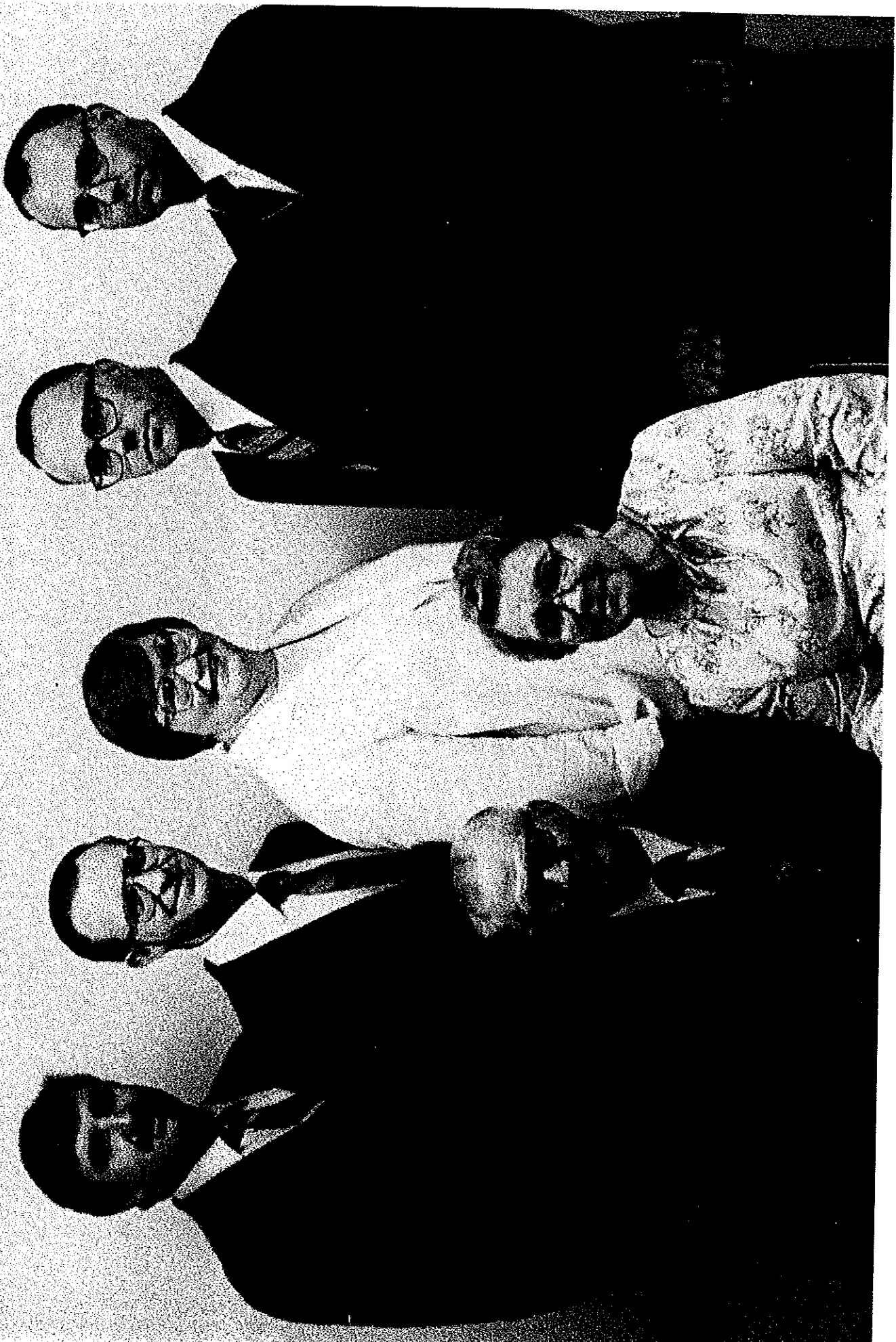


**THE LIFE OF RICHARD E. YANCEY**

**An Oral History Interview**

**July 31, 1993**



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# THE LIFE OF RICHARD E. YANCEY

## An Oral History Interview

INTERVIEWEE: Richard E. Yancey

INTERVIEWER: Teresa Yancey Wilson

DATE: July 31, 1993

PLACE: The home of Richard E. Yancey in Blackfoot, Idaho

W: This is an oral history interview with Richard E. Yancey for the purpose of family history. The date is July 31, 1993. It is 9:30 a.m. My name is Teresa Yancey Wilson.

Tell me about your early family life.

Y: When I was a small boy I was bashful, very bashful. I hid behind my mother's skirts. I kept a big straw hat with me all the time so I could hide behind it, when I needed to. I had problems when I went to school. I was afraid to ask the teacher to go to the restroom. Sometimes I would go home with dirty pants, or wet pants. These were just normal things. It took a long time to overcome it. Later in life, we moved to town. I couldn't stand to have people going by on the sidewalk. It frightened me. I was that bashful. I just wasn't used to it. It took many years of public service and serving on a mission and things of this nature to overcome it. But it's no problem now. I enjoy meeting people, interviewing and talking with them.

