

Lloyd S. Starr

Nauvoo, Illinois

Birthday: December 30, 1930

Interview on September 21, 2001, at the Joseph Smith Academy

by Tyler Dahl

Q. [Tyler Dahl] How long have you lived in the Nauvoo area?

A. [Lloyd Starr] I have lived in this area seventy and a half years. I was raised about eight or nine miles southeast of here—on the Connable blacktop. I was born in Keokuk, Iowa. I moved to Nauvoo in the 1960s after I was married.

Q. What attracted you to this area?

A. A man offered me a job as a garage mechanic at Horton Standard Service, a Chevrolet dealership down the street—1420 Mulholland, next to the Allyn House. I started there on January 7, 1954. Halfway down the block was a Ford dealership. We had about ten men working for us. They sold between 100 and 120 new cars a year. Every two months I went to General Motors training school up in Hinsdale, Illinois, on Ogden Avenue and 34th. I spent three or

four days there learning to work on transmissions and the new styles of other parts. It was very interesting. We had one of the only cars I have seen from 1957, a four-door sedan with fuel injection like a Corvette had.

Q. How long was that job?

A. All I did was work on the vehicles. In those days when we got the cars nothing was put on them—they came through as a bare model. You had to put the heaters, radios, or fog lights—whatever you wanted had to be added extra.

Q. Did that cost a bit to have every piece installed?

A. It didn't cost very much. A General Motors radio cost maybe \$42. Most cars were six-cylinder. Then in 1955 General Motors came out with a V-8. In 1956 they extended the V-8 and redesigned the cars with an oil filter on the bottom. In 1956 we got the first air-conditioned car that I ever saw. It was a beautiful car—a beautiful, cool car.

Q. How long have you been a mechanic in the garage?

A. I've been a mechanic all my life. In 1958 my boss, Lowell Horton, who was mayor of the town, went to a GM trading center meeting in Burlington, Iowa, had a massive heart attack, and died on the spot. The next day GM canceled the dealership, so I purchased the dealership. GM was supposed to take back the extra parts but never did it. I had run the dealership as an independent garage until 1998.

Q. What happened in 1998?

A. We sold the garage equipment at auction to a man who makes door gaskets for Dodge, Chrysler, and General Motors minivans. He owns the building now. He makes probably one hundred thousand gaskets a day. The building, still on Mulholland, has a sign which says, "We make the black sticky things," on the side. The company makes gaskets that simply glue on to the side of the doors. They are made to be self-sealing—just rip the paper off and stick it on the door. If you make a mistake, you have to throw them away. The man has bought the place now and is planning to expand the company. I don't know how he will expand.

Q. What do you like about living in this area? What social events, like plays or civic action?

A. Here are a few of the civic things I have done: commander of the American Legion post eight years, secretary for thirty years; secretary for our district IOOF, The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, twenty years; treasurer for forty years of our local temple lodge, Temple Lodge 222 (named because it was originally the LDS temple here in town). I have been on the Veteran's Assistant Commission in Carthage for thirty-five years. I was president of the Keokuk Camera Club for eight years. I have been a fireman since 1957. I was fire chief for fifteen years and have been a trustee of the Nauvoo Fire Protection District for over ten years.

I have been president of the Nauvoo Chamber of Commerce. I was president of the Sonora Homecomers, held every two years out in the country for two weeks. I acted in two plays for the Hancock County Little Theater Group, and we performed all over the county.

I was chairman of the Grape Festival and the annual smorgasbord; we used to have that dinner in the Nauvoo Grade School the second Sunday in October and served about eight hundred people. I was chairman of the Grape Festival parade for eight years. We had the Budweiser Clydesdales here one year, and it rained the whole weekend of the festival. I was the secretary treasurer of the Nauvoo Civic Center for about ten years before it closed.

I have helped on one hundred thirteen funerals, either as pallbearer, flag folder, or on the firing squad. So that's a few of the social organization I have had to serve on.

Q. So you have had plenty of chances to serve?

A. Right.

Q. From your knowledge of this town's history, who are some influential people or groups in the area who have made significant contributions to Nauvoo or the surrounding area?

