Voices from the Past

Clementsville

By Silas Clements

Tape #61

Oral Tape by Tony Clements & David Christensen

Transcribed by Louis Clements and Erin Cervo April 2002/July 2009
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INTRODUCTION

The Library of the Upper Snake River Historical Society in the Teton Flood Museum contains over 600 video, cassette, and reel-to-reel tapes. These oral interviews have been gathered to over the past years from individuals throughout the Snake River Valley. I had the opportunity to catalogue this collection over the past couple of years and was amazed at the information containing therein.

I decided that it was unfair to the public to have all of this historical information on a tape and only available to a few who had the time to come to the library and listen to them. The library does provide a service in which copies of the tapes can be made, and during the past few years, many have come in and obtained a copy of a particular tape. The collection has a lot of family stories, some pioneer experiences, a few individual reminiscences of particular parts of history, and some recorded individuals have a personal knowledge of a historical event.

I spent a lot of time trying to come up with a name for this series of stories that would describe the overall text of the message contained herein. Since they are transcribed from the actual voices of those who experienced the history the name, Voices From The Past seemed appropriate. The oral history in this volume of Voices From The Past has been taken from the interviewer with it being recorded on tape. Since Idaho's history is so young in year, the oral history becomes greater in importance. Eyewitness accounts rank high in reliability of the truth of events, although the reliability suffers as they interviewee ages or the time between the event and the interview grows. As the age of some of the cassette is progressing into the time period of deterioration of tapes, all are currently (2002) being copied onto audio discs (CD's) for preservation.

I have selected this event as one that occurred in Eastern Idaho which was experienced by the person or persons being interviewed. There was such a vast amount of information available in the library; I had to reserve many of the tapes for inclusion in future volumes. The tapes are being transcribed in order of importance according to my thinking.

Transcribing from a tape to written word is a new experience for me. I have done this on a very small scale before but to attempt to put the contents of a conversation down on a paper requires a great amount of concentration. I have taken the liberty of editing out the many "a's" that occur in an interview as well as other conversational comments. Then comes the problem of the book a challenge from the point of view of making a correct transcription and yet an interesting story. I have made a few editorial changes in view of this problem.

I would like thank the many people who have taken the time to arrange for the oral recording of an individuals story. The information obtained in this manner is, in many cases, not available from any other source. One of the pioneers of oral history in Eastern Idaho is Harold Forbush. Despite the handicap of being blind, he travels around the whole Snake River Valley visiting with people and taping their responses. He began his career of taping while living Teton Valley and serving as the prosecuting attorney there.

His lifetime interest in history got him started and since then he has been a major contributor to the collection of stories in the library. He continued his oral history recording after moving to Rexburg. After retiring from being Madison Counties' magistrate, he moved to Idaho Falls for a time and now has returned to Rexburg to continue as occasional taping session. He is to be congratulated for his lifetime commitment to the preservation of Idaho's history.

There are many others who have done some taping including several Madison High School students. Most of the student tapes are not of the same sound quality as the professional oral history collector, but the stories they have gathered over the years have provided a special look at the Depression, war experiences, farming experience, and many other subjects which can't be found anywhere else. Many thanks to them.

There are some tapes in which the interviewer did not identify themselves. These unknown records have provided several stories which have helped make up the overall history of the Snake River Valley and I thank them even if I cannot acknowledge them personally.

I hope that as you read the following stories you will be inspired to keep a record of your own either in written or tape form so that your opinion of what has happened in the world or in your life can be preserved. Many think their life has been insignificant and others would not want the years and find each other to have its own contribution to my knowledge of what has happened. Idaho is an exciting place to live and is full of stories which are unique to our area. Share them with others.

Louis J. Clements.

Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society

(Tony Clements and David Christensen interview Silas Clements about Clementsville east of Newdale.)

Harold Forbush: It's a pleasure for me to interview Brother Silas Clements of Rexburg today here in my office in Rexburg on the 23rd day of March 1968. Mr. Clements has prepared himself to give me a brief account from the life account of his grandfather, Eugene Prentiss Clements. He came out West and after he was named the little community of Clementsville and what is now Teton County and also the little settlement of Canyon Creek just across the county line west, which is now Madison County. So today it's a real opportunity for us to have Silas Clements talk to us about his grandfather first and then we will go into some extensive questioning of the organization of the family and the time they created the little community of Clementsville.

Silas Clements: Eugene Prentiss Clements is the third son of John Fenderson Clements and Margaret Davis Clements. He was born on the 13th of October in 1855 in Saint Anthony, now Minneapolis, Minnesota. In the spring of that year, his parents moved from Maine to Minnesota; at that time, also, uninhabited. They were ever settlers [inaudible] which is necessary to [inaudible] timber [inaudible]. In spite of all the work that had to be done they [inaudible] as much as possible, which amounted to about three months a year, when about 14 years earlier [inaudible]. On July the 3rd 1839 [inaudible]. [Inaudible] to Maine and moved with his parents to [inaudible] about 1865. He truly was a [inaudible] man. Also his parents were baptized. He joined no church until he was found by Mormon missionaries. His conversion was miraculous and he and his wife were baptized on September 27, 1881. That winter he moved as a lumberman—he worked there as a lumberman for about four months. In the spring he planted his crop and in the later part of the summer he and his wife began to [inaudible] such things as they could to prepare to move to Utah quickly. They sold their grains and their crops that had been harvested at the market price. The balance of their crops was sold at a [inaudible]. Their home was left by Bertha's parents to sell to the first buyer. Eugene and his brothers were the only ones of their family to join the LDS church. Bertha was the only member of her family to be converted. They were anxious to be with people who believed what they did; so on October the 13th 1883 they left their home in Minnesota with others who had also been baptized and travelled by train. In five days they arrived in Logan. Eugene's new brother Silas [inaudible]. On November the 5th of that year Eugene became ill with Rheumatic fever. For a lot of years he was afflicted with the disease. Whenever he was able to work in Silas' blacksmith shop, he usually would woodwork in the repairing of wagons and buggies. In October 1883 he had recovered from Rheumatic fever, but the thing with [inaudible] after it could inflict with another disease. Eugene left his family in Logan, traveled to Rexburg with the intention of later making his home there. He built a log house where he could later bring his family. He and Andrew McInnis became partners and built a blacksmith shop, the first one in Rexburg. In September 1884 he returned to Logan and on October the 17 Eugene and Bertha through the Logan Temple where they received their endowment, had their two sons: Lester and Cecil sealed to them. They then journeyed to Rexburg to the new