I grew up in a large family. I was the oldest boy in the family. I spent most of my time working, doing chores. My younger brothers spent a lot of time out playing ball. I stayed home and did the chores.

W: What memories do you have of your parents and family outings?

Y: Yes, we went on many family excursions. We used to go up to Wolverine and pick sarvis berries and choke cherries. We used to go up in the foothills and up to Brush Creek along the Blackfoot River and go fishing. We used to catch all the fish out of the big holes where beavers would dam the creeks off. We used to get in the wagon with the horses and go out to Lost River Valley and stay all night out at Aunt Mary's and Uncle Parley Black's. We had lots of fun trips out there, playing with cousins and other things of that nature.

Yes, the folks used to take us on trips as other people did at that time with horses and buggies and wagon and stay over night or sometimes stay over for a few days.

W: Did your grandparents live close by? What memories do you have of your grandparents?

Y: The grandparents lived close by. We lived in Groveland. Grandpa and Grandma Dean lived on one side of the old church house and Grandpa and Grandma Yancey lived on the other side of the church house. We went there often and visited.

Grandma Dean and Grandpa Dean enjoyed flowers. They had flower beds around the house, beautiful peonies, rose beds, and pansies. They worked a lot with their gardens and their flowers. They had an orchard with all kinds of apples in it. They had herbs in the cellar way hung up to dry--yarrow and parsley. Horseradish and rhubarb used to grow by the house.

Grandpa Dean used to like to joke. He used to sit on the porch with Uncle Nephi and Uncle Sam and others and tell jokes. I can remember that, and they would laugh about it.

They had a feather bed in the house. When I would stay for the night I could snuggle down into a straw-filled mattress, or a feather bed mattress, or whatever it was. I enjoyed things of that nature.

I used to go to Grandpa and Grandma's lots of times when they were painting or cleaning the house. Grandpa used to like to be conservative. I heard him say once that if you only made ten cents a day that you ought to save some of it. He used to calcimine the house and white-wash the fence. If the paint ran out, we would just stir in a little more water until we got done.

I was at Grandma Yancey's house a lot of times to help. I used to take wood and coal out there after Grandpa died. When he died he was probably about sixty years old. He was bishop of the ward out there for years. There was lots of people who told me, in later life, things he had done for people. Like if they ran out of hay for the winter, he would give them enough hay to feed them through the winter, then the next summer they could bring the hay back to pay him back for it.

They also had a large apple orchard. He used to haul apples to Pocatello to sell them in the winter time and other times when he could get there with his horse and wagon. He was blind; he couldn't see. He always took one of the boys with him to tell him when he was coming to the railroad tracks, so he would know whether a train was coming or not. He would go around the streets of Pocatello and sell his apples to the restaurants and cafes and other eating places where they used apples to make pies.

He also did a lot of carpentry work around home. He built a picket fence. He measured the sand and gravel and things out with a measure because he couldn't see to mix his cement and pour it. He put the pickets in and made a beautiful yard. Even though he was blind, he did a lot of things like that.

Grandma in her later life had diabetes and suffered a lot. She had to wear a pair of overshoes on her feet to keep them warm most of the time because of that. But she was one that went out most of her life and

did a lot of nursing for other people and helped the sick and did a lot of community service. They all did in those days.

W: As you were growing up, what type of work did you do on the farm?

Y: Yes, we worked on the farm. I used to hoe and thin beats, and irrigate potatoes and pull the weeds out of them. Mother taught me how to work a lot, as well as father. I used to help mother milk cows. I remember once when she was sick and couldn't be there to milk, I milked thirteen cows one night before someone finally came to help finish them. We all learned to work on the farm. We would irrigate most of the place. We used to drive the fields on the harrows in the spring. We had about twenty head of horses. I would drive the horses on the mowing machine in the summer and the hay rake.

There wasn't much money involved with those times. We didn't worry about whether we were being paid for any thing we had done. We worked because we needed to work to have something to eat and a place to sleep. That was the main thing. I think the first time I earned a dollar was when Ed Gaffner paid me a dollar when we finished work one night. We had teamed up with neighbors to dig potatoes and had worked at several places. We finished working on his small patch that evening. We were putting the potatoes in a basket and dumping them in a shaker/sorter to shake the little ones through, and as he was shaking them through the sorter and bagging them, others would come later with an old truck and haul them to town or wherever they needed to go. But he gave me a dollar that night when we finished with the patch. I told him I couldn't take it. I'd never been given a dollar by anyone else. Father came and talked to me and told me that it was alright to take it. That was because we had always just worked for our dinner and a place to sleep, and that was all we expected. But he gave me a dollar, and I kept it. That was probably the first dollar I ever earned doing some work.

W: How many brothers and sisters did you grow up with? What were your experiences growing up with such a large family?



