

Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon
Oral History Project

Interviewer: Dan McGuire
Narrator: Alma Cox
Date: March 30, 2004
Location: Cox Home, Rockville, Utah

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Section I: Family and Social Life in Zion Canyon

McGuire: Please say your name and then spell your name.

ALMA: Alma J. Cox. The J stands for Joy.

McGuire: Where and for how long did you live and/or work in the Zion Canyon area?

ALMA: I've lived in Rockville since December the 19th, 1919, except for three and one half years when I was in the service. I was in the army air force. I was an airplane and engine mechanic. I serviced and repaired and modified bombers, mostly, that were going over and dropping bombs on the Continent, in Europe.

McGuire: Where were you stationed at that time?

ALMA: I was stationed at Lythem, that's right close to, well, that's where I was, and Frankleton too.

McGuire: Where? In the U.S.

ALMA: Oh, no. Over in England.

McGuire: Lithium? And also:

ALMA: Lythem. Frankleton is where, there was a bomb dropped on Frankleton and killed a lot of kids at one time. An accident. Accidental one that ...

McGuire: So except for that period of time when you went into the military service, you've lived here in Rockville.

ALMA: Yes, yes that's true.

McGuire: Please describe the members of your family and how many people were in it.

ALMA: Well, there was ten of us; ten members in our family. That's my mom and my dad and my brothers and sisters. My dad's name was Arthur D. Cox, they called him D, well it was just the D in there was for Delano and that was ah, so they just called him D. And that was his, what they usually went by D and my mother, her name was Cora Haight. And then there was eight of we children. I was the oldest, course you know mine already and Elmer was the next. And Marie was one of the girls and Lenna. Then there was two more boys, Robert and they called him Bob and he's living here in Rockville at the present time and a brother Evan, and he lives in Fresno now. Then there was two more girls, Bernice and Amelda. And they live in, one in Hurricane Bernice and Amelda lives in St. George. And that's our family members.

McGuire: What brought your family to live in Zion Canyon?

ALMA: Well, we were living out at Cane Beds and trying to make a living out there and it was dry farming and we weren't doing well and when we found out about irrigation here where they had water right from the river that would come out on our farms and irrigate our gardens and our crops whatever they were, why we decided this was a good place to live!

McGuire: What year did you come to this area?

ALMA: Well, in 1919.

McGuire: When you were just a baby?

ALMA: Yeah, three years old.

McGuire: Well, you were born in 1919 weren't you?

ALMA: I was born in 1916 out at Orderville.

McGuire: O.k. so you came to Rockville in 1919.

ALMA: UmHmm. The 19th of December.

McGuire: Tell me when you were born and where. And whether it was in a home or...

ALMA: I was born out at Orderville, that's in Kane County and it was, well it was in the east end of Orderville and it was on the north side of the crick. And our home burned down when I was only, well, just a, not very old, real young anyway, and we moved into Glendale and lived there for the rest of

the winter. And we moved out to Cane Beds in 1917. And we lived there until we came here to Rockville in 1919.

McGuire: What was the date of your birth?

ALMA: It was ah, October the 29th, 1916.

McGuire: Did you all live in one house in the Zion area? Did you have other relatives nearby?

ALMA: Yeah, we all lived in one house until we children got married and moved away, you know. We had relatives that lived nearby too.

McGuire: Can you tell me about the house you lived in? And where it was?

ALMA: Well, it was up in the east end of Rockville, well, it was right in back of where my brother Bob lives at the present time in a two-room home up there. And ah, then we built a lean-to on the west end of it and then another sleeping quarters across the ditch, a little further west where I and my brother Elmer slept.

McGuire: That house is long since gone?

ALMA: Long since gone.

McGuire: Did it bum down or was it taken down or ...

ALMA: I don't know how it came to be demolished or whatever happened but it's gone now. There's nothing there except some fruit trees.

McGuire: And where did you live after that?

ALMA: Well, I, when I went into the service ...

McGuire: So you lived there all of your live until you went into the service?

ALMA: Yeah, ah ha.

McGuire: And then when you returned from the service?

ALMA: Well, we built a new home there, the one that my, present home, the one my Bob's living in, except an addition that's he's put on. In 1928 and 1929 and I didn't go into the service until 1942 so we lived in that new one for awhile fore I went in the service.

McGuire: And that's the one that Bob lives in now.

ALMA: Yes.

McGuire: That's been there that long?

ALMA: '28 and '29's when we built it.

McGuire: It's a nice looking home!

ALMA: Yeap.

McGuire: What work-related activities do you recall doing with your family?