home Eugene had built for them. In 1886 they moved to Camas. Doing blacksmith work they were on the road using their—used by trailers and repair work was constantly needed on their outfits. In the fall of 1888 they returned to Rexburg. In the spring of 1892 they moved to a farm in which is now called Hibbard. During the summer they conducted a school for the young children in a one-roomed log cabin on the James Hendricks farm. When Hibbard was first organized, Eugene was called as First Counselor to Bishop Hibbard. At this time he had already filled three whole missions in the Bannock Stake. He had also been First Counselor in the first Elder's Quorum in the Bannock Stake and First Counselor in the Stake YMMIA. At one time when he owed tithing and he had no cash he gave his fur coat as tithing. After that when it was necessary to travel and sometimes he needed to go many miles, the only protection he had besides his light suit coat was a quilt to shield him from the rain, wind and snow in subzero weather. Now we step from our warm cars into a heated car—from our warm homes to a heated car and never feel uncomfortable. No more what the temperature may be Eugene rode in an open sled and was on the road sometimes for hours. In May 1908 with the perfect [inaudible] established their own homes, Eugene with his sons Lester, Cecil, Eugene junior, and Will filed on dry farms land east of Canyon Creek which was soon known as Clementsville, named by the family. A branch of the church as organized at Canyon Creek with Eugene as presiding Elder. He held this position until December the 14th 1913 when he was released because of ill health. The Clementsville store was started about this period of time by his brother in law, Thomas L. Nichols. His health did not improve. He suffered a heart attack while visiting at Hicee Hot Springs south of Rexburg and passed away June 3rd, 1916. Ten children was born to this couple. They were Lester Amos, Cecil Thomas, Eugene Prentiss, Joseph Will, and triplets was born to them: Bertha, Blanche and Bessie, they were born while they were out at Camas and died two weeks later, April the 1st 1888. Charles Alma was the next son and he died, also, two years later. George Washington Clements and Gladys Clements Fullmore; Gladys is the only one living at this time.

HF: Now I understand, Brother Clements, that from this little history of your grandfather, he and his boys went up there in the Clementsville area in 1918 and did they construct a number of homes in the area of Clementsville and did they also have—prepare kind of a stopping off place where they had a store and some of those things. You might tell us just what was done those first few years with reference to construction of homes, schools, or stores, or what there might be in the first few years after they went up there.

SC: Well they all started building homes, they lived in tents and covered wagons, but they did build their homes out of logs. They brought them from the timbers, which lies to the south, three to four miles, and all built log homes. Now grandfather's home was built and Lester Clements's and Cecil Clements's was all built pretty close together in kind of a v-shape. The Clementsville road ran right inbetween grandfather's home and Lester's and Cecil's. Grandfather's was on the south of the road and Uncle Cecil's and Lester's was on the North of the road, which still is there now. A.E Bott owns the farms there now at Clementsville. And Will—

HF: And those would be about how far east of the county line in Teton County?

SC: I think about two miles east.

HF: And just on the south side of the present highway 32. Is this right?

SC: Yes. Then Will Clements's and Jean Clements's farm was about three quarters of a mile further on east along this road. That took care of the underground hollowed out in all directions from their homes. They were allowed 160 acres at that time when they filed on. There are quite a number of other folks that filed in about this period of time. However I'd like to mention about this Canyon Creek church, actually the church that was started down there, but grandfather was the presiding Elder, I just don't know for sure the date, that's some information that I've tried to get, but if it's soon after Clementsville was started. The number of people around Canyon Creek took up farms in that period of time, maybe a little bit earlier. In Canyon Creek right down in the canyon itself there's a large barn and store building near too and I can remember that very well in my day. That would be along 1912 that I can remember that and it continued on for, oh I would say up into 1920. The road went right down into this creek. The dug roads were quite a problem in them days, but the water was there and it offered quite an accommodation for the travelers from Teton Basin coming down into Rexburg area and on out to Market Lake for traders the watering horses, all trading was done horses and wagons [inaudible] was provided a place to stop over and feed the—later on when Clementsville was opened up, Grandfather got their buildings built and [inaudible] I can remember a lot of the Teton Basin, which was stated our home, fed our animals and watered and then journeyed on. We made many friends [inaudible] from those people in Teton Basin. Then the church at Clementsville would be built sometime in about 1914, something like that and all the people around that area at that time were very [inaudible] for time and came and helped to build this. A number of them were not of our faith, but they were anxious to help build up the community and have a place where they could meet and have funerals and such as was needed. We made many friends then. And then the school was located—the school was probably built about in 1914, '13 or '14, and that was a mile south of the store. I went to school there during my school years until I was only fifth grade. Then we moved to Hibbard. Then there's the sawmill that was about two miles south of the store right up in the edge of the timber and that was somewhere in the neighborhood '13-'14, 1913-'14. And it ran until about 1918 and that time period. Then there was the sheep shearing trail about five miles south of east of the store, could be little more. That was a quite an attraction for us and then to visit and see that and all those big herds of sheep that come in there, sheep shearing in the spring. Then they were brought into the summer range for some feeding.

