

Transcript of Oral History

William Harold Boyce

Interviewed by: Karen Larrabee
Cottonwood Heights HS Member

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DOB: 8 June 1922
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My name is William Harold Boyce. I was born down here on the corner of 2000 East 7000 South in 1922. I have been in this area all my life. I have seen a lot of changes around here. We went to church up on top of Butler hill. I went to the school up there, too. I just kind of roamed the country and farmed here, and farmed there, whenever we could. Whenever we found somebody that needed some work, we would go to work for them for pennies; but it was a living.

I remember the first job that my dad got. It was for the Deseret Mortuary. He got a commission of 25 cents to 50 cents for every funeral. That was about the size of the work that came into our place. We made a living. It was a good living. A lot went on. There were a lot of things that went on that shouldn't have done and a lot of things that didn't turn out all right that should have done.

I ran this farm here, and my brother, I couldn't get much help out of him. I run this farm here with horses. We always had 3 or 4 horses in the corral all the time. When spring came, we had to work them. If you didn't get your horses out and get the ground plowed, harrowed, and planted, you wouldn't make it for the year. Some years it was a short season. I guess it paid off. The farm was located on the south side of 7000 South (Fort Union Boulevard). It extended from 2300 East to 2000 East.

If anybody needed some work, I would take my horse and ride over there where they was and help them out for a day for a quarter, and that wasn't very good wages. I knew, and I still do, know every farm and every person clear around here. I knew them all. I worked for the biggest part of them. Maybe it was only a day's work or something.

Some of our neighbors were the Erekson's. He was one time a bishop around here. There were also a lot of Mounter's, too. There were a lot of Green's up on the

other street. There were some Colebrook's and people up this street. There were people on Poverty Flats. They were a lot worse off than we was. Of course, it didn't bother us too much because if you was poor, because everybody else was. If I was poor, and he was poor, you know we was equal. That's the way it went. We cowboyed quite a bit. You can always get hurt doing that. We just done the best we could with what we had. Lots of times there wasn't too much to be had.

I can pretty well remember all the people around. The Colebrook's were here, and the Butler's lived there. My grandmother was a Butler. Her name was Edith Samantha Butler. She married my grandfather, Charles Franklin Boyce on January 1, 1890. Her parents are Leander Butler and Elizabeth Chugg.

We could kill a pig or we could kill a beef, and we had our own meat. We raised a big garden over here, and mother would bottle it all up and put it in the cellar. There was a cellar under the granary. It was cool and nice under there, a dirt cellar, and had all the stuff in there. It was good. It was a good thing for the winter.

I went to Butler School and Union Jr. High. That was all the schoolin' I got. I never did graduate, but I got an education right here on this farm. I didn't need to go to school and get an education. Of course, we had to go to Union School, and we got up there a little bit, and then they did run a bus up here for a year or two. Remember them old cracker box buses? That was the only transportation the school had, and it was okay. It was a ride. A lot of times if you missed the bus, you walked home.

My dad had a job with an oil company overhauling pumps. He would go to Utah and Wyoming and fixed all the pumps in all the service stations. He was gone a lot. He would maybe be gone a month at a time, and then he'd come back. It was up to me to do the work because I just couldn't get nothin' out of my brother, Avar. He was so much older, and he bossed the outfit. That's the way it goes when your older brother's like that. It was my place to build a home and make a home.

My one sister moved over in with my aunt in Holladay in Sugarhouse somewhere. She went to school over there a couple of years. She was my older sister, Luana. She got a good education. She kept going to school. She was a little older than me. I had a younger sister, LaRue, and I was 7 years younger than my brother. Luana wasn't around too much. She married a guy that worked on the river for a couple of years. She was down there with him quite a bit, and they came up here, and he got into the oil business. They got married and went oil drilling for a couple of

outfits. Then when they got all squared away, they went to Portland, Oregon. They worked in the shipyards during the war.

I did farming for fun and for work. I loved to ride horses. I named my horses depending on how they acted. I had some good horses, and they give me no trouble. My dad said one day, "That horse of yours is losing weight." I said, "No, he can't be losing weight. The manger's full of hay every day." He said, "Yeah, but he's not in there to eat it. You've got him out riding him all the time." I said, "Well, he needs it." He was a good horse.

