

EMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES, 2003
FOREST SERVICE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
Interviewed by Shirley Spears and Dottie Grimes

IRA HATCH

Spears: Let's start with you telling us your name and where you were born.

Hatch: I was interested in

Spears: I know you were around during the depression.

Hatch: I was born in 1932 and that was the heat of the depression, but I remember more about things we had to do without during the war years, like shoes, tires, gas. . .we never wanted because we had the livestock operation and we had the necessities of life.

Spears: Were others in the same condition as you?

Hatch: Yes, it was a farming community and back in those days we looked out for each other in times like those.

Spears: Do you have any specific memories about that time?

Hatch: I

Hatch: Depending on your . . .business. You had an allotment. We had enough for

Spears: Were you ever in the military?

Hatch: Yes. I was in the 1952-53. . .We were attached to a patrol effort that patrolled the iron curtain.

Spears: Was that during the Korean War?

Hatch: Yes, but I was in Germany instead of Korea.

Spears: Were you in combat?

Hatch I married Elaine Brasher. I worked on the farm and ranch in the summer and helped there, and then I went back to school. I went into the service, and when I got out of the service, I managed the family livestock for three and a half years and then went back to college at B.Y. U. I met my future wife there. She was a professor in the food and nutrition department at Brigham Young. We were married the year that I was a senior and she was a teacher there at the university.

Spears: How many children do you have?

Hatch: I have three children. Margaret she's married Ted Wells, and they live in Price. He works for Pacific Corps. They have three children. Jordan who married Joelle Jensen. They live at the family farm in Huntington. He works for Joelle works for the Smith's bank in Price. They have two children. Peggy and Polly. Then our youngest child, Yvonne—she married Ty Jensen. She teaches at the Canyon View Jr. High. Ty has the cabinet shop in Cleveland. They have four children. They have a set of twins, Kensie and Karlie, they are sixteen and Braxton who is two. We have our family traditions. We have Sunday dinner almost every week.

Hatch: I went to Brigham Young University. That way I could go home and help out with the

farm on the weekends. . . I had five brothers and three were married. We didn't have a large operation and some of us needed to.

I majored in Animal and Botany, so I had an agricultural

I made out some applications to the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, and there was an opening in the Forest Service and so I made that my career.

Spears:

Hatch: I graduated in 1961 and went to work for the Forest Service in the Ashley National Forest as a technician and transferred to the office in Vernal. Transferred to . . . an opening came in Castle Dale, and so I made application and transferred here in 1965. I spent most of my career on the Manti Lasal Forest. I started in 1965 as a ranger in the Castle Dale

So I spent 34 years in the Forest Service and two years in the military, so I retired with 36 years of government service.

Spears: And now you are a county commissioner, so how do you feel about Emery County?

Hatch:

Hatch: We were able, during my tenure here, to accomplish several notable things for Emery County. We completed the road between Huntington and Fairview. It took a lot of coordination . . . In the 70s the power plant went in to Huntington, and built Electric Lake. . . Also a lot of the energy cycle started up pretty heavy in the 70s. Most of the coal mines are located on forest service property. On the western side, I should say. I had a lot of opportunities to work with the coal companies. Deer Creek Mine, . . . a lot of coal mines opened up about that time.

Grimes: How big of a problem was it to work with the coal mines. There is such an issue about coal companies and the land.

Hatch: It takes about 40 acres to open a coal mine, and in this area, they are in steep canyons. . . for the most part we were able to work together. It takes a lot of cooperation to make it work, but . . . Then there were the oil and gas mines . . . When you get to pushing snow at the elevation it brings up some concerns.

But I think we had good cooperation. . .

Grimes: What part of your job did you like best?

Hatch: I liked interaction of the permittees. To get out on the ground and work with the permittees. . . Our major job was to work out multiple use of the forest. . . not that they weren't environmentally . . . but now they have lots of groups looking for the

I think the people—the oil and gas permittees, the coal permittees

Grimes: Do you think you would not have enjoyed it so much with the philosophies that prevail today?

Hatch: I know I wouldn't I had some of that in the waning years of my service.

Grimes:

Hatch: You know you kind of migrate from one field to another. Start out as a range technician, and then you migrate to . . .

Grimes: What years were these?

Hatch: Early 60s. We would go into a primitive area to do a rain survey. We would stay out for 10 days and come back and be off for 4 days.

Then you have more office work and supervisory responsibilities. And there was a certain

amount of office work, and then when you got to be district ranger, then it is management. . . It migrated and I guess that is what you miss most, is being able to spend as much time, course I made time to be out checking on the status of projects. We had a bug infestation . . .so I was in charge of the bug infestation eradication. All we did was spray for the rocky mountain pine beetle and the

Course, now look what happens, we can't do that.

Grimes: Why?

Hatch: Politics and environmentalists. . . I think they just don't understand the . . . another part of our job is forest fires. We are not in a big forest fire area, but there is some, and we send our crews to be trained and then with fire fighting responsibilities

Grimes: Someone we interviewed called this the asbestos forest.

Hatch: It has been called that, and I think that we don't have a lot of fires because we are more of a range forest than a timber forest.

Grimes: What was your biggest problems that you faced? Weather, permittees

Hatch: Well, there were a lot of things that were challenging. Putting a road up through Huntington Canyon took a lot of coordination. Building Electric Lake Dam . . . I don't think we had any insurmountable problems. We were able to compromise . . .

I think the most interesting thing I did was during the reconstruction of the Huntington reservoir was finding the mammoth. Coordinating with different agencies, you know getting that animal out.

Grimes: Start at the beginning and tell us what you were doing on the dam and who?

Hatch: Well the state required some work on the dam . . .you go down to bedrock and leave an impervious wall. . .when they were excavating for that wall, they come in contact with—Nielson Construction was doing the project, and noticed an unusual dark shaped thing that came out of there. He didn't think much about it, and dug a few more times, and then thought that didn't look like. . .What it was was a femur bone.

The thing about it was that it was late on the project when they found it, and the rules say that they have to stop operations if they find anything. . .so it would have been easy to bury that thing and go on with the project, but he didn't do that. We made contact with the state paleontologist, and he got with Don Burge, and we made the initial investigation of it, and looked for more, and determined that there was more, and we did a preliminary investigation to determine if there were additional things. We determined that there wasn't and we were able to close that area off, and get that animal out in a week, so the project could go on.

It is an interesting thing, you know we had that earth quake in 88 in August--and this occurred about a week after that. So I have some shirts that say 8-8-88. Due to cooperative efforts of Don Burge—CEU, the state—our archeology type people, we were able to get that whole animal out within a week. We didn't slow any of the construction down.

You know it was an interesting thing. At first we thought it was a different type of elephant. You know if you go over to the top of Huntington and go along Skyline drive, there are some sink holes. There are some miniature horses in there and some other type of mammoths, so we thought this was the same type, but we found out that this was a prairie mammoth—whether he was the last and wandered up there. He was a Columbian Mammoth right after the ice age. Glaciers would recede and wash some . . .down and recede and wash down. We figure that it washed some of that fine silt clay that washed down. Our theory is that he got in there and couldn't get out. He had one broken leg.

Grimes: That had to be so exciting.

Hatch: It was. It was different than anything we had done. We learned a lot. We learned that it was preserved in tact. They were able to do some DNA testing on it and there were still some digestive . . .in its stomach. When we got down to the head we thought it was going to be