HF: Incidentally, at that time in connection with the sheep interest did there seem to be any friction between the sheep owners and the cattle owners in bidding for grazing purposes in those south hills?

SC: Not that I know of right then. However, my grandfather had quite a herd of cattle, but he kept them down and around the Hibbard area over—I'm just not sure where his range was. But on in about '16 I think he sold out of cattle. There could have been but I

didn't hear any if there was. I think there would probably be some in around the basin area. Would probably give us a little better information on that than I would.

HF: Well now, you mentioned that your grandfather was the presiding elder there at Canyon Creek and this—he held this until the fall, I believe you said, of 1914 and at that time he moved back to Hibbard and a brother-in-law took over his home and started this store. Is this correct?

SC: Yes.

HF: And now, what facilities were there for a store and what did it cater to and what services did it provide people in the area? And you might mention some of the subsequent owners of that store and how long it really maintained itself.

SC: When Grandfather moved down to the valley Uncle Tom Nichols, which is a brother-in-law moved here from Minnesota and started a store, also the post office was started and he was the first master. People travelling from Teton Basin on and out [inaudible] to pick up a few little things. Also, it serves the farmers around there. It's quite a place to come and get your mail and see how the neighbors are doing and so forth. It just added quite a gathering place. Now this store was in Grandfather's house. Now George Clements, the youngest son, he came up and ran the store for several years and he lived in the back part of the store, two wings in the back part. And Uncle Tom and his mother lived in the front part and ran the store. The owners of the store, Uncle Tom Nichol started the store and these are some of the owners after he left; there's J.D. Yard, then Jorumphrey run the store and one time he moved it over to his ranch a sixth of a mile south of the store and a little bit west. Then it moved back over to the original site. There was one more owner that I didn't get the name. Then Bert Jensen ran it the last that we know of. The post office ran about a year later than did the store, but the store ran up until about 1934 or '35, and that takes in the history of the stores [inaudible].

HF: Well now, again for purposes of identification, this store is located where Mr. A.E. Bott has his airplane hanger, which is across the street across the highway 33 to the south from his home, from A.E. Bott's home.

SC: Yes.

HF: Is this correct?

SC: That's right.

HF: And that would approximately two miles east of the Teton County line.

SC: Yes.

HF: Well, now, Mr. Clements, about the school, can you tell me when it was started and the number of students that attended the school, some of the teachers who taught up there and about the date that it was abandoned.

SC: As near as we can tell the school would start somewhere about in ’12 or ’13, 1912 or ’13, and it ran up until about 1953. Now I didn’t get very many of the teachers names. There were some that I went there; I can’t remember all the names. But I do remember one teacher that all the kids were very fond of: Marina Ellsworth. Henry Nelson and I dug out a lot of these names and we both agreed that this name stands out among all the school teachers that we’ve had, however we have had a nice bunch of teachers, but she was our favorite. She married a man and moved over into Driggs, west of Driggs and they farmed for many years there and she has died since.

HF: [Inaudible] Sterling Murdoch’s wife.

SC: Yes, that was the name.

HF: Well now Silas, did a quite a number of youngsters attend that school? Did they provide the schooling for the eight grades, one to eighth grade or just how extensive how comprehensive of an education could a young boy or girl receive from the schooling.

SC: It was from the first to the eighth grade, all in one room and I think that there could have been at least thirty-five children in that classroom at one time. And they would all be in various grades from the first to the eighth. I remember in my days there I started in as a first grader and when I came out I think I was in maybe the fourth grade. It took me more than—I think I was five years getting that far because of the school year, hard winters when we would go to school we would hardly go. [Inaudible] heavy snow and then go a little while in the spring. I think we went two full winters, as I remember, while I was there and those were really hard winters. But the other times we would go in the spring and the fall. So we did have quite a number of teachers.

HF: Did the teacher stay right at the school; was there a little facility there for the teacher who remained right at the school?

SC: Right to start with there wasn’t, but it wasn’t very long until they built a little too a lean [indistinguishable] on the back of the school so that the teacher could stay. And this continued on right up until the school closed. Also they built barn facilities about the two last years that I went so that when we went with our horses in the winter we could put them in the stable so we keep them from the blizzards and snow until we were out of school. And we would hook them on the sleighs and go home.

HF: Did the school provide any transportation for the youngsters or did they have to get to school themselves?

SC: Everyone furnished their own transportation. Over at Clementsville we would hook a team on a sleigh and we would pick up the children from our place on around to the

school and each would take turns doing this. And over those from the east and from the west they did likewise so that—everyone furnished their own transportation. We didn't have any buses to come pick us up at the door in them days.

HF: Well now turning from school to the church, after the church there in Canyon Creek was closed I understand that the community got together there in the Clementsville area and constructed a nice LDS church on further to the east and maybe a little to the south. Maybe you could tell us when this was constructed and the participation, of what material it was built and how long it continued and about the regular attendance, about how many would it be.

