

Voices from the Past

# The Community of Hibbard, Idaho

Interviewee: Elmer Hendricks

September 25, 1982

## Tape # 45b

Oral interview conducted by Harold Forbush

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Side two of this tape will deal primarily with the community of Hibbard. And the interviewee, that I am privileged to chat with this 25<sup>th</sup> day of September 1982, is Elmer Hendricks who has lived in this kind of a bedroom community of Rexburg for all these many years. Now that particular terminology, I guess, is referred to such popular places as Salt Lake and the bedroom communities would be Bountiful and Farmington and so on, but as this time as we are recording, many people have their employment in Rexburg and yet they drive in and about a ten minute's drive from Hibbard where they live. There they have a two or three or four-five acre lot in their home and have their garden and maybe a cow or whatever. But they sleep out there, about what... five miles out?

Elmer Hendricks: Yes.

HF: Three to five miles away they come in to Rexburg and have their daily employment. Now Elmer, would you share with me the date and the place of your birth.

EH: I was born in Huntsville, Utah, on December the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1898 at the home of my grandparents, John Felt.

HF: F-E-L-T?

EH: Yes. My grandfather comes from maybe ...

HF: Well, now alright. But you had... your mother had been living already in the Hibbard area?

EH: Yes. The folks were married in 1896 and they moved into Rexburg. Father had already acquired a farm here, a place, a number of years before. They moved into the new one room log cabin on the farm. And when I was due to come to the earth, Mother went down to Huntsville to live with her parents, stayed with her parents while I was born.

HF: And that explains why you were born in Huntsville near Ogden.

EH: Yes.

HF: Now who were your parents?

EH: My father was James Hendricks, he was the son of Josiah Hendricks, from Logan, born in Logan, Utah. My mother was Josephine Felt. And lived in Huntsville, her parents would come from Sweden. And established a home and farm in Huntsville and she was born there in Grantsville and moved to Huntsville.

HF: Did any of her people ever come in to the Upper Snake River Valley? The Felts?

EH: Well, her one brother come up here for a few years, Hyrum Felt, lived. She was from a polygamous family, her father had five women. She was of the youngest family

and her immediate family was four children, that lived, some have died earlier in life. But there was four that I new, Hyrum Felt, Gest, Steve, Lindy, their sister, there were four of them.

HF: Elmer, had your father and mother homesteaded out in the Hibbard area?

EH: Father come first and took the farm as the Desert Act. He come here and work for his brother and live with him and found this piece of land available and he bought the relinquishment from a man and took it over as a desert claim and then when they were married and moved Mother here and he turned it into a homestead. And then filed on as a homestead.

HF: 160 acres?

EH: Yes, I think it is 160 to start with yes. And he sold off 30 acres later on and to his brother, that come as a sort of a surprise. When he was working here, he worked with the time that sugar factory was being built in Sugar City; quarried out the rock and helped faced the rock at that time, he got some rock in his eye. And because of that lost his eyesight, practically so. Had to go to Salt Lake for treatment and sold 30 acres of his land in order to pay for that debt.

HF: He didn't loose his sight then.

EH: No, he was fortunate enough that he was able to have doctors, doctors thought maybe he was going lose, he took treatment here in Rexburg for a time and just kept getting worse and worse and finally he had to go to Salt Lake. I think it is Dr. Stoffer treated him there.

HF: Dr. Stoffer.

EH: He was one of his doctors and then maybe the first one or the young ones but he is one of the doctors.

HF: That is interesting because he was my doctor.

EH: Was he?

HF: Years later.

EH: Well.

HF: Now what is your earliest recollection of your home on the ranch where you were brought back as an infant to be reared?

