

Q. What do you see for the future of Nauvoo?

A. Maybe I'm not being very realistic, but the scriptures talk about how a city on a hill cannot be hid. "Let your light so shine that people may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" [see Matthew 5:16]. So many people are coming here, I just think about that scripture.

Q. Do you think Nauvoo will change?

A. I don't see how much change can take place. I don't think there is anybody coming in with business. A lot of our men have to go other places—to Fort Madison, Keokuk—to work.

Q. Do you have any other comments or observations about Nauvoo?

A. I just know that I am glad that I live here, [chuckles] I love the river. The people are so friendly. It is a wonderful community to live in.

Q. [JJ] If you had any message to give to people who come to Nauvoo in future generations, what would you say?

A. Nothing that I can think of.

Q. [JP] Thank you so much for letting us come.

Lee and Carmen Ourth

Nauvoo, Illinois

Lee's birthday: November 27, 1933

Carmen's birthday: May 3, 1934

Interview on November 19, 2001,

at the Joseph Smith Academy by Joella Peterson Kristelle Moore also present

Q. [Joella Peterson] How long have you both lived in Nauvoo?

A. [Lee Ourth] We were both born here, but we haven't always lived here. I was born in William Marks's house. My mother told you that.

A. [Carmen Ourth] I was born here in Nauvoo in the house next to the post office. All my education was in Nauvoo, up through high school. I left to go to nurse's training, but other than that my education was in Nauvoo.

A. [LO] When I was four years old, my family moved to the Kirtland, Ohio, area. I attended church in the Kirtland Temple for eight years. I moved back to Nauvoo when I was twelve—not where I live now, but where my mother lived, down the river about a half-mile. We are fixing that house up now.

Later, I had been in the service, but I came home when my father died. I farmed for a year. Then I went back to college, and we got married after my junior year. We went back to the University of Illinois for a year. Then after a couple of years, we moved to Honduras in Central America. Carmen was a nurse at a clinic, and I was a vocational agriculture teacher. I worked for church and school. Our second child [Julie] was born there. She had congenital glaucoma, so we had to return to the States for her care. During those eight years before we got back to Nauvoo, we had five children. I came back to Nauvoo as a school principal.

Q. Where did your ancestors come from?

A. On my father's side of the family, the Ourths, my Grandfather Ourth came over at the end of the nineteenth century. My mother said that my grandfather was in Missouri for a while and came up here in 1894. That is when he met my grandmother. The two got married and lived here for a year, then moved back to southern Missouri. Then they moved back to Nauvoo in 1908. My father was raised here; they were farmers.

Now, on my father's mother's side of the family, my ancestor was a stowaway on a boat from Germany. He wanted to get out of inscription in the German Army. He came from Alsace-Lorraine, which is either German or French depending on what time in history you are talking about, [chuckles] When the Germans took over, they were drafting men who were at least sixteen, so he stowed away on a boat and came over. His brother was already living in Nauvoo. This was probably in the middle 1870s. My mother [Florence Ourth] already told you about her side of the family.

A. [CO] My father's family, the Hersch side, came from Germany. The dates were around the late 1800s. He lived in Nauvoo all that time. His father was a schoolteacher—the first ward schoolteacher. My father had one brother. They grew up down in what we call the flat next to the boot shop in a house that is still there. His mother had lived in Nauvoo too, but her folks had come earlier. My mother's side of the family came to this area, but they lived in Warsaw for a while. Her father's side came from Irish decent.

Q. What occupations have you pursued in Nauvoo?

A. [LO] When we came back, I was a principal in education at the high school. I then worked for the state office developing programs for gifted students. When the politics changed, I went back in the classroom. I ended my career as the administrative of the Hancock County Public Health Department.

A. [CO] I am an RN. I worked for an ophthalmologist for many years. Then I worked at St. Mary's Academy and Convent as a nurse. I am familiar with the room [we are now interviewing in]—it was our first aid office.

A. [LO] Then around that same time we also owned the Nauvoo Bakery: it is now uptown. My uncle owned it, and we bought it from him. We then sold it to the people who own it now. My uncle is the one who came up with the whole wheat recipes. He and some sisters here at the convent were the ones who worked together to create the good whole wheat bread.

It was a good place for us to raise children. We have five children. It helped them work their way through college. It also let them go to church activities and so forth.

Q. What do you like about living in this area?

A. [CO] We like Nauvoo because it has been home to us most of our lives. We have made many friends here. We have been involved with things in and around Nauvoo. We find the joy in working with the people in Nauvoo. That is what I like about Nauvoo—the people. That is what is important.