ALMA: Well, we were picking and drying fruit and sweet com and we raised beans for, you know, and harvested them. And we made sorghum, and we, course that was from the planting it and right all the way through and making it into sorghum, course we had bees too and we made honey so we had plenty of honey and we were picking fruit for market and butchering animals for, well, mostly for our home use with the animals we used, cuz we didn't sell those I don't think.

McGuire: What kind of fruit and what kind of animals?

ALMA: We had apples and pears mostly, course we had a lotta kind of have, we had Setsuma plums and

McGuire: how do you spell that kind of plum?

B ALMA: I couldn't tell you how, I'm not that good at spelling! Satsuma. It's a big red plum, read read and juicy and good. We had some of those and course we had other kinds of fruit too, there was peaches, course I mentioned apples and pears they were the main things, apples and pears. Apples and pears were Delicious apples mostly, and the pears, Bartlett pears. And we had those for, we raised a lot of those for marketing. They was part of our living was those.

McGuire: How about the type of animals that you ate?

ALMA: We raised horses and cows, sheep, pigs and you know, that. We had horses, course we had the horses for riding a little bit but mostly for work. That's the only way we could do our work was with the horses at that time. And ah, and we had cows for milk and all of the, everything that goes with milk, cheese and butter and cream, all the good things. Sheep for, well we even made, when we had our sheep we'd use the wool at that time to make batting for, you know, with the cards that they used at those times, to make bats to put on the quilt, you know, the frame, they still do it

today I guess, but I don't know that they have quilting bats that they use. They have to buy that already made, I guess.

McGuire: Did you do some of that work?

ALMA: Yeah. I helped out a little bit, that and the, it was interesting!

McGuire: You mentioned pigs. Pigs were sorts of food also?

ALMA: Oh, you bet. We always had pork, I mean pig meat, whatever you want to call it. The whole pig. We used to put that up with salt and sugar and a little salt peter so it would cure and put it in a barrel. I still have some of the barrels that we used to put it in and keep it all winter long. It'd keep all winter long and we had that. And the other meat, we'd bottle that if we wanted to keep it for a period of time, we'd bottle it. So we had plenty of good food to eat all the time; raised lots of vegetables and melons and all of that kind of stuff so, honey.

McGuire: So you were part of all the work activities and the farming and the canning, picking and um, dressing out of the meat and all the things that related to the farm work, you were part of that?

ALMA: Yeah, yeah. That really.

McGuire: What non-work activities do you recall doing with your family (ie for recreation/fun)?

ALMA: Well, we would, besides our work, we had a good time for playing baseball, pitching hoops and playing marbles and of course, we went swimming, that was in the summertime, that was a must! We really enjoyed that! And in the wintertime, when we lived here in Rockville, we'd play cards and have popcorn to nibble on while we were playing cards with some of our friends. Or singing around ...

McGuire: What kind of card games did you play?

ALMA: Pit and ah, that's the only one I can remember. We played two or three kinds of cards though, ah, oh what was that other one we used to play? Pit was a pretty good game anyway, it was one where you played cards, it was about different kinds of grain. _____ on corn or wheat or barley or rye something like that and it had the bull and the bear in it, and it was quite interesting and we had some of our neighbor friends id come in and we always had a big batch of popcorn—mom wid always make some popcorn for us and sometimes it was just salt and buttered and sometimes it was candied and sometimes she'd make it into popcorn balls. But that's the way we enjoyed our...oh well and sometimes at night when I was a kid, we

used to go around through the town and play some games in the dark. One of them was Hoopedy Hoopedy Hollar—if you don't hollar we won't foller! And that was two different groups, you know, two teams, and they'd do things like that so there was a lotta things doing. We'd have candy pulls and singing dos, you know, at other people's homes, you know where they sing around a piano. Have some candy pull to make molassas candy and stuff like that. Little different that it is today!

McGuire: And your swimming was in the Virgin River and can you tell me in what area you used to do your swimming? Was it dammed up for example.

ALMA: Oh no. We just went where there was a, maybe the river turned agin a ledge or something like that and it was a little bit deeper where we could swim but it wasn't really to go swimming it was just to get in the river and run up and down the river and enjoy it you know, and take a watermelon and, each one of us would grab a watermelon and take and then when we wanted to have a break, we could just pop it open with our hands and just eat it and ...

McGuire: Where these someone else's watermelons?

ALMA: Oh no! They were ours! No nobody lived close around. When we were down on the farm why we were pretty much by ourselves.

McGuire: When you say 'down on the farm' where?

