

Voices from the Past

# Life History of the Wilding Family

Interviewees: John Henry, Dollie, and David DeWayne Wilding and Leulla Wilding Park

February 27, 1980

## Tape #127

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by: Tia Aucoin, June 2007  
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Harold Forbush: Through the facilities of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society located on North Center Rexburg, Idaho. The following reel to reel taped interview is now being transferred onto a C-90 cassette, this 17<sup>th</sup> of June, 1984.

HF: Oral history of the Upper Snake River Valley. It's my pleasure this evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 1980 to have here in my office at Rexburg, Mr. John Wilding of Idaho Falls and his wife, Dollie, and Dwayne B. Wilding of Rexburg and his sister, Luella Wilding Hart of Rexburg. We are here that we might explore the history of the Wilding family as it goes back to the original convert in the church, David Wilding, in England. So let's, uh, with a lot of joy people that we welcome you here this evening. First of all, I should like, however, to chat a moment with John Wilding and then we'll do this with each, asking the full name of the person and the date and the place of his birth and go along in this fashion. Mr. Wilding, will you state your full name, the date and place of your birth?

John Wilding: I am John Henry Wilding. I was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, 1893 in Salt Lake City.

HF: Now, your father.

JW: My father is Henry David Wilding.

HF: And your mother?

JW: Eliza Hannah Oldham. She was a convert to the church in England and immigrated. They met in Salt Lake City and were married.

HF: I see. Now, the Wilding family goes back several generations. Could you, could you tell us who the original Wilding, his name, that came into the church and about when this was, and where, and who was instrumental in bringing him into the church?

JW: David Wilding is my great grandfather and as far as our history records his life, he was baptized by Heber C. Kimball. He was a rebel in [Preston Rigby?] He was [?] in 1838. They immigrated after their conversion to the church. I might say this that David Wilding was the first member of the Wilding family to join the church was presiding over the Rochdale Branch when the first conference was held in England by Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young [???]. He reported the Rochdale Branch as the first number of the Millennial Star. They immigrated to Nauvoo in-

Woman: In '38?

JW: February the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1839.

HF: Well let's see now.

Woman: [inaudible] February 1849.

HF: What we might do is have Luella Hart, Wilding Hart just read a little of this portion of the early history from the, from the journal. Now, did you prepare this journal, Sister Park or...?

Luella Wilding Park: The Family Genealogist.

HF: The family genealogist.

LW: [Sam Mistro??]

HF: And [?]. Now who was, who was the family genealogist?

LW: Geneva Wilding. Geneva [Mortenson?] [?].

HF: I see. And-

LW: And [?].

HF: For the Wilding family?

LW: For our organization [??]

HF: Okay. Now maybe, maybe we should have you read that excerpt from the, from the record in onto the tape. And I think this would give us some dates and a little background up to at least to the time that they came to America.

LW: Okay. Well, "When Heber C. Kimball led the Mormon Elders to England he set up the British Mission. Among one of the first converts to the Mormon faith was George's father, David Wilding. He joined the church in 1838 and the following year, 1839, David Wilding baptized his son George in the River Ribble near Preston. George was confirmed a member of the church by his father and Thomas Richardson. George sailed with his parents and brothers and sisters from England on the ship Echo the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, 1841. They landed at Nauvoo the first of May 1841. The Prophet Joseph Smith was the first man George became acquainted with in Nauvoo, Illinois. George often held the proper [?] [?]. At one time the prophet laid his hands on George's head and blessing him, said to his father, David, "David, this is your son and he will be a great blessing to you." George was then eleven years old and wondered what this meant, but later understood as his father and the other members of his family left the church and died as apostates."

HF: Now, just going back to Brother John Wilding, this George of whom she made reference would have been your...?

JW: My grandfather.

HF: Your grandfather. Do you remember a little about him as a youngster?

JW: I met my grandfather while I was just a lad. I remember he wore a long white beard; it was right about his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Then he came up to Idaho and visited with my father and mother and spent several weeks with us. We became quite a well acquainted with him, after we learned to love him. He was quite active at that time.

HF: How would you characterize the feel of the stature of the Wildings as you know them?