A. [LO] It is a good place to raise a family. It is a small town. We still don't have the fear that some people have now. We don't have the fear of crime—someone snatching their kids. Where we live now our kids had several acres to roam around on. It was great from that point of view. I like a small town.

Our son lives in the Chicago area. We have a couple of daughters in the Kansas City area. It is fine to go visit, but no way would I live there. I like to know people.

Nauvoo has changed a lot. It used to be you knew about everybody. Carmen's folks had a grocery store for several years, so she knew a lot more people than I did because she met more of the town. She could give a rundown on almost everybody—who they were, who they were related to, and all this and that.

Q. What events, traditions, social or cultural characteristics make Nauvoo an attractive place to live?

A. In spite of what you might hear, our churches work together. About three pastors for our churches worked for several years before the rest of the churches joined. So Dad was one of them that started it with the Presbyterian and Methodist church, et cetera. These three churches worked together for quite a few years back. Later on, after we were back to Nauvoo, we would work at getting more congregations involved. We started out with a Christmas concert at the academy when it wasn't quite so popular to do that. To see a Catholic nun direct it as it would move around to the different churches—she was still in habit. This made it even more interesting to see a person at the different churches.

Then came the Passion play, which was here last spring. It is fun to have so many participate in a church activity. Along with our church we have the campgrounds up here in town. Before that we used to use the Nauvoo House, and that area was our campground.

A. [CO] Nauvoo has a good education system. Children come out of that school doing well. We both served on the school board at different times. He was on for seven years, and I was on for eight years. We really felt that it was a good experience. The young people in Nauvoo are good kids.

Q. What are some of the challenges that come from living in Nauvoo?

A. Part of it is that you are in an area where transportation for some people is difficult, especially for older people. There hasn't always been a doctor in Nauvoo. That has been difficult, because we're not situated where a doctor can go to one hospital of people—with some in Carthage, some in Fort Madison, and some in Keokuk. That has been a challenge over a period of time—health care. To some people that would be a challenge. I think the beauty of Nauvoo makes up for that challenge.

A. [LO] There are times in the school when you need support. That makes it a challenge. Most everybody is working out of town. The cheese factory employs some, but not everyone can work there, so a lot of people have to drive out of town to get to work and that takes some time. I don't mind driving. When you are shopping, you can't get everything in town. It's fifteen minutes into Keokuk, where you can get most things, unless you like to go to the big city to do your shopping. I don't know if you like to go to a big city to shop, [chuckles]

Q. I live near a big city—Salt Lake City.

Q. [Kristelle Moore] And I'm from Des Moines, [laughs]

A. We have a daughter that lives in Quincy who likes to go to Springfield every so often.

Q. [JP] What opportunities have you had to serve in civic offices, community service organizations, or church service positions? You mentioned the school board, so why don't we start with that?

A. It is an elected position. You have eight members who make the decisions of how the school is going to operate. They make the decisions, and the guy who runs it oversees everything. Later, because of my job there was going to be a conflict of interest. The kids said, "Mom, why don't you run?" So they campaigned for her.

A. [CO] It was a small town, so there weren't any women on the school board.

In a small community, it seems like you are on a lot of things. I was on the Library Board for a year or two. I was president of that. I was involved in Home and Community Education, which is a group that is actually community education for women, a state and national organization. I am active in the Republican Women, serve on the Food Pantry, help with the Passion play, and served on Bible School Committee.

For a long time we didn't have a doctor in Nauvoo, so our home—I can't say I did, but our whole family did—served as a first response for the doctor's office for a long time. People would bring their kids there when they were hurt and that kind of thing. We worked from examining everything from bones to a loose tooth. In our church [Community of Christ], women hold priesthood. So I served as pastor for a few years until I chose not to put my name up again. Again, you are elected to that position. I was the only woman who has served as pastor in Nauvoo. Some men are ready for it, and some men are not. That's the way it is with anything. You are kind of just on the frontier of some of these organizations. It was a lot like the school board.

A. [LO] I served full-time as a pastor and also as patriarch in our church. We have both been active in our church camps; I have been the director. I have also been active in teaching classes. Presently, we are the camp managers for our church camp; we do the scheduling and that kind of thing. I served a term as city treasurer. Presently I am county board chairman, which is the governing body for the county. I have just finished my seventh year as a member of the county board.

I get to serve as a representative of the Nauvoo Ministerial Association for our church. I now serve as the president of Nauvoo Ministerial Association. I have served in other things along the lines of serving the people. It is our belief that Christians should be involved in the community. That is why we like the name of our church: the Community of Christ. Christians can help participate in making the world a better place. That is what Christians are for.

