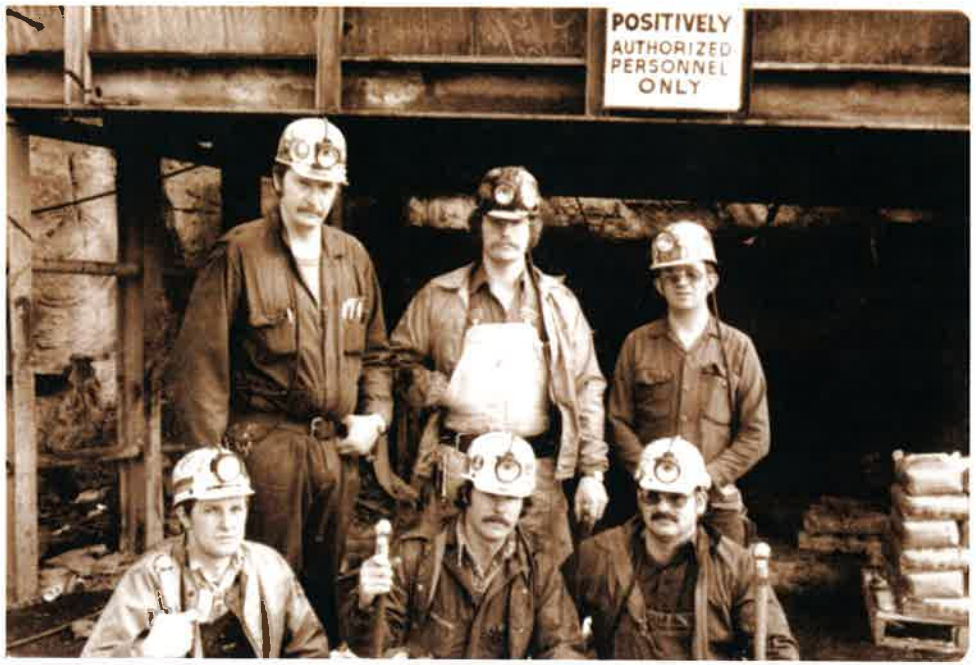
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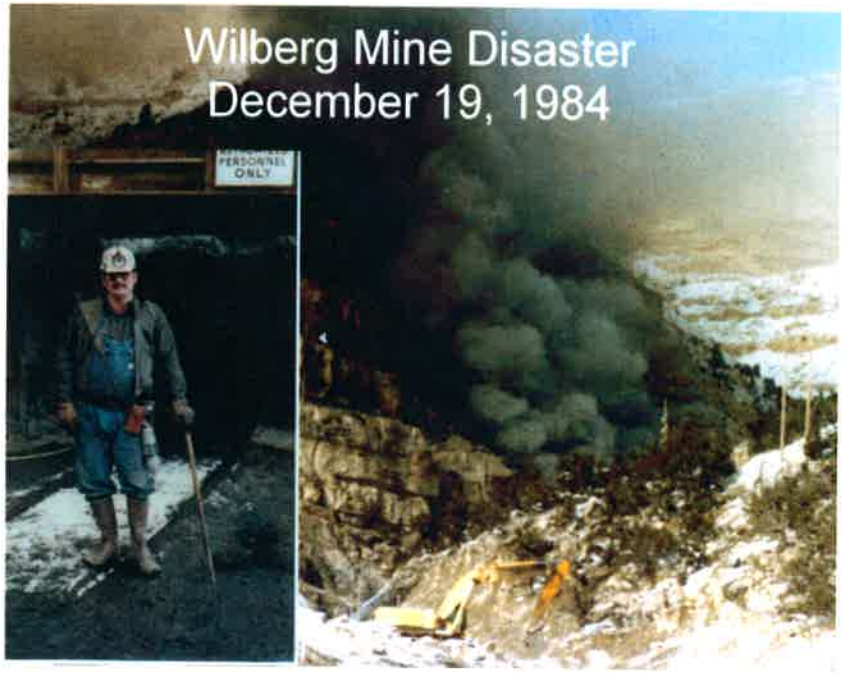
Wilberg Mine Disaster
December 19, 1984
PERSONNEL ONLY

GRICULTURE/
LORICULTURE

Citizen Spotlight:

A monthly spotlight on a citizen in our community. For the month of May will be:

Dixon Peacock

Dixon was raised in Emery and was the second of four boys in the family. His father was a farmer so he learned to work hard. He went to school in Emery and South Emery High School, where he was active in track and was Student Body President his senior year. Dixon has been a coal miner most of his life. He also worked construction and in the Hard Rock mines in Utah County. However, when a chance came for him to move back to Emery County, he jumped at the chance. He has lived in Orangeville for more than forty six years and loves the people here.

Dixon is the father of four, the grandfather of fourteen and great grandfather of five (And husband of one) Dixon is very civic minded having served as an Orangeville City Councilman for 16 years and on the Board of Adjustments for 21 years. He has also served on various boards or committees, including the Southeastern Utah Stock Show committee, and the Emery County Nursing Home Board. Dixon was very instrumental in oranizing the Emery County Museum forty years ago. He recently (last October) received the very prestigious LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD for 40 years of volunteer service to the Pioneer and the San Rafael Museums.

Dixon loves to fish and is very seldom out fished. In his younger years he aslo enjoyed hunting deer, elk, and arrowheads. Each year he has a beautiful garden and enjoys giving some of his produce to family, friends, and neighbors. Through the years Dixon has made and has refinished many pieces of wood furniture. He can literally make a silk purse out of a sows ear.

EMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
NOVEMBER 3, 2009

DIXON PEACOCK
Interviewed by Dottie Grimes

Dottie: Lets start with your birthdate, where you were born and things like that. When were you born?

Dixon: August 2nd, 1942.

Dot: And where? In Emery town?

Dix: I'm not sure whether it was Emery or Price Hospital.

Dot: But you were living in Emery?

Dix: I lived in Emery all my life.

Dot: When did you move to Castle Dale.

Dix: Well, I live in Orangeville.
I was born and raised in Emery town. I was student body president of the high school.

Dot: What was the high school?

Dix: South Emery. Graduated in 1960.

Dot: Okay, wow. I don't know the history of the high schools and who went where.

Looking at a display in the museum in honor of Dixon and his contribution to the Emery County Museums.

Dot: Tell me a little bit about this. Is this yours? (A peace pipe)

Dix: I made it.

Dot: You made that? Is it a peace pipe?

Dix: Yes. That's just a dowel ripped on a saw, then turned over, you can actually (he blows through it).

Dot: Wow. What's this made out of (the bowl of the pipe)

Dix: That is burl.

Dot: And wrapped with horse hair?

Dix: Braided it.

Dot: Beautiful!

Dix: Now this is the jaw bone of a deer. (Axe like weapon) And this is greasewood.

Dot: Wow. Greasewood. So you've always been interested in Indian stuff, I guess.

Dix: Yes. This here is the Wilberg Disaster—at the time of the disaster.

Dot: Were you working her at that time?

Dix: Yes, I was.

Dot: Maybe we better sit down and you can tell me about your work experience. We'll get back to that.
Did you make that lamp?

Dix: I did. The bottom is black walnut, and the top is cedar. And note how it makes a complete turn.

Dot: Yes! And is that how you found it?

Dix: That's it's natural form.
This is my mom and dad and my four brothers. (Looking at a family picture.)

Dot: What are their names?

Dix: Neal the youngest, Paul, myself, and Bob is the oldest.

Dot: What are your parents names?

Dix: Mervin and Leah Peacock.

Dot: What is this picture?

Dix: That's just a picture of me, and that's my rock garden and my garden in the background.

Dot: Look at that corn! And so you've just collected those rocks?

Dix: I have.

(Reading an award) "For outstanding Jaycee in the Chamber of Commerce in 1996."

Dot: (reading) Start up and Organizing the Pioneer Museum. Wow. That's cool.

Dix: Here's a history of the museum.

Dot: Yeah, you shared this with me one day, and I typed it up, so I do have that at the Archives.

Wow. What a handsome young man you were! And darling children pictures.

Dix: That's my youngest brother and myself. Then my high school picture.

Dot: Were you in track or football?

Dix: Yes, I was in track.

Dot: That's a gorgeous picture.

Dix: This picture here is the men who worked for me.

Dot: What was your title?

Dix: Safety Director.

Dot: At the Wilberg Mine?

Dix: And the Deer Creek also.

Here is a picture of the mummified body found in the desert east of here.

Dot: Oh!

And is this an award you received? (looking at two statuettes of coal miners) 25 years?

Dix: Yes, this one here is.

Dot: Is that a Gary Prazen?

Dix: Yes.

Dot: Browning, Des Bee Dove, Wilberg. Did you work at all those?

Dix: Yes.

Dot: Wow. Let's sit down. I want to hear about your...

Wait, what's this baby thing?

Dix: Something my wife gave me for my den. Are you still figuring on coming up to my place? Because my den is full of this stuff.

Dot: I'd like to do that.

This is a very nice display.

Dix: I had a brain tumor that they operated on, and it ended up causing a stroke, and paralyzing my left side. And then I had a bleed and (inaudible). That's been a number of years.

Dot: Wow. You look like you are doing great for all that!

Dix: (looking at a pictures). This is Ann Whistler... and that mummified body. That really got the museum going. That and private collections.

Dot: How did you get people to donate their private collections? Did you have to twist people's arms?

Dix: You know...

Let me start from the beginning on these show cases. Parker Childs...