Y: I had eight brothers and eight sisters. Some of them came later in life, and I wasn't at home to grow up with them. We got along fine together. We didn't have any problems. We all learned how to work and how to share. There was always a big pan of stew on the stove and there was plenty to eat. We had our own rooms and we were taught to take care of them. We shared our rooms with an extra brother or two. We learned how to sweep our rooms. When it was time to clean our rooms we learned how to calcimine the walls or hang paper. We also had times when we went out and played ball and ran races and kicked the can. We played together and had a lot of fun, because there were enough of us to do those things.

W: As you got older, what did you do?

Y: I was probably about 25 before I went on my mission. While Father was farming we used to feed a lot of cattle. He used to feed a lot of hogs and fatten them for market. Sometimes he'd have two- or three-hundred head of hogs. He would take a couple hundred head of cattle for the winter and feed them for somebody. And I spent many days hauling hay on a sleigh in the winter, from neighboring farms out of the hay stack to feed the cattle. Yes, we worked all the time.

After he quit feeding cattle, as I mentioned once before, he milked cows for awhile. We had about twenty or twenty-five head of cows to milk by hand, morning and night. That took a lot of work. We would turn the cows out in the pasture and other places where they would feed. They had to be tended during the day. There was always plenty of work and there was plenty of us around to help do it.

The folks taught us how to work. Father told me once, "My dad would tell me to go out and do something. When I would go out and do it and get through he would say, 'Oh, shucks, why did you do it that way? You should have done it this way.' I decided if I had any kids I was going to show them how it was done." So he always went and showed us what he wanted done, and told us what he wanted done; and then he expected us to do it after he had showed us how to do it. So he not only taught us how to work, but he taught us how to do the work the way he wanted it done.

I used to work and irrigate a field that had probably about 100 acres in it, maybe 160. There would be two or three streams of water to change the head gates in different places. I had a lot of experience in irrigating and managing crops as I grew up.

W: Tell me about your decision to serve a mission.

Y: I was called on a mission from the Second Ward in Blackfoot by Bishop Osmond Buchannan. I had worked in the Sunday School presidency, and the Elder's Quorum presidency and had a little helpful experience in that respect. Other than that, I hadn't had a lot of training for the mission field. But I had a desire to serve and I was called. I was sent to the Southern States Mission. I was a day late getting to Salt Lake for the missionary training course through some misunderstanding, which lasted about ten days at that time. I received my endowments in the Salt Lake temple at that time also before going on a mission.

We were given short courses by many of the Church leaders. I met many of them while I was in Salt Lake in those few days--Reed Smoot, Elder Callus, and President McKay. He wasn't president then; he was a younger man. But he came in and taught us. There was also John Taylor. It is hard to remember them all at a moment's notice.

Dr. David Smith came in and talked to us and said, "When you go to the mission field, you're going on sacred money. You shouldn't waste your money on foods that won't do you any good. You don't want to eat bran flakes and all that kind of stuff that doesn't have any nourishment in it. You want to eat foods that will do you some good." He said, "If you want to stay healthy while you're in the mission field, you ought to drink a quart of water each morning and lay on the floor and splash it back and forth in your stomach for five or ten minutes. That will keep you healthy." I learned to do that. I've done it for many years since and I've heard of other people that have done the same thing. It's one thing that helps to keep the stomach cleaned out and helps to keep you in good physical shape. They told us many things down there about health care and what to do, and how to be choosy about the things you eat while you're in the mission field.

I remember before leaving Brother Briggs of Blackfoot talked to me. He had served a mission in the Southern States. He said, "Richard, when you go to the South, don't take a new suit of clothes with you. When you get down there you'll put on a lot of weight. People always put on a lot of weight when they go to the south and eat the foods they have." I went to the Southern States, and spent two years. I followed his advice. I went in my old brown suit and wore it until people were probably ashamed to see me in it. But in the South you could buy a new suit for fifteen dollars with an extra pair of trousers. We had the opportunity to buy all the suits we wanted from those suit stores down there (chain stores) and to dress like you should be dressed as missionaries. It was a great experience to go on a mission, to be able to meet people, and to see the changes that come into their lives as you worked with them.

W: Who set you apart for your mission?

Y: Elder Charles A. Callus, if I remember right, set me apart. He had presided in the Southern States Mission. He remembered Aunt Alice Yancey who had gone on a mission. He reminded me of her. I had a nice interview with him and he wished me well on my mission.

W: Was your mission for two years then?

Y: Yes, our mission was for two years. I served most of the time under the direction of Bishop LeGrand Richards. The mission procedures changed quite a bit under his administration. Some of the first companions I had spent most of their time holding street meetings and holding cottage meetings in the evenings. But he changed the program to door-to-door tracting. We went through the communities and went door-to-door tracting for people that might be interested. We also put a lot of emphasis on the Book of Mormon and getting people to read the Book of Mormon. We also had a lot of instruction and training leadership in the branches so they could better do the work they were expected to do.