JW: The Wilding family are pretty well built; around 200 pounds in weight. My grandfather George Wilding was about six, just over six feet tall. My father was six feet two inches tall; in the prime of his life he weighed around 240-50 pounds. So they were good sized men.

HF: Now, John, is there any characteristic about the Wilding family that could be brought out? Were they characterized by, were they builders in occupations? Did they enjoy the great outdoors? How would you characterize the family if you were going to mention one particular characteristic?

JW: I think that the Wilding family are outdoors men, yes. They love the outdoors, they love wildlife, they were always ready for doing fish sports, hunters, at least. They loved the wildlife and to [live to love it??] and have a lot of wild game. My grandfather was chosen as the lead supporter for the company as they came across the plains and he did very well with that. Him and his companion supplied the company with meat as they came west across the plains. Now to fill a characteristic of the Wilding's right now [?] they like the wildlife. They like herding, they like fishing. They like the outdoors, most of them were farmers. My grandfather, George Wilding was a very good mason. He worked on the cut stone for the Salt Lake Temple and then he [?]. He worked there in the stone quarries and cut stone of size that fitted into place on the Salt Lake Temple; for several months as he worked there.

HF: This is a rather an interesting comment, the Wildings being sportsmen and being lovers of the outdoor life. I think sitting here with us tonight is, perhaps, we couldn't find a better specimen of an individual who has been engaged in sports, selling sports goods, and enjoying the great out life, outdoor life. Let's see, it would be the great, great grandson of David Wilding and here he is D.D. Wilding.

DW: Well, I have spent most of my life in the sporting goods business having operated a sporting good store for about 21 years. And we disposed of it recently and then now am engaged in a gunsmith trade repair of fire arms, and I have a firearms collection of my own. And we're helping to get this museum started for the Upper Snake River Historical Society.

HF: Dwayne, in your activities in sports and the outdoor life, I suppose you've done a lot of hunting, not only in Idaho, but in other places. Is this correct?

DW: Yes, this is true. We've oh, it seems an annual affair. We have a hunting, at least one good hunting trip every year. I've hunted in Arizona, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Idaho mostly, and we're planning a trip now to Alaska in the near future. I've been able, so far, to bag most every kind of game we have here. The Rocky Mountain sheep and the goat are the only two that I have yet to get; I have killed all the others.

HF: Well that is indeed remarkable. Now his sister, who has read just briefly from the Wilding life story, or journal, is Luella Wilding Park; and I'd like to have her perhaps read, continue her reading of the life story, how they started west on the, on the trip that is to say David Wilding and his family of eight or nine children. If you have that at mind perhaps you can name those who constituted the David Wilding family?

LW: Well, we don't have the exact number of the children, but it was a large family which David had with him. And he was employed as a carpenter and his son George was a Mason and they both labored on the building of the Nauvoo temple. David came to Salt Lake City in the early 1850's, but just a few years later then his son, George, and his family. David made his home on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> North and 5<sup>th</sup> West; however, he lived there but a short time, returning to Nauvoo where he joined the [?] church.

HF: Then we don't have much added information about David, but it was his son George who remained faithful and active in the church. Now, could you quote from your journal the company in which George came west and some of the experiences they had as they came west?

LW: Yes. "When George needed money to make the trek to Utah, he went to Oregon [?] and worked on the farm digging sweet potatoes. One night the men who were working with him were cursing the Mormons. George said to him, 'You should be men of understanding, I am but a boy, but I am a Mormon and it hurts me to hear you speaking this way. Please do not curse my people before me.' They never again said more in his hearing. George, his wife, and baby son crossed the plains with the Benjamin E. Gardner company. They left Kaneshville, Iowa the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1852. The company consisted of 241 people and 45 wagons. Fourteen of their number died on the way of cholera. George's wagon was drawn by one horse and one cow. The wagon was not [?]. George and his brother-in-law, Horace Owens, [paid?] the hunters for the immigrant train, the purging of wild meats such as buffalo, elk, and deer, and so forth. Their firearms were mussel loading which took about five minutes for reloading. There were thousands of buffalo in Wyoming; therefore, at that time there were no meat problems. They were able to furnish all the meat. [The buffalo, though, was huge by their company?]. Often after a hunt they would enjoy curling up by the campfire for a [?]. One day while returning to camp after a hunt, they came upon a spot where there were many new graves, they counted 130. One man had been wrapped in a [???] when buried and it had been partly pulled out of the ground by a bull. George put forth his foot to turn up the face to see if he could recognize it. The corruption came out and he smelled the terrible odor of cholera. Soon he contracted the [???]. One night as he lay almost dead in [pain??] he heard the cat come outside and say, 'We will stop over tomorrow to bury George.'

