

Q. Before the interview you were telling me about some bumper sticker?

A. [LB] We have a Mormon lady that lives about three or four blocks from us in Scottsdale, Arizona. One day she walked by, and her next-door neighbor told me that she was a Mormon. I didn't know that. Everybody knows everybody there, and we're real friendly. It's a nice area to live in.

She came by and I said, "Have you looked on my bumper on my car?" She told me she hadn't. She read that it said "I love Nauvoo." She asked me if I was from Nauvoo. I told her I was. She told me that she'd love to go there and that she's never been able to. She has been sick this last year, and I went to see her. She was laid down and sleeping, so I didn't get to see her. She had asked me before if I'd bring her something from Nauvoo when I went back.

She wanted me to talk at her church. I told her that I wasn't Mormon and that she knew more about the Church than I did. She told me that she'd be glad to have me come. I asked her what time the service was at, and I found out it was at the same time as our Presbyterian Church. I didn't get to go anyway. The preacher from your church came over and talked to me a little bit and he gave me the Mormon book here.

Q. Are there any other comments that you'd like to make?

A. [WB] I'm glad to see that they're building a parking garage there. That's one of the biggest problems in Nauvoo. The farm trucks go right down that main street.

A. [LB] They're going to have to do something about that. I don't haul grain anymore. I still have grain—I have a share. My son-in-law has to haul it in, and it goes right past the temple. They routed the main street a little different now, but they're going to have to do something about it and divert it someplace else.

## **Richard Bolton**

*Nauvoo, Illinois*

*Birthday: November 12, 1936*

*Interview on November 24, 2001, in his home by Libby Hanks*

*Cava Cahoon and Amy Redd also present*

Q. [Libby Hanks] How long have you lived in the Nauvoo area?

A. [Richard Bolton] Since 1965—that long.

Q. When did your ancestors first come?

A. My father's father came over here with his family in the middle 1800s. They came to the eastern part of the United States, then ventured here in the early 1900s. They were farmers.

Q. Did they come here to farm?

A. Yes, they came here as farmers.

Q. What occupations did they pursue once they settled here?

A. Just farming.

Q. What occupations have you pursued?

A. I worked at the cheese factory. I drove a truck. I was a firefighter for ten years. I worked on assembly lines. I worked on the farm.

Q. Were you on the city council? Tell me about it.

A. I was on the city council two times. I was on for eight years once: then I went off after I had my heart attack. I went back on six years ago, and I just came back off the first of October. I resigned. My nerves got to bothering me.

Q. Why?

A. People of Nauvoo got to buggin' me.

Q. Tell me about it.

A. I don't like to do this because there's a certain small amount in any town that do nothing but gripe, and I

don't care who they gripe about. It's just a certain amount of people very few—but they got to working on my nerves, and I couldn't sleep at night. My health came first. And my wife and I had never argued for ten years, any more than anybody else, until the last six months. I'd come home and people would bug me; then I'd get short with her. My kids saw a difference, and they got on my case. So I resigned.

I enjoyed it because you serve your people. There's a certain few that when they start—at my age I couldn't cope with it this time. I'd like to have stayed because I enjoyed doing what I was doing on the council. I also served as tax assessor for eight years—years ago. I was on the fire department in Nauvoo for twenty-eight years; like any small town, it's volunteer. If you're there for the money, you wouldn't do it—you do it because you want to.

Q. I heard you were accused of being a Mormon-lover.

A. That's what I was told. That's when I couldn't handle it. I treated everybody the same. But this is the same chosen few I'm telling you about. The very same people had the same feeling towards the academy girls when they were here, and they were Catholics. But a certain amount of people are against everything. They're people my age, and it's ridiculous. Life's too short—why not get along?

I have very high respect for the Mormon people; I got along very good with them when I was on the council. Even years ago when they first started coming back to Nauvoo, they always treated me fine. I treat people like they treat me.