A. [CO] We have also been active in girls' groups, Boy Scouts, and Cub Scouts with our children. Wherever our children were is where we tried to be active. We felt like it was important that we were with them, which is Scouts and school and camp.

A. [LO] We are no longer the scoutmaster, den mother, or that kind of thing with young people today.

Q. What are your church camps like?

A. [CO] Everything changes over a period of time. But I think our basic views of our church camps have been that Christ, I would hope, would be happy walking into our church camp, whether it was at mealtime or at a campfire or in the cabins. That is why I say that sometimes we stray, because at times I think that Christ would be a little disappointed if He would walk in on some of that. I know I am a little assertive and probably have mentioned that to some of the young directors, because I don't think that some songs or skits are appropriate. Hopefully the young people that go to our camp have a good Christian experience. I will have to say that over a period of years.

I know that when we first started working camp (of course I didn't start working as soon as Lee did, because of the children) we had more people that belonged to our church. Now, I would say that we have more people that are not particularly of our faith. They like coming to our camps because they feel that it is a good place to spend a week with good Christians. There are three different age-groups: junior, junior high, and senior high.

A. [LO] We have class work, craft classes, and fun classes, so it's a wide variety. Youth come for a whole week.

It gets kind of expensive.

A. [CO] Not too expensive—only about seventy-five dollars. The price just went up.

Q. Is it a coed camp then?

A. The junior high and senior high are. For the junior camp it is a boys' and girls' camp. They eat together, but classes are separate. We were very instrumental in that change. We thought people were trying to get the kids to grow up a little too fast, and we didn't think they were ready at that age.

A. [LO] Ask any questions you want. You are not going to hurt our feelings.

A. [CO] Our campgrounds are used by many different groups of people. I don't know if you know about the *City of Joseph*. The cast uses our campgrounds for two and a half weeks; it becomes their home. We have about 250 to 260 people there, and once they come in they are in charge of the camp.

Q. From your knowledge of the history of the area, what groups or people stand out as having made a great contribution to the city of Nauvoo?

A. [LO] When we look at history, we see that Joseph Smith lived here for a short time. The Mormons only brought a few items—architecture and growing the community. They left the community. The Icarians came, and then we had a totally different viewpoint. We have to recognize, though, that it was the Germans who influenced the town to be the Nauvoo we know today. Starting in the 1950s, NRI [Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.] came back and started making changes; the Community of Christ had some property here that they first started improving. That is why my mother came in the twenties—she had the opportunity and took it. The kind of people coming to visit Nauvoo, for that part of history, was started by our church in the 1920s and greatly expanded by yours.

A. [CO] I think also one group that made an impact on the community and had an effect on the lives of people were the Sisters of St. Mary. They had many girls who walked down those halls from many different countries and homes. I think it has changed the lives of many girls. Maybe not the citizens of Nauvoo so much, but they had an impact on the lives of the world, from girls who learned respect and were changed as individuals. I thought it helped the Catholic community grow. The city was basically all Catholic.

A. [LO] About fifty percent.

A. [CO] That wasn't even including the nuns. Just in the community.

Q. What was it like to work in the academy?

A. St. Mary's had girls come for four main reasons: some had tradition through family, some had problems at home, some wanted to go to school in the U.S. We had many girls from Mexico, from Spain, some from Germany and many from Asia, some from Africa. It became an international school, which made it interesting for the other students to have that relationship with these girls too.

A. [LO] I think the reason that they went down in enrollment was it wasn't quite as popular to go away to a girls' school as it had been in an earlier time. There were fewer nuns in the teaching area because there were fewer nuns in the convent. There were many more lay people working, such as myself. That happened in many places. We had a daughter that taught math here, and we had a daughter that was an R.A. For many years all sisters were R.A.'s, and it was all sisters who taught.

Q. Were there any other groups or organizations that have made contributions to Nauvoo?

A. [LO] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints now has a strong influence on what is happening in Nauvoo. That is taken both positively and negatively in this community. I am the president of the Nauvoo Ministerial Association. When the temple first came up, I remember going to the city council meeting and discussing how quickly everything was done. It used to be that the Catholics ran the community; now they are afraid of the LDS running the community. We are working as a community to try and overcome prejudice.

A. [CO] We had an experience with this. Our daughter Jill was a math teacher, which I have mentioned before. She was very vivacious, outgoing, and she liked to be in plays. She was in a play about the Icarian movement. She did a real good job. Noni Sorcnson is the one that directs all the young people here.