Between gasps George said, 'No you won't; I will live.' He remembered his father's words, 'Take strong whisky for cholera;' David Wilding was a doctor. George's wife, Elizabeth, went to the camp of Horace Owens. As Horace was night watchman and got whiskey and into the glass she put black pepper; he drank it and was able in a short time to continue his journey. The company arrived in Utah the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1852 after four months on the plain in fairly good condition."

HF: Well that's a marvelous account, isn't it? That is indeed a marvelous account. Well now, John, as you recall the story, were their, their conditions were rather bleak when they arrived in Utah -- that is the early colony in 1852 -- and maybe you could make some comments? Just how it was for them that winter?

JW: According to the history of this family, George and his wife lived in the covered wagon that they crossed the plains in for the first winter and their second child was born there in that wagon. They had a rough time while supporting themselves for the first, for a while that they were in the Salt Lake valley. George Wildling went out with his sickle and worked cutting grain with his sickle [?] and very often he would drink his days' pay of full in the [little?] sack of something [with grain in it?], which his wife would bake bread, feed the family for their meals. Well this is about the conditions that they lived in during the first stay in the Salt Lake Valley.

LW: "Mary Elizabeth Layne, the wife of George Wilding, raised flax, spun it, and wove it into cloth, and from it made the family's clothing and underwear. She dug roots and thistles, and this was [??] spent her family until George could reach their first harvest of grain. They also helped to feed other immigrants who settled in their neighborhood until they could care for themselves."

HF: Now we, perhaps, should learn just a little about George and his family. I understand that he had by this time or some time later entered into plural marriage, having two wives. Could you, could you quote from your journal or you people contribute to our information about these two wives, their full names, and something about their families?

LW: "The first wife of George Wilding was Mary Elizabeth Layne, whom he married with their [?] 1850 by Orson Hyde, married by Orson Hyde, in the post office at Kaneshville, Iowa [??]. Two wagon loads of relatives and friends went with him and all returned to their home in [?] to celebrate with a [wedding humor?] George had but 50 cents and Mary Elizabeth, 75 cents. George gave his 50 cents to Brother Hyde for marrying them. After the wedding dinner was over, the girls in the party took the bride to their room and put her to bed and the fellows took groom to another and did the same with him, and thus ended the celebration. Their first home was a one room log cabin with a built in bunk bed, which was made by boring two holes in the wall and nailing a post to the floor for the two other corners. Raw hide was stretched across the bed and a [?] was placed on the raw hide [?]. Then a sheet and two quilts, a frying pan, and two plates completed their household equipment."

JW: [Inaudible]

HF: Now, in his two families could you, could you give us an idea of how many children there were?

LW: Yes. To Mary Elizabeth Wayne and George Wilding were born 13 children: five sons and eight daughters. That was all of them.

JW: That was all of them.

LW: That was all of them.

JW: That was all of them.

LW: “On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1875, George Wilding, age 46, and Fiona Lioha Winter, age 18, were married in Salt Lake City. George was destined to have a large family of daughters by his second marriage also; eleven to be exact, and one son.

HF: Now, John, you, do you come through the first family?

JW: Yes.

HF: And your father’s name was?

JW: My father was Henry; Henry David.

HF: Henry David. Do you know a little about his early background in the Salt Lake area before, before he moved up into the Upper Snake River Valley?

