wright needed to get a bucket of this skimmings to make candy. He took a brass kettle and we, we left the meal and was going up through Tom Smith's field walking along the sandy ditch up through the snow. I was carrying the kettle and my right toe caught in the left leg of my overalls, and I stumbled forward and I brought the kettle down, but I kept it right side up, but it hit the ground so hard that it splashed the cool of the skimmings on the smooth sand. We didn't want that all the way, so we got on side of it there and knelt down and we were licking the top of that skin, it didn't go immediately into the sand because it was so thick. And Scott bobbed my head and shoved my face into it and when I picked up my face, it only showed sand, except for the openings of my eyes, nose, and mouth. There was another little patch there and he thought it was going to get wasted, so he went to take some more and, of course, I didn't do a thing. He said what a damn fool I was not to know that you'd do the same thing.

LD: –move my car down over the side of the first settlement in this country and I'd like to have him tell us more about that. And so I'm going to ask Mr. Rawson some questions and, and that will give him the opportunity to discuss about these things. Mr. Rawson what is your full name?

William Rawson: William Rawson.

LD: Uh, where were you born?

WR: Coalville, Utah, January the 15th 1873.

LD: And, uh, what were your parents' names?

WR: Francis Rawson and Lucy Rawson.

LD: And when did you first come to Idaho?

WR: We came to Egin Bench in 1881 in April. I should have said that first.

LD: In April?

WR: We actually got here April 1st—

LD: And, how did it come to be named Egin Bench?

WR: Well, near as I understand it, the Winegar's and John Powell was here first and they called it the Egin Bench, Egin.

LD: You said in the beginning it was Egin Bench, the whole Bench up along here?

WR: Yeah.

LD: Well, who was here when you came? Do you remember?

WR: Well, as near as I can remember there was John Powell and his family and William Rawson Senior and his family. Robert Greenwood and his family, and then there was the Broadhurst boys, William Broadhurst and Steve Broadhurst and the old man Broadhurst; those boy's father.

LD: What about the Winegar's?

WR: Didn't I mention them? But nonetheless, there was Stephen L. Winegar and his family.

LD: Uh, what about Jim Smith, was he here when you came?

WR: No, Jim Smith didn't come for a year or two year after. I don't know just what year.

LD: Where did, where did these people live, some of these people. Where did John Powell live when he came?

WR: Well, he lived right up in the hill, right close to where we lived. But the winter before that, '79 he lived down in, in the timber like and the water came up the ice board and he had to move out in the winter time.

LD: And, where did William Rawson live when you came here?

WR: Well, I'm not right sure where he lived. But he lived right close to where Uncle John Powell did the one winter, the winter we lived there.

LD: Was he here with John Powell the first winter, William Rawson Senior?

WR: I couldn't say for sure whether he was or not, but I think he was. And then Parker's came in June after we came in April, the same year.

LD: That would be eighty-two.

WR: Eighty-one.

LD: Eighty-one. Stephen Winegar was here the first year, wasn't he?

WR: Yes, Stephen Winegar was one of the first, I guess about the first one that landed on the Bench.

LD: You mentioned an old gentleman Parker, do you know when he came?

WR: Yes, he came in June, the same year: 1881.

LD: And where did Stephen Winegar live when you came?

WR: Well, right there on the old Winegar place, where Mrs. McFarland lives now I—No.

LD: That would be about an eighth of a mile south of the present Heman schoolhouse.

WR: Yep.

LD: And where did Robert Greenwood live?

WR: Well, as near as I can tell you it was right down under the hill, right down about due south of where old William Powell lived down on the Bench by (inaudible), down under the hill.

LD: You mentioned that John Powell moved from where he lived when you came. Where did he move to then?

WR: Well, he moved down under the hill, just, oh, about fourth, no not a quite—

LD: Around an eighth of a mile?

WR: About an eighth of a mile from the foot of the hill there, where you go straight down south to the old John Powell place.

LD: That would be east of Will Farmer's house, right? You're talking about, just about, just down under the hill there; east of Will Farmer's house. Is that right? Where, where John Powell lived.

WR: Yes it's, yes.