A. [LO] The summer interns in the musical program [Young Performer Missionaries].

A. [CO] Noni had done this for years. Noni saw Jill and asked if she would like to be one of the young performers for her church. They had never had anyone but people of your faith. Jill said. "Oh, I'd like to do that."* It was wonderful. We got to meet a lot of the young performers. They would come to our home.

Jill had the opportunity to sing with the choir when they dedicated the jail. It was nice for us. Jill was also in the movie that you see down at the visitors' center. She was the young girl that gets off the boat and greets "Joseph" with a handshake. She had to audition for that part. So we have had some good working relationships with Durell Nelson, Elder Cutler, Elder Hopkins, Mike Trapp, and the Sagers and many others. It is a good relationship, as far as we are concerned.

A. [LO] I was the principal out in the high school when some LDS kids started at school. We had some prejudice in the high school that the principal had to deal with when the Anderson kids started coming to our school. But they were good kids. I'm glad they started with good kids. That helps. Then we had another couple of kids the next year.

A. [CO] And our kids have some things in common.

A. [LO] One of our son Joe's best friends was Robert Baird. His father was one of the architects for the NRI center. Then one of Julie's best friends was Barton Golding. Barton was here just a week or so ago. He stopped by to see us. Joni and Jill were friends with the Holidays. We appreciated their kind. Most of the LDS people that come in here are on assignment with NRI cannot be the bottom of your group, [chuckles]

A. [CO] Cream of the crop.

A. [LO] They have good standards. I appreciate that.

A. [CO] When Dr. Kimball first came here to Nauvoo to start NRI, he bought his ancestor's place and would come to Mill & Bakery. So we got to know him quite well too.

A. [LO] Do you know Hugh Pierce?

Q. Yes.

A. His second wife was the sister to Ron Prince. He and his first wife, Josephine, were very good members of the faith and good friends.

A. [CO] We shared a dog.

A. [LO] Well, it was our dog. It would just go up to their home—and we would have to go and get him. We had some fun. Then, in the Nauvoo Ministerial Association, I had the opportunity of getting acquainted with whoever was the lead person for the missionaries.

Q. What do you know about the history of the Mormons?

A. All of it. [chuckles]

Q. I knew you would.

A. We had heard a number of things. You never quite knew what was true, of course. When people look back at history, they usually glorify their particular position. That muddies the waters any time. When people write history, they do the same thing. It is not as factual as it could be at times. So you are not sure.

We have heard from people whose ancestors have gone back into that time. But there were those who said that Mormons came down to their farms and said, “God told me to take your livestock.” I’m sure you have heard this story. I don’t know whether that happened.

You recognize that Nauvoo was the largest city west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. If you were going to be a criminal, and you wanted to hidesomewhere, this is a larger community. If you were to come to Nauvoo now, it would be a little easier. But if you came to Nauvoo fifty years ago, a town of eleven hundred, somebody knew who you were. When you get eleven thousand on the western frontier, you have people that could hide much easier. I’m sure there were some that were here. So you have that problem.

My understanding is also that Joseph Smith getting into the Masonic work also worked into his killing. It was our understanding that people were going through the ranks—or whatever they were called—faster than anybody else. So this became a serious problem. The Masons have certain kind of code words, and I understand that Joseph Smith used those at the time he was in Carthage Jail when he was assassinated. In other words, he was calling for assistance, so they had alienated him.

Then politically—politics, we think sometimes, revolves around what is going to come. So we have a community of a large size, and politicians are the ones that are courting, hoping that they can get a whole bloc to vote a certain way. So we have the charter—Nauvoo had one of the most liberal charters. You can see how that is a conflict. So Nauvoo was winning some of those kinds of concessions. That is how we got the charter. Then we established a militia that was pretty well armed. If you have fear—which people do now, after September 11th and those kinds of things—that fear is not a new fear. For the people here, there was something going on, a whole crazy amount of fear.

A. [CO] The other militias from surrounding areas felt very intimidated by them. ‘They have lots more people, so we need to band together to be against them.’ I think that started some of that problem too.

A. [LO] We had a mixed group in this part of the state as far as background. People from Quincy and north came from the New England area. If you get out in the hinterland, in the southeast part of the county, many of those people came from Kentucky or Tennessee. So you have a different outlook as far as life. It was a different lifestyle. They came in with a little arrogance, saying, “Our lifestyle is superior to yours, and you ought to be like us.” That doesn’t make the best of friends. That is my idea of what happened.