ALMA: It's the same farm that's right down there now just east across the river from Grafton town. That's our farm. We homesteaded that in 1924. We got a homestead applied for and it was an old abandoned farm at the time and it had some fruit trees on it and of course, we planted all of these others that I mentioned. And there's still a few of them old, old, old ones still down there. One or two of them, some sugar pears and whatever we called them, Chinese pears. And I've got a start of all of them down on my own lot here, where's I got all of 'em I wanted to keep them all so I've got 'em budded into my own trees here on my lot, because I've grafted and budded and I got one tree down in the lot that's got six or seven pears on it and one apple! I just like doing that kind of stuff! Cherry trees ...
[Transcriber's note: Alma is well known in town for being able to graft any fruit onto any root stock. I think when he says he has a tree with six or seven pears on it, he means six or seven different varieties of pears grafted onto a single root stock!]

McGuire: You lived in the home you described where Bob lives, then you had to walk down to your farm work? Where all the trees and veggies and gardens were when you talk about down on the farm.

ALMA: We commuted, I mean in an old 28 Chevy, when we got around to getting a Chevy. Course we had a wagon at first and we'd come up to church in it and a buggy with the horses pulling it and at that was at first until we got the Model B Ford and the 28 Chevy and they didn't cost too much back in those days. I got my own car in 1940. Just before I went off to war.

McGuire: Did you attend church with your family and if so please describe this?

ALMA: Oh we always attend church unless it was sickness, you know. And they was maybe quarantined or something for mumps or scarlet fever or something like that. But we always attend church. Whether it was when we went in the wagon or was could go in one of the jitnies that we had later. But we always attended church.

McGuire: What church did you attend. Where was it located?

ALMA: Well it was the same old church that's up here now.

McGuire: In Springdale?

ALMA: No, in Rockville. It's what's called a community center at the present time. It's that old church that's there; it's called a community center. And course before that I went to school and all went to church across the road from there in the old church before it burnt down on the 24th of December in 1930. It burnt down and course after that why...

McGuire: The original church was across the street from the community center?

ALMA: We went to church there and to school.

McGuire: Next to the school?

ALMA: Well, it's right where the school is now.

McGuire: So the school was built after the church?

ALMA: This here, well, that school house there where Fatali has his um, home is the school house that was built after the old church burnt down. And we didn't have church, well we had church ah, the first church we built that in '32, one and two, the new church. And course it wasn't dedicated until '35, but we did have church in it and but wadn't dedicated until '35 because it wadn't paid for, it was being paid for over the years, two or three years.

McGuire: I want to be sure I understand: where the school house it today, where Fatali's Schoolhouse of Photography is, was, the original church was on

that location and that church burned down and they build the school house.

ALMA: Yeap.

McGuire: Then the new church across the street?

ALMA: Yeah.

McGuire: Which is now the community center?

ALMA: They built that un in 31 and 32, that new chruch.

McGuire: So that's where you attended church all the time that you lived in Rockville?

ALMA: Umhrnm. And I was bishop in that church for ten years and three months. That was from '58 till '68, course that was later on.

McGuire: So that was an active church up until what date, do you remember?

ALMA: I think that was about '78. Now I'm not sure about that date when we merged with Springdale. So that it's like it is now, Springdale and Rockville have the Springdale Ward. I'm not too sure about that but it seems like it was about '78.

McGuire: And they had build the new church which is now across from the Chevron station and prior to that up in Springdale, they used ...

ALMA: Oh we went up a little further up there, you know where the, up in the center of, we went there for a bit. I remember going there just for a short time though. I don't know whether O.R. Johnson was bishop, or, whether Dennis, well I can't rememer. Seemed like it was O.R. Johnson.

McGuire: And any other things you could describe about going to church with your family? Such as the activities that you did at church or attending your various classes and things?

ALMA: Well, they had their classrooms down in the basement for, and we didn't have too, too many classes because we didn't have too, too many rooms. And it seems like we had to double up quite a few of our classes because well, maybe they was only two or three in one class and just that many in the other so they put them together and have one teacher for 'em.

McGuire: And at that time, the church was on the block time program where you went and stayed for a period of time and came home inbetween times—how did it work?

ALMA: Yeah. Well we just had Sunday school in the morning, that was at ten and never be late to your Sunday school class! Promptly at ten in the morning! Ha, there used to be a song about that! That was Sunday school and in the afternoon we'd meet at two oclock and have sacrament meeting service for an hour and a half or whatever, I can't remember the time for shore, but and primary was on a Tuesday and Mutual on a Tuesday night.

McGuire: What about Priesthood and Relief Society?

ALMA: Let's see. Priesthood. We had Priesthood meeting Sunday morning before Sunday school, I believe and Relief Society I think used to meet on Tuesday if I remember right. That's a long time back!

McGuire: Do you have a religious view of the land here and if so please describe it? In other words, um, how do you see the land and the mountains around you? Do they represent something to you? or something religious?