Many times we would go out to a cottage meeting in the evening wondering if anybody would be there. People would flock in from the little trails that come out of the woods and other places. So by the time

the meeting got started there were so many people they were hanging out of the windows and every place else, wanting a glimpse to talk to you. I remember once at a street meeting we held people had gathered around the town square. There were a lot of Negroes, colored people, also that were interested. As my companion was talking, he was telling them about Joseph Smith and the restored gospel. The people were quite interested in the things that he was saying. The audience kept hollering, "Amen, Amen, Amen." They agreed with what he was saying, but he thought they wanted him to close. So he quit, said, "Amen," and sat down.

W: How did the members react to having the missionaries there?

Y: The members were very gracious to the missionaries. Most of the time when we were in the mission field we rented a room to stay in in the community, either from a member family that had an extra room or a non-member family if they had an extra room. We were treated very graciously wherever we went. We were always invited out to dinner. You had to be careful that you didn't overdo yourself on the invitations and not take advantage of their graciousness. Most of the time we ate in our room, especially the morning meal. We would buy a little milk, or something from the store and we could have the meal in our room when we needed to. But there was plenty of invitations out to dinner. The people were really good, and the food was good in the south. They had lots of vegetables, okra, and collards. They had great meals with vegetables. They had lots of fruits (citrus fruits)--oranges, lemons, and tangerines.

W: Did you have very many baptisms on your mission? Where did you baptize the people?

Y: We didn't have a great deal of baptisms. We had some. We usually baptized the people wherever there was water that was deep enough to baptize them. If we were laboring out in the country districts, we would find a stream that had a pond.

I remember once we baptized someone out in the edge of the ocean, and in doing so I went into the water in my stocking feet. I stepped on

some large shells and cut the bottom of my foot. After I got out, this sister got some fresh turpentine and put on my foot and bound it up. Even though it was cut nearly a half an inch deep, the next day I walked twenty miles on that foot and it didn't bother me. It healed right up and got better.

Yes, it was a joyous work. Baptisms were few and sometimes went for several months before you found one, but the main thing among the people down there was they all read the Bible and they were all quite satisfied with religion. But the religion they had usually seemed to be what they felt was good enough for their parents, was good enough for them. It took a lot of tracting to find someone who was interested enough to read the Book of Mormon.

I remember one sister I loaned a Book of Mormon to said she had read the Bible seven times, clear through, page to page. It could have been thirteen times. After reading in the Book of Mormon for two weeks, when we went back she said she had learned more about the truth by reading the Book of Mormon for two weeks than she had learned in all those readings of the Bible.

There was a lot of interest in religion. I met another sister that had banded with some of the neighbors. They were holding a religion class once each week to study the Bible. They were different religions, but they felt their ministers were not teaching them the truth. So they got together and organized this class so they would find the truth by themselves.

W: Did you teach those sisters?

Y: We didn't go to any of their meetings, but we had the opportunity of giving them copies of the Book of Mormon and different literature. There was two or three of them that I know of that did join the Church before I left the mission field.

W: What happened when you came home from your mission?

Y: When I came home from the mission I didn't have a big crowd there to meet me as I got off the train. I took my suitcase and walked down the sidewalk to the old ice cream store where my wife to be was working. I went in and sat up to the counter. She came to the counter. Before that, the man in the store next door--she worked at the ice cream store, and the apple store was next door--had slipped through the back door and told her that I was coming. So it wasn't any surprise to them. But they were a little bit hesitant to have me come in because another missionary had come in a month or two before that. When he had come home, his girlfriend was anxious to see him and he was interested in someone else, and wasn't too interested in her. So my girlfriend was a little bit wondering how she should react at that time.

W: Tell me about when you first met Grandma.

Y: Ethella was in the Blackfoot Second ward. She and her mother and her sister rented a house from Uncle Cecil Wright. I met her in going to church. We sang in the choir. At choir practice and things of this nature we became interested in each other. I used to walk home with her at night after choir practice. If we had a teacher training course or something we attended we would walk home together at night afterwards. And this was the beginning of our courtship. We enjoyed each other. We enjoyed doing things together. It was a new experience for us, and we got along very well together.

W: Did she write to you on your mission?

Y: Yes, she wrote to me quite regularly. Once she was kind of concerned when she didn't get a return answer right away. The problem was, we were given the assignment of taking the Church census, which I think was done once each ten years. We traveled through the assigned section given to us in the mission field to contact those who were members of the church and do this census. It probably took us two weeks or a little better and we were out from our regular mailing place, so I didn't get a letter sent home. When my next letter came from her, she was wanting to know if I was still interested in her, and what had happened that she hadn't received a letter.

W: How long was it before you were married?