Well, these walls were just in shambles from the water damage, and the plaster was falling from the walls and ceiling. The Green Thumb Program, we qualified for, so they came in and replastered, and then a couple by the name of Pypers. They were artists by trade, but the husband worked at the power plant. Mrs. Whistler was on our board.

Dot: Who is she?

Dix: She was on a board member.

Dot: Was she a resident of Castle Dale?

Dix: Originally from California. But her and her husband moved up her. She would bring yolks of eggs mixed up for the Pypers to mix with this paint, because in Europe, this was the ingredients they would use in paint. And it was long lasting, especially with anything with yellow, like these... And 40 years, you can see how distinct them colors are.

Dot: That's interesting.

Dix: It interested a lot of people to know that that ingredient was used.

Father Escalante, and them are locals—the Seely family and Brigham Young, and this chief. I forgot his name. (He is describing the murals on the walls.) I wish we had more pictures of before and after. Because as you look and come in

from outside. There was no lawn. The sidewalks were broke up. There was no oil on the street...

Dot: How long was this building empty?

Dix: About 40 years, the upstairs—about 45, because it took us at least five years to get it to where we could open it. And this group of Jaycees. There was an age requirement to get in, and an age to leave, once you've had that time period. We started out as an organization asking for donations, which was not successful. But as we grew, this here charter, represents a hundred dollar donation from people throughout the county.

Dot: Each signature is a hundred dollar?

Dix: The first contribution request was a dollar. We got a little, but not...the lighting was furnished by American Coal Company (Shirl McArthur's company). The heater was donated by the Daughter of Utah Pioneers. Let me tell you about the showcases. They were built and designed by a carpenter name Parker Childs.

Dot: Where did he live?

Dix: Here in Castle Dale.

He built them, and the glass was tempered glass, ¼ in thick. Because of the irregular shape, LeRoy Maxfield, Dan Cox, and myself rode to Salt Lake and was able to pick up the glass. And the Green Thumb Program, which was just getting a good start. They assembled them when they got here.

Dot: And what first went in those?

Dix: The artifacts—the Indian private collections. Later when the Museum of the San Rafael had accumulated enough artifacts showcases, the articles in these showcases, we wanted to transfer them to the San Rafael. Everything had to be logged, and an accession number put on them. That was a major job. Something that took several years to do.

Dot: And all those artifacts came from private collections.

Dix: Yes.

Dot: And how successful were you in getting people to donate their private collections?

Dix: No problem at all, because they were proud to finally, instead of being stuck in the corner somewhere, they had a nice place to be displayed. And regardless of the size of artifact, we found a place for them. And the first chance we get, I'd like to

take you to the Museum of the San Rafael. I personally have over a thousand arrowheads there.

Dot: You've shown me the different collections you've made for each of your kids. I've seen them, and they are absolutely amazing! (He has framed arrowheads in different designs within the frame.) And you said you found most of those on your property in Emery.

Dix: I did. We would take our milk cows to the field and spend the whole day out there looking for arrowheads!

Dot: Wow! That sounds fun. Especially when they are right there on the ground.

Dix: That's...as far as the private collections, nobody was concerned like they are now. Now, you just don't do it. It's against the law. If its on your own property, it's one thing, but you don't go out on BLM or other property—public lands and look for artifacts.

Dot: Right.

Because your property had so many arrowheads and potsherds, what do you imagine your land was like at one time? Do you think that is where they lived or just traveled through seasonally?

Dix: No. Evidence...in fact I got ahold of Dr. Gunderson at BYU and told him of some of the finds that had been made on our property, and they came down and excavated it. They would bring students down. They excavated it and found vases and a lot of stuff like that – just like a blue clay hill. But them people were trained and knew what to look for. But as a young boy,...well, it was great learning from them. It wasn't just the low places, the valley, but it was also in the mountains as well.

Dot: I didn't know that.

Dix: In fact, there is an area by my grandpa's saw mill on the mountain.

Dot: And who is your grandfather?

Dix: Joseph Christiansen. He had a saw mill up there.

Dot: Above Emery?

Dix: Um-hm, and one day the archaeologist was going through, and he come upon this excavation – picture of it – that he was involved in, and I said to him, my name, and he said, "You wouldn't happen to be in reference to the Elusive Peacock Dig?" I said, "You're looking at him." (laugh)

What happened is we found this location, and we told them, and they kept going back and back and they couldn't find it, so they named it the Elusive Peacock. (laugh)

Dot: So did anyone ever show them where it was?

Dix: Yeah, they did.

Dot: Your father or grandfather?

Dix: My father. And finally, the mining activity in that area created so much pressure, that it literally fell—the cave literally collapsed.

Dot: Wow. So it was a cave that you knew of up there by the saw mill?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: On Emery Mountain? Wow.

Dix: Yeah. North Spring.

Dot: Do you think they were more concentrated in that area, as far as Emery County goes, you know in the Highway 10 area?

Dix: I think the more concentration of the Indians were farther south in the Last Chance desert area, where they were farmers; they grew crops. They were hunters and gatherers on the mountain, 'cause they area that they lived...They migrated from the mountain elevations and wandered into the lower elevations.

Next time you come to the museum, over there, I'll show you different types of beads that the... the ivory from the elk. They made beads out of it.
Dot: Did you find beads on your property too? What else did you find?

Dix: Lot of different things that they carved out of bone. Beads, bone awls—very interesting things that they made—different things.

Dot: Was your whole family, your brothers and your parents—were they also interested in these artifacts?

Dix: Not as much as me.

Dot: Just you? You had the fascination? Well that fascination proved to be a boon for Emery County! You got these museums going.

Back to cabinets, where was the mummy placed in the museum?

Dix: Well, we had a special a .... When it was first found it, it was found in what they call Sid and Chaley, just the name of formation.

Dot: I've been there. Clyde's Cavern, right?

Dix: Right.

Dot: And where is that located from Sid and Charley?

Dix: Four or five miles. Lavar Sitterud took me there first. Lavar was not the first one to find it. It was found prior to that.

Dot: Wasn't it found by Clyde, isn't that why it's called Clyde Cavern? Clyde Funk?

Dix: Yeah. Clyde's Cavern. That's probably how it got its name.
But when Lavar told me about it, I immediately called Don Burge, an archeologist from the College of Eastern Utah, and we took him down there and my wife was with us, and Lavar, and his elder son. We didn't want to disturb it until we had people that were trained.

Dot: Didn't you say that people had found it and rebury it, and you were afraid that someone would find it and not rebury it?

Dix: Yeah. Did you that picture?

Dot: Yes.

Dix: Now there's a blanket at the museum.

Dot: I've seen that. A woven blanket and a rabbit skin, right? What was the baby wrapped in.

Dix: It had its own little clothes, and its hair had a reddish tint. Just tiny, tiny, possibly a new born.

Dot: Ooh.

Dix: That discovery is what actually got this museum going. Don Burge accompanied us, because had we not, we were subject to getting in trouble for disturbing...

Dot: The antiquities law?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: So he went with you, and did he recover it then?

Dix: He actually...I don't remember what he carried, whether it was the adult or the baby. I don't recall what I carried. My wife wouldn't touch them.

Dot: He carried one and you carried the other?

Dix: Yes. My wife wouldn't touch them.

Dot: Oh. I think it would have been a privilege to be able to carry them out and be able to take care of them.

Dix: She chose not to. But let me tell you what happened after the studies were conducted. It was soon after that law was passed, that they were taken to a designated location. See a lot of them had lost their identity, not knowing what culture.

Dot: They didn't know where you had gotten them and stuff.

Dix: No, that's right. So after that law was in tact, congress passed a law that these vaults would be made, because the concern was where these cultures going to be placed, who goes where?

Dot: Yeah, and which culture of Indians gets them?

Dix: Right. A lot of that information may or may not ... I'm sure it doesn't show up in this history here. This is just how the museum got started, the original board members.

Dot: What time frame did you get the museum started? (reading the history) It says in '68, the mummy was found.

Dix: Yeah, but private collections originated years before that.

Dot: But when was that law passed that you couldn't display bones and mummies?

Dix: Well, it was a number of years because I remember as a kid, going to Salt Lake and seeing those mummies in them showcases that had been there for years.

Dot: I remember that too.
About how long were they here in the museum before you had to remove them?

Dix: We received them after they had done their study, and they returned them, but at that time, there had become so much discontent about outside people uncomfortable about them bodies being here, finally we felt, "Let's get them turned over to an institution that is prepared to have them.

Dot: Do you know where the vaults are?

Dix: No. They are placed in an unknown location, according to their culture—unknown and unmarked. Which if you stop and think about it, is a good thing.

Dot: I also heard that they would have a ceremony when they reburied them.

Dix: Right.

Dot: But you were able to keep the blankets?

Dix: I got the blankets over the museum that the adult was in.

What else we have...Oh, something else that I found at an excavation that is very valuable—an atlatl. This predates the bow and arrow. The one I found still has the stone on it.

Dot: Wow. So you've done a lot of research about atlatls, huh? That is neat. I think I've seen that before. Is that over to the museum?

Dix: Yes. I donated that to the museum.

Dot: That is neat!

So it took you about five years to get these walls fixed and painted. Did you have to do anything to the roof?

Dix: Three times it had to be repaired. So many people done so much. Years later when Jan moved down here...she worked at the courthouse for many years, but she was instrumental...actually she was on the Museum Board—the State Museum Board, and the last room to be worked on was the Red Room, and the closet in the Red Room was so deteriorated from water damage, that ... then she become a member of the State Museum Board, and seemed to be able to really help us. She was instrumental in getting grant money, and by doing so, they replaced these windows. They had been painted over, but the new windows...(in audible).