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

A. It's a small town. You know everybody, and everybody knows you. It's a nice little town. It's quiet. You can do what you want. Everybody pretty well works together.

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

A. Everything. The churches work together. All the organizations—the Lion's Club, the Knights of Columbus, the Lutheran Church—has its youth groups; and I think they all work together. That's something I really enjoy.

Q. What are some of the challenges that come with living here?

A. I can't say there are challenges because everybody works together. I don't know if there's any challenges.

Q. What opportunities have you had to serve in civic leadership positions?

A. I was on the school board at St. Peter and Paul's for four years. Years ago they had Jaycees—I was president of it for four years. I was on the city council for about ten years, and I was a tax assessor for eight. I was assistant fire chief for three or four years. I like to stay busy.

Q. From your knowledge of the history of the area, what individuals or groups stand out as having made a significant contribution to the growth of Nauvoo?

A. We had about three mayors that did a lot—Mayor Lowell Horton, Mayor Yeager, and Mr. Hugh Pierce. Them three, I think, had a lot to do with the way things are going now. Lowell Horton and Dick Yeager was instrumental in getting the state park here, and they could see growth in Nauvoo the way it should be for tourism. Hugh Pierce was mayor for four years. It was after both of them, and he was very instrumental in getting NRI [Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.] moving. He done a wonderful job.

Q. The Mormons came to Nauvoo in 1839 and built a city. They were here until conflict with neighbors drove them out. What is your understanding of the causes of that conflict?

A. From what I understand, at that time there was a lot of communism as we see it today. It was in every group, from what I understand. You hear so many stories, but are they true? The French Icarians were strictly communist. But outside of that, I don't really know.

Q. Do you know why the citizens of the surrounding communities were upset with the Monnons?

A. No, I don't.

Q. What have you heard over the years about what the Mormons may have done to provoke actions against them?

A. I don't know, really.

Q. What accounts or interesting stories of events during that time period have come down through your family?

A. You see, my family wasn't here then, so I don't know. They came in the early 1900s, [so the conflict was] before my family ever got here.

Q. Were any of your ancestors members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. What is your understanding of the role that anti-Mormon activists played in stirring up animosity between the Monnons and their neighbors?

A. I don't know. This is the first time I've heard this.

Q. What is your understanding of how Joseph Smith was viewed then and how he is viewed today?

A. I think they thought he was a crook. Whether he was or not, I have no knowledge. Evidently they thought he was. Today, I don't hear nothing like that anymore. It was all way before my time.

Q. What are your thoughts and feelings about that period of Nauvoo's history?

A. It's made Nauvoo a lot better. The whole lower part of town is very beautiful now, and this is all brought back to that period, the way it was back then. It's sure made Nauvoo a lot nicer.

Q. Are you familiar with the history of the Icarians that were here in the 1840s and 1850s?

A. I don't know, but they might have been the group that brought the vineyards to Nauvoo. I don't remember.

Q. Were any of your ancestors Icarians?

A. I don't know. My grandmother and grandfather on my mother's side came about the same year, but they moved directly into town, so if they had some contact with the Icarians, I don't know. He was a tinsmith by trade, so I don't know whether he had any dealings with them or not.

Q. Are you familiar with the beginnings and history of the wine industry in the area?

A. Pretty well. There was a fellow—I want to say he was a priest—who got the grape industry started. The grape industry as you see it today is nothing of what it was. There used to be huge vineyards in Nauvoo. Back when I was in high school, [the wine industry] used to truck grapes as far north as Bismarck, North Dakota. My dad owned a truck, and we hauled grapes for the grape industry here. It was the only way we had to get them there.

Q. What caused it to decline over the years?

A. I really don't know exactly, unless it was the economy and the bigger companies that kind of overtook the little ones. I don't think that the winery could compete with the bigger ones. The law got involved—it was so much more stricter. The wine did not have to be state stamped when they first started. They had a revenue, but Prohibition came in and made them put a stamp on it. It just got to where everything else was so costly that the small people here in town could not compete.