ALMA: I've always um, I've always um, thought about the beauties of nature and God's creations and wherever it is it's always amazes me what the Lord has done when he's created this earth for us. And the park also. I remember when I was postmaster why, I was postmaster for a long, long time [in Rockville] and the tourists would come down, you know, after they'd been up in the park and they'd have a bunch of cards that they had bought and they wanted 'em cancelled out so they could go to their homes and some of the people they come and 'just a big pile of rocks,' and others would, 'oh, it was magnificent! Magnificent, those sheer ledges going up there.' And you couldn't imagine how they, the difference in people! Ha, I guess it all depends on the eyes of the beholder I suppose. Cuz, but most of 'em, most of 'em really enjoyed ...one lady says, "This is just like being in the celestial kingdom." Well, she was talking about Rockville. She was talking about Rockville, "this is just like being in the celestial kingdom."

McGuire: Do you agree with that?

ALMA: Yes. Ha! Yeah. Well it's a beautiful place to be!

McGuire: Are you LDS?

ALMA: Yes.

McGuire: Do you think your religion had much impact on how you and your family felt about the Zion area and if so, describe?

ALMA: Well, I guess. Because of our belief in the creation, that God created all of these things including the park. That maybe it had a little bit of the influence, anyway whenever we had family or friends that'd come and visit us we always liked to take them up to the park cuz we thought that was beautiful. The Weeping Rock and up at the Temple of Sinawava and all of that and even right up to the where you go wading in the river, what do they call it? The narrows. They call that the narrows and the grotto and all of those things. It was just something that was um, interesting to us and so we thought it'd be interesting to our friends, our family and friends. And we'd take 'em up there.

McGuire: Outside of your family, who were the people you saw the most when you were growing up?

ALMA: Well, I had a lot of friends, a lot of friends and other people and there was a lotta people, they had some people, older people that was quite old that used to get together sometimes and be sitting on somebody's wall, you know, or out in front of their lot and they'd be spitting and whittling. Maybe tobacco too, maybe it was! [phone rings]

McGuire: You talked about the people outside your family that you saw when you were growing up about some of these adults who got together in groups and sat together on walls and were spitting an whittling. Tell me about that, were these some of the older people you liked to listen to?

ALMA: Well, a lotta time they, some of these was at the post office when it was up in the east end of town and they'd be there sitting on the wall and ah, but some of the things that they were talking about wadn't very nice and when they, they knew how to swear some of them too just like, it wasn't very good influence for young people but of course that wasn't much to the older folks but you'd run into them occasionally like that. But we young people had other things to do like, like I've already mentioned, playing at night and sometimes we'd have a get together with sing-dos and things like that. Make candy pulls and things, and I, personally, I loved the mountains and I was all the time up on the mountains. I'd go clear up to the blue knolls, up where we called it Steamboat up there and sometimes all alone and sometimes with a friend and sometimes with my brother Elmer occasionally, but he wadn't as fast as I am and Morris Dalton.

McGuire: What was your friend's name? Morris Dalton? He lived here in Rockville?

ALMA: Morris Dalton. He lived across the street from us when we, when our family lived up in the home where my brother, that Bob is now and he lived across the street and down a little ways. But ah, I used to like to go hunting for pine gum for chewing, you know, like we chew our gum today. But we used to get that and I used to like to hunt for ah, pretty rocks

and stuff like that. And roll rocks down off the mountain. We'd find a place where there was a rock that looked like, "oh, that'd be a good rock to roll down the mountain" and roll it and then sometimes we and our friends would have a sled that we slide down some of these slickery places on the mountains in the summertime. And in the wintertime, we'd have sleds that we'd go down the mountain, I mean, the snow knolls over across the river that used to have snow on every winter, every winter. And we'd go sledding down them and ...

McGuire: The snow knolls?

ALMA: Snow knolls, well they were covered with snow, it was knolls its just across the, it's right across the river. They're still there, they're over there where Eldon Walker used to live just east across from where he used to live. And ah, Kim Docksteder and Barry Sochet and those.

McGuire: Did you play with children other than your siblings?

ALMA: Well, I guess my best friend back at that time was Morris Dalton. We used to chum together a lot, chum together a lot. And I had another friend, Bud Bennett. We got in a fight one day and bloodied each other's nose up and when the teacher caught us why she got after us and we went to the tap together and washed our bloody noses off together and put our arms 'round each other after it was over just as if nothin' had happened! He, he, he, he! I don't know what it was all about!

McGuire: Were there other organized activities in the Zion Canyon area like dances, games or parties? If so, what kind and how often?