There must have been some untimely actions, also with a bad attitude. Charismatic groups, and it was a charismatic group—I don’t want to use the word cult—but it was a charismatic group. Joseph Smith evidently was quite charismatic. You give the people a little bit of freedom, and you have some contention. Some people think that it was coincidence—his assassination was completely innocent. I don’t believe that for a second. A lot of things like that just don’t happen. I think that Joseph Smith made a mistake in running for president. With everything else that was going on, maybe it was not wise to turn his head in another direction.

A. [CO] I think that Joseph Smith was only a prophet and not a statesman. And I know that your church didn't think quite as highly—and I'm speaking very frankly here—of Emma, his wife. But I feel that in many ways she was the backbone of that man. I think she was a strong influence in his life, behind him one hundred percent. It is interesting to us.

We kind of share an aunt on Lee's father's side and my father's side; Aunt Sophie married my father's uncle. She was a cousin of Lee's grandmother. Anyway, she died at the age of ninety-nine. She had attended Emma Smith's funeral. When her mother came to be married in Nauvoo, she became friendlier to Emma. Emma had arranged Aunt Sophie's mother's wedding. When Emma died, Aunt Sophie's mother said, "I would like for you to represent the family at the funeral." She was twelve years old. Aunt Sophie was a Methodist—a very good woman, a very Christian person. She was a friend to everyone she knew. Her husband was mayor. She was not just a nobody. Lived until she was ninety-nine.

She always spoke highly of Joseph and Emma. She didn't know Joseph, but she always said that her parents would not have had an association with Emma if they hadn't been honorable. I thought, "She was a proud one to say they wouldn't have associated if they hadn't been." I felt like she was a good friend of the elders of the Church, and when she died, much of her furniture went to members of the LDS Church.

A. [LO] It is interesting how there are some people who didn't go anywhere. The Church left here. I don't know if you talked to those who are descendants of those who originally came.

Q. I haven't personally, but I know that some of the other students have.

A. There are some of those Saints here. They are friends of ours. Those Saints didn't go anywhere. They just pulled back and stayed with their homes.

A. [CO] This was good farm ground.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to say?

A. [LO] About back then? No, because it is all hearsay anyway, [chuckles]

Q. Could you tell me about the Icarians?

A. [CO] Has anyone interviewed Lillian Snyder? I'm sure they had to. I would hate to challenge the knowledge of that woman. We ride together once a month to a meeting, and I have learned a lot about the Icarian history. I think that they came with a real positive approach to life. I think the zionistic ideas were wonderful. The same things could have happened to any groups. The power got overshadowed, and the idea of communism was just not working too well.

A. [LO] Actually, some of it. I am a strong believer in Fourth Nephi in the Book of Mormon and how people work together. I think that is what they were doing. So in a way, that was pure communism, not what the Russians had. I think that is what they were trying to do. One of their difficulties was that they didn't really have a deity. They didn't have a belief in God. They didn't have a focus that would have helped to strengthen their organizations. They weren't bad people. Some of their descendants still live here.

A. [CO] Their philosophy was good; they just had philosophy without theology.

A. [LO] If you read their materials, you find that it is not so different as what you and I would believe in, except for that. Over here at the temple lot, that was their area, right there. I still remember their apartment houses were right across from the bank.

Q. How did the wine industry start?

A. I think that probably started—the Catholic priest was given credit for planning it.

A. [CO] But he really didn't. It was really the Icarians and Germans. They came. The Germans also brought some vines. But the Germans did more with it. The German heritage was grapevine users. Wine was very much a part of their everyday life and meals. They grew a lot of wonderful grapes. The vineyards in Nauvoo were just thick. I would say that the Rheinbergers would be the ones that I would give the credit to.

A. [LO] At one time there was a lot of wine in this town. Under Illinois law, every household was allowed only two hundred gallons for use without having to have a license. I don't know how long it would take to drink two hundred gallons, [chuckles]

A. [CO] You would share with your friends.

A. [LO] Yes. Not always without a price to pay. [chuckles] Then when Prohibition came along, it slowed down just a bit. But later on, it came back. It was a way of life for the Germans. A number of arched wine cellars in and around the surrounding community are still used.

A. [CO] But not all have wine in them.

A. [LO] Well, I don't think so. Dick is gone. The house where my mother lived—when we moved there, it had a place that was used to make wine. In fact, we just got rid of the barrel; it didn't have wine in it for years, but we just got rid of it when we started the cleanup of that house.