JW: My father, according to his record and to what I remember of him, he had very little schooling; that is, he only went through the, what he called a fifth reader. But that was about the size of his education. He worked at [?], he worked out of the [?] at Salt Lake. He was married when he was 18 years old. My brother, who had immigrated, probably she was 19, Eliza Holden.

HF: What induced them to come up here into the Upper Snake River Valley?

JW: Father had a sister, Alice, older than he, that moved up into Idaho first. They had lived here approximately two years when father decided to leave the Salt [???]. And find a little boy [agreeable?] [?] and was working hard out in the sun. He liked farming and he decided that in Idaho was a good opportunity to obtain land and start out on farming, you know, life that he so much liked. He left Salt Lake City after three children were born. They went to the Salt Lake Temple in 1893, same year that the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated, in September, and had three sons sealed to them before they left Salt Lake City.

HF: Will you give me the names of the three sons in accordance to their age?

JW: David was the oldest son, Ellis Preston the next, and I was nine months old when they left Salt Lake City. We left there on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September in 1893, traveled in a wagon on my two horses, with all of their equipment, a few chickens and what would go with a family at that time. They landed in Rexburg on the 5th of October in 1893. He came here to Idaho Falls across the river there on the bridge. The old bridge that crossed onto the west side of the river and they came up the west side of the river through the ferry; and so it was almost straight west of Rexburg right to the [?], where the new highway crosses the river now. He put the wagon on the ferry and swam the horses through the river and [??] on the south side and continued their journey on to what is now Rexburg.

HF: According to your understanding, did your parents have friends at least? I don't suppose they had relatives up here in eastern Idaho?

JW: His oldest...

HF: Other than his oldest sister.

JW: His oldest sister, Alice [?] [?] lived in Hibbard just west of Rexburg when it was, of course [?] they visited first and lived the firsts of winter. [No travel farm?] just [north of the Teton river?] of Rexburg. A little log house that they cleaned up after [?] and the first year that they [?] in this country.

HF: Didn't your father subsequently acquire a farm or ranch in the Sugar City area and raise his family there?

JW: Yes, father worked on farms and he did farm on it for the first two years that he lived. And he started to work riding a farm that was owned by the, the owner at the Summerhayes livestock ranch, owned and operated that ranch. That was right close to where Sugar City is now, but he lived on there for approximately ten years. Settled the children [??]. Then after that he bought a piece of land, 40 acres of school land. Just covered with sage brush, he moved [on to that?] into the sage brush and lived in a tent. The first summer, while he built a log building that he used part of it with his family to live in and he used the other end as a barn protecting horses and cows during the winter time. The next summer he built a log house, 20 feet square, the [?] a family. That is where I first really remember my childhood days was in that little log house on the banks of the Teton River. That was uh...

HF: Which, which fork of the Teton River are we talking about? The north fork?

JW: We lived on the south fork, southeast of Rexburg, about three miles up the river from Rexburg; we lived right on the bank of the river. 9:00 is where the Sugar City Cemetery is now. Yeah.



HF: Now how many were in the family? Can you name your brothers and sisters who grew to maturity and in turn had children live of their own?

JW: Yes, father and mother had 11 children, six boys and five girls. David was the oldest, Ellis, myself, John Henry, Earl Raymond, Sarah, Lizzie, Maggie, Harry, Frank, Alice, and Vivian.

LW: Vivian.

JW: Vivian and Alice [??].

HF: Well now...

JW: And all of these children grew to maturity and were married before any death occurred in the family.

HF: And of this family of Henry Wilding, many of the Wilding's in this area today are from this particular family.

JW: Yes; these, all of these boys, of course, carries the Wilding name. Dave, the oldest one has five boys and one daughter. My brother, Ellis, the next one died soon after he was married; they only had three children, they lost their first child, a girl. The next one was a boy, Preston; he is now living in Phoenix, Arizona, he has quite a big family. His daughter lives in Iona, out there near Idaho Falls. Then there's myself; we have two boys and two girls living, we lost one girl. I, I don't have a record of the rest of the children but...

HF: I see. Well that's, that's very, very interesting. Now, John, you were married to your lovely wife here when and where and oh -- just briefly indicate; well, I'll have her just briefly indicate her background and as a matter of fact, Sis. Wilding, why don't you give this part of it? I think its only right that you should do this.