SC: Well as near as we could figure somewhere as in '14, 1914-'15, this was built and in the summer we would quite the [inaudible] participation because of the people would come up on the dry farms in the summer and of course everyone would be quite active. And quite a number would move back down to the valley where there kiddies would go to school and of course them in our church would drop off so there wouldn't be very many, but there were, I would say they could be 50-70 people would be going there to that church in the summer, easy. They also used them for recreation, evening dances and socials; if anyone got married they'd have a big social and boxed lunches and really have a party. Now that I can remember quite a bit because I was rather small and I got sleepy. Kids my age, we'd hope it'd provide some blankets or quilts and we'd go up on the stage, as we called it, and go to sleep and they'd continue dancing until it was time to go home. We'd probably wake up home and never knew we were disturbed. I do remember when we went to sleep or when we were put to bed, but I—this church provided quite a social gathering place also [inaudible] church.

HF: And do you recall to mind some of the individuals who presided in the branch, I presume it was a branch or was it a Clementsville Ward?

SC: No it was a branch and I'm sure that Cecil Clements was the presiding Elder for awhile. I'm just not sure the various ones. I'm sure there were some changes made, but just who they all were I don't know. But I understood that it ran for quite a number of years after we left then in about 1934 it was sold due to the fact that everyone had moved away for the winter and it was—travel was easy then and they would moved down to the valley so that the kids could go to high school with friends and so it would leave [inaudible] in about that period of time, '34-'35, something like that.

HF: Well now Silas, in the early days, 1908, when the area commenced to be settled, I take it was on the assumption that a man could go out there and take up a homestead, which usually call for 160 acres. Can you tell us a little about the background of the settlement of the Clementsville area, who these people were and from what areas they came. Were they members of the church? Were they non-members? Possibly you can tell us a little about the extent of the settlement and the approximate number who inhabited this Clementsville area.

SC: Well, Henry Nelson and I had jotted down all of the old early settlers that we could think of. If there are any that we've left out we would like to know it, but as near as we can tell, as I have gave this as Grandfather Clements and his four sons homesteaded ground which was Lester, Cecil, Eugene Jr., and Will. They were all very close together on the north side of this homestead area, so to speak. These other names that I give will be—I'll try and locate them and they will be a little east, a little south, and southwest. Floyd Westover and Ern Westover homesteaded about a half a mile east and south of the Clementsville store. Joe Nelson and Joe Rumphry were pretty much south. And Jar Genard was south and east. Earl Lee was directly east of the Clementsville store. Also, George Yurr, Lee Parker were right up in that area. And Joe Nevil was south and east. Malcolm Hemmil, Chester Miller were to the west and just a little bit south. Charlie Steel was north, no, east and south. Charles Thompson, Dave Davis, Hue David, Joe Bell, and Hyrum Bell were a little further south and east. Moes Hendricks, Ab Hendricks and Jess Freemen and George McKinneth were all further south than was Nelson's; they were right along up next to the chimber line. Sid Robison and George Hue were a little bit west and to the south. There was one more party in there that—his name was Butcher. We were not able to find the first name of this man, but he was a little bit west and south. That takes in about all that we could come up with. A lot of these fellows that kick up ground stayed there for three to four or five years. Some held their ground for 15-20. Now, the space has quite changed. There's one man alone as much as ten of these homes did up there and he farms with machinery instead of horses and he can do it easier now than we did then when the horses, so the picture has changed quite a bit now. Oh yes, then the—they weren't all LDS people. They came in there in various faiths. The Umphrey's and the Nelson's and the Yarb's, I understand they came from around Kansas; however the Yurr's and Parker's and the Hill's and Miller's, they were from around in this area as young men, same as with Hendricks'; they were from out in Hibbard. Freemen was from down in this area. There are some of these fellows that I don't know where they were from. Dave David and Hue David were brothers; they were, I think they came from Kansas and they were—they came out here and they were young men weren't married. They married girls from this area. And so they came from quite a number of places way off during this time that the ground was opened up for homesteading. That was quite an attraction for this area and it did build up quite fast.

HF: Well now Silas, when these homesteaders got out here surely they found pretty raw country, no buildings in which to dwell. They apparently first were required to construct a little cabin and they had to worry about water. How in the deuce did they do all these things? How did they manage to get these things done?

SC: Well that's true. To start with, the main thing was to get a place to house in from the weather. I mentioned earlier that they built log houses to start. While they were doing this they had to live in tents or in their covered wagons. Now the water facility was—to get drinking for your house use, for the stock, they had to haul it from Canyon Creek or the early springs. The spring of the year they could get some from the creeks and it was a little to the west in up by Crooked Creek; either that or melt snow. Now to preserve this water and have a place for storage they built what we call cisterns. They would dig a hole in the ground that would be probably about eight to ten feet, maybe,

deep and across would be something like eight feet to ten. And then they would put a top on it with a wooden lid to keep the dust and mice and whatnot from getting in this cistern. They would plaster this clay. Now when they dug this cistern it would be quite a solid clay and you could dig the dirt out and that would be quite solid. And then they would plaster this up with cement, just plaster it on like you would stucco a house. And every so often, even though you'd build it as tight as you could with dust and weeds and everything the way the wind blowed and you'd get in there and of course it would settle to the bottom and I've been lowered down in one of these cisterns many times in a bucket and I would dip up what little water would be left down there and scrape up the dirt and wash it down and send it up in a bucket. And have [inaudible] you would dump it in and send it up and back down to me and I would clean it up. Of course before I was that old my older brother had his turn and so that's the way we did that; but it was quite interesting when I think back now. That also was used as a refrigerator. So when you got this half full of water and covered up the way it was you could lower your butter and your milk on a rope down in this cistern and let it hang just above the water and it would keep cool. If you didn't the butter would melt out like grease and you wouldn't have much to butter and sometimes eat it. Same with the milk, it turned sour awful quick if you didn't put it down the well and we'd have a nice bucket full of milk and put it down there and butter and like I say it acted as a refrigerator.