A. [CO] Many people in Nauvoo still make a lot of wine.

A. [LO] I am told by some friends that the Nauvoo wine is too sweet.

Q. How did the bleu cheese industry get started?

A. [CO] The Rhodes came—old Grandpa Rhodes. He just had a couple of heifers, and he decided to start this business. Then his son kind of took it over and ran it. Then there was another man that came who was very smart with cheese curing. That was Ray Falk. Ray is getting a little older. But he really did a lot with the bleu cheese and is very knowledgeable about this. So they developed a very fine bleu cheese. It was unusual because it went to a lot of places in the United States that didn't make bleu cheese. After the wine cellars were closed, they would store the bleu cheese in some of the larger wine cellars for it to age, so it would be good and moldy. You would see them go by our house with the loads of cheese and put them in the wine cellars. Have you visited Lloyd Star? He would tell you about all those things. He has one of the big wine cellars used for the bleu cheese.

A. [LO] The bleu cheese factory was not built as a bleu cheese factory but as a brewery.

A. [CO] It has provided jobs, which we need. They used to take tours through the plant. I would say it has probably done well for itself.

A. [LO] It has changed some now. It has gone very commercial. It is not owned locally. It was a family-owned business for a number of years, but it was sold to a Jewish man in St. Louis. Now it is owned by ConAgra, a big agricultural company. Now all of it is kosher. Part of their market is still kosher, so they make all of the cheese that way because it is easier. Because if you don't, then you have to go and sterilize everything all over again. They have increased their production.

Q. Can you buy the bleu cheese?

A. [CO] Yes, the bakery has it, and the grocery store has it. They had a store for a long time, but they felt they would do just as well having someone else sell it.

A. [LO] Not all of the bleu cheese that goes out of here goes under the Nauvoo name. It is also called Treasure

Cove. But it is the same thing.

Q. What churches have been influential in Nauvoo?

A. I think it depends upon what kind of thing you are talking about influencing. Each one sees it from its own perspective. As far as churches actually working together, I would have to credit my father for some of that. Of course, the Catholics are a very strong church—they have been here a long time. For the size of them, I'm not sure that they had any more influence than any other church. For a long time, most churches had stayed to themselves. It is hard to say that one church has had much influence over another. Since they started working together, I would say that it has been a joint effort.

Q. How did that change come about?

A. Some of it was just trying to work on it a little bit. I was pastor when it changed to a wider outlook. The music people were the ones who put out the life in it. I remember that our music director at the time said, "We ought to do something with the others. I'll talk to the music directors, and you talk to the pastors." So I remember her coming up and telling me the Catholic priest had a Christmas concert. Someone just needed to push it to get it started. Once it started, it is something that the people have continued.

At times when we have a new minister come into one of the denominations, he usually has a problem joining the association because your church [LDS] is a part of it. I remember a previous Lutheran pastor saying that they should not belong to the Ministerial Association because the Mormons did. Then they put a paragraph or two about how, more or less, our church was worse than yours. So they thought that their church shouldn't be a part of it. But this was after things had been going for a while. The pastor went back, and his denomination outvoted him. He left. The Methodist minister at that time asked his congregation what they should do, and they said they didn't want to change. It was helpful that the Catholic priest had been a chaplain, so that made things easier. I understand that your church [LDS] doesn't normally work in ministerial associations. Here they have for some time.

A. [CO] All the churches work together for Bible School.

A. [LO] I'm not sure what has happened with the Baptist Church. We finally got the Baptists to join. They don't have any kids, but we try to invite them to Bible School.

Q. What is Bible School?

A. Many denominations have a Bible School where kids will come in the summertime. They have Bible stories and lessons and crafts that go along with them. It is, for other denominations, similar to what the kids would be doing in Sunday School—it just has a few more kids and more activities. For some time, each denomination had its own. We never did so much—our kids went to the Presbyterian one. In a small town, you don't have very many, so we put ours together.

We had some discussion on that, too—what we would teach our kids. In one of the evaluation sessions that we had afterward, one of the ministers said, I think that we should approve what is being taught.”

Then a Catholic nun spoke up and said, “No way.” Well, it wasn’t quite that direct.

Then the Catholic priest said, “I get them until they’re six years old. Then I’ve got them—I don’t have to worry about them.” [chuckles] That is what we do. For the first full week in June, all of the kids gather together.

We have enough kids for two places. The younger kids go to St. Peter and Paul’s School. The older kids go to our campground.

A. [CO] It is a committee that works together to choose the curriculum. The opening service is always done by the young performers. They do a wonderful job. Young kids get to know them and think they are great.

A. [LO] For four or five years now, we don’t select any Bible School material that doesn’t start with a skit.

A. [CO] It has been good for the community to see how well they work with us on that too.

A. [LO] Two years ago, the theme centered around a castle, and one of the young performers was the court jester. He did such a good job as a court jester, he had no peace for the rest of the summer. When he went around town, all the kids recognized him as the court jester.

