

Oral History: Interview Release Form

In view of the historical value of this oral history, I,

Keith A. Larsen
person being interviewed

knowingly and voluntarily permit BRANDEN LARSEN
student interviewer

and Diane Carter the full use of this information for educational purposes.

Signature Keith A. Larsen

Date April 9, 2006

Interview: Keith Andrew Larsen



Collected by: Brandon Larsen

I interviewed my Great Grandpa Keith Larsen. He is 82 years old.

Brandon: What is your full name?

Keith: My full name is Keith Andrew Larsen.

B: Did you have any nicknames growing up?

K: No

B: Where do you live now?

K: Huntington, Utah

B: Have you lived anywhere else?

K: Yes, we lived in California for four years. Your grandpa was born there.

B: Okay....What was the year?

K: 1944-1948

B: Have you traveled anywhere? (Besides California)

K: Oh yeah, we went to Europe. Germany, France, Switzerland....Some other places I can't remember (ha ha)

B: Can you tell me the year?

K: 1977

B: Can you tell me where and when you were born?

K: I was born in Cleveland, Emery County, Utah. June, 9 1924

B: Spouses name?

K: Joyce.

B: Where and when was she born?

K: She was born in Hiawatha, Utah Carbon County June, 20 1926

B: And what was her maiden name?

K: Gordon

B: Do you have any children if so what are their names birthdates ect.?

K: Well you get over here so you can help answer some of these questions (he was referring to my grandma and his wife Joyce) we have 6 children. The first Keith Gary (my grandpa) was born April,20 1944; Janice Gay was born March, 16 1946; Carol Lee May 23 1952; I have to stop and think on some of this! (ha ha) Garth was born July 12 1952; Kurt was born July 2 1954; Blair was born September 4 1956.

B: Okay what kind of work did you do?

K: I worked in an aircraft factory I worked in a rubber factory. The aircraft factory was Douglas Aircraft. I went down right after- in California- right after I graduated from high school 1942. And I worked for firestone tire and rubber company from 1945 to 1948 in California as a tire builder. I worked with my dad on the farm and I hired out as a hay hauler for .50 cents a day. I thought it was quite a bite. In those days during the depression we didn't get jobs and there was no money to be had. People were having a bad time.

B: Um, can you tell me about your teaching?

K: What do you want to know?

B: Just everything.

K: Oh, well I started in 1956 as a teacher. The first year I taught in Emery as an elementary school teacher; the second year I taught elementary school in Elmo; and for

the next three years I taught at North Emery High school. It was the last years of North Emery High. And then when the high school moved to Castle Dale I stayed and went to the junior high. There I was also a guidance counselor. I later became principal of the Canyon View Junior High school. And the last few years I employed by the Emery County School District I was Elementary supervisor.

B: Okay, Um, how old were you when you started teaching?

K: Umm, 33

B: Okay, Um, how much schooling did you have to have between the teaching and everything else?

K: All together I graduated from high school, I went to the college over here in Price for 2 years, I went to BYU for 2 more and I graduated, and I got my bachelors degree and then I went back for my Masters and that took me about 4 summers.

B: An you were teaching during the time you were getting your masters?

K: Yes I would go up for some night classes and I would go up during the summer.

B: Are you a member of any clubs, organizations, churches?

K: I belong to the American Legion and I belong to the LDS church.

B: Okay and what about the Cattlemans association?

K: And I am secretary of the Cattlemans association and have been since 1965.

B: Okay and that's 41 years?

K: yeah well whatever.(Ha Ha)

Joyce: long time huh?

B: Yeah

K: I've also been on the board of directors for the Huntington/ Cleveland irrigation

company for about 15 years.

B: Okay, do you have any brothers and sisters?

K: I have a brother.

B: And where does he live?

K: well I don't know (ha ha)

Joyce: he's moving.

K: He owns a house in California and he sold it. And he's building a home in Lehi. And in the mean time he is staying with some of his kids or something.

B: Okay, and how old is he in relation to you?

K: He's 3 years younger. He was born in 1927

Joyce: He has a sister too. She died early.

K: Yeah my sister was killed in a car accident in California.

B: How old was she?

K: She was 40

B: What is your fathers full name?

K: Andrew Smith Larsen

B: Okay, birthplace?

K: Cleveland, Emery County, Utah

B: Do you know his birth date?

K: January 5 1900

B: What was his last residence?

K: Well, last residence was California, but the last three years of his life he was over here in the nursing home.

B: In Emery County?