EH: Well, I remember I was a little fellow, after getting big enough to get around, I used to run around in the farm and on sage brush. The place was covered with sage brush

when they threw it up and the land will clear few acres at the time a year and pine and the crop and go off to Montana or somewhere and work for a while and make stake and finish paying the debts. He left mother alone a lot of the time because he had to go up to get help that way and he worked at Anaconda and Butte Montana and different places. Hayle, Idaho. He, that way, made the expense to pay for the developing of the farm.

HF: He was a miner then?

EH: Well, not necessarily, he worked at the mines, he worked in timber work, he work in Anaconda work and brick yards there. I have a picture of him and the crew in Anaconda working at the brick yard. So he had a variety of that just labored with their different jobs and he applied on the farm. He was a hard worker he was big, husky man and he used his strength to the maximum, he always worked hard and done a lot of heavy work. He was well liked, made a good success on the farm and developed it up. And I remember him when I was just a little kid who was down burning sage brush one day, clearing some of the ground out and got my sleeve on fire. Started to burn my hand. I stated to holler and cry, Dad come running, grabbed me by the hand, run my wrist around and smothered the fire out on my sleeve, and it was kind of a scare because I didn't know how, to remember how bad that blaze got to going. Anyway, it got to burning me, scared and cried. But I had the experience of growing up. I could remember through the years, of the fall, seeing them burning sage brush, out in the neighboring fields and all. Grubbed it off and rake into rows and burn. There being fires, strings of fires going across the fields. At night, generally they burn at night.

HF: Were other neighbors doing about the same thing as your Dad?

EH: Yes. We had the neighbor of Joseph B. Rigby was our closest neighbor on one side. The Clements on this west side of us joined our farm.

HF: What was his first name?

EH: Eugene Clements. He was the father of Cecil and Lester Clement and those boys.

HF: And he was a neighbor on your other side?

EH: Yes, he that time lived on the west side. Lived at home on the road, running east and west. Later he built home up on the other corner reserve up close to us. He owned a big section of ground in there and he donated the ground for the building the church house, where it now stands.

HF: Now that wasn't the first church, though, was it?

EH: No the first church in Hibbard was a log cabin built up in the Dewy Parker farm, where Dewy Parker home now stands. He built first a one log cabin and started out, that is for the church and school and all they used that. And finally a second room at his long building of it. And I was pretty young when that was transferred in 1900; they started to

build the new frame building on the corner where the present church is. Built a nice frame house here and that's clear where I grew is full of church activity. And while I was on my mission in 1923, they built the new school. And then...

HF: Was it near the church?

EH: The school where I went to school was just kitty-corner across the street from church like where Ferris Robison now lives. It was, while I was there it was four room school house, it started out with two room frame building. They added two rooms of brick on the south sides of the frame. If I remember it was the own belfry in the top, a bell in the top that ring if ....

HF: So kids would respond to the school bell?

EH: Yes, sometimes.

HF: Now the building preceded the brick building?

EH: Yes.

HF: Where it was built, about 1921 or '22?

EH: Yes. Maybe it is now. And you see this other was up on the corner in this half a mile...a little over quarter a mile north where the overall regional was.

HF: Do you remember your teachers?

EH: Some of them, I remember. Well it started out Leo Jake was one of the teachers that – I had picture of the school when I was first stated school. It was Leo Jake and Mrs. White who taught. Mrs. White must have been my teacher. I don't remember much about that beginning. Leo Jake was the principal of the school that time. Then, went through the years, several of them. Remember toward the last, one year Lewis McClellan, that I always admired, had already come from back east used to hire a lot of student teachers from different places back east them days because it wasn't available here. And this Lewis McClellan, he was a good sport kid and we all liked him, and yet he was a good teacher and I learned quite a lot from him. Remember going to down the, after he went here, he went down to a school close to Ogden, Korean, or somewhere they were talking. I went visiting...

HF: He probably was not a member of the church, was he?

EH: No, there were several of those teachers that taught those days that were not members of the church.

HF: But they were good community people.

EH: Nice community people. And then Jenson it was, I can't think his first name was. I graduated under from eighth grade, there were ten of us. I have a picture of the graduating class.