Y: I came home in the fall, and we got married the next April--April 23, it was. It had been an early spring and I had leased some land on the reservation to farm. I had been down there and done some plowing and got some land ready for a small crop, fixed some fences, and had done a little work on the house. It was kind of a dry spring then. The ground was dry when I plowed it. We left to go to Logan to get married. When we came back there had been a big storm. We had to shovel a couple feet of snow out of the gateway in order to get into the field where the house was, because the snow had drifted that deep in the gateway. It was about six or eight inches deep over all the ground. Then there was rain, and it soaked the ground up good so the crops grew well that summer with very little water.

I think if I remember right I borrowed five sacks of wheat from Uncle Joe Wilson. He told me I could pay it back to him in the fall. I borrowed a few sacks of barley from Bishop Loveland. And I managed to put in a little crop by borrowing the grain drill. The place that I had rented had a team or horses that went with it. So I was able to get the plowing done and put in a little crop with that team of horses. And then afterwards I had an offer to buy an old thrashing machine tractor with steel wheels. I paid Uncle Daniel Yancey 100 dollars for it, and I used that to farm with for three or four years until we traded it and got a smaller new tractor with rubber tires on it.

W: Tell me about your relationship with Grandma.

Y: Like all couples that get married, I guess new experiences are entered into maybe with caution and a little apprehension. But we didn't have any problems, really. We enjoyed each other and we were anxious to do what the Lord expected us to do. We were disappointed when our first child was born. Because of a small pelvis, it was a forced birth and the baby's back was broken. She was stillborn. But the doctor told us at that time that we would never have any family. But we weren't satisfied. We went to other doctors and were given the assurance that we could have a family, at least we could have some. And through faith and prayers and the assistance of good doctors, our next children that were

born were twins. When I paid the doctor, the normal fee was 35 dollars for delivering a baby, and the doctor charged me 350 dollars. I asked him if he charged double for twins. He said, "No, Brother Yancey, I don't charge double; but this was a case where I had to cut your wife to the bone to keep the flesh from tearing. I just had to do that much surgery that that is what it amounted to." The boys, when they were both born, had black eyes, and bruises on the heads where the doctors had used instruments to try to deliver them. But the Lord blessed us. They both recovered and everything was alright as far as that was concerned. All of the children were delivered in a similar fashion, some maybe a little easier than others. When Dean was born, Mother had to have part of her bowels and some of her intestines removed because they had been damaged. It was a long time for her to recover. I remember bringing her home from the hospital. She was so thin and frail that she just laid and slept for several days before she could even have enough strength. But the Lord blessed us and she survived it. We were blessed with a wonderful family.

W: Did someone come and stay with her after having the babies?

Y: The neighbors were good, yes. Truly Wright and her family came when Mother was in the hospital. And when she came home some of them came and stayed with her for a few days and helped. People did a lot of that in those days. They helped each other. And ours was no exception. Everyone in the ward was so good when these times came about, to help other by doing what they could.

W: When did you move to this house that you live in now? What were the experiences relating to that?

Y: I don't remember for sure just when it was, probably about 1948 or along in there, about that time. We had been living in just a small two-room house that had been used for the school teacher. We were right here adjoining the school house. And the old school house had been used for a church meeting house. The place we bought had the house on that joined the school house. And after being in it for a winter or two, we decided to build a new house. And so we had the house pulled back and hocked the foundation and built the new house in front of it. And we lived in this while the new house was being built. Dean was the baby



then. He had gotten pneumonia. We had quite a struggle getting him over it. But after we got into the new house with the furnace and controlled heat we got along fine. He never had any more problems that way. It was a great blessing to us, to have a better house fixed up where we had things we could get along with better.

W: When did Aunt Jeanie join your family?

Y: I don't remember just when it was, but she was probably about ten or twelve years old, or a little bit older. She wasn't getting along too well where she was living. They had to make some changes, so we volunteered to have her come and try living with us. And we got along fine, but she had to learn a lot of things by her own experience. We offered to help her get through school and do things like that, but she wanted to get married. So she got married early. Like I say, we learn a lot of things by experience. She learned a lot. At the present time she is married in the temple and has a husband she's getting along good with. She has a boy in the mission field that's doing a good work. She and her husband are both doing a good work here at home.

W: Did you have a vehicle?

Y: When we were married, Dad gave me one of his old trucks. I had it and he gave me his old car. It was quite a nice car. It was a Dodge. After we had got back from Logan, getting married, we decided that it used too much gasoline so we quit using it. It was a bigger car, as cars were in those days, and so I took the motor out of it and took the rest of it and made a wagon out of it that I used for years. After I got the motor and things out and got it turned upside down I found out one reason why it used so much gas was there was a small crack in the gas tank. Once in awhile if you put too much gas in it the gasoline would leak out. These were some of the things that we learned in life. Things that we don't know are causing us problems sometimes really aren't problems if we could find them and get them repaired or fixed. However, we bought us a smaller Ford car that just had one seat in it and a little place behind the seat where we could sit the kids when we went to town, the twins. And we drove it from where we lived on the reservation back and forth to town to do our shopping and get things we needed from town.