HF: What kind of a container or tank would they use to haul the water from the creek and put in this system? They must have had to make several trips in order to fill these cisterns up.

SC: Yes it would be a—that would be quite a chores hauling water. You start with the tanks that were made out of wood. The tongue grooved and they would start pouring and they would put that close together and then kind of put pitch in the cracks so that it would be tight and they would have bolts or timbers that would tighten up and tighten these things right tight so that it made a quite a wooden tank and enabled all the water. And then you'd have a spout on the back that you could back up to the well and pull this pin and the water then would run out into the cistern. As you went over to get it you had a regular bucket fastened on a long stick and you'd dip the water in the creek and you'd stand there and dip it and pour it in the top of this tank. At one time we had a pump build a well or drove a well and pipe up in about a mile east of Clementsville store right next to a [indistinguishable] patch and they did have water there for quite awhile, but that would only last the early part of the spring. And you could pump that then directly right into the tank. Then later on the Clements' bought out Bill that was south of east of the Clementsville store. He had a spring on his property and they went up there and built a reservoir and they then let this spring run in this reservoir and then they could just drive up with these tanks and let the water run out of the reservoir and out into the tanks, save on all this bucketing. But then it kind of dried up [inaudible] go back to Canyon Creek. And then Joe Umphrey went in a canyon that was south of his place which he owned and he had a quite a well down in the canyon and that furnished an awful lot of water there; hauled a lot of water there. And then you could go to the river to the east over at the Teton River and get water there. No matter which way you went it seemed like it was a long ways, a four-horse team and one of those tanks. [Inaudible] during thrashing time

and harvesting time when we had a lot [inaudible] and he would haul water for the tractor [inaudible]. He'd haul a tank of water every day before he'd go to work.

HF: Well now Silas, when they first started homesteading after getting themselves into place in which they were to leave, some shelter and preparing for the water supply and so forth they turned their attention, undoubtedly, to the clearing of the land. Now, was it mainly sagebrush or were there some quacking aspen and other timbers on the land? How did they go about doing this?

SC: There was a lot of sagebrush, the quacking aspen patches were more or less on a slope and they were pretty well grouped together. They pretty much left them alone, right to start with. If you traveled up in that area now, you still see the same quacking aspen they left there, they do harbor quite a bit of snow banks. These snow banks were used quite a bit for to get snow to make ice cream in the summer; we would cover that up with straw and use it for refrigerator purposes. During this sagebrush, it was quite a problem. It seems that the best method they had was to just plow. Course, a lot of times they would have to do it. But for this plow did a good job tearing the sagebrush loose and they would pile it up and burn it. Course they didn't clear it all at one time. Later on, when they opened up this state plan in the North, that time the [inaudible] They did a lot of breaking up of the sagebrush in that area at that time. They would go out and do custom work. Later on they used the columbine to harvest the wheat.

HF: Now, I think to start out with, these individuals would have to prune up on the ground in order to get a homestead patent. I guess this took years, maybe they would have required to have so much way of improvement under cultivation. Maybe you could go into this and how they managed through hard work and effort, various old fashioned machines and methods as we understand them now, in other words, no horses, maybe you could give us a little background on the way in which this land is broken up.

SC: Well, it started with I'm sure they didn't clear the 160 acres last year, I think they turned as much as they could, then they would plant and continue on throughout the rest of the grub, and they would plant it the next year. It took quite some time, now as a rule, it took six heads of horses, seven to pull a full bottom plow, as we called it, and that's about the size of a general size of the plows that they used when they used the horses. Some just a little bigger, but it was a two bottom plow. Some just chose the one. [Inaudible] Then the tearing of the ground, you would take a couple of leaves and set the horses with the harem between three and six, that's about the number of marches. Some rode and some walked the car, some would drive it. I didn't go because men would get your horses and he was walking behind you would pick up a clod and head to slow the horse. It took a number of years as you can think back to the sagebrush. You could clear as much as you possibly could if you wanted to plant it and get that preface. Building buildings, and making certain improvements as you went along to go along with this improving your barns and houses and grain, and when you harvest your grain you had to have the things with it, the horses, and the supply for that there. Some came infused; some went hauling in the valley to feed these horses with straw, you would use straw that you harvested in the hay stack. You would use that to feed the horses along with grain. I

know how they hauled the grain to market they would try to do that with all of the props at work you would have to {inaudible} Several of them would go together, so if one man got stopped, the other could get his jeans on especially if it was raining. The roads were muddy, if it was rainy weather. They would get their mud boots. It was always quite a thing to go down this dug road, pull the breaks, and when you get down in there you double out and get their wagons out of this dug road which was quite steep and they would get everyone on top and they would go on there on down to St. Anthony.