HF: What year was that, Elmer?

EH: 1915.

HF: Is when you graduated from the eighth grade?

EH: Yes.

HF: Did you go on up here to Ricks then?

EH: Yes. Yes, I come up to high school at Ricks. I went through high school and graduated in 1920.

HF: All four years?

EH: It took barely five years to make it. I wasn't a brilliant as some students, I guess, but we went through a year of the flu at that time. During that time is when the school was closed down for some time, with flu epidemic. Then one year I was out of school for quite a bit time with the inflammatory rheumatism. I was crippled up, couldn't get around so I missed school and slipped back, I had to take an extra year. I should have graduated in 1919. But I didn't quite have credit enough to make it and graduated in 1920.

Sister Hendricks: I think the more you get through far, you ought to tell how your mother kept track of you. Her only child.

HF: You were the only child?

EH: Yes, I grew up all alone.

HF: Is that right?

EH: I had one sister, who lived up to the age of six weeks and died. So that is nearest I come to having any companionship. I often say I'm caught out of the girl class. I grew up alone as a boy in a home and when we started out we raised five sons no girls. So I don't know much about the women side.

Sister Hendricks: I've had to help him out, because, and fill in for the girls. But anyway, we got along real well. But I do want to tell you how his mother kept track of him out in all that sage brush, which is higher than he has. She put a red sun bonnet on him. And she said she can see that bobbing up and down among that sage brush and that way she could follow him.

EH: Had an old dog that used to follow me too. They'd call the dog to find me.

HF: Oh, that is interesting. Did you do quite a lot of horse back riding, Elmer?

EH: Not a great deal. I didn't do a lot, we didn't handle many cattle. Always milk cow and that all I did ride. I didn't do a lot of saddle.

Sister Hendricks: His boys are the horse back riders. Our Son, the last son we had, Elray Hendricks, was awarded the all around cowboy at the BYU in 1965. So they're the ones that take sport up.

HF: Isn't that interesting.

Sister Hendricks: Yes, he was awarded a prize saddle because of it, with his name on it, and then the year the stirrups.

HF: Now thank you for that contribution Sister Hendricks. Now Elmer, what was your first employment where you earned maybe a dollar an hour or dollar a day or whatever?

EH: I didn't do much of employed work only because we were are the only ones in the farm. Dad did the farm and I stayed at home and worked most of my life, very little of employment. Till later years, I remember just before I went on my mission, I worked some in the beets and things and I thought I had made a fortune. I went and worked down to neighbors, top beets for a couple hours in the morning till it is time for the beet dump to open. And I worked as tare man on the beet dump. I got \$5 a day, for my day at the beat dump. I'd make a couple of dollars at topping beets, I thought I could buy the world, I thought I was really making some money. That seems small compared to nowadays, that it makes it hard for me to adjust to all these inflated prices that were used to be fine, nowadays.

HF: Now they did have a beet dump in Hibbard. And there was a spur of railroad from Sugar City down to Hibbard. And that indicates to me there must have been a lot of sugar beet producers there in the Hibbard District.

EH: There was quite few produced beets there. See there was a series of dumps down along the track along the Sugar City, one in the Salem area. It is on the Salem road and it is going from Rexburg to Salem was a dump there. One down, they call Jacob's dump, was in the north where Del Reybow now lives. There is a dump there, and the one we call the Hinckley dump, is where we used to lay hold beets, too. That is down where the track turned right; it was in the Hinckley farm, at that time, it is used to be. It is right across the road from where Dennis Rock now lives, out in the field there, Lester Rigby's farm, there.

HF: Is that the terminal of the...?

EH: No, it turns the tractor and then it went down to the river, right across the street from Hyrum Summers' home. They ended right again just a side, there was a dump there.

HF: There was a dump there?