W: Tell me about your children, about their school experiences.

Y: As far as school goes, Mother used to take care of all the problems that used to come up that way. I guess maybe she went and met with the teachers once in awhile. I was busy working all the time. I didn't take time to do things like that too much. The kids rode on the school bus.

In the winter time once when the bus was coming home it had snowed so much that they couldn't get home. The bus started out and the snow plow came ahead of it. The snow plow got as far as it could go and it had to turn around and go back. They brought a bigger snow plow out. He got as far as he could get and it finally ended up that we had the neighbors come up with a sleigh from down below. They picked up the kids about half way up to the highway from where the school bus had been able to come and brought the kids home on the sleigh. I think it was two weeks before they got the road opened back up so the kids could go back to school. The neighbors had to dump the milk out of the cans. Nobody could come and get it. We made home-made ice cream to use the milk that was good. But we were snowed in for two weeks.

We used to have to take some of the kids in to early classes, before the school bus came when they were taking seminary. We had to get up early and get the chores done at four o'clock in the morning and take them into their early classes because they had to have them over with and they couldn't go on the school bus. We did many of these things to help them.

W: Did your children help you on the farm?

Y: The kids helped on the farm and we did what we could to teach them how to drive the tractors. They were just getting tired of doing hand work and we finally got some machinery that operated by the tractor, so they could work with tractor. That helped them learn how to work and to do things and to enjoy doing it. But just like all children growing up it takes about as much time, or more time, to help them to do it, and teach them how to do it, than you could go ahead and do it yourself.

I remember I used to wait for Saturday to come to clean the ditches so the kids could get on the ditcher and help manage it, if I drove the tractor to clean the ditch. But when Saturday comes, there is always Aaronic priesthood outings or after school things that are planned for the kids. Sometimes you end up with your help not being there because there are other interests that have taken them. I remember when the kids couldn't help me clean ditch because they were out on some of these things, I just took an equal weight of lava rock or something heavy and put on the ditcher and went ahead and did the work, just the same as if they had been there. I used to need their help in cutting grain with the binder sometimes. They would drive the tractor to cut the grain while I managed the binder behind the tractor. But when they couldn't help, I learned to fasten a rope to a clip on the binder. I'd go ahead and cut the grain and dump the bundles with rope. So we learned to manage when we didn't have help, and at the same time, we learned to train the kids and help them to work if they were available.

W: Tell me how things have changed over time.

Y: Things have changed a lot. Everybody used to have their own small farm, and now they've taken out all the fences and ditches and put on sprinkler lines and things of that nature. We used to think there were some things we could do with a tractor and some things we had to have the horse and horse equipment to do. But when I went to work on the Church farm once, the neighbor came with his grain drill behind the tractor. I watched him drill the grain and how he turned around. I went home and sawed the tongue out of my old grain grill and hooked the tractor on and learned how to do it the same way he did. So things do change.

Sometimes it takes us awhile to realize what the change is and whether it's for the better or not. But there are some things that don't change, and that is learning how to manage what you have and how to get along with it. Sometimes you think you need a new car, but if you start telling yourself you don't need it you can fix the old car. Maybe you can save yourself a fortune by fixing up the old car and making it go a few more years.

and a great surgeon. He saved her life many times. And yet he died a drunkard. He became an alcoholic, and was kind of a bum on the street before he died. But he was a great physician and he was a great doctor.

And as far as food storage is concerned, my mother was the same. She always took advantage to can and use the things that were available. I think today, if you wanted to, I could go down in my basement and still get you a jar of Mother's jam or jelly. Yes, it's probably thirty years old now; she's been dead a long time. But some of it is still down there. I'm sure it's still edible and could be used if you wanted to use it. Some people keep food for a little while and they dump it out and replenish it with fresh food. But I don't like to see a lot of things wasted. Many times they can be used, if not for human food for pet food or something else. We've always had our shelves full. There's always dried beans, and dried rice, and any amount of it downstairs. If I live another hundred years, I don't think I'll get eaten up what's downstairs. But I can take food that's a little bit old and blend some newer fruit in with it from the garden or from the fresh trees, and you can use it in breads and cakes and things of this nature. And it cuts down on your food bill. You don't have to go to the store and pay 100 dollars to fill your grocery bill. You can go to the store and spend ten dollars sometimes and get everything you need.

W: Would you share some more feelings about Grandma?

Y: We don't know it, but we're all poets. They had a little thing in Relief Society once where we paid tribute to our wives and our mothers. I wrote a little poem. It's in Mother's journal. It's quite a nice little poem about mother.

We bought a house and invited her to stay;  
She made us a home for both work and play.  
With lace on the windows and frills on the bed,  
The pillows must be fluffed and the mattress turned over, she said.  
And that's why we like to sleep in her bed.

She talks a lot and sings songs too,  
And is always there to listen to you.