K: Yes.

B: Can you tell me about when you moved to California?

K: Well my mother and dad went to California it was towards the end of the depression and the jobs were picking up and so his brother said he had a job down there for him so he went down there. And he went down their.....Well he went back down there¹⁹ well let's see they first went down their in 1941 the summer of.

B: Do you remember moving?

K: Well I never did move down there with them. Oh wait I did spend the summer down their with them in 19..... well I'm going to have to think this out a minute (Ha Ha) They went down there in the summer of 1941 and I went into the CC camp that was all like this job Corp. I spent the summer there and we were discharged because of all the trouble they were having with Japan and Germany. And I guess they all knew that the war was coming which it did and about three months after [the war began] we disbanded. After that I went down to California to live with my folks in the summer of 1942. Then I worked for Douglas Aircraft. After that I went to BYU for a quarter (cough cough) then I came down and found a place to live here. While my folks were still in California, then I worked at the Hiawatha mine for a while, before I went in the Navy.

B: Do you remember your thoughts about World War II/ any experiences related to the War?

K: I don't have anything much to tell about.

B: Well were you in the Navy?

K: Yeah

B: Were you in the Navy during or before or after?

K: During

B: But you did see any combat?

K: No I was a right hand sailor.

B: Okay what did your dad do for a living?

K: He was a farmer when he lived in Cleveland and then he went to California getting a job running a press and making butter cartons and boxes and he did the printing on those.

B: Okay, um, what is your mothers full name?

K: Mary Gladdis Larson

B: Her birthplace?

K: Molen down their below Ferron Oct. 22 1902

B: Her last residence?

K: Well the same as my dad. They lived in California and then they came back and came in the nursing home.

B: Okay, um I'm going to backtrack a little bit what year did your dad die?

K: He died Oct, 24 1994

B: What year did your mother die?

K: Feb. 27 1994

B: How old was she when she died?

K: 91

B: How old was your dad when he died?

K: 94

B: Um, what kind of work did your mother do... Was she stay at home or what?

K: Um, she worked for something...When they first moved their she worked in the defense factory and I don't remember what she did. She later worked in a store as a salesperson it was a store that was Henshaws I think it was it was a little bit like ZCMI a little bit higher class and they sold furniture and..... What did they sell in Henshaws Joyce do you remember? I think they sold clothing there too, didn't they?

Joyce: I think.

B: Okay.

K: It was just something like ZCMI they sold a little bit of everything that was a little bit better quality.

Joyce: High class

B: Right, okay, where did your ancestors come from?

K: Denmark

B: And what language did they speak?

K: Well, Danish

Joyce: Ha Ha

B: Okay do you recall any stories about the history of your family?

K: Well my dad's father and mother came from Ephraim. Well first of all my dad's grandparents came to Ephraim. They joined the church. And came from Denmark and left their own kids over in Denmark. And then the grandfather got sick and so my grandfather came from Denmark to take care of him. And my grandmother came from Denmark and she came to Fairveiw and she lived with an uncle. And my grandmother and grandfather met at a church social in Gunnison. They were married in 1887 in the Logan temple. In 1888 they moved to Cleveland.

B: Okay so did they have any part in settling the Castle Valley?

K: Well they were kind of pioneers. My grandfather worked on the canals that go out their to Cleveland. If you go out across from the airport theirs a structure in the Cleveland canal and his brand is stamped in the concrete. I'll take you out their some time and show it to you.

B: Okay that would be cool.

Joyce: When you do get a picture of it.

K: Well I don't have a picture of it.

B: Yeah but she wants us to get a picture of it.

K: Oh, I thought you asked me when I got a picture of it.

Joyce: No I said when you DO get a picture of it.

K: Alright, well that branding iron is around here somewhere I don't know where.

B: What was the brand?

K: Oh, LPL my dad also used that

B: Can you tell me about how you came into the farm and the brand we use now?

K: Well I purchased the farm from my father-in-law

B: And his full name?

K: Vaughn Gordon did he have a middle name?

Joyce: No

K: I bought it in 1952 for \$8,500 and the brand we use now was his brand and I just took it over. And that's where we get the "V"

B: And the brand is V+ right?

K: Yes

B: Do you remember the house you grew up in?

K: Well we started out in a log house with three rooms in Cleveland. And then my father bought a camp house from Sunnyside and moved it onto a lot in Cleveland and fixed it up and we moved there when I was about 8 or 10 years old I'm not sure but it seems to me that I was there when I was 9 I had my 9th birth date there.