HF: Silas, this is really interesting. When it got to the point where a lot of the land was broken up, and they needed the methods of getting more ground plowed, land that was already reduced to the point where it was tillable, did they continue to use horses, or a greater number of them, or did they ever come up with mans ingenuity to perfect steam engine or gas engine or something like this. When was this first down and maybe you can give us a little background on this?

SC: Well, I think when the Thomas's got their tractor it seemed to me it was about 1914, 1915, something like that… maybe '16. It was pretty well throughout in the 1918's but I do have a problem with this tractor pulling the columbine. Using the columbine, where we got the tractor, they used twenty-seven other horses to pull this columbine. Now, they used six other horses and used four, and then they put the three out on the leaves. There was a ladder that extended out in front over the first six, and there is where the driver rode. He would drive these and they were all fixed so that he only needed two lines to drive the three lead horses. It tied into others. Course anyone from our city wanted to encourage to come up a little faster. We turned it off. The first two sets of six, and I can remember riding up there, the one that I rode with, I know he drove for two different years. He worked for my dad, Mr. Clements. Course, he would take his turn so they all worked together on this columbine. He tended the columbine and did this for quite a few years, he could sell faster than, well, nobody could beat him. They did plant a few rows for feed for their cattle and horses and such, and when they would harvest those, those oats, you could hardly get them off fast enough with that cutter. On this big columbine, there was a big shoot, like a slide you would call it, and it would hold about six bags. Us kids used that for a shoot like the kids at school, it was a slide. We would get on that thing, pull the lever, and slide down. We would use it in the summer; we would slide down real easy. Anyway, this columbine was quite a wide truck, I don't remember how many feet, must have been about twenty-five. The ground, hard, meaning you are there now, and there was a chain on these big fields, it would go around and pull the power, and the power would make the power for the machine and course once you stop, then everything stopped. There was quite a little bit of loft. Now days they have a molder that pulls that, so that it runs it all out. [Inaudible] Also, they had a method I know that they used a number of times, use a hedger box. Now this was a thing where you cut the heads off the wheat and canvas, put it in the hedger box, something like a hay rack, they would haul this to a stack and unload it, just like a haystack, and would leave it in that condition until it got all the crop cut. Then there would be an instruction sheet put up in that area, and then it didn't matter whether the rains came, but the stacks would be dry, but wet on the outside. We used sacks, and had quite a pile and put straw on top of them.

HF: Could you tell us about when you first went up there?

SC: Ok, in about 1910, the state opened this ground up there at what is called Clementsville. It's now in Teton County. They opened it for homesteaders. My grandfather and five boys, my dad was the oldest in the family, they went up there and each took 160 acres and homesteaded. On doing this, this ground was all covered with sagebrush. You had to get the sagebrush off of it, pile it up, and burn it. Then plow the ground and get it ready to plant your grain. About when they grew up there was grain, oats, and barley. Course it took a lot of work to clear the sagebrush off. They didn't do it all at one time because five boys and grandpa meant six places. That was quite a lot of area right there. This is why they called it Clementsville because grandfather and his boys all settled right there. Digging this sagebrush out with a team and plows was kind of a hard situation. So to finish it off, a group of them got together and sure did pool their money and bought a great big tractor. Now this was a hope tractor. There were two crawler tractors on the back, with tracks on the back and one great big wheel on the front. The name of the tractor was Hope. They took that up to Clementsville. They had what they call a disc plow. That worked out very good for digging the sagebrush out. They got quite a few acres a day with that thing. When they got theirs all cleaned out they went over to the other homesteaders to help, homesteaders who were near by them. They did it for them too because this tractor made quite a thing there. That was the first tractor to come up into that country. Course, that was back in the early days. I think that tractor came up there in about 1911 or `12. Now I was born in 1909 at Hibbard. Course I went up there as a babe. I didn't know all there was to know about that but I do know when I was six years old this big plow had a platform on it. Of course, it was getting pretty well worn out. It needed an awful lot of overhauling. My dad had me ride on the back of that with a short pitch fork handle, just a pitch for handle. He was plowing and I would poke the weeds through this plow so it wouldn't pop up. Course, that was quite interesting for me as a kid. But anyway, getting back to the early homesteaders. There's quite a lot of them that homestead up in there around about this place they called Clementsville and Canyon Creek. To begin with there was a store, post office, and school at Canyon Creek. My older brother, who was four years older than me and some other kids around there, they attended school maybe one year or two down at Canyon Creek. That's about five miles away. So then we got enough homesteaders to build a school at Clementsville. Now this school is still standing. Whenever you want to see that, you go up to what they call Clementsville now. That's where Bott's have a big farm right there. That's where the store used to be and it's just one mile south of that place. Where Bott is now, that was my dad's farm. Course, the store was across the road south. Anyway the school was one mile south and we used it in the summer when the folks were using the horses. We used to have to walk to school. The reason we had school in the summer was that the snow would get so deep up there in the winter, and the wind blew, we just couldn't get to the school. We would go to school early in the spring, the summer, and the fall. We had a little space of time in the summer that we were out but quite a number of winters we just couldn't get to school. The sleighs and horses couldn't make it. There was no way of pushing snow off like we got today. That's the way school was. Course, I was up there a year ago and took pictures of the old school. It's still standing. The blackboards were on the wall. It was kind of interesting to me because it seemed to me like when I was a kid that school

house was three times the size that it is now. I guess I was a kid and it just looked so small now. But it was kind of interesting to go there and see the old pot bellied stove that used to be there that heated the building. It's still there but it is kind of torn down. They've used parts of it for something else.

Brian: How many kids were in the school?