A. I would say probably the best man is Lowell Horton, the one that first pushed Nauvoo beginning in the 1930s until his death in 1958. He answered the phone, "Horton Standard Services in beautiful, historic Nauvoo." Even though it was a Chevrolet agency, he still answered the phone that way. Cecil Grant was a very influential man too. He helped start the Fire Protection District; he was also the first fire chief in 1951 or 1952. Bob Soland and Joe Lewis helped in the starting of the Fire Protection District and were both trustees. These men knew what was safe even though they didn't have all the fancy rules and regulations that you do now; they would work with the citizens of Nauvoo to make the town safe from fire.

Another man who lived down by Hamilton was Raymond McVeigh—a very sharp man. He gave a lot of good suggestions on how to successfully run the city and the fire program. I think the Fire Protection District and firemen of the area have done an outstanding job working as a unit. The old station was across from the temple until 1960s, when we built the fire station near the Nauvoo Family Motel, a block east from the carwash, right on the corner. In fact, they are putting a new addition on starting next week. The roof is being raised three feet to ensure that the new ladder truck can fit. We will also have a meeting room for EMT, first response, and EMS classes, which we have once a week.

Q. What is your understanding of the causes of the Monnon conflict?

A. Well, a lot of the people I have talked to over the years have said they got things stolen from them. There were some who were dishonest and thieves who joined the Church for protection by Joseph Smith. That made some people mad. Mrs. Bowseman, who lived in Fountain Green, Illinois, said her grandma hid in the oat bin every night for fear of being killed; the community stole or someone stole horses and cattle and blamed it on the Mormons. If it was them or not, you don't know. You can mix it in, make a scapegoat, blame whatever on somebody if it was them or not.

Q. Do you know what may have provoked the action against them?

A. Not really. Never heard anything solid about that.

Q. What interesting stories or events come down from your family?

A. Francis Clark, my great-grandfather, came to Nauvoo as a convert from England—he came because of religious pressure and persecution over there. They came here and settled after the Mormons left—or were asked to leave.

Then these other people found out about it and all came over and bought this land for nothing. They came over from England with bushels of money; it didn't make any difference. They bought a lot of land. It worked out pretty good.

In the 1920s that land was all swampland at one time—now it's all cleaned up, and they farm it all. Now the stories you hear about some of the stuff is just hearsay from years back, so you don't know whether it's true or not. Francis Clark never told my grandma much about it.

Q. About what?

A. About the prosecution here in Nauvoo. He never left Nauvoo. His health wasn't very good, so he stayed here.

Q. Just him, or did his family stay?

A. His whole family stayed—part of them did. Well, a few of them went west.

Q. What part did Francis Clark play in helping the Saints in Nauvoo?

A. He and his brother David came here and were stonemasons. This guy's name was Francis Clark. He says in the book [*Clark Family History*] that he helped carve the sun-, the moon-, the star-stones, and the oxen that held the baptismal fountain. Now all these burial things out here at the Pioneer cemetery, if you look on the bottom it will have *FC* cut in there, which meant Francis Clark—he carved a lot of the stones out there.

Q. Were most of the headstones carved after the Saints left?

A. Yes, and he carved all his life.

Q. Any details about the headstones, sun- and moonstones?

A. Yeah, it's all in that book that your grandpa [Larry Dahl] has, written by man from Keokuk, Iowa. He spent several years writing that book, and the tools that Francis Clark used are up by the Weld house, up by the Allyn house in that historical house. The tools are up in one of the cabinets on display.

Q. What is your understanding about the anti-Mormon activists?

A. I never did hear much, besides the scapegoating, all my years of life. Nobody ever talked much about it. Well, maybe all of our family wasn't white sheep either, remember that. We got some problems in our family—they get in problems and skip out. It wasn't all because of the Mormon situation. When they moved out, the people bought the land for nothing.

Then, of course, the Icarians came in here, and the Gcirnans then started the wine business. They built all these caves, wine cellars, and beer cellars. Now we have a beer cellar built on the southeast of my house. It's approximately seventeen feet deep and goes back eighty-seven feet in the ground. That's where they made beer in the 1850s, back in there. Then they brought it up front where they sold the stuff, or aged it. A beer cellar is dry and wine cellar is wet—that's the difference.