ALMA: Well, they always had dancing from the very, very earliest time I first remember. They had dances in that old school or church that burned down. One time there was a dance there where there was some boozers that had some homemade booze out by the fence. And when they get dancing, got warmed up a little bit they'd go out by the booze was and take a dipper and take a swig of that good booze, I suppose it was good, they smacked their lips over it and anyway, one time they's one of these guys and maybe the booze affected him, but he got the GIs or whatever and he had to go. He had to go bad. And the outhouse was around a little further to the south and up and he, oh, he knew he didn't have time to go around there so he just hitched up over the fence and it was oh, right where this barrel a booze was. He turned it loose right in that barrel a booze! When these guys come up to smack their lips why, they took a dipper full and he took a swig a that and he says, "this tastes kinda like, ah, well, a couple of _____ in there what I put in. He says, "try it," and he got him a dipper and "yeah, it does, it does taste like that!" That cut down the boozing on that night! I shouldn't a told you that story, but ...

McGuire: That's a great story. The kind of booze they made was made from fruit or hops or do you have any idea what it was?

ALMA: I don't know whether they used hops or not! They mighta done, but I don't know just what, but I guess they used fruit cause we had lots a fruit and I suppose, I didn't know how to make it. Course I wasn't interested in making it.

McGuire: So dances were a big thing?

ALMA: Oh yeah, I was telling you about the dances, they had dances in that old, old school house, our church house and they had a podium up on the front on the top and they was a, that was on the south side of the building, on the main floor and then they had a partition where they could pull the curtains across and divide the main part on the west where the dances was, course they could have that for some classrooms too if it was church activities. And then if it was dancing they'd pull the curtains and they'd have all of that for dancing. They had dancing there and then they had a place like a little pavillion, course it didn't have a roof over it up by the cemetary and they had a slab there where we danced for quite a while and then we, in '34 we built the recreaton hall, was that '34? I don't remember. And later on why, we had, I and Angie, we organized a dance, squaredance club and we taught stake dances in the church program in the wards and ah, as the stake dance directors for a long, long time and we had our own organization there were all young, all couples young and old could come out and for 25 cents they could join our club. It was called the Rockville Square Dance Club. And that went on for years and years. And people, oh, they really loved that and we didn't teach just square dancing. We had little mixers you know, and rounds that we would teach for other activities at the churches, that churches had during the year for 4th of July and 24th of July, and Thanksgiving and all of those, Christmas and everything. We would lead them in some dances and when they had a food you know, a dinner and things like that you'd usually have some dancing after.

McGuire: What years were these?

ALMA: This was in the late '50s and well, late '48s just barely though cuz she didn't get over here until '47 and from then on why we were dancing all the time, seemed like. That was just one of the main things that we did.

We had, at one time, a scalp hunt. A scalp hunt, that was to get rid of the mice and the rats and the squirrles and things that were detrimental to our raising crops and nuts and things like that. And a mouse might be one point and a rat two and then gophers two and then gophers two and

squirrels, maybe squirrels being 25 or something cuz they're bad ones and the east end of the town would be against the west end of the town and the loosers would have to furnish a feast, a dinner you know, for the rest of 'em and then dance and that. That was an interesting project!

McGuire: That was a scalp hunt?

ALMA: Yeah, we called it a scalp hunt and it was the tails that we'd keep to ...

McGuire: o.k. to prove that you got the animal.

ALMA: Yeah. Oh yeah, you had to turn them in so that they'd prove that you had a mouse or a rat or a gopher or a squirrel or whatever you know.

McGuire: Was it scalp or skelp?

ALMA: Scalp, they called it s-c-a-l-p [though it sounds like he's saying skelp]. Scalp, except it was their tales.

McGuire: You had mentioned that in 1948 when you were doing this dancing that your wife had just come over; I know she came from England. Would you tell us something about your wife? Her name and where she came from?

ALMA: My wife was Angela or Angeletta. Her name was really Angeletta Howard. And her mom called her Letta and her dad and her close family. And most of her friends called her Angela and my army buddies they nicknamed her Angie. And of course that's what she was known as, I guess, by most everybody after that was Angie. And she was the only child in the family and she was going with an only boy in a family when I...she says, "well I got, I wasn't interested in him anymore," and she said "anyway it sure was nice to be called Aunt Angie by, because there was a lot of 'em you know in my family you know and they loved to come here. When we first come over here why, she was asked to be a primary teacher even so she wasn't a member of the church, why they asked her to be a primary teacher and so she did and she loved teaching in the primary and the kids loved her and they'd come down here. I don't know whether they come down here to listen to her English accent or whether it was to get some cookies to eat or whether it was because they loved her, but they used to come down here and it was quite fun.

McGuire: Where in England was she from?