Dot: I'm just so glad you preserved this building! It's the perfect place for a museum

Walking through the building now:

Dix: This room up here was the old Principal Office, converted into the old CoOp. (A general store.)

This is the Pioneer Room here. It's a combination of a bedroom, a bathroom—it's got a tub, a kitchen—it has a big cook stove.

Dot: It was once a classroom, right?

Dix: Right. And behind you is the Farm Room which is combination of actually, you know, farming and mining history.

Dot: It's amazing what artifacts are in there, what people have donated.

Dix: After we got up and going, we finally had to go to Montell and ask his permission to store some of the stuff in the upstairs of the CoOp. We had things coming out of our ears. So we sent letters to people. We had to log everything. At one time we had...I forget how many spinning wheels. We sent letters to the original owners, and they had been gone, and some of them had died, and their families were so pleased to have spinning wheels and things back and put into their own homes. We felt like we were preserving them for them.

Dot: What are some of your prize possessions that came in? Some things that are the oldest here?

Dix: I'm trying to think.
This here is a handmade ? Came from ? Mercantile.

Dot: And was it shaped like that? That's a unique shape.

Dix: Yeah, and H EAVY!
Dot: When did they donate that?

Dix: Right after we opened it.
And this here represented a school room.

Dot: I know; I love the school room, since this was really a school, its neat to have some of that preserved in here. Some neat stuff in here. Old record books, and isn't this a picture of the original court house?

Dix: Yes. Mr. Whistler—Ann Whistler's husband was a professional in restoring old furniture. I spent a lot of time at his place, and he taught me how to restore old furniture.
There's a story behind this guy (looking at a picture). He was a hermit.

Dot: What was his name? (reading) "Harry Welch Nielson. The Old Hermit."

Dix: He got them pictures on ...out by an old concrete silage. He lived there.

Dot: He lived in this little rock structure? (looking at a photo).

Dix: Actually its this one here (showing me another picture)

Dot: Oh, I see. And he painted the pictures on the silo?

Dix: He did.

Dot: So what do you know about this man? Did you know him or was he before your time?

Dix: No. He was before my time. See, even if I had lived in Orangeville...I was married in 1960, so he was dead and gone before I ever...

Dot: I wonder what years he lived. It doesn't say. Or why he was a hermit?

Dix: We found his headstone at the cemetery one year. That's where he's buried.

Dot: He was buried in Castle Dale?

Dix: Orangeville.

Dot: Well I'd like to hear about your mining experience too.

Sitting down again:

Dot: So let's talk about ... well let's talk about your childhood and your getting married.

Dix: How far back do you want to go?

Dot: As far back as you want to go. I would like to know what it was like to grow up in Emery Town.

Dix: You know I had an older brother and then myself, and then one more brother, and my youngest brother Neal, so four boys. I graduated in 1960 as student body president. I was on the track team for three years. I went to school in Emery until the 8th grade, and then I took the bus to Ferron.

Dot: Who were your friends growing up?

Dix: I had some real good friends. Duane Olsen, Marlow Petersen, Russ Jensen. When I got this award for 40 years, they all called me, and I was thrilled over that.

Dot: How did you meet your wife?

Dix: She was just a year younger in school than I was. She was a cheer leader.

Dot: Where is she from?

Dix: Orangeville

Dot: So you met in high school. She was a cheerleader, and you were a track star and student body president? That's neat.

What kind of things did you do when you were young. Did you play a lot or did mostly herd cows and play while you...

Dix: Work, farm, put up hay, tended water, hunted artifacts and arrowheads-- just enjoyed growing up.

I had some sad times. My father was a drinker. My mother separated after many years.

Dot: Did you continue to help him with the farm or did he leave?

Dix: I continued to help on the farm.

Dot: Did he keep the farm? Did your mother leave, or did he leave?
Dix: After they separated, he was disabled. He had an accident, and he spent his last 17 years in a rest home.

Dot: Oh. How big of a farm did you have in Emery?

Dix: Oh, it was nearly a hundred acres.

Dot: And did you take cows up on the mountain and down on the desert?

Dix: We did.

Dot: I've heard it was fun to live in Emery. Everyone took their cows on the mountain together and brought them home together and then separated them.

Dix: Talma and I was married in the temple.

Dot: And when did you start working in the coal mine?

Dix: You know, right after we were married, we moved to American Fork and I went to work in a calcium -- calcite mine. I worked up there for seven or eight years until I found an opportunity to go back to Emery for... uh, I-70 was just beginning. My dad, prior to his accident, worked for the State, and he got me on. I ran an air track on I-70. Then I had an opportunity to go and work for Browning Coal Mine. There I worked and was in the union, and then Shirl McArthur was hiring for three mines that he was over.

Dot: Let's go back to when you were working on I-70. What did you think about I-70 coming through Emery County?

Dix: It was great because it brought so much employment. People traveled long distances. People from Price and East Carbon had to travel a long distance to get there, but it was in my back yard! The money was super!

Dot: And it was at a time when the economy in the county was pretty low, wasn't it?

Dix: It was. I remember working out there in the middle of the winter, freezing to death. My helper was busy packing cedar to keep the fire going. (laugh)

Dot: How long did you work there? Did you work there until I-70 was done?

Dix: Three sections was opened. It started at Fremont Junction. I worked there—past Eagle Canyon and down to Spotted Wolf —so that's three different contracts. And that's when I was hired to go to work for Bryant Browning. The operator was Horace Pettey, which now it's ...uh, married to my wife's sister—well, Regina, that's my wife's sister.

Dot: So Browning Mine? And where was that located?

Dix: Just a few miles southeast of Emery. Now it's called Consol.

Dot: Oh, I see.
And then Shirl offered you a job?

Dix: They...in fact they hired about 10 of us.

Dot: From Browning?

Dix: Yes.

Dot: And what had you done at Browning?

Dix: I ran the drill and drove the shuttle car.

Dot: And which mine did you work at first, for Shirl?

Dix: Church Mine, which was Deseret.

Dot: And did you do the same thing?

Dix: Yes. Drilling and Shuttle Car., yeah.
The top mine was called Beehive. The mine in between was called Little Dove, and I worked at all three of them.

Dot: Did you work at all three of them at the same time?

Dix: No. I alternated.

Running the drill—roof bolting—you had to go wherever you was needed, and that gave me a chance to work at all three of them.

The Deseret Mine had more fatalities than the others. There were fatalities at Deseret which involved the belt fatality.

I think some of my worst memories about them fatalities was when you'd go to the hospital, there was a family of anywhere from three to five waiting for their loved one. Which I ended up, at different times...it would occur, driving the ambulance over there, and the families waiting and meeting for ya. It was very sad. (inaudible). That was the first fatality of Shirl's ...there were some prior to that, when the church owned it and operated it...

Dot: Why did it have more fatalities? Was it deeper? More gas? Less safety?

Dix: No, it was just a variation of conditions.

One in reference I was thinking off hand was a double fatality..(? inaudible) was involved. He was a shuttle car driver. Had he stayed in the seat of the shuttle car, he would have been saved from that fatality. But he got out and walked up and was talking to the miner operator when the top fell on them...

Dot: Oh.

Dix: And it was a double fatality.

Dot: I bet that was hard to see the families and go through that with them.

Did you have any close calls?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: Were you ever afraid to work in the mine? Did you dread going?

Dix: Shakes his head.

Dot: Not at all?

Did you enjoy the work?

Dix: I enjoyed the mine. When I got into safety, I had some of the best people. In fact they were all very educated people. I was probably the least educated of the whole bunch. I have five people working for me, and all five were college educated.

Dot What mine did you get into Safety?

Dix: Wilberg and Deseret Mine. I went later to Desbee.

Dot: Who were the men that you said was educated and had such a good crew?

Dix: Wilberg. One man called me. Right now he is the safety director at Nevada Power. He worked himself up—Ernie Wilson. I was his foreman at Desbee.

Dot: Do you remember the other names?

Dix: Wayne Story, Curtis Steel, Lee Bunderson, Harry Bunderson. There's four. I'm missing one. I need to look at the picture.

Dot: What did you do as Safety Director? What kind of responsibilities did you have?

Dix: We were in charge of going throughout the mine and identifying potential hazards and making sure they were corrected, and finding potential violations and where they existed and making sure they were corrected before the inspector could site you for a violation.

Dot: And did you do training too?

Dix: Training was a big part of it. The training departments vary about how important they were to do. Some of them was even...(?)

Dot: I used to work for a mine and I know they had to be trained on every instrument and piece of equipment, and we had to check the papers and make sure they had a paper for every piece of equipment they used.

Dix: What mine was that?

Dot: Plateau Mining.

Dix: My oldest son, he had an accident two months ago at Dugout. He broke his pelvis and broke his shoulder.

Dot: Oh Dear! Ohh! And he works at Dugout?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: Did you have a lot of violations? I know at Plateau, no matter how safe they tried to be, they always had violations.

Dix: It depended on where you was, and there for a while...them inspectors...some of them was pretty decent about it, and others of them competed in giving violations. It appeared to me that people from back east were accustomed to write more violations, and they seemed to be competitive thing to see who could out do their quota in a given quarter. It shouldn't be that way. You should be on your own merit. If there's a violation, sure, write it, but just because you're coming on to take

over an inspection from another inspector, doesn't mean that you have to keep up or exceed his quota. I don't think you should have a quota.

Dot: We had some inspectors that the guys used to hate to see coming and others that they were very friendly with.

Dix: Oh, I had some super friends, and I had some that wasn't! (laughing)
And you know I found that some of the women working were just as good or better than any of those men. And the sad thing about it, they were treated rotten!