SC: As I remember, the largest number of school kids that were there were twenty. Course, that's quite a small group.

Brian: What ages were they?

SC: From six years old until they got out of the eighth grade. One teacher taught all of us. We sat in different spots and she taught the whole works. I went there for three years, first to the fourth. I remember, I started in the fourth grade in the fall and then we moved out. It went on for years. It had a lot of different teachers. They even built two rooms on the back of the school for the school teacher to live right there. They had a horse barn out of the back of the school. When we rode our horses there, those who rode to school, we could put our horses in this barn and then we would come out and come on home. This continued on for, oh, I think it's been up to twenty years since it was closed down. Henry Nelson was the last school trustee. He farmed up there. He's the one who finally decided to close it and bus them all into Driggs. So then they closed the school down. So many people lived down here in the Valley; there weren't enough kids there to hold school. So, that's the reason it was closed. I think you have to have about seven or eight kids or so to pay for a teacher. It might be more than that, I'm not sure. Now you might want to know a little bit about the farming conditions. They had to plow the ground, harrow it, and then you could drill it. When it came time to harvest, why you used to have to hook horses on this big combine. The Clements brothers and my dad worked together in this harvesting because we pooled our money and bought a big harvester. Now this harvester had a twenty-seven foot cut. It took twenty-seven head of horses to pull it. They'd have three spans of six and then three horses out in front. The cut was twenty-seven feet wide. Now the thing of it is with this harvester, they never had an engine on it to pull it. Now they have an engine on there harvesters that run all the machinery but this harvester was quite a big one. It had big wheels on the back with big cleats on. It was what they called ground powered. These big cleats would dig in the dirt and these wheels would furnish the power to run all this machinery. You understand what I mean? It was quite interesting. Now my dad, he was the oldest boy in the family. He kind of looked after the machinery. Of course, they had to have a fellow to sew sacks and one to run the wheel to make sure if the ground wasn't too level they had to keep raising and lowering the cutter bar or you'd miss some heads and not get it all. They had a man drive it. Up over the first set of six horses they had a big ladder. It stuck out over, it kind of went by the heads of the first horses, the first span of six. There's where the driver sat. Now you only had two lines and that was the two lines up on the three head of horses that led the bunch. All the others were tied to the next ones double trees, their halters were. Of course, when he had to turn he had to be pretty careful and not turn too quickly or it would kind of crumple up the outfit. It was interesting to me. We had a fellow, a young fellow; he was probably

twenty years old. He was driving the horses. It was always my fun to want to ride up on this ladder with him. It was quite a seat and there was room enough for him and me too. He always had a box of rocks there to throw at the slow horses. Course, that's what I like to do, is throw rocks. I would get up there whenever I could and ride with him so I could throw those rocks at the slow horses. Course, they had big brakes on this combine so if you went down a slope you might want to stop or you might go a little faster than you wanted to and these brakes were handy. Anyway they had this big tractor. When it wasn't busy doing custom work for somebody else why they used that quite a bit. It would pull the combine by itself. They made quite a little money doing custom plowing, sagebrush, and that stuff. So that's why they used the horses. Of course, each man when it come noon, each man would get off and take care of his six horses. It didn't amount to too much work one would think. It took a lot of hay and grain to feed those horses. I remember one winter, I don't know what happened to the combine, but it didn't work. We used some headers. These headers were pulled by six horses. It would go along and just cut the heads off the grain and this header would elevate it up into what we would call a header box. Then we would take it and stack it in stacks. Then we would have a big steam thrashing machine come in and, later on, thrash these stacks out. One day it was so late in the fall before we got all the farms cut and stacked, so they had this trashing machine come in. Why, it snowed. The snow drifts up there, the steam engine. There was a fellow by the name of Hall. He had come up in there with the steam engine and the steam engine couldn't go through the drifts. So my dad took this tractor with two crawlers on the back. He couldn't go through front wards so he would turn around and back through the drift. That thing just took through that snow like; he backed through a few times and then hooked onto the steam engine and helped it through to the stacks. Then the trashing took place in the wintertime. They then had to haul the grain in. Everybody had sacks then. They put it in sacks. They didn't dump it in a big truck like they do now. It was all sacks. They would stack it up. Later on we would haul it to Newdale or Tetonia in the sleighs. That was an all day job hauling wheat all winter long. I remember the folks leaving there. I don't know just what year it was but they came out with a report in a farm magazine that Newdale shipped more grain out of there in one year than any other shipping place in the United States because there were so many farms right there. So they would haul it in from many points around the area. I'd come with my dad down to Newdale in a sleigh loaded with wheat. I'd have to stay there all night and then come back the next day. As you go up through Newdale, on the south side, there is a great big barn up there. It doesn't look so big now as it did as a kid. That's where we slept. There were no motels or anything right there at Newdale so we'd bring our own bedding. We'd put the horses in the barn over there, it didn't cost so much to keep the horses there. Then we'd go up there in the loft and roll out your bedding. You'd think that was awful cold. But you know there was probably twenty other horses below in the bottom of that barn. The heat from those horses, it just amazes me how warm it was up there. The next day we would rise early. There was a café there. We had a good supper and breakfast and then we'd head back home. In those days, you know where Canyon Creek is? You just go across the bridge now. Back then you had to go way down in that canyon and cross the creek and then way back up the other side out of there. When you went down it from the other side loaded in the sleigh, you'd throw a chain around the runner on the sleigh. It would keep the sleigh from pushing the horses down that dugway

very fast. You wanted to go slow. Then we'd take it off and go up the other side. Usually when they got to the bottom they'd take and put an extra team on so they would have more horses to pull that load up out of that canyon. Then they'd bring them all back down to bring up the next one. Then it would be on down to Newdale. So it took quite a little time to go down through and out of that canyon. That's why it took so long. Course, you could jog the horses going down the hill but it was slow going up. It was always three to four farmers who would go together so they could help one another out if they needed to. They all took a shovel. Course, I helped to shovel by keeping the snow from around the sleigh. We did it this was until about 1930. Then we came across the bridge. We didn't have to go down into the canyon. Anyways, let's see; is there any question you want to ask about that?