JW: I might say that I went to England in 1915 on a mission, while I was there and on that mission of 1915 until 1919 and I met my wife, [Lavinia?]; we weren't married though until after I came home of [1919 and then got] married in 1920 after I returned home. If we'll just let her, she knows more about the marriage than I do. (Laughter)

LW: Well, I'm a convert to the church over in England and John was a mission president there. And after he came, returned home, he corresponded with me; and then my sister came out [first and] our family immigrated to St. Anthony, Idaho. And it was so close to Sugar City that I didn't have any idea that I was going to meet him again. But after we came here for a little while, then we, I wrote to him and then he came over to see us; and that's what started our courtship.

HF: And you were married where and when?

LW: We were married in the Salt Lake Temple on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1920. We have, like he said, we have five children, but we have four living.

HF: And of more recent years, you people have moved to Idaho Falls, your present address, and you've engaged, both engaged, in a considerable amount of temple work and officiating in it. Would you like to just comment about this, each of you, about your temple assignments?

HF: Do you want to first?

LW: Well, my husband was in an accident, see, in 1956-57. And he was, so that he couldn't farm any longer so he, he sold the farm and then we got this assignment in the temple; and so we've been working in the temple for at least 13 years now. And so, after he sold his farm then we moved to Idaho Falls so that we could be a little closer to the temple.

JW: I might say that after we had two children, Malcolm and Marla, they were both called on a mission to California where we served for six months on a short-term mission in California. After I returned home from California I was on a stake mission. And then after our next son was born, right after, we returned from the California mission. I was called on another mission to Canada where I served another mission there under the direction, of supervision, of President [Orsenvac?], in the Canadian mission. After this mission was filled, I was called as a stake mission president in the North Rexburg Stake; I was the first North Rexburg Stake mission president. I labored in that capacity for four years where we made more converts in Rexburg than I ever did in the mission field. And since then I've held another stake mission and then we was called into the temple and we've been there now for...

LW: 13 years.

JW: 13 years. I've learned all of the parts, taken all the classes in the temple, with the exception of sealing; I've never been called as a sealer, that's where I've never served. At this time, I studied three to four days a week for 13 years now.

HF: A very grand service, I'm sure. Now, let us turn our attention to you people, brother and sister, the grandchildren of George Wilding and -- you can give us a little of your history in how, how this ties in relationship.

LW (I think): Our grandfather, George Wilding, was the oldest child of George Wilding and a brother to John Wilding's father, Henry. Now George Wilding Junior was born the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, 1851 at Winter Quarters, North Pigeon, Pottawattamie, Iowa. His parents were with the saints that had been driven from their homes in Nauvoo. George was born while his parents were preparing for the trek to the Salt Lake Valley, with others of the early pioneers. He was one year old when they commenced the journey. He was the son of George Wilding and Mary Elizabeth Layne. His father was among the first converts to

the Mormon faith in England. His mother was converted to Mormonism with her father's family in Clay County, Indiana, and later moved to Nauvoo. The Wildings lived with the Salt Lake Valley the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1852 and arrived there the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1852 with the Benjamin E. Gardner family for company. [Inaudible]

HF: Now your father, your grandfather Wilding, George Wilding, I suppose spent the greater part or all of his life in the Salt Lake Valley. Right in Salt Lake or...?

LW: Right in Salt Lake.

HF: And could you tell me a little about his activities, either one of you, his occupation there in Salt Lake, or maybe his life that he lived for his family?

LW: He was a farmer all his life. There was a short period of nine years when they went down into Sanpete County in Southern Utah for what reason we do not know; whether they were called to go there or went of their own [?], we don't know. But he received his schooling in the Salt Lake Valley with others of the pioneer children and he was baptized in the year of 1866. We don't know the days and he attended church in the 16<sup>th</sup> ward of Salt Lake City and there he was ordained an Elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood. And he attended church regularly and there became acquainted with the Brown Family who were converts from England. Sarah Brown later became his wife and Mother of their 11 sons and two daughters.