A. [CO] They do a good job. We appreciate their skills.

A. [LO] We feel this helps to get people to work together. Each year it is a different denomination. Next year it is our responsibility to be the host, but everybody is involved in the selection of materials.

Q. What have you heard about people’s thoughts and feelings about the restoration that has been done in the past few decades?

A. I can remember when they first came to town. Dr. Kimball was the one who started it. He bought the old family place and then started talking to other people. Then there was some concern about it—but not very much, because they were buying property down in the flats. They were paying a higher price than people would have been able to sell it to anyone else. So you know what happens.

We didn’t have much discussion or antagonism until one year about three or four of them decided to run for city office. That is when people started talking—like what I told you just happened. I happened to be in the mix; I didn’t feel that way about it. I just happened to be running for treasurer, and I was elected. My opponent was an LDS woman. She was fairly new in town, so that might have made a difference. I was related to part of the town, and she didn’t have that

advantage. I didn't have a problem with it and would not have used it anyway. Then that died down. So it didn't rear its head much until the temple. If you take a look at a small town, somebody coming in from the outside to put up a large structure in the middle of your business district is a change.

A. [CO] Especially when it is not going to be accessible, except for a short time.

A. [LO] So this is a major change. There are some difficulties. Your church, when it wanted to get the building permit, wanted to get it in a short time. That didn't help. So there were some antagonisms on that. I tried to tell some of them, "They didn't even need to ask you because there is no zoning." There are no laws on that. Zoning should have been a long time ago. I worked for it twenty years ago, and we lost.

I remember talking to a city alderman who said there hadn't been a change in Nauvoo for years, and he didn't want change now. If you are looking that way, it has had an impact. But no community stays stagnant; it changes one way or another.

Another thing that came up was trying to build a road around the temple so that the trucks weren't coming down the middle of the business district. Had it been sold just on that, I think it would have gone a little bit better. But it also seemed like it just wouldn't go around the temple, so it seemed like that was being pushed. We weren't seeming to be able to get anything done. Then suddenly your people [the Mormons] started pushing it. and they seemed to have some influence somewhere. So the governor tells someone to come out here and do something. That sears people—that the LDS have so much influence that they can just come in and do anything.

Then of course you have been around while the temple is being built. It has disrupted transportation; traffic through here has taken some time for a year and a half now. It has disrupted the main drag down through town. That has caused some difficulties.

Since your people are interested in it, many of the pieces of property that have gone up for sale have gone to people that also have affiliation with your faith. There are those who are selling because they can say, "Mormons are going to run the whole town." But then there are a whole lot of those who are selling because the price has gone way up.

A. [CO] Money talks.

A. [LO] Yes. You have that kind of reaction. Some of them are saying, "Because of this, my taxes are going to go way up, and that's the Mormons* fault." The Mormons are going to bid higher prices, yes. That means that the assessment for the property is going to be higher, which in turn makes the taxes go higher.

There are also some concerns about infrastructure. Your people have not had a tendency to come and stay a long time. They don't spend a lot of money when they come. They come more as a pilgrimage. So it is a short-term type of thing from a business, economic, point of view. You are not here to stay, but more as a tourist type of thing. There is some concern if there is going to be more need for infrastructure, but is there going to be an increase in the income that will take care of that? I am talking as a government official.

Those are some of the things that have happened. Part of it is definitely prejudice. Like I told you. someone buys a piece of property, and it happens to be someone of your faith, I'm told, "The Mormons bought it." If it is someone from some other faith, they will give me a name of the person who bought it.

Some of these with prejudices have some of the same good Mormon friends that I do—Hugh Pierce, Dan Hall.

Durrell Nelson—some of those who are well respected and liked in this community. You have that kind of a thing happening. Give it time, and it will even out. I know that Carmen and I have worked hard at getting people to look at it from a reasonable point of view.

Q. What was the reaction to the announcement that the temple would be rebuilt?

A. I think that once you get it done, landscaped and all that, they will see it as a beautiful structure. You people take care of things really well. We know Durrell, who will probably have some responsibility with it.

I think that it is a wise decision to build a parking lot. That will help. I wish they had put a tunnel underneath the highway. That would have helped. But the fact that they are going to leave the parking lot open to the community is nice, because parking is always a problem. I mentioned that before the temple was brought up. Businesses wanted to come in, a year or so before the temple, and so we had some people saying that parking would be one of the problems. So this added parking will be a benefit to the community.