B: How many rooms did it have?

K: Oh it had 3 bedrooms and a bathroom and a large... kind of a combination living room and a kitchen.

B: Was their indoor plumbing?

K: Not when we first moved in there wasn't any electricity or waterworks in Cleveland at the time. The electricity in Cleveland was turned on April 6, 1931 and the water came uh like about the time we moved into the upper house in about 1934-35 and my dad put in a bathroom it was one of the first in town that I know of. He dug a trench by hand about 6-7 feet down to the back of the house there was a wash... you know after you make the turn down in Cleveland to make your way towards Price there's a wash there and we lived just over the hill and dug a trench down to that wash for the sewer.

B: And it was one of the first in Cleveland?

K: That I know of.

B: Can you tell me when the first telephone came into Cleveland?

K: No, when I was growing up in high school there was only one phone in town and they had to send for ya, then you would have to go to the store, then you would call the operator and they would call the person who called you.

B: Did you ever get to use that phone?

K: Yeah well I used it to call grandma. When we were going to high school they had phones in Huntington. They still didn't in Cleveland and I don't know when they came into Cleveland.

B: And she had a phone at her house?

K: Yes

B: Let's see do you remember anything about Cleveland? (population, ethnic groups, industries, what people did for fun)

K: Mostly farming their wasn't. when we lived here it was during the depression and their just wasn't much work of any kind except farm work. People who had farms did pretty well because they could raise their own food. And in those days you had to raise your own food. We had chickens and pigs and cows my dad farmed and raised grain. To the grain to the mill up here, it was in operation and traded it for cereal and flour.

Joyce: You had a garden too didn't ya?

K: And my mother had a garden every summer with me and my brother pulling the weeds. And we did a lot of canning. Canning the vegetables and the fruits. Because that's what we lived on during the winter time.

B: How much different is Huntington and Cleveland now then they were then?

K: We didn't have any oiled streets. The road between Huntington and Cleveland was just a gravel road.

B: And did you have cars?

K: No, I didn't get my first car until about a year after I was married.

B: Can you tell me what kind of car it was?

K: 1939 Ford Coupe it had kind of a big window in back. And grandma would make a

bed for Gary. Do you remember that?

Joyce: Yep.

K: My first car really was um. I'm trying to think. It was about a 1935 Chev that my friend and I bought for \$35 when we were going back and forth to BYU. I sold my share to him. And I don't remember what happened to it after that.

B: Can you tell me how much gas was?

K: Not really, about 19-20 cents a gallon. I ran the service station up here where Huntsmans for about 3 years. They had a service station there sold gas for 25 cents for regular gas and 27 for what they called ethanol. I had a service station across from the elementary school for a couple of years while I was going to school in Price.

B: Can you tell me about the air conditioning you had in your cars?

K: We didn't have air conditioning.

B: So what did you do for air conditioning.

K: Roll down the windows and put wet towels over them.

Joyce: We also had the water to put our feet in.

K: In the cars we had the floor was dished out a little bit so we would put a keg of ice there and grandma would put her feet in it and it would. Well I guess it would keep her cold. I don't know.

Joyce: Well it would keep me.....Not so hot.

B: Did you do this on long distance trips?

K: Yeah when we went to California. We usually went to California at night. And drove across the desert at night. And it was still hot but you didn't have the sun shining down on you.

B: Were the cars resistant or would they over heat easily and did they run different than the cars do now?

K: Yeah they'd heat up and you see a lot of cars to the side of the road that had overheated. But for some reason we lucked out their was a couple of junkers we drove back a forth a time or two but we still made it. (Ha Ha)

B: Do you remember any favorite family stories that you have or some point in your life that you remember, maybe on a trip to California or just growing up something that you remember?

K: Oh, theirs really nothing special I remember.

B:If their's something you think of as we're going along let me know.

K: We were coming home from church one night we were walking from church. The church was a couple. The church was down off the hill from where you turn off to go to Price it was down off the hill their. And we lived down their on the bottom street their. And it was the winter time, and I wasn't very old and my dad was carrying my brother and I was holding my mother's hand. And in those days farmers did all their farm work with horses but in the winter time they just turned them loose and they just ran all over the country and in the spring they had a round up. And that day we were walking home from church and their was about a foot of snow and we were walking down the road and my mother said well you'd better get off that road or those horses will run you over. And she pulled me off the road. And my dad said oh, those horses won't bother us anyway the horses came and knocked him down (ha ha) My mother outsmarted him I guess. He didn't get hurt really.