ALMA: She was from Padium. And that's quite close to Blackpool if you know where Blackpool is. It's a big seaside resort up in the north end of England. And that's where I met her was in the tower, it's called the tower, like the tower that's in France ...

McGuire: The Eiffel Tower?

ALMA: The Eiffel Tower. It's similar to that only I think it's a lot bigger than the Eiffel Tower and it had a big ballroom there and that's where I met her. Of course, that's a whole long story in and of itself. But ...

McGuire: If you spent time outside when you were young, how much time was this and please try to describe it? Sounds like we've covered that with most of your activities. So we'll press on.

McGuire: If you were married at the time you lived in Zion Canyon, was your spouse from the area? How did you meet him/her? I kinda got ahead on that one. When did you get married?

ALMA: Well I got married on the second of September, 1944. That was, I got over in England in 1943. And I met her, I think it was in September, and we got engaged on Valentine's Day that same year in '44, and then we got married right after that in September the second, 1944.

McGuire: In England?

ALMA: In England.

McGuire: And this was Angie. 1944. Where in England:

ALMA: It was at Padium. And course it wasn't LDS, cuz she wasn't LDS. But we had a chaplain, I suppose it was a chaplain, marry us. We had to get permission from the Air Force, the army, you know my situation there.

McGuire: You met her when you were in England in the Service and what was she doing?

ALMA: Well, she was, when we met we were dancing.

McGuire: No, I mean was she with USO or with ah, ...

ALMA: No, she was a clerk in a market and her main job was cutting cheese and big pieces of pork. And package them and ready for sale. And that's what she did. And she had a job working for Phillips um, electric company or something. That same old Phillips that's Phillips now, whatever it is throughout the world I guess. It's the same company.

McGuire: So you met her at a dance.

ALMA: I met her at a dance. And we were dancing ever since then until we couldn't dance anymore.

McGuire: So it was love at first sight for both of you. You knew right away that that was the woman for you.

ALMA: Well, I suppose so. I got a story, it's written right here in this here stuff that I just been working on. How I met my wife, there's a story written about that and then my wife wrote a story sometimes after that how I met my husband. And I didn't find it until 1999! After she was dead for a couple of years, and I found it and it was telling all about how I met my husband. Of course I got that, and I'm keeping that because that's a choice possession I've got. And nobody has written any history about my wife at all. So the only history she'll have is what I write and keep in my own personal history.

McGuire: If you were employed during your early years in the canyon, where and what did you do?

ALMA: Well, I did work right up in the canyon itself one year in 1963 as an irrigator. And I met quite a lot, well I met a few people you know, they were there in different spots you know, and I was watering the trees ...

McGuire: Were you actually a park employee?

ALMA: Yeah.

McGuire: Worked for the National Park Service?

ALMA: Yeah.

McGuire: Just for one year?

ALMA: Yeah.

McGuire: As a irrigator. Then what happened?

ALMA: Well, I had my own work to do. I guess I had too much work I couldn't handle everything. So I couldn't keep working up there. I only worked there one year. I did help out one time when they were making some stream-bank curbing. But they had a special project and they needed some special help and I can't tell you what year that was. That might have been the very same year or it might have been another year, but I can't remember and I haven't even got a record of it, but I remember they put a lotta rocks in with the mesh wire around it to hold it and to hold the rocks

in place so they wouldn't, but it was just for stream bank protection up there.

McGuire: Did your family build your house, and if so, what materials did they use (rocks, wood, etc ...) and where did these materials come from?

ALMA: On my home? This home is made out of ah,...

McGuire: I mean the home you grew up in.

ALMA: Oh, oh. That was just a lumber, pine lumber.

McGuire: Where did that lumber come from?

ALMA: I don't know cuz it was already built and we just moved it from down the land and moved it up there. It was a two room home and we lived, moved it up there. Oh. Our own home?

McGuire: The one were Bob ...

ALMA: Yeah, that's a wood frame home. We got our lumber from up at Cedar City for that.

McGuire: O.k.

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

McGuire: We've noticed a lot of long rock walls in the area...did you have any of these rock walls on your family's land, and if so, what was the purpose of the walls?

ALMA: Ah, well, we just had a short one down on the farm down there that I remember. I just supposed it was for um, property line or boundary line, you know, property boundary line, or maybe it was to keep livestock inside of an area or something like that from somebody else's livestock that's what I supposed it was.

Section II: Wild Plants and Gardens

McGuire: Did you have a garden or did your family farm when you were in Zion Canyon, and if so, what plants? What were these plants used for (food, medicine, etc...) We've covered a lot about that, about the nature of your vegetable garden and your fruit trees, anything you'd like to add to that?