Q. Are you familiar with the Nauvoo bleu cheese industry?

A. I worked down there for a while. The fellow that started it began it in the middle '30s. How he got involved I don't know for sure, but he worked out for other people to pay his help to get it started, and it gradually grew and grew to what it is today. I worked down there for a while. My wife's dad hauled milk for twenty years for them—picked milk up in the country. That's how he made his living. Very quick process, in a way.

Q. Did you enjoy working there?

A. I didn't mind it too bad. The pay was not the greatest, and that's why I left.

Q. What churches have been influential in Nauvoo over the years?

A. You can name them all because they all have. I think the best thing was when Father Wissing came. He was a Catholic priest, a retired Navy chaplain. I don't remember what year Father Wissing came, but he started a ministerial association. Before he came the churches didn't see eye to eye, and he said, "It's time this stops." That must have been in the '60s, and he got everybody working together, and that's why the churches work together today. Before then, none of them got along. We can go back to Father Wissing, who got that group started. Now they all get together and keep it going.

Q. What are the people's thoughts about what the Mormons have done in restoring the Nauvoo flats and the coming of tourists to Nauvoo?

A. I think it's been pretty good. It's made all of our property worth more. The lower part of town where they've restored most of the homes was very brushy. I don't know whether people didn't take pride to clean it up, but when [the Mormons] came to Nauvoo they offered good money for the homes they bought, restored them, cleaned the lower part of town up and grassed it. It's beautiful. They sure made my house look a lot better. It's really for the better of the town. I see nothing bad about it. I think it's been great. I'm anxious to see when all the houses that they've got started down there get built because they look beautiful. When the Mormons start building something, it's beautiful. That's why I can't wait for this to be done across the street.

Q. You have a great view. What was your reaction to the announcement that the Mormon temple was going to be rebuilt in Nauvoo, and what have you heard from others?

A. I was on the council when they announced this, so I thought this was going to be a real asset to Nauvoo. When they get it all finished, it's going to be a big asset. It's something that Nauvoo has to rely on for tourists—that's how the city makes improvements. So far, it's a very beautiful building, and it's not completed yet. I'm anxious to see it done.

Q. What were the reactions on the council?

A. I think we were all surprised. We knew it was coming, but we wasn't expecting it to be starting when it was. We figured we had six months to study plans. But they come, and they wanted to get started immediately. So we was in an uproar for about a month, until we got all the particulars and everything. But it was a good feeling, because everybody had a feeling it was an asset to Nauvoo.

Q. People weren't upset?

A. I don't think so. Well, there was maybe a chosen few, but I don't think any of the council members were upset. We all felt that here was something that was going to make Nauvoo more beautiful, and that's what we all thrive for. We look for our town to look nicer, so I don't think anybody on the council had any ill feelings.

Q. What contact have you had with the students that have come through Nauvoo on the study program?

A. None. I see the kids walk up and down town. My wife has more contact with you people because I'm gone all day.

Q. Where do you work now?

A. I'm the janitor at the Nauvoo High School. I retired this spring, and I couldn't stand doing nothing. So the head guy out there came and talked to me—he wanted to know if I wanted a job being janitor, and I took it. I had to have something to do. I could mow grass, and I could putter around, but it didn't work. I just had to have something to do. I am basically retired, but it's a job. I go to work at six in the morning, I get off work at two, and I've got from then to do what I want. It's not hard work, so it's not work. I enjoy what I'm doing. The kids out there treat this old man very well. You take somebody sixty-five, sometimes they kinda work on you, but the kids out there treat me really good.