EH: And that accommodated the people from Plano in quite a few beets were grown and brought in from Plano area and then that area down and the north corner of Hibbard, all delivered their beets there.

HF: And so the farmers would bring their beets to these various dumps in wagons and then they were put into a hopper and then transferred to a railroad cart.

EH: See the first dumps were highline dumps we call them, they built the highline where they... the high ramp and they with a shoot off into a cars or the base cars could drive right under the shoot and then they tip up the side of the beet bed, tip it sideways up and let the beets go off into the car.

HF: The houses have any problem negotiating?

EH: Well, yeah you had to watch them. They used to use four head of horses, two on wheel and two on lead. You had to make them haul beets, because they were hard to pull and you had to use a special wagon in these soft fields loading, they get a good load while they have four head of horses. They took a good teamster to drive and when it comes to going up this highline, a lot of them were scared, it is kind of job to get them going, to go up over. You'd have to hop and hold them and then while they'd hook a, pull a block onto the side of the bed and there was a hinge so they could tip up sideways. The beets were dumped down over a screen, screen the dirt out. The beets went off into the car. And that is where I worked as a tare man. We'd weighed the dirt that comes out of them and then we'd catch a basket of beets and clean the top off, trim them up, clean them and then weigh that. And that is what we call "taking tare" on the beets. And that is all figured off of the percentage off of the load.

HF: I see. And then the farmer would get credit, then, with the net poundage of beets.

EH: Yes, that is right.

HF: And who would pay him, the sugar company?

EH: Yes, that was a...

HF: Based on those figures those net figures, then the sugar company, there at Sugar City, would make reimbursement?

EH: Yes, and they pay it in your, I don't know just how they work it. They used to test the beets on the sugar percentage in that amount they figure it out. I don't understand the

analysis of how they figured that but they used to pay on the tonnage or the figure, and applied it all to the...

HF: Did Hibbard produce good size beets as a community? How did Hibbard for example compare with its productivity of beets per acre say with Salem or with Odette Parker or whoever?

EH: Well, I think the Age and Bench area was a little better producer of the beet, the soil was a little easier to handle, just like it is with the potatoes and that sandier soil over there. But we used to grow some pretty good beets. Some growers done better, used to have to haul a lot of backyard manure to fertilize and that was all we had them days we didn't have commercial fertilizer and everybody hauled out the backyard manure and scattered on the ground, fertilized them to make beets and with the good hands at it, they grew some pretty nice beets.

HF: Now the soil of Hibbard is more of the clay soil is it not?

HF: Well, not too much. So it quite a sandy, almost like a river bottom, there is areas where there is quite clay soil and it is quite sandy.

HF: But there isn't anything like it over in Plano, as far as sandiness.

EH: No it isn't a sand of that type. It is a little different type of sand than Plano.

HF: I see.

EH: Now around Rexburg, here, it's a type of heavy soil, clay soil, more here than it is out there.

HF: You mentioned quite a few building being built of brick. There was a brick kiln, out there wasn't there?

EH: Yes.

HF: What can you tell me about this brick kiln?

EH: Well, my father and Josiah, my uncle, my father's brother and George Mortimer and Joseph E. Rigby went together and organized the Herbert Brick Company, to burn brick for their own homes. We went to the timber at Island Park, got out timber, loaded it on freight cars and shipped it down to Sugar City and then we hooked horses on the cars and drug [*sic*] them from Sugar City down to the Hinckley dump. There is where we unloaded and hauled the timber down then for burning the brick. They built a dump down in my uncle's farm, down next to Uncle Josiah Hendricks', own close to the river. We built a nice brick kiln, hired John Calhoun, who had been a brick man before. He supervised the building of the kiln brick and burn it. I remember just a kid I went down and helped turn brick and mold the brick bats, lay them out on the ground to dry and we

turn them over to let them dry all around, had to cure before the put them in the kiln. And they put them in the kiln and burn them and that way we got brick left for four nice homes.