ALMA: Yeah. I'll, there's one thing, there was a plant that we called pigweed. And we used it. It come up real early and just all over the place you know; it seeded itself. And it came up early and we used it for greens like you would swiss chard or something like that. And it was delicious. Had good nice leaves on it and nice tender twigs and that was one of the things that we used to use and ah, and then we kids used to dig up sego lily bulbs and wild onions, they were little bulbs sort of like sego lily bulbs and we used to eat those, course, that was just on the side.

McGuire: Did the wild onions have another name?

ALMA: I don't know. That's what we kids called 'em. They were just little bitys you know. They wasn't anything to use for cooking or using for a family. It was just things that we kids liked to do cause it was different. And then they was a vine you've already mentioned, hops. That used to grow on the fence and I don't know whether that was used for, you said something about maybe that was used for brewing. I thought maybe they used it for poultices and you know, maybe if they was an infection or something, I thought that's what it might be used for, but I didn't know for sure about that.

McGuire: Where there other plants that might have been used for medicine?

ALMA: We used pine gum for, well we thought it was good to draw out, for infection, you know, to draw out. We used it when I had a sliver in my own foot and I think it was good.

McGuire: How did you...did you have to heat it and apply it or...

ALMA: No, you just get that ripe, soft, fresh, sticky gum. It wasn't the old kind that you could chew. And we just made a little poultice and put it on the area.

McGuire: Any other plants that might have been used for making teas or liquid medicines?

ALMA: We used, um, oh let's see I was gonna tell you about that...it had um, squawbush berries! We kids used to take those berries offen the squawbush. There the bushes you know, and we'd take a handfull of 'em and put them in a glass a water and put a spoonful of soda in there and it'd fizz, it'd fizz just like alka seltzer and drink it just forthe fun of it. I was talking about that last night with Bob! We used to that!

McGuire: A trick, was it?

ALMA: Well, not necessarily! We were just, the fizzing of it! It was exciting! We had devil horns. They were great big balls of 'em that would roll up together down on our farm when we homesteaded down there. And they were, they got those real sharp hooks on 'em. The Indians used to use these hooks fer when they was weaving baskets and things like that. But I don't know what the real name is, but we called 'em devil horns. You could pop them open and they had four sections with little seeds in 'em like about the size of a sunflower seed, the big kind that you could eat, you know, and you could put a handful in your mouth and chew them and spit out the part of it, you know. Or else you could do each one little bitys. But it was good and we used to like them. And ...

McGuire: Can you describe the devil's horn plant? Was it a bush? [transcriber's note: I think Alma is referring to what we today call, devil's claw]

ALMA: Ah, it was a quite a big plant, not too, too big. Some of 'em was little ones, but they'd always have some devil horns on 'em.

McGuire: The devil horns was the fruit of that particular plant. How big where they, like the size of a golf ball?

ALMA: Oh, it was a, it came up and branched out and curled around like that and had two horns on each, whatever you might want to call it, a pod or whatever it was, and these were *really* sharp and *stiff*. Stiff and they'd even get caught around an animals ankle sometimes there, and hang on quite a little while. But like I told you, the Indians used to use them too for hooking their things when they were making baskets and stuff.

McGuire: But the pod contained the seed that you like to eat.

ALMA: Yeah, we used to eat 'em.

McGuire: So they were like a pod shape, like a long pod like a ..

ALMA: Long, well, it was kinda long and then when it got up to the top it branched over an hooked over like that. You'd take those two and pull them apart and you could get these seeds out. And there's a little section on each side, two beside, but it was kind of an unusual plant. And there was prickly pear apples! They grew on the leaf cactus you know, the big leaved cactus that have the big leaves on 'em. I mean the, I guess they ____ use their leaves, but it's the flower that grows on each one of these that grows up and it has a fruit there. We call them fruit. And you can make jelly out of them, or jams out of them. And people do that you know, some people do. Maybe they still do to this day, because it's a unusual flavor and all of that. But real good. And we, course its loaded with thorns, little fine thorns; bigger thorns all over the cactus of course, and you'd

have to burn those off, get rid of them some how to use them. But that was one thing.

McGuire: Tell me again what it was called?

ALMA: We called 'em prickly pear apples.

McGuire: Prickly pear cactus? Or apples?

ALMA: Prickly pear apples but that grew on the cactus.

McGuire: That's what you called them? They still make jelly and things ...

ALMA: Yeah, they do. And then there was a Japanese lanterns or wild chokecherries. They were a little plant, they didn't grow very tall, but they grew wild all over, and they had a little thing that would hang down and like a Japanese lantern, you know, with a little silky thing around the outside and here was a cherry growing up in there about the size of a cherry and we used to call them chokecherries. I don't know, but we used to eat them. I can't remember that they were that good to eat, but he! he! we used...