She taught us how to shop and how to save,  
And we always liked the advice she gave.

She knew how to wash, iron, mend, and sew..  
She kept us clean from head to toe.  
She sweeps the floor and scrubs the walls.  
She knits with yarn many things, and shawls.

She writes the letters, answers the doorbell too,  
Receives all calls, now just a few.  
She mixes and stirs and blends and shakes;  
We like the cake, cookies, and bread she bakes.

She clips your hair, and rubs your back,  
Serves you breakfast and puts your lunch in a sack.  
Band-aid and salve on your cut finger or sore,  
Picks up all tumbles and spills from the floor.  
She gives out a hug and a kiss and they hurt no more.

Always a light in the window when you come in from the cold.  
A warm meal and a smile to keep you from getting old.  
A sentence, a page, a picture, or a line  
Each day she puts on the family tree so fine  
And that's why we cherish that mother and wife of mine.

Mother was just a queen to me and always will be. Mother hasn't left me. She's every place I look around here. I pick up a book and there are all the little kids in it and their pictures and things. Mother finished her work before she left. I appreciate the fact that she did that. She's still here with me. True, I have to stop once in awhile and sweep the floor, because she's not here. But I enjoy doing it. And that's how I feel about her. She knows it. And you all know it. Two of my sisters came to see me yesterday. My older sister probably won't live more than another week. But that doesn't make any difference. Life goes on. Some of the things we can't do somebody else has to do for us. But that's all in the plan of life. It's a wonderful plan to have parents to teach us and to show us what to do and to help us to know how. I remember as a boy I used to get sick to my stomach when father would want me to

hold a horse while he sewed up a cut. I couldn't stand the sight of blood. But life gives us experience and helps us. As we go on we learn to bear all of these things. With the help of the Lord it becomes easier, a joy to us, when we're able to do the things that we couldn't do if we didn't have parents to teach us, to train us, and others to help us and show us how. It's a wonderful thing to live in a life where we can help each other and be united in the things that we do.

W: Tell me about Church callings you have had?

Y: My first calling in the Church, if I remember right, was librarian. I had the job of being librarian in the Sunday School. At that time, that meant I was in charge of taking care of the song books and putting them out for Sunday School and then on occasion gathering them up. If there were torn sheets we went through and repaired them and fixed them up. I also probably had an assignment in the Deacon's or Teacher's quorum as a counselor. I don't remember that far back. These were the first jobs I had in the church, just to be there and to be on time and help to keep things in order and do what they told you to do. Later on I was a counselor to the Sunday School superintendent. And I was a counselor to the Elder's Quorum president in the Blackfoot Second Ward and also in the Riverton Ward. Our Elder's Quorum was with another quorum out in the Riverside and Thomas areas. Those were my assignments.

And then I was interviewed by President J. Elmer Williams to be bishop of the Riverton Ward. I was bishop for approximately twelve years. Two months before I was released from being bishop I was made a member of the stake high council. I served on the high council for eighteen years. I served on the adult Aaronic Priesthood Committee. We organized and taught the temple classes and taught the prospective elders. Sometimes we had as many as twelve different classes going at the same time in different wards to train these people. I had the assignment of genealogy work in our stake, the Blackfoot Stake for a number of years. Brother and Sister Merlin Murdock took care of the baptism assignments, and Brother George Mangum and his helper took care of the sealing assignments. We had ward histories written up in the wards. And we had a goal of trying to get one endowment for each member of the ward in the year. Sometimes we would fall short. But one thing about temple

and genealogy work, the more you do the more there is to do. It's a work that never ends. You do your very best and do all you can, but there's always that much more. The more names you find, the farther it reaches out, the more lives it touches. It's a glorious work, to be able to go to the temple and renew your covenants and do this service for someone else.

W: Were you ever a home teacher?

Y: I've always been a home teacher. I'm still a home teacher. I've got my teaching done this month. I did it last month. I take a younger boy with me. When Mother was alive we were going to widowed homes, and so she went with me for a few months. Then in the winter when the roads were bad and they had a hard time going on their route to do their Relief Society teaching, I would take them on their beat. While they were giving their lessons I would shovel the snow off of people's sidewalks.

W: How has the gospel influenced your life and the way you have raised your family?

Y: One of the purposes of the gospel is to learn to share and to learn to be united in the things that you do and to be working for the same goals. The gospel helps us in our lives. If we live its principles the Lord blesses us to know what to do and how to do it and to help us make decisions that are important.

When the kids were in the mission field, the quorums of the Church offered help and assistance. I said, "That's fine. I'd like to thank you for it. But I think we can get along. I'd like to try and do it." With two in the mission field and two returning from the mission field and going into school, it was quite a challenge, but it seems like there was always something to sell to meet our needs. I remember one time when the cows freshened in the spring I bought an extra calf and put on each cow. I thought, "Well, we need the money for the mission field, and we'll do well." I fed those cows and raised a double crop of calves. But when I got ready to sell them next fall, the calves were cheaper than they were when I bought them.