Sometimes we would look around a little bit and see if we could get a better horse with a trade or something. The biggest part of the time you ended up with worse, but this is life. We had a little gray horse that we bought down in Union and brought him up here, and we were raising peas. We put a load of peas on that wagon, and we were going down to the cannery. Dad hollered, "Get that harness off of that horse, he's gonna die!" I jumped down and got the harness off from him, and he dropped over dead. We'd only had him a week. You know them things happen. My dad hauled ore out of these canyons with the horses; and some were tied to the wagons, down to the smelter.

Like I say, there has been a lot of changes around this valley. The biggest changes have been the traffic and the people. I don't like it. I don't care for it. That's why we have two homes—one here and the other in Salina, Utah. I love it so much down there. There ain't much down there, but it's a good little town.

How I met my first wife: There was a guy who worked at Kennecott, and I was working out to Kennecott for a little bit. I would go and pick him up and go to work and one thing and another, and she was running around there. I just kind of met her, I guess. She was home with her mother. Her dad died a long time ago. We had two children.

Things wasn't getting a long too good. I kind of went one way, and she went the other. Then she took off and went to Billings, Montana in that country and got all married up and one thing and another up there. Then she went back east. She was a bishop in a Catholic church, or whatever that was. We just got word that she was going to die, and she died. Her oldest son was over in Colorado. He went to the funeral. He got there just as that was over. It wasn't a very close family.

My children's names are Paul and Stephanie with my first wife, Cathryn Lucas. I had David and Cheryl with my second wife, Elaine Tullis. I met my second wife

when she was going to school down there in Union. We got married in Las Vegas, Nevada, the same time that my second sister, Jean, married an Italian.

I retired from Premium Oil. My sister, Jean, got the cancer, and she was getting these shots down at the hospital. I didn't have nothing to do. I come down every week and would take her to the hospital to get these shots.

Jean Boyce tells how she and Harold met because Harold could not remember:

“Our families were very close. I lived over here on about 6500 South between Highland Drive and 2300 East for many, many years. Harold's brother, Avard, was seven years older than he was, and he chased with my uncles who lived with us.

“One day Avard came to the house to visit my uncles, and he had Harold with him. I was between 10 and 12. Of course, Harold was five years older than I. This good lookin' man had the blackest, beautiful, wavy hair, and he had this little moustache, and I was just smitten. That's how we met.

“Over the years the two families were very close. My uncles and my mother and dad chased with the same crowd that Harold's brother chased with. It was interesting. I fell in love with him, and I was smitten back then and carried that torch until I finally caught him.”

Jean continues: “I can remember when he got married the first time. His first wife lived down at the bottom of the lane we lived on. There was Pfetzer's, and then there was another house that she lived in. That's where she lived right on Highland Drive. I can remember one day when I was walking home from school. It was just after he'd married Cathryn. They drove by me. He honked, and honked, and honked, and waved, and waved, and waved at me.

“I can still see her. She was practically sitting on his lap. I was jealous of her. I was in high school at that point and time. Harold brought my first husband to Salt Lake. He was a buddy to Harold, and that's how I met my husband.”

The world has changed because of the traffic, and people, and houses and buildings....terrible. I don't believe I went to Salt Lake over three times in my life until I got up to where I knew what Salt Lake was. When you went anywhere, you had to go with your folks because they just had the one car. If you wanted to ride, you'd get in. If you didn't want to go, you'd stay home.

My first car was a blue 1931 Ford pickup coup. I was paying my dad for it. He had it, and I bought it from him. I finally got it paid. It probably took a couple of years.

I never went to Salt Lake. There was nothing in Salt Lake for me. I was too much of a lonesome dove, or whatever. Just being around people just got to me.

We went to church. The family went to church. Dad went on a mission in the southern states somewhere. He didn't say too much about it, and I didn't ask too much about it.

I was never a speaker like Dad. I can't get up in front of people and talk. That's the worst thing for me to do. Me and my dad, we built a lot of the church. Every time we had time off, dad would say, "Let's go to church", and we worked and worked and worked on it. I used to tell people that, "I built this church". I figured that was a pretty good deal for not having to get up and talk.

The happiest time for me was a day off—just to have a day off with nothing to do; but you didn't get very many of them either. I loved chasing wild horses on the desert in Neph; but when I got home, I got in trouble because the work at home did not get done. That was a great life. We kept a few of the wild horses and brought them in and sold them for \$10.00, and we thought we were millionaires.