Dot: Did you have women coal miners?

Dix: Yes, Oh many, many!

Dot: Do you remember when women first started working in the mines?

Dix: I do.

Dot: How was that?

Dix: Well, I lucked out. The first one that was hired, her husband was a superintendent of one of the section mine. She gained a lot of respect because of her husband's position. Then others held different positions: roof bolter, shuttle car—excellent workers! And I never had a minute's trouble working with any of the women that I was around. They treated me with respect and I treated them with respect.

Dot: Well, good! That was an interesting industry for women to get into.

Dix: It was, and I know it was hard because they had a situation to overcome. Some of them took it with a grain of salt. I've seen men go out of their way to use vulgar language in front of them. I guess it's just a way of life in coal mining now.
My position in safety was, they knew I was in there, and if there was accident, or if there was violations I had the responsibility was to get in there and do what I could do as fast as I could to get it corrected or get somebody bandaged up and fixed.

Dot: Tell me about the Wilberg fire, what you know about that, and your perspective of the whole thing.

Dix: I don't personally think or agree with some of the speculation with how it originated. As the one mantrip come out and the farthest section developed inby, (meaning going in toward the mine) that the head roller on that... or the compression started that fire. I don't agree with that cause. I think that fire originated from the head pulley on the drive. Because that was the closest source of

fire, and the farthest section inby had to go right by that compressor. It was still running and the testimony of all the people testify of that. Now this is just my own feeling, but that head pulley being hot, could be smoking. The most likely...The inspector would like to think that it was that compressor—it was jumping out. Well if it was jumping out, (inaudible) all day.

Dot: Did they ask you your opinion, since you were the safety director? Were you part of the inquiries?

Dix: We all had to be questioned and give our opinion. All the safety on various shifts. As I remember that fire was well on its way when...before I even left my home to go to the mine.

Dot: You didn't hear about it until you got there? Had you heard about it before you got there?

Dix: Yeah, in fact we could see the smoke.

Dot: Is that when you headed up to the mine or were you due up there?

Dix: See that picture on the table? That's the same picture I had when my other safety guys was in route to the mine. And then the National Guard got up there and we had orders to evacuate.

Dot: Did you agree that it was because...well they were trying to say that it was because they were pushing for a record.

Dix: Everybody's got their own opinion.

Dot: Well it seems to me that the mines run all night anyway, whether you are going for a record or not, the equipment is running around the clock.

Dix: That's a good point. That's what we thought, "Hell, if they wanted to break a record, they could just keep mining...what's the difference?

Dot: It was just that they were so close to the record that the management was down there to be part of the record breaking?

Dix: Well, there was a man who was in a very top management position in there during that same shift that was above having a self rescuer on. So you can come to any conclusion you want.

Dot: Tell me how you felt when you first heard the mine was on fire.

Dix: Sick. That to me was the hazard of any coal miner—that fear.

Dot: So you hurried up there and what were you hoping?

Dix: I was hoping it wouldn't be to that extent. We needed to put all of our people available to do what they could do.

Dot: What did they try to do?

Dix: Main thing was to be to short circuit the air and direct it to another air course. Get all the ? Systems in full operation so you could smother it.

Dot: So the guys had to go into the mine in other areas.

Dix: With self rescue apparatuses. They had an assembly line with crews coming, going, assembling the self rescue apparatuses.

Dot: Did you have extra workers up there?

Dix: You bet. We were getting teams from the other mines—some of the best available.

Dot: How long did you work on it before the National Guard came up there?

Dix: All they got involved with was providing meals and helping that way...the big help come from the other mines—fully trained. The National Guard, as far as assisting in the fire itself, in my opinion, they were there. That's it. If your not trained, you have no business being there. If you're there just helping with the meals, they're not even in the same category.

Dot: How long were your crews up there working?

Dix: Until we was ordered home because of the extent of time we'd already put in.

Dot: How long before they sealed it off and pulled the rescue crews out.

Dix: You've got to remember the distance it was from one opening clear through to where it broke through on the Cottonwood side. It took them, like forever to get them sealed. It was a long time.

Dot: How long did it take from the opening to where they were working? How long did it take a mantrip to get in there?

Dix: Oh, about 30 minutes.

Dottie: That's the same as at Plateau. They were that far into the mountain.

Dix: The overburden was 2200. (Meaning that there was 2200 feet of mountain on top of the tunnels where mining was being done.)

Dottie: So what happened after that? Were you all just out of work?

Dix: I got transferred to Deer Creek.

Dottie: Was Deer Creek owned by the same people?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: Ben said that whenever anything happened underground, in another mine, you could feel it all through Plateau—underground, in the offices, everywhere. It just rippled to everybody. There was like this silence. Nobody could talk. Nobody wanted to talk.

Dix: My son was involved in the Crandall Canyon disaster. He won't talk about it to this day. It was devastating to him because he lost nine men!

Dot: Oh!

My husband started working at Plateau not too long after it opened in the 70s, but the first fatality was in 1979. Our son was born that night, and when I got to my room, Ben turned the TV on because somebody called and told him there had been a fatality. We were so happy to have a new baby, but so sad and shaken over the mine. It was a weird emotional day.

Dix: My sister in law lost a brother in that mine. Was there five killed?

Dot: Yes. It was a sad time.

Dix: I'll tell you. I've taken a fatality to the Price hospital and there was a mother with five little kids! You just don't ever forget that.

Dot: No. And then when so many of them are taken, like at Wilberg. That's terrible.
They really they couldn't get back in for months to rescue them, could they?

Dix: I was involved with the first fatality at Deer Creek. A guy ran a big ...a mechanic had looked under the boom and spotted a hydraulic leak, and Ernie Nelson, he was a miner helper (inaudible)..I kept seeing the mechanic looking underneath, and a ? cars were built high. Anyway, I just heard Ernie just broken down and oil just shot all over against the braddish, and the boomer just dropped that quickly, and it caught him in his temple. We had a guide jack in the kitchen and we ran to get it, and it would not raise up high enough off his head. He was killed instantly. He had kids at home.

Dot: Um-humm

Yeah. It's a dangerous job.

Dix: Things like that you never forget.

Dot: Um-hum.

Dot: Were your part of a union? Were those mines union?

Dix: They were. When I was at Emery, I was Union President for a short time, and then when I worked for Shirl, I was only in the union a short period, and then I was promoted to Safety -- a management job in Safety.

Dot: So then you were salaried, and you weren't part of the union. You were management.

Dix: I spent far more time in management than I did in the union.

Dot: How did you feel about the unions? Well, you were president, so you must have thought they were good.

Dix: There was a guy that worked (inaudible)... the same time as I did, and he helped me (inaudible)... hated the union so bad. He was born and raised in Emery like I was. Well I was voted in, and I had a job to do like anything else. Then Shirl took over and he immediately hired all the experienced men that he could. I was quick to go. And it was the best move I made because the majority of my years...I just got recognized for 37 years of dedicated service. So I felt pretty good about that.

Dot: Yeah! Wow! 37 years!

Plateau Mine, where my husband worked, he was always in management--he was an environmental engineer--but I remember they had a lot of wars every time they had a strike. Plateau was non union.

Dix: That was a big mine, wasn't it? A lot of people?

Dot: They burned the bridge one year, so the men couldn't get up there.

Dix: (laughs) Where was it located? Wattis?

Dot: Yes. Wattis.

Dix: Let me tell you something. I was Union President when Max Petersen called me and said, "You get up there and get on that picket line. Well, I was president, and I couldn't tell him no, you know.[laughing] I got up there, and the main thing you do while on the picket line was play horseshoes. [laughing] I remember a good friend of mine, he was a strong union, and he said, "I sure as hell hope we don't get caught! (laugh) Somebody catch us up here playing horseshoes." [laughing] 'Cause there we were working the head gate, and me being president!

Dot: Well, the strikes were really hard, weren't they? Did you go through some strikes where you were off work?

Dix: They were. I was.

Dot: How did you make it through those?

Dix: Several. Three agents. We were out so long the union made food stamps available for our families. One of the worst ones was Sufco. They had just held tight for so many years. Strong, strong, anti union. And they still are. They're still non union.

Dot: I remember when people were out of work, it was just depressing. Even though we weren't out of work, it was a very depressing time, those strikes.

Dix: My granddad was a staunch union. He used to say, "I'd rather work for nothing than..."

Dot: Well in his day, unions were really necessary, weren't they? They were mistreated and poorly paid...

Dix: Oh yeah. So many of them people were shipped back here. Living conditions were terrible for them. Pay was bad.

Dot: Pay was bad, the work was hard and dangerous, and they risked their lives...

Dix: He told me stories, growing up, about massive cave-ins. Little or no effort was spent to retrieve the bodies. They were immigrants, you know, shipped out here away from their families. Can't you imagine what hardship they had?

Dot: And didn't they have to work long hours and hired young kids?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: I think people were really abused in that industry, and so I can see the need for starting unions.

Dix: When you get ... When you get up home, I'll show you a picture of some miners. In fact one of the pictures is my dad and he looks exactly like my brother Paul. But in the old Red Creek--horses would go inside. The mines out there Red Creek and Sufco. The one mine that's still in operation is Sufco. There was a mine down --it was a shaft mine. Here, not too long ago, the Historical Society took us down to Willow Spring Mine. It was very interesting to see that mine shaft.

Dot: Yeah. I think I was on that trek. It was really interesting.

Well, I appreciate you talking to me about your experiences. You've had a pretty full life—lots of accomplishments!