Brian: How many acres a day would you get done?

SC: Well, I was pretty small, but I don't think they'd cut over then acres, something like that. It was pretty slow. See that being new ground, right out of the sagebrush, it yielded pretty good. I imagine it would get twenty-five bushel per acre. Later on they had to go into deeper drill and it harvest a better yield. I was so small. But I do know this. They planted barley, maybe it was oats, I don't remember, one or the other. They build up the ground for wheat. I remember when they run that sack sewer he was kept so busy that he could hardly keep up with sewing sacks fast enough. These sacks would hold about a hundred and twenty pounds. Course it would be lighter with oats or barely. On this combine they had a chute that could hold about six sacks. They would pull this lever up and the end gate would come up and it would hold the first sack and the next one until they had six sacks in there. Then they'd pull the lever along and it would slide out of this. So when they went to pick it up with the wagon afterward, why you'd have six sacks altogether, see. Instead of dumping one out, why you could pull and load six sacks on the wagon and then go to the next one. So that made it pretty handy.

Brian: Did you sew the sacks right on…?

Silas: Sewed the sacks right on the machine. Then you put it over on the scoop and it would go down there until you had six sacks on it. There's another little story I'll have to tell you that was amusing to me. See I was quite small, six to eight years old, when all this happened. My Uncle ran the header. See, he stood up there and run this reel to raise and lower the cutter bar. He was supposed to make sure he got all the heads. In them days the sage hens were quite thick. Every once in a while you'd come along and a bunch of them would fly up. You'd always carry a shotgun right there with you. He'd grab that gun and shoot those sage hens. Then he wanted me to go pick up the dead ones. So I'd scoot down the chute. If it was loaded I could run down the sacks. But when I got back, if it wasn't loaded, I had to walk along there and carry these sage hens until the sacks got in the chute so I could walk on top of them. I could walk up the sacks. I couldn't go up the chute empty. It was too slick. It was like these chutes you have in the parks. Why, it was the same thing. Course, we kids used this in the summer time to scoot down anyway. As kids we had lots of fun scooting down that. But anyway I would bring these sage hens. I would get quite a lot of them. Course, this one uncle of mine, he liked to be around

having fun with somebody. One time I was up there just about the top of that chute with those chickens. You know, it seems like, I was so small and I thought they must weigh ten pounds apiece. I think they really probably weighed about two and a half pounds. But I was small, see, and it seemed like they weighted a lot. I got pretty near the top and he reached over and pulled the lever and us and the sacks all went down. So then I had to, I told him what I thought about it too. I got big enough that I could tell him that. So I gathered up my chickens and waited until the sacks got in there again and then I hustled back up. But he had to do that once just for fun I guess. Anyway those were some of the experiences I had. Do you have anything else? All of the water, for all these horses. We had to haul water. We had to haul it clear from Canyon Creek or from over to the Basin. Then they finally got some wells. It was called the Humphrey Well. That was about three miles away. But the other was four or five down to Canyon Creek. When you had a tank on a wagon it took about four head of horses to pull this full of water. I know I and my brother, we hauled one year, during thrashing time like that. He was four years older than me. He'd run the horses and I'd pull the brake. I was too young to drive that many horses. When we'd get to the Humphrey Well, you could just drive under there and dip it out of the cistern. When you went to the creek, you had to back right up to the creek with horses. You could stand on a platform that had been built to dip it in. Later on the Clements boys, they bought them an area in the hills there. They built them a cistern. There was a spring there and this big cistern would fill up with water. You could drive in and fill up from below it. It would just run in out of a pipe. That was pretty handy. It sure saved a lot of bucket throwing. But that hauling the water was quite a job. As I remember I only did that one year with my brother. Then we hauled for the thrashing machine that year also. They paid us for doing it. We thought we were pretty big kids, I'll tell yeah.

Brian: How often did you have to go get the water?

SC: We just went everyday. It took a tank a day, whether it was the steam engine or this group of horses. Somebody had to go everyday for the horses and then for the use of the house. Course there was about; somebody sometimes took a barrel of water in a buggy to haul to their house. During thrashing time, to keep up, I know it took a load of water everyday to those horses. Course, the thrashing machine was a steam engine. We had to have water for that too.

Brian: How many gallons of water could the wagon carry?

SC: Oh, I imagine it would be fifteen to eighteen hundred gallons. It was made of wood. Then they had clamps on it. It was tongue and groove to start with then they would tighten the clamps around it. This would hold it tight. You had to keep moisture in they or it would dry out. The wood would smell and keep it right tight. In the winter time I remember my dad built a tin receptacle. He would shovel the snow in there and it would melt. Is there anything else you want to know?

Brian: I think we have about covered everything.

TC: We're about at the end of the tape anyway. Thank you a lot.

(This ends the taped interview. This interview was an individual assignment for Tony and Brian's U.S. History Class at Madison High School.)