They used that in the 1930s-40s for Nauvoo bleu cheese, after Oscar Rhode started that cheese company. He started it about 1937 or 1938 right across the street in the dairy. He came down from Parkersburg, Iowa, with a recipe from the University of Iowa or someplace that had bleu cheese and was looking for a place where he could store it, and the Shank's brewery was right over here and had a cave in it. That is where he started making the bleu cheese and storing it in the cave and experimenting with it. Then he moved over here to all these buildings, and they rented eight to ten beer and wine cellars to store and age cheese for sixty days.

Q. What legacy have the Icarians left?

A. The Dadants came in the 1840s and brought with them bees. They started a big bee company down in Hamilton, Illinois. They had honey, and they brought the bees with them, and that's where they started the honey thing. Of course, your grapes and your fruits all had to be pollinated, so that is what they used the bees for. They came up here and settled this land, and most of them people, the Champeus and Perrios [Perotts] came up here. I remember when I was a kid going to Florence Shaw's, she was a Perrio. We used to play upstairs in the attic. They had two chairs up there which had the numbers 30 and 31, but they were rich and from the Icarians—their folks had them. I don't know what happened to the chairs. They were walnut. They was all handmade. The Icarians all ate at a certain chair and table every meal.

Q. What have other cultures brought in?

A. The Germans mostly brought in the grapes and stuff for the wineries. They found out this soil was excellent for growing grapes, and they made it produce. At one time they shipped over one thousand carloads of grapes out of here. They took them across the river and put them on a train and had them iced by hand and shipped the grapes under ice.

Q. Has the wine industry been producing as much as then?

A. Weed chemicals that they spray on the power line area kill the grapes right on the spot; they lost a lot by wind drift, overspray, stuff like that. A grapevine is pretty susceptible to any kind of chemical.

Q. What have other cultures brought?

A. They all brought the stuff they brought—wine and beer and bees. That's about all.

Q. What was your reaction to the announcement of the rebuilding of the Morrnon temple? Were you excited? How do you think it will affect things here in Nauvoo?

A. My theory on the Mormon temple is anything for the betterment of the town. I think it will be a good thing for the town, although a lot of people complain.

Q. What is there to complain about?

A. They didn't want them to do this or that—mostly the dirt on the roads. But all in all, most people come by and look at it every day to see the progress being made—the windows being installed, the stone put up, like today when they put up the angel.

Q. Have the people been complaining now that the temple is quite under way?

A. I haven't noticed much after they got things going. Everything is pretty much calmed down now, I think. Now, you're going to find if you have a bushel of apples and find a bad apple, it is going to spoil the bushel and cause lots of problems.

Q. Along with restoration, what about the flats?

A. Most people thought it was wonderful to clean up the flats. If you could have been here forty years ago, you would have been surprised the amount of junk houses and the way it was kept up—it drew a lot of bad people into town.

Q. Was the flats the area they started farming again in the '50s?

A. NR1 [Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.] started to really clean up the area in the '50s, when Dr. Kimball and Elder Snowgrove, who is dead, were here. I saw Elder Snowgrove's daughter the other day.

Q. Now that the temple is being rebuilt and the flats are rebuilt, how do you think it will affect things in Nauvoo?

A. I think we will have a lot of growth. Pretty soon there will have to be a bridge built across the river to here, and within two miles you'll hit three interstates. It's a quick way to come in.

Q. Are most of the houses going to be built in the East? Where is there room for expansion?

A. There is expansion room all over if the city puts it out.

Q. Is there much contention about expanding?

A. Not too bad, but money talks. Money will keep people quiet and get people to talk.

Q. I have noticed the high house prices. Is it because people know the houses will sell?

A. Yes, a lot of these houses are overpriced. People want to get as much money as quick as they can.

Q. What about the BYU students? Have you had much contact with them? What has been the community's reaction?

A. A little contact. The town has had no disagreement at all.

Q. Anything else you see in the future for Nauvoo?

A. Any town that grows this fast will have growing problems— people will always complain. The "old citizens"

want to sell out high, but there will be more building out here—especially on the east end of town. It's a good place to live. I know we have troubles, but they have drug troubles everywhere. They could stop the drug problem in twenty minutes if they wanted to.