Dix: Well, I've enjoyed talking to you.

Dot: I would really like any mining pictures you have—especially of your dad. If I could borrow those and scan them and bring them back to you. That would be great.

Dix: Oh, yeah!

Dot: Let's set up a date for next week.

Emery County Archives
Oral History Project
November 17, 2009

Dixon and Talma Peacock
Interviewed by Dottie Grimes

In Dixon's home, in his den where he has some artifacts from old mines and his finds on his property when he was younger, and paintings and old cedar and pinion wood that he has made into lamps or other artistic items. There are many of Cliff Oviatt's paintings on various things, pieces of wood, leather, etc. Photographs are attached to this history.

Dottie: Okay, start over. Which mine—Deseret Mine?

Dix: ...broke into the old Bell Mine--which the old Bell Mine broke clear outside. There was old magazines and these old rails. Well these kegs were all over in there, and they were full of small spikes. Ray Sitterud was the manager, or superintendent of that lower mine, and he took me back in there and asked me if I wanted any of that stuff for the museum. I told him yes.

Dot: Wow. I bet!

Dix: He had one of... what they call hames that they backed the horse up and hooked it onto a car, and then pull the car out to the main line, and then take it on out to where they could dump it off the hill. It is really an old fashioned way to get the coal out of the mine.

Dot: So is that what is in the museum—is that a coal...?

Dix: No what is in the museum is what the horse is hooked to, and it hooked onto the mine car.

Dot: So tell me again what the hames is?

Dix: It's what hooked onto the harness of the horse and the other end hooked onto the mine car.

Dot: That is so interesting.
So did you put some of these barrels over in the museum?

Dix: I did.

Dot: Are they in the general store?

Dix: No they are in the farm room. The one hames that we hooked the horse and then back up on one end and the other end was hooked to the mine car, it's in the museum. We packed that out and put it in the museum. It's been there ever since – 40 years.

Dot: Well this is really neat.

Dix: I wish I could be more help.

Dot: You are a lot of help.

Dix: See that corn grinder down there?

Dot: Oh, yeah, where did you get that?

Dix: I have four out in the rock garden that I can show you that are better than that.

Dot: You're kidding! This is perfect.

Dix: Tip it up on its side so you can see the legs on it. That's different.
Well, I think we are pretty much through down here. Talma keeps her quilts in those trunks.

Dot: I've never seen trunks that are all wooden like these. Where did you find them?

Dix: Oh, just at yard sales.

Dot: Whose rocking chair is this?

Dix: I bought that for five dollars from an old bachelor that we rented from the first year we got married.

Dot: So you've always had an eye for antiques.

Dix: See that lamp over there? That keg is one of those I brought out of that bell mine, and here is one I made a cushion for.

Dot: You've been busy all your life, haven't you?

Dix: Oh, I've enjoyed it. I can walk out with you to show you my rock garden.

Dot: Do you have any other old pictures of your father mining?

Dix: No, I think that's all I have. He was for the most part a farmer. When they first got married, he mined out at Red Creek. My mother cooked.

Dot: So did he just work at the mine in the winter time?

Dix: Yeah. Seasonal.

When I first moved home from American Fork, I got out of the Calcite Mine in Utah County and went to work on I-70. I-70 was no place to work in the winter time. It was seasonal.

Dot: But did you work there year round?

Dix: No. Huh-uh. I went from there to the Browning Mine.
What do you think of that? (looking at an old crank wall phone)

Dot: I love that! It is so neat. Where did you get it?

Dix: A couple from Huntington knew that I finished wood, and so they asked me if I'd be willing to trade this phone to redo their kitchen. So... I wasn't sure but they got the best deal of it, after I was through with it.
I'm going to slip a jacket on.

Dot: Okay.

Outside:

Dot: Did you find all of this?

Dix: I did.
This is petrified wood, and that's petrified wood.

Dot: It's gorgeous. Do you remember where you found this?

Dix: Not exactly, but the black rock is very close to this area.

Dot: Where did you find this huge mollusk or whatever it is?

Dix: That's a snail. I traded a friend for it. I got two of them. Isn't that something?

Dot: Yeah! They made big snails back then.

Dix: I thought these pieces of wood were unusual too.

Dot: Gorgeous.

Dix: And also the big weathered rock.

Dot: How did you get it? It's so huge.

Dix: It was quite sandy there. My brothers was all there. We dug out two holes and back the truck into that and inched it in. That white rock is 100% calcium and that was the first mine I worked in that Calcite Mine.

Notice this glaze on this rock.
Dot: What is it?

Dix: It's just like a molten hot...some of that I found is just like it had run. (red, shiny, glaze on rack caused from hot lava.)

Walking through the yard with some difficulty, Dixon says, "The first surgery I had was to have a brain tumor removed, and I had a bleed at the same time which ... then I had another stroke, which didn't do me no good at all.

Dot: How long after your first one? Was it all about the same time?

Dix: Oh, a couple of years later.

Dot: Oh! My gosh you are doing so good! You are walking and everything.

Dix: Here's what I wanted to show you. See that glaze?

Dot: It looks like paint has been dumped on it.

Dix: Them are two really outstanding grinders.

Dot: Where in the world did you find those?

Dix: Over to Emery when we were kids. We put them on our bicycle and took them two at a time and road to the main highway and then talked our dad into hauling them to town. There was five upside down in the same hole.

Dot: Oh, my word! Is this when you were out herding cows or something?

Dix: No—well, we were out there, supposed to be tending water, but we would make sure the cows was in the right pasture too.

Dot: So you were tending water, and how did you find them?

Dix: Because we were familiar with that area. We would find a hole that had charcoal in it, and we would know where to dig.

Dot: How high were the knolls?

Dix: Oh, about as high as that bush.

Dot: So maybe three feet high?

Dix: Oh, and another thing I was going to mention to you. You seen all them inlaid elk teeth?

Well I dug up...my brother dug up handfuls of elk teeth that had holes in, that they had drilled for jewelry.

Dot: They must have lived right on your property, huh?

Dix: Yeah. In fact there is a team of archaeologist digging right now. They are going to expand that road, less than half a mile from our property line.

Dot: Where did you live in Emery?

Dix: About two blocks south of main street.

Dot: And where was your farm?

Dix: Down where the bridge of the muddy. Our farm was a little closer to town.

Dot: Well, I ought to go with you one day and you can point it out to me.

Dix: They had their tents all pitched and flags all over. I rode with my son to the auction.

Dot: Wow. So who baled all this hay (round bales in his back yard.)

Dix: That's my son.

Dot: Did that used to be your garden area?

Dix: Yeah, this was my garden area, but I can't take care of it that much any more.

Dot: Well, your yard is still beautiful.
So what did you say this paint-looking stuff is?

Dix: That's molten lava. It's all over that area.

Dot: Let me get a picture of you with your rock garden.

Dix: When this gets wet, it really shows up.

Dot: I can see how shiny it is with the sun on it just right.

Dix: Now I give two of the corn grinders to my brothers.

Dot: Do they have some of their stuff in the museum also?

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: Which one was with you when you found these?

Dix: Paul. He's younger than me.

Dot: Wow. This is amazing.

Heading back into the house.

Dixon's wife Talma joins us

Dottie: I'm just going to borrow these pictures, if you don't mind, and I'll scan them, and bring them right back.

Dix: This is one of my favorites. I wouldn't part with that for anything. (Ike and Ann Whistler). They were family, in a sense.

Dot: It sounds like it, you felt like he was your dad.

Dix: I was a lot closer to Ike than to my dad.
Ann was very instrumental in putting the museum together—the Pioneer Museum. And while the upstairs was being renovated, the Pipers were here and they were artists. Ann would mix up egg yolks to stir into the paint.

Dot: How did the artists feel about her bringing egg yolks for their paints.

Dix: That was a tradition in European paints.

Talma: Yeah, they wanted them.

Dot: Well Talma, tell me who your parents were and when you were born.

Talma: My mother was Sylva Jewkes. It wasn't Sylvia, it was just Sylva. And my father was Melrose Luke.

Dot: So you were a Luke.

Talma: I was a Luke. I was born in Orangeville, down on Main Street—lived in the same house, born and raised there.
And then when we first got married, we lived in American Fork for two years and that is where our oldest son was born, and then we moved back here.

Dot: He says you were a cheerleader.

T: Yeah. I was a cheerleader (laugh)

Dot: I wanted to know a little bit about your high school years. I know there was a war going on when Central School was closed in Castle Dale. That was probably before your

time, but do you know anything about it? Did your parents mention anything about it? Or did you have older brothers and sisters.

T: I did. I was the youngest. Clyde Luke was my oldest brother, and then Virginia, and then Marvin, but they all went to South Emery also.

Dix: The biggest rivals were North and South Emery.

T: Well that was North and South Emery when we grew up. Not Central. I think you'd have to talk to someone even older than Clyde. Now he might remember some of it. I don't know.

Dix: My father went to school when there was North Emery and South Emery

T: And Central.

Dix: And Central. My father and my uncle both played in football, and was playing in the same game that the one football player was kicked in the head...

Dot: Really!?

Dix: And he died. And they banned football for years and years.

Talma: Until they got the new high school

Dot: So your father was on the same team?

Dix: And my mother's brother.

Dot: And what was his name?

Dix: Neal Wilcox.

Dot: And your father's name was?

Dix: Mervin Peacock.

Dot: How did the county feel about that? Did you all want to play football?

Dix: They did! And the animosity kind of wore off between the two. To lose the life of an athlete was devastating to both schools.

Dot: Now, who was playing this game? Was it North and South Emery?