However, in the Midwest, as opposed to a big city, people don't walk as far. In the city you walk a block or so, and it is no problem. My son lives in a suburb of Chicago, and when he goes downtown on the train, he knows that he is going to walk about a mile. Here you have to park on the doorstep. You have a different outlook on people. It always interests me—there are those who would go out and walk a mile a day, but they can't walk when they go to the store.

Q. What have you heard about the BYU students who have come to Nauvoo?

A. Not really too much. It can't be too bad. [laughs] Bad news always moves faster than good news. I don't see that many. For a hundred and five, I don't see that many of them on the sidewalks in town.

A. [CO] We hear more positive things than negative ones. They are always helping the Historical Society or different groups. Somebody is planning well. Some place along the line, you have made a very positive influence—that's good.

A. [LO] I don't know how strict they are here in what you do.

Q. [KM] They aren't too bad.

A. [CO] But you are college students and not high school students. That age makes a vast difference.

Q. We also have an honor code that we have signed, saying that we will follow all of the rules.

A. [CO] It is also coeducational.

Q. [JP] What do you see for the future of Nauvoo?

A. [LO] We have heard things—that the temple will make the place grow by leaps and bounds. I don't expect that to happen. I think that it will be a slow growth. There are outside investors that would like to come in. If that happens and they come in and are successful, that can change.

Like if someone were to go to Branson, Missouri, which started out as a small town. Then it gathered a lot of music programs. Then it grew so fast that you have trouble driving through the community. We were down there a year and a half ago, and by then the town had started recognizing that it should probably be building some secondary streets. But if you wanted to go down the main thoroughfare, forget it. That was an hour's drive to get a mile.

Q. [KM] Without stoplights, [laughs]

A. So there are some that are talking that way about Nauvoo. I don't expect that to happen. I do feel that the local economy will improve because it will be more year-round, because people will come to the temple year-round. From what I understand, the Nauvoo Temple is more historic than some of your other temples. So more people will come.

It will be interesting to see what happens with sixty apartments going in down on the flats. But other parts of the town, which would have had to grow to accommodate more people, will not. I can see that both ways. Sixty apartments are one hundred twenty people. To a small town, that is a lot of people.

As far as the numbers, I don't think we will increase as rapidly as they say we will. Numbers are a problem in a community like this because you have people that go to the visitors' center, you have people that go to blacksmith shop, they go to the historic center or whatnot—so where do you count them? Is that one visitor or four visitors? It is hard.

Your present PR person, R. J. Snow, is very realistic in his ideas. I really like him—I think he is going to do a good job, although it wouldn't hurt to give away some of his responsibility too. He came for PR, and now he is in charge of NRI—that's a pretty big load. If you talk to him, he and I would probably agree on what is going on unless something else were to break loose.

The Thomas brothers came out here with a musical show. I don't think it was a smashing success financially, though I hope it is. Have you heard them?

Q. [JP] Yes.

A. I'd like to see what they can do to keep it alive and to feed their family. It is tough to start out. Again, your people don't come to be entertained. It is not like going to Branson. The people come here for a purpose. You two could tell us more about what would happen to Nauvoo than we could.

Q. I don't know about that, [laughs]

A. [CO] Will your people come here for temple rites?

A. [LO] I hear differing reports from my LDS friends. Some say you more or less have to go to the temple in your area. Others say, "I don't think so. You can go to other ones too."

Q. [KM] You have temple districts, but you can go to other temples.

A. [LO] Do you feel that more will be coming here because it is a historic temple?

Q. [JP] Probably. Do you have any other comments or observations you would like to make for the record?

A. Oh. I think that is probably enough.

Donald Elbert Pidcock

Cory don, Iowa

Birthday: October 15, 1917

Interview on November 7, 2001, in his home by Diana Johnson Thelma Pidcock, Jed Briggs, and Jeff Johnson also present

A. [Donald Pidcock] My name is Donald Elbert Pidcock, and I have a nickname, Pid, the first three letters of my last name. That's all that I have heard most of the time since I can remember. So Pid is what I usually go by.

Q. [Diana Johnson] We are here to talk about the trails that were discovered where "Come, Come, Ye Saints 1" was written. What can you tell us about the history of that trail? How did you come to be interested in finding that?

A. I retired from working for the postal service in 1981. We had been interested in archaeology and local history. Prior to that, we had been recording archaeological sites—Indian village sites—with the State Historical Preservation Office, for several years before, so we were interested in history as such, and particularly local history.

As I say, I had just recently retired, and Loren Horton, our state historian at that time, and the lady from the state archaeology office, Debbie Zeiglow, were interested in the Mormon Pioneer Trail. They were thinking that they