Q. Do you think that would require a bigger police force?

A. Probably.

Q. Do you think the citizens will want the community to be kept small, away from industry?

A. There should be some small industry. I don't think it would bother people at all.

Q. Any other comments you would like to make for the record?

A. Not really. [Comments made after interview finished] Carthage College was the only college around here. After grade school my mother went to school three years at Carthage College for high school. To get home they had to ride down to Easton in a buggy, where they caught a train and had to walk two miles out to where they lived. That happened back in the olden years: they rode the train everywhere they went. They were going to build some rails from Carthage to Nauvoo but ran out of money in Sonora Township and never finished. Q. Where do the tracks stop? A. They stop out on eleven hundred road. They worked for weeks leveling and putting in the trolley line. They may have even laid some tracks, but that is gone now . . . [break in recording] . . . this person that went to Carthage College was bold. He hit somebody over the head and killed him. He disappeared and ended up at Temple University in Philadelphia and was a doctor. These things happen. There are black sheep in everybody's family; don't think there aren't. You're from the Salt Lake area?

Q. Yeah, I am from Alpine—thirty miles from Salt Lake, [break in recording]

A. We stayed there all night once, after we tried to look at Ricks College for my girl. We had been looking all over—at Bozeman (MSU), Missoula, Fort Collins, Denver, and Kansas. We arrived at Idaho Falls, and they said we weren't allowed to go to school. A dam had broke the day before in Idaho—Teton Dam. We had to come through Blackfoot. By the time we drove through Salt Lake, it was pouring rain. They say it never rains in June, but it sure did then. We had to stay the night in Heber City. We couldn't stay in Provo—a beauty pageant was going on and there were no rooms. Is that where you're going to school. Weber State or BYU?

Q. I'll probably go to the U of U in Salt Lake.

A. There was a man from Utah—Irvine Covey—from Big Piney, Wyoming. His son-in-law was the coach at BYU.

Q. LaVell Edwards?

A. Yeah. Irvine came to my shop every day or so to get his cars serviced—he came in a lot before they owned their own buildings. He would call LaVell the second god of Utah. We had to do a lot of servicing—changing oil and filling gas. The Nauvoo Restoration had a big Chrysler with four doors to haul people around; they also had a big Bluebird bus to take people around to the buildings. NRI didn't have horses and buggies then.

Q. How long have they had the wagons?

A. Probably ten years—not that long. I put the lock brakes on the wagons after a few of the horses ran away. Now if you step on the breaks the horses aren't going to go very far.

LeRoy Ufkes

Carthage, Illinois

Birthday: September 8, 1930

Interview on October 1, 2001, in his office by Jeff Johnson

Jed Briggs also present

Q. [Jeff Johnson] How long have you lived in the area of Carthage and Nauvoo?

A. [LeRoy Ufkes] I have lived in Carthage all of my life. However, I practiced law and had a branch office in the bank; you have probably seen my name there. My ancestors come from Germany.

Q. Is the last name, Ufkes, German?

A. Yes.

Q. You are an attorney. What school or practice did you affiliate with?

A. I attended the University of Iowa. It was closer to home, only about 100 miles away. Then I came back home. I was offered to be on the faculty of a law school on the West Coast. I was too homesick or whatever you call it. I probably made a mistake—I should have gone there.

Q. What is it about this area that you particularly like?

A. I would say that I was born here and couldn't get away, [laughs]

Q. Almost like in your own little confinement?

A. You know it is easier to stay where you came from.

Q. Are there any events or things that occur here that make the Nauvoo-Carthage area a unique place to live? A. No, I think the most unique part of it would be the Mormons in Nauvoo. I don't think we have anything else here or in Carthage to keep the young people around. It seems to me that the young people are leaving. They go to college, and then they see greener pastures elsewhere. I think we all find that a little.

Q. Why do you think the Mormons make this area an attraction?

A. It brings up something—the residents don't have hardly anything else. This makes it a little difficult for them in this area. One of my partners, now deceased, said, "This is Copperhead country." I don't know whether you know