B: What were some special occasions in your family and community?

K: We every Christmas we went to my grandparents on my mothers side. We lived on the last street east in Cleveland and they lived on the last street west in Cleveland and so we didn't visit with them very often. We'd see them in church. You did any visiting you always had to walk. So on Christmas we would go up their and stay all night. We'd make beds on the floor and celebrate Christmas that way. We did some Thanksgivings that way and we'd have big family dinners.

B: Are their any occasions that you still celebrate now the same way today?

K: Well we still have a family Christmas party but we all go home to sleep we don't gather and sleep on the floor.

B: Are their any that have changed or disappeared?....Well we don't sleep on the floor. But are their any others.

K: Well all my relatives that were alive would have a family Christmas dinner in Salt Lake or in Bountiful but it started out in Salt Lake and we would just have a dinner and go home. And then my aunt got sick and one of my uncles in Bountiful made arrangements with Chuck-o-rama in Bountiful and he paid for the dinner and then we all went to his house and visited. And then he got sick in about 19- I think about the last one they had would be in 2003. but we weren't able to go because I was having my knee operated on at the time. So we missed out on that one.

B: And that was on your mothers side?

K: Yes

B: And her maiden name was?

K: Larson

B: That was her maiden name?

K: Yeah it was Larsen with a “on”

B: Oh right

K: And on my fathers side my grandmother died. My fathers mother died when he was 19 and then he went on a mission and then my grandfather remarried. By the time I came along his wife was really sick and we didn't really visit with them much. I mean we didn't have family dinners much. My grandfather would always once a year have a family gathering or family reunion or family up the canyon we had the Jorgensen family from Ephraim and then the Larsen family from here. Now my grandfathers sister lived in Ephraim. She came over from Denmark and married a Jorgensen from there. They had a bunch of boys. And they all came to this Jorgensen-Larsen reunion. And when my grandfather died that just disappeared. And when my grandfather was alive he had a store right across the street from where that store is now, that building is still standing there. He had his house east of the store and the house has been torn down there is just a vacant spot there now. And before had the store he had a farm east of Cleveland. When he came over here he got a farm east of Cleveland.

B: How did you and Grandma meet?

K: We met at a high school dance.

B: In?

K: Huntington, we were both going to school here at North Emery

B: Did you date steadily and then got married or did you just meet?

K: Oh, we didn't do much dating till what....I was a senior.

B: Was she a senior also?

K: No she was a Sophomore.

B: Did you get married right out of high school?

K: Yeah, well, I was in the service when we got married and I had been out for a year but she still had her last year left to do. So she.... We went to California when she got out and she finished there.

B: How old were you when you got married?

K: I was 19 and she was 17

B: How old were you when you had your first child?

K: 19

B: oh and she was 17

Joyce: we got right busy.

K: Yeah we started a family right quick. (ha ha)

B: I just think I'm 17 right know so....

Joyce: look out

K: Well things were a little bit different then we might not have gotten married as young as we did.

B: Was that just the normal time to get married?

K: Well it wasn't really. Now your grandma and grandpa Litster they got married when they were about the same age. He was in the service when they got married. But she was a year older than grandma.

B: They lived in Cleveland did you know them at all?

K: He was in the CC camp with me and he went to school with me in Cleveland.

B: Were you the same age?

K: We were the same age or pretty close but he a year behind me in school and I don't

know how just. I think the difference in our age was that difference that makes you go to school. If you were born before a certain date you had to wait for the next year.

B: Can you name some special home made foods?

K: My mother cooked peas, potatoes, carrots,.

B: Do you remember a favorite food?

K: My mother used to make a tapioca pudding I liked quite well. In fact I would sample in every time she made some for us. Before it got to the table.

B: Do you have any of her original recipes?

K: Carolee is using the same carrot recipe my mother used. I think that came through Jack. His grandmother was a cousin to my mother.

B: Can you name and describe some of the games you played.

K: I don't remember too much...but there was no TV.

Joyce: run sheepy run, hide and go seek

K: Kick the can

B: What was run sheepy run?

K: Well they were all kind of related. We played a lot of the same things. But we had potato roasts, chicken roasts. The potatoes or the chicken never got to where you could eat them. (ha ha).

Joyce: We tried

K: Yeah we tried that when we...all the kids in Cleveland there would all get together and we would build a big bon fire in the middle of one of the side streets.

B: Was that an often occurrence?