Dix: Yes.

Dot: Oh! My word! So that was probably one of the reasons you hated each other. Did anyone get blamed for that or was it just an accident?

Dix: I don't know. It...(inaudible) as far as blame. But their safety wear—their helmets was not protective like it is nowadays. It was just the old leather type. But there was animosity between the two schools. But it was quite a coincidence that I had an uncle and father that played on the same team.

Dot: Did you hear them talk about that?

Dix: No. I did not. I was too young.

Dot: So, that probably dug up a lot of hatred between the two schools.

T: There was, in fact in the time when they built the new school, there was a lot of people thinking they couldn't get along. When I was going, because I was the second to the last class to graduated from there.

Dot: From the old school.

T: Yeah, from the old school, and they talked—how could they get along, but it went really well--everybody you talk after they did– because there was such a rivalry.

Dot: That's the other thing I wanted to talk to you about.

Dix: See Talma was a cheerleader her senior year, and I was student body president.

Dot: How fun. You had fun high school years?

T: Yeah. We did.

Dix: We were sweethearts...

Dot: So you married your childhood sweetheart. I saw a picture of him in high school. Gorgeous man!

T: (Laugh.) Yeah.

Dot: So did you know anybody that was younger than you that had to go over to the new school? Were they dreading it?

T: Oh, I don't think they were dreading it because by then, I was out of school. Yeah, I knew them, and all, but I was out of the area then.

Dot: Sam Singleton said that everybody was pretty ready and willing because the schools were so old, they knew they needed something else..

T: Yeah, the older people did think that, but the kids, on the other hand ...

Dot: Yeah, but I was going to say, Kent Powell, on the other hand, would like to get some history on how everybody felt about that. He knew it was pretty tense in the county.

T: And see we were at American Fork at that time.

Dot: Oh, so you married right out of high school and moved away?

Dix: Sam taught both Talma and I, and so did Coach Nelson, and I was on the track team, and she was on the cheerleaders...

T: Yeah, so we was up there during that time.

Dot: Tell me about some of your teachers. They were locals around here so...

T: We went to school at the old school, and it seems like all the teachers were old, you know. It doesn't matter how old they are, they all seem old, except Bill Jorgenson, and he had came back, so it was probably his first years of teaching.

Dot: He didn't teach you did he?

T: Yeah, he did. That's what I say, he's enough older that he had gone to school and graduated. I don't think he probably taught when Dixon was there, because he had graduated the year ahead.

Dot: And how did you like Bill?

T: He was okay. (laugh) I like him as a person.

Dix: His mother taught...

T: Yeah, his mom was sweet. She was so sweet, the kids run over here.

Dix: She taught type, and I was scheduled to take her class, but I got this finger cut off, and I used that excuse forever to keep from milking the cow, (laugh) and it kept me from type too.

Dot: How did you cut your finger off?

Dix: I was cutting hay out to the farm.

Dot: And what happened?

Dix: Grass and ...

T: It was the old fashioned mower.

Dix: Yeah, with a long bar...I forget the weed that balls it up, but it got tangled up. I got a hold of it, pulling on it, and it freed it, and it run my finger...

T: It actually got two fingers.

Dix: The bad part was that I had to lift that bar up and get it latched and go five miles to town to get my mother and then to Price to get it sewed back on. But I used that excuse for milking for a long time. My brother had to milk (laughing)

Dot: So you were just a teenager when it happened.

Dix: Yeah.

Dot: So, Bill taught you and Sam was a teacher...

T: Brad Jensen, Ralee Williams, and Lois Beach, and Lucinda Wild

Dot: What was it like to live amongst your teachers. I never did that. I went to East High and never even saw a teacher outside of school.

T: Well, most of them were from Ferron, so it wasn't like I socialized with them. In elementary school was more that, but I don't remember really socializing with them.

Dix: Mrs. Baker had a reputation of having favorites with the boys, and she had a class in English, and I was one of her pets, so I got excellent marks.

T: He didn't do a thing!
But I think it was great. We went to school here until the 8th grade and then went to high school for four years, and I don't think we had the ... I think Jr. high is such a hard age for kids, and I think, "Why don't we just go back to that? We never had those problems."
It was fun growing up here with the bon fires, playing kick the can. You never had worries. Your parents probably worried (laugh) but it was a different kind of worry than what you have now. It was just carefree...play ball across the street. We lived on Main Street, and there was a field over there where the park is now, and no matter your age was you was over there to play baseball, with a board for one base and a cow pie for another one. (laugh) You know. No oiled roads—Main Street and Center Street part way up.

Dix: Emery was worse than over here. They didn't have any oiled roads.

T: We had Main Street and Center Street part way up. In the winter time—this is later when I had kids—it was so muddy, you'd just go like this up the street. My kids, when they were oiling the roads, just thought that was terrible. "It's going to be so citified!" (laughing)

Dot: That's what I want to know—how change has affected life in a small town.

T: And another thing, the canal used to run through town. It wasn't covered like it is now. So the canal was right behind our house, and then we had to get across Main Street. I remember...I mean, we really never played by the canal, but other people in town that lived farther away worried and worried about their kids in the canal, I remembered Mama saying. But we just grew up with it, and it didn't bother us, except we did swim in it, but they would always go out with us when we swam in it. That was a favorite swimming place here.

Dix: One big difference In Emery, we went to school until the 8th grade in Emery, and then we'd have to take a bus to Ferron.

T: So did we, except you didn't go to 8th grade, you just went to 6th. You went to 7th and 8th in Ferron, didn't you?

Dix: Where did you pick the bus up?

T: We didn't bus until the 9th grade.

Dix: We rode the bus two years longer than you.

T: I couldn't remember for sure you did. I know the kids younger than us, they did bus to Ferron for 7th and 8th grade, but I wasn't sure if you did.

Dix: Yeah, we did.

Dot: So that was a long high school.

T: Well, there wasn't very many. He had a bigger class. There were 63 in his graduating class, and there was, I think, 48 in ours.

Dix: Yeah. The very next year, it dropped down.

T: No, you mean the year after us? The year after us, was even bigger. We had several get married before we graduated. The class just younger than us didn't have one person get married before they graduated. I remember the teachers commenting on it.

Dot: But at the time you were growing up, is that the time the county was dwindling, and their kids were all leaving after they got married, you included?

T: Yeah. You just knew when you got married you were going to leave, or when you graduated.

Dix: There were just no jobs for nobody. I remember growing up the W...I forget what they called it, but they had elderly men that dug ditch, and they got very low wages. No matter what they done, they would make work for them.
Dot: Was that WPA?

Dix: Yes.

Dot: Now what year were you born?

Dix: 1942.

Dot: And WPA was going on then?

Dix: It was.

Dot (to Talma) What year were you born?

T: 1943. I don't remember that, but the economy was dwindling.

Dot: Well, it was hard to make a living at farming in Emery County, right?

Dix: Oh yes!

Dot: You needed another job to support your farm?

Dix: If you didn't have two jobs, you'd starve to death. Very few could be sustained on a farm—only those farms that were big, huge and had lots of cattle, and then it was hard for them.

Dot: I only know one person in Elmo that didn't have another job with his farm.

T: Yeah, everybody had to work, whether it was the coal mine or somewhere.

Dot: It sounds like the coal mines worked out pretty well, because way back they only mined in the winter and so you could farm in the summer. They only ran in the winter, way back, right?

Dix: I remember, as a kid, Emery had a hotel that would board these truck drivers, and they were from polygamist camps in Southern Utah, and there were deeps lines of trucks lined up on Main Street waiting to be able to get to the coal mine sites to get their loads and then back to Loa and the other small towns down south, and then get back in order to get two loads in one day.

Dot: Were there any stores in Emery when you grew up?

Dix: Oh yes. There was ... to hear my brother talk, there were dozens (laugh). Vera Duzette and the Duzette Merc.

Dot: Did you know her?

Dix: Yes, very well.

Dot: I can't place time periods with people. I know her name and have seen a picture of her store. So you knew her?

Dix: Also in the museum...

T: Dixon, stick to that. There was the Duzette Store, and the Mortensen Store, and the Post Office, and

Dix: And the Sorensen, and...

T: And there was an Anderson...

Dot: Wow. Did they all carry the same things?

Dix: A variety of things.

T: You shopped at home. I think that was a lot of the difference because in Orangeville we had the three stores. There was the Peacock Cash Store, which was actually Crawford Luke before that because it was my grandma and grandpa that were in on that. But when I grew up there was Peacock Cash Store, and Ware Store, and my Uncle Eldon Luke's store, and there was a cafe, and the beer joint. That's where we met after church (laugh) on Sunday, you went and spent your nickel down there. It's so funny to talk about it now, because you got a nickel, but when I got bigger I got a dime. I was so excited; I couldn't wait because my brother and sister had a dime and I got a nickel. In the store, back in...the candy counter was in the back, and here was the bar where men are, but Sunday it was the only thing that was open, and you just went there and spent your nickel and then went home after Sunday School .

Dot: It was just home, huh?

Dix: I can remember after we got married, they had a big, round thing of cheese—huge!

T: That was at Peacock Cash Store.

Dix: Peacock Cash Store. And then they had those big, long, full rolls of bologna, and it was good!

Dot: Now how did they have enough business to open three stores in a little town. Was there some competitiveness? Was there some resentment between owners?

T: I don't think so.

Dix: I just think they learned to appreciate each other and work together. It was just a unity.

Dot: Wow, it just seems like today, selling the same thing, they would be mad at each other and try to outdo each other and be mad at the people who shopped in the other stores.