HF: Did you have to go very far to get the material to form the brick?

EH: No, most of it was got right there on my uncle's farm, clay and soil. I don't remember where got some sandy stuff, there was certain kind of sand they use to mix in that. They hauled, I know, in some of that. I don't remember just where they got that. But they...

HF: They made a pretty fine brick.

EH: Made a nice brick, yes.

HF: Now what will be, it wasn't like an adobe, it was a...?

EH: Well, it made it dark like adobe, I guess it made clay and they did mold. They would mill a horse on, turned and mixed the mud. And then they would squeeze out and it comes into molds. There were several molds that they put the brick in, like butter molds. And then they would dump them out on the ground, smooth off a big area of the ground, and spread them out on there and let them dry for so long. And then they were taken right into this brick kiln. The style built so that there was air vent through them to let the smoke in. When they built a fire there was a flue or places that fired underneath the brick kiln and went up to and burned those brick.

HF: Now each partner got a brick home out of the deal, I guess?

EH: Yes, my father, I believe, that built, was the first built. We built our home in 1910. My uncle Josiah built – no I believe his was the first, his was first, he built first in 1908, I think he built his home. I don't know whether he completed or not at that time, anyhow. And then my dad built ours in 1910, and then Joseph E. Rigby shortly after that. Mortimer, who was a member of the company, he sold his brick to Earl Garner here in Rexburg and he built a nice home out of them and Mortimer built a log house. So that's the way it ended up.

HF: And that ended the brick company?

EH: Yes.

HF: Now did they use any of that brick to put into the church?

EH: No, that was built much earlier, the brick church was.

HF: The brick church was?

EH: The brick church was built in 1940 . '47 I think it is. And they...

HF: You mean so much later?

EH: Yes, '47. I went in as Bishop of the Hibbard Ward and Joseph Sutherland, Delor Atkinson as counselors. We decided that, then discussed and worked on to get a new building for a long time. So we just well, got started on it. And we organized a building committee and they started to make plans for a new building and we selected Herbert J. Wilmore as supervisor to take charge of building the building. We started in February tearing down the old building. Three of us took the, paid \$100 apiece for them to tear down the building. Elvin Rigby, C. Clement and myself each gave \$100 and for \$300 we got the old church and we tore it down. We divided the material between us. Then we immediately started to excavate and prepare for the new building. We were more as supervisor. We completed the building in 1949 and it was dedicated by LeGrand Richard in 1950, I forget, I should look that up.

HF: Well, the new brick church we had then was built at the same site as the old church?

EH: Yes, right on the same spot.

HF: Requiring of course that you first get rid of the old building and so on. Well, now what do the community of Herbert do in the way of, how did they build their homes? Were a lot of them building out rock, or a lot of them build out of wood? What seems to be the major history of that part?

EH: Well, of course the first buildings were mostly log buildings that they could secure from timber and build log buildings without much expense and now the they early ones built that way. And then as they progressed, there was a few rock building built. And few brick buildings, they scattered around as the two principles kind. And then some build a frame.

HF: Mr. Parker was the first to build a rock building, wasn't he?

EH: Yes, Parley Parker built a rock building, a nice one, along the road where Harold Rigby now lives.

HF: And that still stands?

EH: No it's gone now. They tore it after the flood. They tore it down. And then Fred Parker his brother, built out in the field north of that – they each owned a farm in there, Fred was over in the middle of the section – he built a home out in the field there. A brick home there which is all gone now, and the land down a farming ground where the old home site used to be.

HF: Well Elmer, has the topography of Plano changed very much since you were a boy, through the use of the bulldozer, the land leveler and so on? Has there been a great deal of change?