HF: Now [Dwayne] did your, did your grandfather ever know about the Teton, excuse me, about the Upper Snake River Valley? Did he ever have occasion to come up into the Upper Snake River Valley? Your grandfather.

DW: I think he probably knew of the valley alright, but he never had occasion come here. He died at the age of 46, was it?

LW: Forty-seven.

DW: Forty-seven years of age, so he didn't have much of an opportunity to come to this valley; and he spent all of his life in the Salt Lake Valley. They lived in Hunter, out in Hunter Ward at the time of death.

HF: Now, your father, can you tell me a little something about your father? When, what induced him to come up here into the Upper Snake River Valley?

JW: Well, the father come into this valley to work on the railroad. He helped build the railroad from here through to West Yellowstone. And Uncle Henry, John's father, was here and, of course, through that acquaintance he had relations here; and he come up here and he worked here for some time before he was married; and then returned to Salt Lake and there he was married and lived in Salt Lake. Were two children born there?

DDW: Luella and Ida were born in Salt Lake, and George too. And then they moved to Downey, Idaho and myself and my brother Arnold were born in Downey; and then they come from Downey to Rexburg and spent the rest of their lives here in Rexburg. Father was a farmer most of the time. He operated a [crashing?] machine in the fall each year and he used to manage a sheep sheering [?] in the spring. This seemed to be kind of a set procedures that we'd go through every year, sheer sheep in the spring and run the [?] machine in the fall and farm in the meantime. We always milked a lot of cows; and in fact, during World War I we operated a Dairy here in Rexburg. In part, he was in a partnership at that time with John's older brother, Ellis; and in fact, they were partners at the time Ellis died.

HF: Now, let's see.

LW: Father came in 18[?].

HF: What time did your father come into the valley?

LW: In January 1899 he came to Rexburg to work for Uncle Dave, but he had been here before that time [?].

HF: Now, who was your mother and how did, under what circumstances did he meet her, how many, how many were there in, in your father's family? How many brothers and sisters, in other words, did he have?

LW: There were nine children in the family, three girls and six boys. Mother was a convert to the English, or to the Mormon faith, from England and she came just before her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday with the missionaries from Idaho, Brother Brahm, Frank Brahmwall. And she made her own way from that age until the time of her marriage in 1908.

HF: Now let's see, am I correct in saying that your father's name was also George?

LW: George, uh-huh.

HF: And, and he had a son by the name of George.

LW: And we have five generations of George's.

HF: Five, five generations.

LW: From oldest to oldest son to oldest.

HF: Isn't that interesting?

JW: Wasn't mother cousins to John's mother?

LW: Yes; and mother, our mother, was a cousin to John's mother. They were cousins, you see, and John's father was my father's uncle and this is the way they met. They met at the home of Uncle Henry and Andy Rice and...

HF: Rather a double relationship there.

LW: Oh, yes.

HF: That's, uh, that's very interesting. Well now, was your, was your father, George, interested in sports, outdoor life? How about that Bro. Wilding?

JW: He was probably one of the best wing shots of the shot gun that ever hit this valley or any other valley, I think. He spent a lot of his time hunting for the market when he was young in Utah and he was exceptionally good; I still have men talk to me about what a shot he was with a shot gun. Father didn't seem to have too much interest in rifle shooting for some reason and hunting big game, he didn't, he went a few times with us younger fellows in his later years, but he, he was a bird shooter and one of the best. He always, always had a bird dog along with him, no matter where he went he had a bird dog. There was one interesting thing I'd like to mention about John's father, Uncle Henry, we always called him, or Uncle Vick; he told me about when they lived in this little log house that John mentioned when they first come to this, this country. This is where John's brother, Earl, was born. And Uncle Henry said that he had made arrangements for a midwife; they didn't have any doctors in those days. The midwife didn't show so Uncle Henry was the midwife, the doctor, the father, and the whole thing there; so he, he actually delivered Earl himself. This gives you an idea of some of the hardships and the things they had to put up with in those days that people couldn't get around like they do now and you just had to do with what you have and meet your emergencies when they come up.