And on another occasion we had wheat out in the field. It was clear up to your shoulders and headed out and looked like it would yield eighty to one-hundred bushels to the acre. But the rust hit it. And when we cut it we only got fifteen to twenty bushels to the acre. It was a disappointment for sure, and it was a challenge. But somebody always came and paid you a bill that had been past due for five years, and you had forgotten about it for something you had sold them. And the Lord had moved up on them to come and pay their bill. Things like this happen. When the time comes for the money that's needed, to support a missionary or to keep somebody in school, the Lord always blesses you to have it.

I sold a cellar full of potatoes one fall, a small cellar. We had fifteen loads in it. When it was time to quit that evening, the company that was picking them up had one big truckload left. They said, "Do you want us to come back in the morning and finish this?" I said, "No, I think we'll just leave this load sitting here." They hooked on the sorter and pulled out that night, and I shut the cellar up. Well, I kept that load of spuds until that next spring. By spring the prices had gone high. I got more money out of that one load that was left than I got out of all the rest I sold in the fall. It's surprising what the lord will do to help you sometimes. And one spring when I was planting potatoes Boyd used to get out of school early in the evening. I would hire some Indians to cut seed during the day and I'd load it on the truck and haul it over to the field. He'd get home at about four o'clock and we'd go and plant potatoes until it was dark. We did this for several days. We ended up getting in thirty or forty acres of potatoes. And that fall when we dug those potatoes, by taking advantage of a few hours time to get them planted and into the ground, each field of potatoes that we planted made an extra 1000 or 2000 dollars that fall when we sold them. The Lord blesses us to take advantage of our time and the opportunities that are present to do what we can in managing our affairs, and it all comes out for our good.

W: Would you like to share your testimony of the gospel?

Y: The gospel is true. I know it's true. Everything in nature bears record of it being true. The sun comes up in the morning. The moon



goes through the sky at night and the stars shine. The winds blow, the rain comes. The rainbow comes in the sky from time to time. The clouds go over. Isn't it marvelous to look at the trees and the flowers, to see the calves jump in the fields and all of these things. All nature bears record to us the gospel is true. And then deep down within your bosom, when the Lord answers your prayers, whether it's the way you wanted it answered or not, you have that warm feeling and you know that the gospel is true--whether it's in life or death. Death is a gift of God. Nobody knows when they're going to die or when it's going to come. You can't order the time. The Lord gives it to you. Sometimes your work is done, and sometimes maybe you have some of it left unfinished, but the gospel is true. Everything we do in life there is record of it. I know it's true. It's always been true. It always will be true.

W: Could you leave some advice for your posterity?

Y: Advice is one thing that is free to all people. Some people take advice, and some treat it lightly. But if we seek the help of the Lord in the things that we do and try to live the commandments, the Lord always blesses us to know what to do. I've knelt in prayer many times as I've went out to go to work in the morning. Sometimes I had so many things to do, but I didn't know what to do first, or which way to turn. But you know, if the Spirit of the Lord comes to direct you sometimes many of those things take care of themselves. Instead of not knowing which way to go, you go whichever way the Lord directs you to go. It will surprise you what happens sometimes.

When I was working with the stake presidency as a member of the high council (and I worked under several) they used to counsel us to take care of ourselves, to be mindful of our health. That's one thing that sometimes we can do and sometimes we can't. But if we take advantage of the opportunities to do the things like I mentioned when I went to the mission field, the advice Dr. David Smith gave, it's helped me through my life. I've read in little doctor books things that were good for curing ailments and things. If you find something that works, use it, remember what it is, and be careful.

If I were to give you any advice, I'd just mention two things. It was my birthday yesterday, and up at the ward gathering they sang a birthday song for me. Some of them found out it was my birthday. And when they got through they said, "Tell us something, Bishop." I said, "Well, I'll just tell you two things you can do if you want to live to a ripe old age. Your body is just like your garden. If you want to raise a good garden you give it nourishing food. And when it starts to grow then you pull the weeds out, take the bad things out and give it room to grow. Your body is the same way. If you give it nourishing food it will grow. And after it has taken the nourishment out of the food then you've got to get rid of the waste. In other words, you've got to pull the weeds out. If you want a healthy and strong body, you nourish it, and then you get all of the bad things out." I've been blessed with a good stomach. I've never had any bowel problems really, only in times of sickness. You know there are a lot of things on television that are advanced for health reasons. Many of them are not false but many of them are misleading. They will say to you, "Use roll-on to keep you from sweating." To me, that's not right. You need to sweat. That's what the body is for, to sweat and get the poison out. You need to sweat. You need to read good literature. You need to do a lot of things to take the bad out of your life. And then give it the nourishment that it needs both physical and spiritual. Just be brave and take one day at a time. With the direction of the spirit, do the things the Lord tells you is good for you to do. You'll never regret it for as long as you live.