LD: Then the first settlements were made down there, rather than at Parker or at Saint Anthony. Was that right?

WR: Yes, yes there was, there was no ward at Parker until a year or two after that.

LD: And when was Saint Anthony, when was the first time it was built in Saint Anthony?

WR: Um…January.

LD: Uh…you said around 1889.

WR: Oh, about 1889 or '90.

LD: And when was the first meetinghouse or schoolhouse built on Egin Bench?

WR: Well as near as I can remember it must have been around '83.

LD: '83?

WR: Yeah.

LD: And where would that have been?

WR: Well, on the south of the hill right by Sam Smith's old place, just on, what's known now as the Rhodehouse place.

LD: That'd be about an eighth of a mile south of the Heman church—the Heman school and church.

WR: About a quarter of a mile south.

LD: It'd be about a half a mile, to tell the truth.

WR: Yeah, about a half a mile.

LD: Well, when were the first houses built up on the Bench itself? Do you remember?

WR: Well no. Winegar's lived on the Bench when we came here and, and they also had the post office. First post office was the Winegar's house.

LD: Who ran the post office?

WR: Well, the old lady was, I think, was the postman.

LD: Mrs. Winegar.

WR: Yes, Mrs. Winegar.

LD: Then who followed them—who followed her?

WR: Well the post office, I think, went from there to young Wyman Parker, up across the street, right where Frank Mason lives now.

LD: You mentioned some Parkers. What Parkers was that that you mentioned?

WR: Well, it was gentleman Parker, Wyman M. Parker…

LD: And his son?

WR: And his son young Wyman lived right across the street from where the old gentleman lives and lived and the gentlemen lived right where Harold Harbor lives just now.

LD: And you said that he lived where Frank Mason now lives.

WR: Yeah.

LD: Where did you live when you first came here?

WR: Well, right down under the hill, right down from where Ray Sidorse lives now, who was down there today and seen—see the place where the house is sitting on the hillside there.

LD: When was the first canal dug down on Egin Bench?

WR: Well the first canal learned about on the Egin Bench onto the old Parker farm there in 1883.

LD: And what was the name of that canal?

WR: The Egin Bench, the Egin Canal.

LD: Egin Canal. And when was the Saint Anthony canal done? Do you remember?

WR: Well, no I don't remember, but it wasn't long after the Egin Bench ditch until they started the Saint Anthony, but it was quite a while before it got done.

LD: Well, when was the Union Canal dug? Do you remember that?

WR: No that was quite a while later and the Independence was dug later on then that.

LD: You mentioned awhile ago some Gypsies. Would you tell us about them?

WR: Well, there was some Gypsies right up the top end of the—where the bottom is now and they parked there and they left, a (inaudible) that they had there and she had a colt with her and they just left the colt with her. And Willie Winegar and Jim Powell and myself went up there to catch the colt and we ran the colt to Willy Winegar's house, run him out 'til he couldn't run him no longer, and while he was gone home to get a new (inaudible), Jim Powell and I caught the colt. And then his father made him give the colt up to William Winegar later on.

LD: I see. Well, where was the first store built?

WR: Well, I couldn't say whether it was the Davenport store or the Stanford, but there was both had stores.

LD: What Davenport was that?

WR: That was Joseph Davenport.

LD: And what was the Stanford's name?

WR: Alfred Stanford.

LD: Alfred Stanford.

WR: Yeah.

LD: And where, where were they built?

WR: Well, the Davenport store was built right just a little bit north of where Lester Davenport lives now.

LD: And where was the Stanford store built?

WR: Well, it was built down where Gertie McNee lives now, right there. She—that's where they lived.

LD: I see, and you mentioned today and I—right down over the Bench, about an old Indian woman. Would you tell, would you tell us that story now about this Indian woman and their girl.

WR: Well, the first winter that we lived down under the hill there after we came here, there were some Indians came and camped right close to our house and they left an old lady and her young woman or she called her, her daughter. And they lived there all

winter and she used to fix currants and blueberries down on the river in the summer time and take them to my mother for salt—or for sugar and flour. She slept in our house one night because it was awful cold; Mother let her make the bed down by the stove. And then there was another Indian squaw who used to come there and she helped do some quilting on one of mother's quilts.