LW: [Inaudible]

LW: I remember John's mother, Aunt Eliza, telling us about the time that they had the dreadful, they -- didn't they call it black diphtheria -- up here in this valley in the early days. This was the time that the Evan's family had it so badly and many died and many lost their speech through this. And I remember she helped, I think she told me, she helped Sister Evans with this family at this terrible time.

HF: Now, Luella, did your parents have a home right here at Rexburg where you, you children pretty well were reared in the party; and where was this located?

LW: We came to Rexburg to make a permanent home, I think in about 1910 or '11, and soon after this our father bought a home on the Teton river here too, just out of Rexburg a mile.

HF: To continue the interview, turn to side two.

Part 2

HF: Side two, continuing the interview with Brother and Sister John H. Wilding, D.D. Wilding, and his sister Luella Wilding Park.

Woman: And then I attended school for, in Sugar City, for some time, for a short time, and then I commenced work and I took a salesmanship course through the J.C. Penny Company and have a diploma of graduation on salesmanship from there. Now Dwayne could tell you probably more about the boys.

Dwayne Wilding: Well, all of us boys received our education here in Rexburg. I remember I started school in the Washington school building. It was a fairly new building at that time and I attended school in the Adam school building when it was brand new, when it was first, first built. Then I was one of the first classes in the, what is now, the junior high school here in Rexburg, but we went there in grade school; we were in the sixth grade and that was before the building was completed and ready for high school, but they had about three rooms in the building completed and we went there in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade; and then later I went to high school at Madison. I have the first three year books that Madison put out; '24, '25, and '26 and that was the, that was the extent of my education in Madison High School. I never did graduate from high school and no college education at all.

Dollie?: I'd like to say- um, the only school, the only public school in Rexburg at the time I started school was the Bill Washington Building that still stands on the high school ground.

JW: This is John speaking again. I went to the first Ricks Academy that was built in Rexburg, it was in a log cabin they called the Ricks Academy. That was where I went in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade in school. I never did go to college after it was built, but I did ride on the sleigh while my father hauled rock to build the Ricks College, the first building of the Ricks College. I remember very well hauling, going on the sleigh and hauling rock down to the college ground to build that building.

HF: Now this would be the administration building or the Jacob Spori building, wouldn't it?

JW: Right. That was the first building that they built, what they called the beginning of the Ricks College.

HF: Very interesting. Well now, Dwayne, what, if you can recall and try to analyze, what were some of the circumstances that perhaps led to your, oh, interest in, in selling sports goods, that is the Rainbow Sports shop I'm assuming that you opened and established and got going. Maybe you could give us a little history on that, any comments which you would, which you'd like to make?

DW: Yes, I, I was always rather interested in the sporting goods. I, I like to fish and hunt and, by the way, the sporting good business is kind of a poor one to be in for a man who likes to hunt and fish because you got to work when the season opens. You don't, you don't get nearly as much fishing and hunting as you would think. But we moved away from Rexburg when, when we were, after Mother passed away, soon after Mother passed away, father moved to Medicine Lodge out west of Dubois and bought a ranch out there; and we spent seven years out there and then the depression hit, and so we had to leave there and come back here and start over again. My brother, Arnold, and I went together and bought out a soda water bottling plant here that belonged to Ben Sainsbury, and the Sainsbury Bottling Plant. We bought this out and operated it for, for two years. Then I bought Arnold out and he went back to farming, and then I closed down the bottling plant and started jobbing for the old faithful beverage company out of Idaho Falls. I operated this business for 10 or 12 years along with a roller-skating rink. Then World War II came along and I had to go to the army for a couple of years and the soda water business disappeared during this period because there was nothing, there was no materials available to make soda water during the war time. After I returned from the service, I operated a roller-skating rink for a couple of years and then decided I would go into the sporting goods business as I still had the building that I had operated the soda water bottling plant in. So I started out with a third of the building and as our business grew I took over another third and later on another third of the building; and the business continued to grow so I rented a building across the street. I operated this business for 21 years and it continued to grow all the time while we operated it and then in 1969 I sold it to the Ricks brothers who were operating the store at the present time; and I've started the gun repair shop now.