EH: Well, yes all through the area, Hibbard and Plano, both have changed quite extensively. Its appearance is hard to figure out all the old land marks. Because the bulldozers and carryalls have leveled up a lot of the ground, changed it. We used to do, when I was a young boy, my father done quite a little leveling with the old Fresno scraper and the tongue scraper, dyking and mixing ground. We had to dyke up the ground in order to irrigate then to let the flood ground right. But now they've leveled it so that it can, made it a lot easier. I know our son Blaine has done a lot of carryall work down on ...next to the river. And then a few years changing, took out sloughs, filled them up where the sloughs were and really changed the appearance of the...

HF: Now the south fork of the Teton River is kind of the boundary of the south area of Hibbard.

EH: Yes, that used to, Hibbard was called Teton Island or Island Ward when Hibbard was first organized, it was organized as Island Ward.

HF: So the south fork of Teton River and the north fork of Teton River, both of which are tributaries to the Snake River, they kind of bounded in this community area.

EH: Yes, that is right. Yes, they go on each side and then outside of the Hibbard Community is that boundaries lines, is Teton.

HF: Has most of the ground now been reclaimed? Do you find many sloughs of duck places?

EH: Oh, there is areas where there is silo, but a lot of it has been changed quite a bit in change to forming what was rugged and timber and brush, willows and stuff like that, has pretty well disappeared all over the country. Opened.

HF: Now when they first settled, of course, each family settled on a homestead, 160 acres.

EH: Yes.

HF: Over the years would it be sold, the size of that farm has dwindled to something less than 160?

EH: Well, the scene in Hibbard has changed quite a bit. At the time I grew up and up while we lived in Hibbard, while I was Bishop there, we built the new church. We thought we'd had a pretty good size building and it would be ample for them, because we sold so many acres and couldn't see any industry or anything much to change the population. Well, since that time, they've subdivided a lot and bring housing units in

there and a lot of more people to divide ward. Each ward had more population than when I was bishop there, now there it's a lot of new people in there.

HF: So a lot of these subdivisions, they have two or three acres per home, per family?

EH: Yes that is right. Yes, some of them less than that just about a half acre. Just building home site and their garden spot.

HF: So literally it has become a bedroom community of Rexburg.

EH: That's right.

HF: Well now, in that community you've always had elementary school I suppose?

EH: Yes, I think ever since we got a community established there, they've had a school of some kind. I guess one of the first that taught was there was on a own place, father when he got there was a little cabin up on the field and sister Beth Clement taught school in that little cabin, had done for a year or so. My dad got the place and he moved the cabin down from one end of the field down to the other end, more where, then, the main road went through as it developed and turned it into a home. And then they built a little school and church house together, a combination of place, where Dewey Parker now lives, a log building. From that they've, in 1900, they built the frame building, so it had quite a history.

HF: Have there been any businesses established out in the Hibbard area, which would employ a number of people? Any co-operations established, a business out there established, there is nothing, no history of that?

EH: No history of any business or anything, they all had to come in to town in order to bring any industrial line or business. It's just then a rural community all that time.

HF: I am aware of the fact that there is a nursery or two out there, people have nurseries.

EH: Well, some the young people. Our granddaughter now is starting a little nursery school. It is just this year.

HF: I meant shrub and plant.

EH: Oh, well there hasn't been too much of that. There was the Woodinsons, Erving Woodinson, and his wife, had quite a garden area for a number of years. It was about the most extensive in that line.

HF: And then the Withers have a small...

EH: Yes, they have a small...

HF: Green house.

EH: Green house for growing plants and selling them. They have a hot house where they can grow up vegetables, flower plants, and so on.

HF: But other than that, the place haven't been commercialized or anything of this nature. Have the roads been changed or altered much from the original layout for the pioneers when they used wagons and so on?

EH: Well, when they first come in here, they angled more up through the, kitty-corner up through the country there, some of the roads then. But then as they start developed the farms, they established them on section lines. And the roads right on the section lines of a square, so it squared them up and go north and west on the east and west roads.

HF: Well, Elmer I appreciate the comments, the sharing that you have provided today on this subject of the community of Hibbard. Thank you.