LD: Was it very unique work?

WR: Just as unique as any white woman ever made.

LD: Earlier on today, you mentioned a Jim Smith, where did he live?

WR: Well he live just up the road a little north of where Otto Nielson's place was under the hill. He had a blacksmith's shop there and a home.

LD: Do you recall any other interesting experiences like the Indians or Gypsies or anything like that you had in your early life that you'd like to tell.

WR: Well nothing, only, there was a big band of Indians camped by our place one time and them folks all went up in the hills hunting and they left the squaws home with the horses, all—only had what they were riding. And an old squaw lost one of them and tied him up to a tree and he pulled back and choked himself to death. The old lady was quite afraid the old man would whip her when she'd come home. She'd come up my mother's and cried and say her man sure whip her when he come home. Mother told her no, she didn't think so and she didn't bother.

LD: Well, I guess you must have had a lot of interesting experiences and have done a lot in helping the community. Did you help with the digging of any of these canals or anything like that?

WR: Yes Sir, I worked on every canal we've got out on Egin Bench, from the top of them to the bottom.

LD: (Inaudible) how they were dug.

WR: Yeah.

LD: How was the, how were they surveyed?

WR: Well, William Broadhurst surveyed them with a level on a straight edge.

LD: And how did you dig them?

WR: Well, we dug them with (inaudible) and scraper, plow, some places had to blast a lot of rock out, of course I didn't have anything to do with the blasting of the rock, but I have turned. I drove team on every ditch that's made on Egin Bench.

LD: Well, do you remember when my grandfather Mason came?

WR: Well as near as I can remember he came in June 1884.

LD: And where'd they move to? What part of—

WR: Well, the nearest I can remember, they lived on—in the bottom right, just east of where Will Farmer lives now, on the street there.

LD: Were the Davenports there when you came?

WR: No, no.

LD: Do you know when they came, Joe Davenport?

WR: No, I couldn't say it when they did come.

LD: First recording tonight is being made, also, at the home of William Rawson, on the evening of October the 22nd 1948 and with him are his sisters, Mrs. Lucy McLiman and Mrs. Jane Crapo. And Mrs. Crapo was telling me a little story just a few minutes ago about an incident that happened with the Indians in early days here. So I'd like to have her repeat that. Will you do that Mrs. Crapo?

Mrs. Crapo: I can remember well when the Indians used to come pick berries from my mother's garden for (inaudible), things, flowers, and her flour and sugar and, also, I remember when one of the Indians fetched their little baby over, because he happened to get some coli, which my mother's (inaudible) house get the Indian while she was very scared. Thought it was going to die.

LD: Well when I was here the last time, a young man came and was telling me that during the earlier years this country then referred to the people that lived down under the hill as Little England. Have you ever heard that name applied to those people?

WR: Not to my knowledge, I haven't.

LD: And was the name Little England Canal—well did you ever hear that applied to that little canal, which was down under the hill.

WR: I'm sure I never did; not to my recollection.

LD: Have you Mrs. Crapo? Have you ever heard that?

Mrs. Crapo: No, I—

LD: Have any of you folks ever heard of or seen any of these little baking ovens, which I described to you, that Al Winegar has piled up. Have you heard of them?

WR: Never have that I know of, no.

LD: Okay. You were telling me a little incidence a few minutes ago, Mr. Rawson, about some people camping on the Egin Canal. Would you mind telling me about that?

WR: Well, George Jenkins and his father camped on the, on the south side of the Egin ditch just up east of where Hal Hunter lived, a short distance, after George Jenkins and his father came.

LD: What year was that?

WR: Well George has always told me that it was in 1883.

LD: 1883.

WR: And they got water out of the Egin Canal when they camped there.

LD: And a few months ago you were telling me about the cabin in which a few people lived including Harry Smith. Would you mind repeating that?

WR: Well as near as I can remember now, it was about four lived in this little cabin part of the winter of 1879 and then they—my Uncle William Rawson was one that went with them down to Menan and worked on the head of the first canal that was brought out of Menan and it was stick and shovel work. They had to run it out.

LD: Could you name those men who were in that?