HF: Just to projecting for a moment and, and reflecting on your interest in gathering artifacts of the Upper Snake River Valley of Pioneer Vintage, have you found this whole area to be, oh, plentiful with artifacts and items that one could get, gather, and collect reflecting pioneer life?

DW: Yes, there's a wealth of artifacts around the area now, although, we are losing a lot of them because we don't have a place to take care of them. There's a lot of them have being scrapped and junked and everything, but I have, I have kept a collection of firearms. Of course, this has been my hobby for well, I have some guns that I have owned for 40 years and I have always added to this. It seems to be a, not a particularly planned activity, but in the sporting good business it just seemed to happen. These old guns accumulated and I found myself with a collection of them, so then I got interested in it and started collecting firearms; and at the present time I have about 225 firearms and have them on display in the, in the gun repair shop. Now, as far as the historical society is concerned, they have agreed to use half of the building that I'm in now and we're going to establish a museum there. We have been organized for five years now and about all we've done is talked, and wished, and hoped that we could do this, and that, and the other; but finally we've got a location now where we can start and start to display some of these things and we're in hopes that people will donate these artifacts to us rather than haul them to the junk heap, or burn them up, or give them away, or something of that [?]. And it does look good now; we're on the way and I think we, we can make some good

progress. The county has gone along with us now and at the beginning of next year we'll receive some money to help us out in our problems and I think in the near future we can have a good museum established in this area.

HF: Thank you Dwayne, I think that's just real fine. Well now as we close the tape, touching on the history of the Wilding family, I would like to hear just a statement from each of you as to, oh, almost anything you would, you would like to comment as we, as we complete this tape. I'm going to start this with John and his wife, then Luella and Dwayne. And this just comment can be pertaining to the influence of the Wilding family, the Wilding name, it's activity in the church or in the community, in building up the Upper Snake River Valley, just anything that would be seemingly pertinent. John?

JW: I would rather say, not very boastfully, but I believe that the Wilding family has established themselves in honor in this community, in this country through here. We have been throughout my life, and ever since we have been here, a rather a missionary family there's been a lot of missionaries leave the Wilding family to go into the world, preach the gospel for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There's been a lot of converts saved on the [Inaudible] and I would say that that was one of the highlights of their lives ambition, is church work. There's a lot of the boys that I would call, I would say today, as not wealthy, but in really good circumstances and they've made it all from good hard labor. I think that they have established themselves as honorable men and women in this valley.

DW: I have enjoyed this family and the family that I married into, especially the George Wilding family. They have always seemed like brothers and sisters to me. I've really enjoyed the family. Because it's -- I think I've just been a little closer to them probably than my own family.

LW: Thank you, Dollie. Well, I want to say that I love this Upper Snake River Valley. To me it is home and always will be. I've, have my six living brothers and two sisters close by me and I too was able to fill a two year mission with my husband from 1956-58. I have a grandson in the mission field. We have a niece and a nephew in the mission field at the present time; and I, I love this valley and I've written two or three poems about it and I'm grateful for my heritage in this land.

DD: I think as a family we've been real fortunate that our progenitors did settle here; this valley has been very good to us. As a family we, like John mentioned, we have worked hard and stuck to our efforts and our work; we have been well rewarded. The whole family is financially, well, we don't have any worries. We're not rich people, but we don't have to worry. We, we still all like to work; everyone in the family is working, although some of them have reached the age where it's probably not necessary to work anymore, but it seems that they all have enough industry and enough back bone to keep going anyway. The only time we seem to quit working is when, when the final end come, we don't retire and lay around. Now, I, a lot of people thought I was going to retire when I sold out last year, but I, I had no intentions of retiring when I sold out. And as far as this valley is concerned I have been almost all the way around the world and



during my lifetime, and in almost all of the states in the United States, and I have never found a place like the Upper Snake River Valley. I'm happy here; I don't want to go anywhere else and I'm gonna stay here the rest of my life.

HF: I appreciate very keenly of the opportunity and the privilege which has been mine this evening to interview you good people on the history, the activity, and the glory that the Wilding family has achieved in the Upper Snake River Valley.