T: I don't remember any of that. We shopped at all three stores. I liked to go to Ware's, and they stayed open a little bit longer, because it was just a little bit closer. And I think they had a little bit more...well, they had the lockers there. We rented a locker...

Dot: Who owned that one?

T: At that time it was Guy Ware, and then his son Bruce.

Dot: And what was a cash store. Did they not take charges?

T: No because I know people charged there. I don't know.

Dix: They had a lot of business in material--selling material for making clothing.

T: Yeah, they had fabrics. Well, they had everything, though.

Dot: Peacocks had fabric and Ware's had the lockers and...

T: Well, they all pretty much had the same thing. They had clothing, shoes, material.

Dot: So did you buy your school clothes in Orangeville?

T: We made them. (laugh)
I can remember having one store bought dress, I think when I was in third grade. And of course as I got bigger, too, Mom sewed less.

Dot: My mom made a lot of my clothes too, and they were all nice.

Dix: Where did you live?

Dot: Well, I was born in Tooele and lived there until I was 10 and then moved to Salt Lake and went to East High School. But my mother was born in Huntington, and so my ancestors are from here.

T: What was your mother's name.

Dot: Her name was Sammy Rowley. Her mother was Margaret Rowley. So the Rowleys and the Blacks. I'm related to a lot of people down here. Her sisters lived down here. One was Lila Wilberg in Castle Dale, and Clara Pettey from Ferron. So I came down here to visit a lot; so I was aware of the area.

T: You say your aunt Clara Pettey, would she be related to Art Pettey who had the coal mine.
D: No. Well, I don't know. Her husband was Lloyd Pettey, and I don't know his line very well.

T: When you were going through who your ancestors were...my one great, great grandparent on the Guymon side. He had three wives, and when the emancipation proclamation was signed and all, one wife lived in Huntington, and he lived in Orangeville with his other wife, and they had the store and stuff over there. I don't know what they had here.

Dot: What was his name?

T: Noah Thomas Guymon.

Dot: I've heard a lot about him.
My aunt's kids—I don't know if Ken Pettey would have been your age...

Dix: Yeah. Right. In fact he died young.

Dot: Yeah, he did. He led a rough, alcoholic life.

T: And he had a brother J.A.
Virginia dated him a little bit—my sister.

Dot: Yeah, everybody liked J.A.

T: Now, did he die?

Dot: He died quite young.

T: Did he? And they had a girl.

Dot: Margaret Lynn, and Donna. Donna was much older. Lou Whimpey was Donna's husband.

T: Oh, All right! He married Ruth.

Dot: Yeah. Donna died young too. She had a younger sister, but she would be older than you.
But they went to South Emery.

Dix: When I was...we had a tragic drowning in Emery when I was young. Two brothers swimming in a pond. They both drowned.

T: Kent and Carl Jensen.

Dot: How awful! That's interesting, tell me more about it. How was the town affected?

Dix: Devastating. I can remember...them that could swim would dive in, and half of them didn't have a swimming suit, and they would dive in, and it seemed like they were never coming back up, and it muddied up finally.

Dot: Was it a deep pond?

Dix: Yes, and then another tragic death was a couple that married young and were expecting their first baby. Forsyth (inaudible) then the winds came up and in a shallow boat, and it capsized and they both died. And then a boy a year older than I was, was thrown out of a car and he was killed.

T: Dixon was in that wreck.

Dix: I was sitting right beside him.

T: That was in high school

Dot: What happened?

Dix: We just came around a sharp turn by the slaughter house and he was thrown out of the car.

Dot: The door just came open?

T: Actually they wrecked.

Dix: We rolled.

Dot: Were you hurt? Anybody else?

Dix: No. Not really.

T: Its funny how that works.

Dot: Yeah. My daughter is an EMT, and she says that all the time. She has pulled people out of wrecks they never should have lived through.

T: Yeah, the rest of them...there were six of them in it. They had their dates.

Dix: I've seen so many mining accidents that you'd have never believed they'd have survived.

T: I wanted to say too, that when I was growing up—I think in the 8th grade, and it was Christmas break, and these two boys got new guns for Christmas, and they were hunting...was it Trail Mountain Mine—that's when Earl Robertson owned it, and his boy was working there, which was Ruth Whimpey's husband. The two boys had gone up there hunting, and for some reason had gone in, and he was probably showing them...and that's when they had the explosion, and killed all three.

Dix: One thing about that explosion. This can give you an idea of the effects of the explosion. This work horse, probably weighs a ton. And the two boys...

T: They were on the inside.

Dix: They were on the inside, near the portal. That violent explosion shot that horse straight across that canyon—never lost any elevation—against the mountain straight across.

T: But the two boys were with the uncle back on the other side. (In the mine.) That was my first experience with death. My grandpa died, but I was only three.

Dot: So how did you feel about him going to work in a coal mine?

T: I don't know. I just think...I wanted to live home.

Dix: Working in that hard rock mine, I was used to working underground there.

T: When we came back here, he did mostly construction for several years. It just looked like if you could go to the coal mine, it would be more of a steady thing because he worked...

Dot: And you were paid well in the 70s. Is that when you moved back?

T: I think it was actually 60s.

Dot: Were you anxious to leave home? You said you knew you were going to leave when you got married?

T: I think all kids are anxious at first, but they only get gone for a little bit and realize they want to...

Dot: So you wanted to come back and you were looking for a way, and I-70 was what provided that?

Dix: I run an Air Track, one of them big drills that drills 20 foot holes. And, of course, I saw several fatalities out there.

Dot: On I-70? Oh, really?

Dix: Yeah there was a huge, big formation of rock that slid down on one of them big track hoes, and all you could see of this guy was just a little part of his shoulder. So they had me take an air track down and drill a hole, hoping they could run these big heavy cables off the cat and pull it off of him. So they had to do some cutting of big cable to get it off of him.

Dot: Did most of the fatalities happen while building the Eagle Canyon Bridge?

Dix: I don't know of any.

Dot: Really, that looked like it would be real dangerous work.

Dix: The fatalities I was involved with was miles to the west. And then there was a water wagon that rolled over and killed a boy from Huntington—the Ward kid rolled it over.

Dot: When you moved back here, where did you live? Did you buy a house?

T: We rented a little house, actually, before my time, it was the Relief Society house. I didn't realize that the Relief Society had a special place separate from just at the church. It was over there on Center Street. And we rented there for several years and then we rented a house up here, and finally we had this brought in from Boise, and ours was the fourth one in the county, and now you know how many there are?

Dot: Yeah, ours is one too. So you wanted to move right back to Orangeville. I bet you were town-specific about where you wanted to go.(laugh)

T: (laugh) But we did look at Castle Dale and Ferron.

Dot: Yeah, but this is home. And you weren't about to live in Emery, I bet.(laughing)

T: He tried, no he didn't really.

Dot: Well, it's kind of far away—a cute little town, but far away.

T: Well his family had all moved away when he was a senior. They moved to American Fork.

Dot: Oh. Tell me your kids' names.

T: Our oldest is Burt and then Michael. Burt lives in Castle Dale now; Michael lives in Logan; Gary lives...well he bought part of my dad's farm, and so he lives on the way up

the canyon; and then Tammy, our youngest, lives in Castle Dale, and he husband teaches school over to San Rafael.

Dot: What is her last name?

T: Allred.

Dot: Did you grow up on a farm? Did you have to do farm work and have chores?

T: Oh yeah. I was the youngest and so I didn't have to work as hard as the others getting coal and wood in and gathering eggs. It was just a good life. I love it. I mean, you know, when you look back when you were young, we didn't have indoor plumbing but there were others that didn't either. And we had the old wood cook stove and the other stove that heated the house.
Dot: But you did have electricity?

T: We did have electricity—all the time.
But when Mama and Daddy first got married, they—you know the little log cabin on the way to Joe's Valley that is set back in? That house actually sat down by the river, at the time—I mean when it was first built by Erastus Curtis. And that's where the first male child was born in that. So when Mama and Daddy first got married, they bought that and I don't know which of the properties, so they took it apart log by log, numbered it, put it together and put a floor in it. So it sits up where it sits now.

Dix: That's a picture of the house, right there.

T: Anyway, that's where Mama and Daddy lived. When Clyde, my oldest brother was born, they have moved downtown because that was the winter, and so he was born at my Grandma Luke's house. Then they had moved back to the farm, and my sister was born in the log cabin. She always related to Abraham Lincoln because she lived in a log cabin, and that's where she was born (laugh). And then they built the house down on main street to the side of his parents.

Dot: And where was that?

T: In Orangeville—about 65 N Main Street. My brother was born in the basement, when they used to live in the basement, and then I was born before it was finished.

Dot: So it sounds fun to grow up on Main Street in a little town.

T: It was because I was right in the middle of everything.

Dot: Right close to the store.

T: And like I say, we had bon fires practically every night in the summer and roasted marshmallows.

Dot: Did you have a specific place for a bon fire, or did you take turns?

T: We kind of took turns.

Dot: How fun. Was everybody in town friends? Were there people that you didn't like?

T: Oh, I think we all pretty well got along, they were different ages. Sometimes it was everybody and other times it was more just your age group that would get together.

Dot: Were there any bullies in town?

T: (laugh) Probably, but I don't remember that part.

Dot: It sounds like you were really friendly and popular.

T: I don't know about that, but everybody pretty much got along.

Dix: She was cheerleader and I was student body president the same year, and I'll tell you we had more fun. We spent more time goofing off than I did studying. Being on the track team, I really enjoyed.

T: At high school, it was.

Dot: Who were your friends growing up?