K: Usually at least once a week. In the winter time we wouldn't but in the summertime

we'd get together and play games and sometimes someone would have some stories to tell. Somebody would have been on a trip they would tell about....stuff like that.

B: Do you remember did you go to school year round?

K: No we went to school from about the first part of September to the first part of May. Had some friends that were twins their birth day was the same day in May. And everytime it came to be their birthday we celebrated their birthday and the end of school. They've added about 3 weeks to school because we had about 150 days of school and now you have 180.

B: Did you have sports teams for high school?

K: We had a basketball team but no football.

B: Did you have any rivals?

K: South Emery was a rival, Central was a rival, Central was Castle Dale

B: Did you go to Carbon at all and play?

K: Yes, there was Carbon and there were teams. I don't think they traveled like they travel now. Most of the teams were in this little area. I remember once a team coming from Ephraim because my cousin was on the team. And that probably the only reason I remember that.

B: Did you play in any extra curricular activities?

K: I played the bass drum.

B: All through high school?

K: yeah

B: Did you have concerts or did you march or what?

K: oh yeah we had concerts and we marched and we went to Grand Junction. We had

band concerts and band meets. They always had one in Price that we went to and days that we celebrated here but...

B: Were their parades like there is now in all the towns?

K: Their was Hereford days here [Huntington] I don't think I ever went to Peach Days but we could have.

B: Did they have the county fair in Castle Dale?

K: I don't remember any county fair. They had something going on and it might have been a county fair. But I don't remember they had something and they had a special name for it and I don't remember it.

B: So did you go to the school here on main street?

K: Yes where Utah Power and Light office is now.

B: So you taught there and went to school there right?

K: [yes]

B: Are any of those games not around anymore?

K: I don't hear anything about those games we used to play anymore...kids watch TV they don't play games anymore

Joyce: we used to get under the streetlight and play games all the time.

B: Were their any streetlights in Cleveland?

K: I don't remember any.

B: You don't remember any?

K: The streetlight was the bon fire we made down their. (haha) we weren't as up-to-date as Huntington.

B: So their was streetlights in Huntington right.

K: Yes on main street.

B: So do you know roughly the biggest town in Emery county was?

K: Well it was somewhere between Huntington and Castle Dale and I'm not sure which one was the largest.

B: Okay

K: People in Huntington thought that they were the largest town and people in Castle Dale thought they were the largest town. (ha ha)

K: Everyone who lived over here called people who lived in Castle Dale CO-DUNKERS

Joyce: I don't want to know what they called us

K: No I never did hear.....Oh wait they called us Alkaline something Alkaline Angel but I'm pretty sure they didn't use the word Angel. But when they were going to Castle Dale they were going to Co dunk. And everyone knew were co-dunk was.

B:Did any one in the family make homemade toys

K: Not that I know of.....Oh my grandfather made that matchbox. Out of wood.

B:Did your parents have any hobbies?

K: Mother did some quilting and some knitting. And my father was pretty handy as a carpenter and he never had any formal training.....Oh wait yes he did he went to Snow College. He had a sister that lived in Ephraim and he went there one year and took a training and so he was pretty handy that way. There was a few things like he did most of the building on our house and things like that.

B: Did he build the furniture?

K: No

B: Did you and your brother share a bedroom?

K: Yes we shared a bed.

B: Do you remember any bad weather?

K: I remember on the farm. Or on the farm my dad had and I can't remember if it was my uncles farm or my dads farm but the wash overflowed and we were over there trying to save those pigs.

B: What was the best advice you got from your parents?

K: My mother said you need to go to church....church don't need you but you need it. And if you couldn't say something good about someone don't say anything at all. That was a couple of her sayings.....I don't know if she always followed that advice but.

Joyce: But she gave it.

B:How old were your children when you moved back to Huntington

K: Gary was 4 and Janice 2 and then uh I was working in Hiawathia and they had a big layoff and we went down to California to see my folks and your grandma was pregnant at the time and she had such a bad time that she had the baby down there Kurt was born down there so we 3 born there and 3 in Price.

B:Why did you come back to Huntington

K: Your grandma didn't like California

Joyce: Your grandpa didn't either

K: it's worse now and it was a big city and you didn't have wide open spaces and it was all closed in and we lived close to where southern California. Where we live all we could find was a big palm tree that was in the front yard of where we lived.

B: This is my great grandpa, took us about an hour and a half to finish these questions my name is Brandon Keith Larsen I live at 840 N Bell avenue in Castle Dale Utah