I have had an exciting life. It's been good, and it's been bad. One good trip that Jean and I took when we got married was when we went to Panama, a cruise around that country. In fact, Jean said, "I don't want to go with you unless we get married." So we got married so she would go to Panama. We were out there, and it was good.

I used to play in a football game in the dirt. There was no grass to play on. We used to play a little baseball in back of the school. We had a lot there, and we would get some games going there. When I was going to school up there, there wasn't thirty kids in the whole school. That was about it. If you wanted a good ball game, you had to play out in the gravel and the dirt. There was no lawn. You might get a gravel rash or two. If you didn't do that, you sat on the sidelines and watched somebody do something.

There was a little pasture there on the corner lot of Blair's place, and I talked to him one day, and I said, "Hey, if I bring my horse up here to school, can I put him over there in that corner?" He said, "Yeah, put him over there." Then he said, "I'll put some water over there." So we put him over in the corner, and he'd stay there and eat hay all day while I was in school. When I was through, I would saddle him up and go home. It sure beat walking.

We used to have better “winter fun” than we did “summer fun”. In the winter they would never scrape these roads. When I first came out in this country, these roads was dirt. They never scraped these roads. They would just push a little snow off, and that’s it. If you get over to the top of Butler hill, the sleighing was good. You could get on that hill, and you could come clear down near where I lived.

In fact, we built a bob sleigh, and we were coming down the hill, and we came to a curve and had a crash. One of the girls got hurt, and she ended up in the hospital. I think that kind of spoiled the bob sleigh. I don’t think we had enough money to build it back up. I think that done away with the bob sleigh business.

- The sleighing was good clear up there above Alta Basin. You could come all the way down from there with four or five of you on the sleigh. That was good sleighing.

I was a good horse shoer. I did it for my own horses. I didn’t do it for a living. Pretty much everybody did their own.

I worked hard. When you worked, you worked hard. When you played, you played hard. A lot of times we would take off on our horses and go to Sugarhouse or down to Murray and come back home. The only way we had to get around was by horse.

I worked for Kennecott for about three or four years. Jobs were hard to get. I bought a job there. I paid a guy some dollars to get me a job, so he got me a job at Kennecott. I had to buy insurance from Metropolitan Life in order to get a job. I worked there for awhile, and then I worked for Tooele Ordinance. It was for the government, and that was a pretty good job. The mistake I made was that I quit. I should have stayed there. I would have been there right today, I guess; but I couldn’t stand it, being tied up in a building somewhere with a roof over your head. I didn’t like that.

I hope my family can remember me for my memory. I can remember dates and stuff. I didn’t know addresses, but I could tell people where our neighbors lived-- just a “hoot and a holler” away. I can remember directions and highways and stuff because I traveled the roads a lot.

I’ve done a lot of truck driving, and I know a lot of the hills, the curves, the grades that were hard pulling up. I drove a truck over a million miles for Premium Oil starting in 1946 in Salt Lake on 2100 South and 200 West. At one time there were thirteen trucks, thirteen drivers, and somewhere around forty gas stations in Utah,

Idaho, and Wyoming. Then we got a good buy on some stuff hauling out of Nevada and New Mexico. I liked all them long trips. I would just get in the truck and go, go, go. I've been pretty much all over the western states. I did that for forty years. I drove for Premium Oil in the same truck. I wore out four trucks. Someone would say, "Where does that road go?" I would tell them, "I've been over there, it goes over here." You just know these things. I don't have to study a book. I don't need a map. I know where I'm going.

I got lost once. I was going to Delta, and I pulled in, and I don't know why, but I got all mixed up in that café. When I came out, I was completely mixed up, and I had to ask somebody where "East" was, and where "West" was. That's the only time in my life that I ever got mixed up.

I've been north, east, west, and south, as far as you want to go. If I went to a place once, or been in a town, or anywhere, I never forgot it. You couldn't lose me the second time. I knew every curve, every post, and every sign. You just pay attention.

I worked for Robinson Trucking for two or three years hauling girders (support beams) for the freeways, along I-15 and a lot of overpasses over State Street and 3300 South.

I've worked hard all my life. My life's been good.