T: They are still my friends. We get together...but the kids my age were Donnette Justusen, and Genevieve Humphry, Colleen Sitterud, Trisha Humphry, Sylvia McCall, Judy Scoville, me, and I must have missed someone—and then there was Carl Justusen, Howard Tuttle, Lyle Moffit and Richard Stilson.

Dot: Wow! There were a bunch of kids.

T: Every Friday night was a ballgame and then a dance was always after the ballgame. We had a band. We didn't have a juke box, we had either the Music Vendors or I can't remember what Harry Snow's band was called, but Harry Snow's band was always the band that the Seniors had at the Senior Ball because he was the Senior Advisor. But at all the other dances we pretty much had the Music Vendors. The orchestra was Brian Jensen and he played the drums. Lincoln Luke was the...played the guitar for a lot of years, and then he moved away, and Neldon Cox played the guitar and sang Malone Jewkes and Cal Jewkes. Uncle Cal—that was my uncle. Those were really good days—really fun days. Everybody danced, 'course you always had some that danced more, but it was fun.

Dot: And the music was wonderful back then!

T: (laughing) It was! It was! We missed out on the generation that got to go to Wilbergs. That sounded like a fun thing back then.

Dix: We run onto something in the Pioneer Museum that was a wooden dish with all different compartments. We'd ask the people, "I bet you can't guess what this was." Then Wayne Wilberg came in and he said, "I know exactly what that is. That is what we put our coins in every time we had a dance. That was the coin holder. They had the green money put in something separate.

Dot: Who donated that?

Dix: We can find out.

T: She's been working on that.

Dot: I have, but there are no pictures. I have not one picture. No one will own up to having a picture of it.

Dix: Have you talked to Zora about it?

Dot: Yes, Zora and I have been working together on it.
So back to your sock hops. That sounds so fun.

T: Yeah, it was. There was the Junior Prom, Senior Hop, Sophomore Slide, and the Freshmen Frolic. Those were the big dances that we had.

Dix: I didn't know you had such a good memory, Dear.
We've been married 48.

Dot: I would like to know a couple more things: about his brain tumor and the Wilberg Mine Disaster.

T: The Wilberg Mine disaster was a sad time. Hard time, hard time (teary). My mother was dying. She died the following New Year's Eve.

Dot: Oh! What a bad year.

T: It was hard. The mine disaster effected everybody—everybody. Whether they had somebody that was related, they knew somebody.

Dot: I remember how awful it was. I just wondered how you heard about it and how you felt about him being up there.

T: Well at the time it happened he was at Deer Creek, but then everybody went up there. He was pretty well over Safety, and I knew he had to be up there. It was worrisome, but I

knew he was outside. He wasn't part of the mine rescue inside the mine. It just effected everybody.

Dix: I was very fortunate to have five of the best trained people you could possibly ask for. Eric Bunderson, Nate Bunderson, Ernie Wilson,

Dot: Oh, Eric Bunderson. I've got that down as Harry Bunderson. You can really make mistakes with these oral histories.

Dix: He owns and operates the car wash in Castle Dale. He was also raised in Emery. But he worked for me, and I worked for his dad. I have a picture of the crew.

T: It's at the museum.

Dot: I kind of get the idea that you aren't crazy about Indian stuff.
T: No, I like it. Yeah, I like it. It's just not my life. I have a greater appreciation for it since I married him.

Dot: You weren't out looking for stuff when you were young?

Dixon: I got to take several geologists to different sites when we were kids, we were finding stuff.

Dot: Now how did they know to come to you. Did you report it or did your father?

Dix: We reported it. His name was Dr. Gunderson from Brigham Young.

Dot: When you were a kid?

Dix: Uh-huh.

Dot: You told me about it before, but I didn't know you were a kid.

Dix: I rode with my son to Salina the other day, and less than half a mile from where we got the corn grinders and took them on our bicycles. Right next to the boundary of our farm are these people with tents and stakes all over. They're digging that ground again. I was telling you about the elk teeth that we dug up that the Indians used for beads and stuff.

T: That's been lots of years ago.

Dot: Lots of years and most of it is at the museum. So you're fine.
How old were you when you found out you had a brain tumor?

T: He had the tumor out in 2007 (mean 2002) and it was seven years before, so 1995. They watched it—we went to the one doctor, and if they had taken it out before, I don't

think he would have left the damage or had a chance to do the damage. But she said, "We'll just watch it." And he'd have some other problems and she would say, "Well it isn't in that part of the brain. I don't think that's causing it." But I think what it was, was that the tumor was there and which one thing presses on another, presses on another, so it was causing it. Anyway, she finally sent us to Dr. Gardner and he said, if it was him, he'd take it out. So he took it out, and when he got in there, he said...because he told us it was about the size of a golf ball, but when he operated, he said it was bigger than a golf ball.

Dot: Where was it?

T: Between the two lobes and down in...I'm not too sure where. The more I thought of it, when she kept saying, "Well that's not where it is, but it still keeps pressing." Anyway, so that was hard. When he come out, his whole right side was paralyzed at first, and he finally got some movement back in his arm. His leg was a while coming. Back when Dr. Hilmo came in to talk to us, it was like, "Are you ready to go home in a wheelchair?" So in both of our minds we were thinking how we was going to do the house to do the bathroom and down the hall to get a wheelchair...but they kept him long enough in rehab and got him walking.

Dix: It seems like I was forever in rehab. And here just recently I had a mini stroke, but all of it come back.

Dot: I be that was a frightening time, and certainly a miraculous time. You are doing so well.

T: It was. Then he had an ABM. They took the tumor out in 2002 and in 2005, they found out he had an ABM which bled and caused a stroke, and then they had...an ABM is where the veins and arteries is where the blood switches, and instead of going down in capillaries and getting smaller and smaller, they had kind of burst. Some people are born with that...so they had to go in and do glue—put glue in the veins to stop it and then do radiation.

Dot: Wow. You've had a pretty eventful life. Are there any other stories you want to tell? What about your parents?

T: Daddy was a farmer, an insurance salesmen, and worked for Selective Service registering guys. And at first he had an office in Castle Dale at the courthouse, and then because of space, he had to bring the office up, so we had it right in our living room.

Dot: When was he with the Selective Service during the war?

T: I think for 30 years. I don't remember when. But I remember him saying when he first started, there was rarely anyone 6 feet tall, and when he quit there seldom anyone under 6 ft.

Dot: what an interesting observation. Do you know when he quit?

T: I think it was about '69. He had a heart attack, and before that, they built the little office next to their house. So he had the office for his insurance and selective service, for a while. My mother was a lot happier with it out of the living room.

Dot: Is it still in the family?

T: Yes. Actually, its all of us. We can't part with it, and we're not good at decision making, so right now it's rented. Naturally, its come in handy. Three of our children have lived there, and a grandchild. And some of Mike's grandkids have lived there, but right now it's rented out.

Dot: What about your mother?

T: Mama was raised in Orangeville. Actually they had a saw mill on the mountain, and in the winter time they'd come home and go to school. And Grandpa worked in coal camps too, but every summer they would go back to the saw mill. That was the Jewkes sawmill.

Dot: And they lived there?

T: Yeah. In fact we have had a couple of reunions there, and some of the cabins were still there then. They're not now. It's back to nature, I guess. There are a couple of things there.
She was from a family of 12. Her father was William A. Jewkes, and there are five William Jewkes in Emery County.

Dot: Did they all come from the same ancestor Jewkes?

T: I don't know. I know they distinguished them by different things like one had seven fingers or something because he had to have fingers cut off. I think that was my ancestor.

Dot: Who was the first ancestor that came to Emery County.

T: Well there was Samuel Jewkes. And he was the Samuel R. Jewkes that had the two wives and then his son Samuel that was killed cleaning a .32 with my great grandfather.

Door Opens:

Dix and T: Hi!

Dix: Dottie do you know our daughter Tammy? This is our spoiled, and our only daughter.

T: She is our youngest.

Dot: Oh how fun! The youngest and a daughter.

T: And she's not spoiled.

Dot: I'm not believing that!

Dix: And she's got the most beautiful kids in the world!

Tammy: And their not spoiled either. (laughing)

T: My dad's ancestor on the Luke side is Joseph Oliver. He came from Manti, and his ancestors came from England, and his grandfather was killed by the Indians over by Manti. There is a history and a monument over there.

Dot: Wow! Not everybody has an ancestor killed by the Indians—that is Western history! Well, I will let you go. I appreciate you talking to me and showing me all of your rocks and antiques.
(To Dixon) Who was your original ancestor to come to Emery County.

Dix: My grandfather's name was ...

T: Isaac Allred. And the Peacock was Edward Lynn.

Dot: Did they both settle in Emery?

Dix: They did. Lynn Peacock delivered freight to the county.

T: And the Wilcoxes and the Behunins
Mine was the Lukes, the Calloways, the Jewkes and Scovils.

Dot: So they all pretty much came early. You came from the earliest settlers.
No wonder you had to come back here.

T: Our roots are deep.

Dix: The original dugouts that my ancestors were born in, are still in tact on the old Peacock property.

Dot: I want to see them.

Dix: You do? I could take you there.

Dot: We need to schedule that.

Dix: In fact my grandfather died in the dugout, and his brother died in there during that terrible flu.

Dot: In 1918?

T: So then she married a Christiansen, and she was a Peacock, so they had a yours mine and ours.

Dot: Well, I'll leave you, but if you have find any other pictures, I would love to scan them and copy them.

T: Okay. I will get them. Not right now, but I will get them. I would like that.

Dot: Well thank you very much.

The end.