Q. What does your wife have to say about [the new temple]?

A. She doesn't say much. She's like me—we're waiting for everything to be done.

Q. What would you like to see in the future of Nauvoo, and what do you expect to see?

A. I'd just like to see it stay a quiet town. I don't want to see it get any bigger than it is. I'd like to see it stay like it is—the tourists can come, and they go—but I don't want to see much growth. The more growth you get, the more problems you have. The tourism is going to amount to approximately about what we have, and it's very good.

A few groups are nasty when they come. The biggest trouble we have is with the buses. They don't want to go with our regulations. They think they should go wherever they want to they can't do this in any other town. I think they honestly think that because this is a little town they can do and go where they want; they don't have to observe signs. It's amazing to watch tourists. There's a big sign right here on the corner that says "dead end." They'll stop at the corner, they'll read the sign, and they don't believe it. I've seen many times a guy and his wife in a big camper, maybe pulling a car behind; they'll read the sign, and up they go. There's no place to turn around! But they don't believe it's a dead-end street. Years ago when I was a kid it wasn't a dead-end street, but then they put the park in and they put a lake down there. It's amazing. You can just see it in their eyes when they read that sign, "Nah, it can't be." And away they go. So it's funny to watch them, but it's also aggravating.

Barbara one time came home from the grocery store, and there were three vehicles where we park. We have a little parking sign. It was some ladies, and they had a Nebraska license plate. They were having a picnic. Barbara asked them if they would move so she could park, and they got real nasty with her. So when they got nasty, she got nasty, and she said "Fine, I'll just call a city marshal." Well, they left, but they wrote a nasty note and left it on her car. So you have a few people that's that way, but on the whole they're nice. A lot of times people will come and ask if they can eat, and they will clean up their mess. When the workers first started on the temple, they came and asked if they could go over and eat. Sure. They picked up very well, and they were nice.

Q. Do you want to make any other comments or observations?

A. Not really. I think I've rambled enough. I just know Nauvoo's going to be back to normal one of these days. It'll be a year or two.



Q. The dedication will bring a lot of tourism.

A. I think after the first two or three years, when the dedication is over, once everybody gets here and they have seen the temple finished, it'll slow down. It won't stop, but it'll slow down. I don't foresee much traffic past the parking ramp. We get a lot of traffic anyhow because of the hotel. I don't think we're going to see much more in here; I don't think they'll come farther than the parking ramp. If they do, they do; that's what the street's for, and we will cope with it.

Q. Are you going to go to the open house?

A. I sure will.

Q. Do you have tickets?

A. I don't need one, they tell me. I asked Mr. Prince, and he said, "You don't need one—you're already on our list." I said, "What list?" I'm on the list to go when the city council and the past city council are invited.

My uncle was raised right down over the hill. His family and him all want to come down and go through the temple—they live in Rockford, which is northwest of Chicago, about 240 miles from here. They all want to come down. It's Nauvoo. He was born and raised here. Then he went to the Second World War, came home, and moved to Rockford. Him and his family want to come down and go through.

So it's not just Mormon people that want to come and go through the temple, others too. A young girl that is a teacher at the high school—her husband is a farmer out by Adrian, and they want to come. I showed her a piece in the Fort Madison paper that was in there Friday, so she's going to get on the Internet and get tickets. The local people are going to get to go first, and they won't have to have tickets. We'll probably get two opportunities to go. And I'm anxious to go through the temple.

[The construction workers say] they will take Barb and I anytime I want to go. But I hate to bug them while they're working. And Mr. Prince said he would take me through. But he works all day the same as I do; he needs time for himself. And I know he puts in lots of hours. He's one of the most wonderful men I've ever worked with. He's a great man. You have a professor that I have a high respect for: Larry Dahl. He's neat. I like him a lot. I mow his yard for him. But I think he's a very neat man. I think a lot of him. I always hate to see summer come when they [BYU students] leave, and I'm always glad when they come back. I really enjoy them.

## **Dean Gabbert**

*Nauvoo, Illinois*

*Birthday: July 23, 1922*

*Interview on November 15, 2001, in his home by Tyler Dahl*