McGuire: The chokecherry was inside the Japanese lantern?

ALMA: Yeah, what we called a Japanese lantern or wild chokecherries. You might call them wild chokecherries or you could call them Japanese lantern but there was a little kind of a thing hanging. It hung down like a lantern.

McGuire: Are these kinds of plants still in the area?

ALMA: I haven't seen any for a long, long time.

McGuire: Do you know why they're not here?

ALMA: Just um...

McGuire: Climate change maybe ...

ALMA: Climate change could a done it. Maybe they just died out finally, maybe just obsolete. Did Brigham tea too and I guess there's Brigham tea still down on my farm. Cuz we never did any use it that, but other people did and they ... little things. Oh! And then there's bottle stoppers! You don't know about bottle stoppers. I don't know that you do.

McGuire: Let's hear about bottle stoppers.

ALMA: Well, it used to grow quite tall but it was kind of a slim plant and it would grow up and when it got up a little bit, little bit then it'd, it'd get a bow on a place, it bows out, you know, like this and then it'd come back to an end and then there'd be a little piece go out here and another little piece go out here. But when it was growing up in the spring, if you'd get 'em when they was fresh, they were might be almost as big as a pencil when they'd grow quite tall. We'd get 'em and eat them sort of like an asparagus only a lot littler. And they were a little bit tart. But, oogh, we used to love to get a handful of those and eat them. They were called bottle stoppers.

McGuire: Did they grow in any particular area?

ALMA: Oh, all over the side hills and everything. You'd just get 'em on gravelly spots and all over.

McGuire: Are those same plants still here?

ALMA: I suppose so. I haven't been around lately to gather any of them! Then there was burdock. Burdock was a, well, it had a ...what do you call them...burrs on them like a cocklebur only it was a soft burr and it grab all over you, ever touch you, your clothes or your socks or your shirts or your hair it'd, if it got in your hair you'd have a hard time getting it out! And they're still around I'm sure. But they weren't, we didn't use those for anything, unless they used the root. And it seemed like they used the root for getting some juice out of it to wash their hair with it, for some kind of a hair rinse, I can't remember about that. Course, hops, we already mentioned hops.

McGuire: These bottle stoppers that you spoke of a moment ago, you picked them when they were fresh and green, but as they matured would they become brown and brittle?

ALMA: They, well, yeah, they just grew old and they dried up and ...

McGuire: I think they are up and around ...

ALMA: Oh, I wouldn't be surprised.

McGuire: There's a stalk with a bulge, and then a stalk...

ALMA: Little stalks sticking up two or three ways.

McGuire: We talked about the use of plants for medicine and how you used them and ah, also, I'd like to know if the plants were used for decorations like wreaths, or trees, or bouquets while you were growing up? Please explain which ones and how.

ALMA: Well, the only wreaths that I remember that they made, they used to make them out of the little cedar boughs. They'd get some little fresh grown cedar boughs and would turn them around and make wreaths out of them. And then of course, we had this Christmas trees, the little pinyon pines that we still use I guess maybe some people still use them, instead of boughten one. And then they had mistletoe that they, I guess maybe they still go hunt them off of some of the trees that have that parasite that mistletoe is and then a course, flowers, they had a, flowers are still used today, wildflowers. We used to use the wildflowers a lot. I'd bring home flowers all the time. My wife would put them in a little jar you know, with some tin foil around it and snowballs and snapdragons, and evening primroses and blue bells and red bells and Indian chiefs, all kind of flowers! Old and tame ones you know.

McGuire: Often used inside your home on the table for decoration.

ALMA: Yeah.

McGuire: When you were a kid growing up did you notice flowers and things like that inside your home?

ALMA: Oh, I, yeah, flowers is, I've always loved flowers. I never did buy very many of 'em. To buy them outright only occasionally, not very often but, I used to gather them *all* the time.

McGuire: So, when you were a kid you had plants and flowers inside your home just like you did when you were married? You describe having flowers inside your home, but I think that's when you were married.

ALMA: That's mostly when I was married. And I suppose, I don't remember about that too much, but ah, hmm, hmm, I can't tell you whether we had it too much.

McGuire: I think the question is basically about how plants were used in many ways. Medicine, beauty and ...

ALMA: Yeah, Yeah.

McGuire: ...in some cases eating and um...

ALMA: Yeah, some of them.

McGuire: Um, do you recall were plants used in ritual at all like wedding ceremonies and church-related events, and if so, how and which ones?

ALMA: I don't whether about them, but I know they used to get um, they'd have a cherry blossom wedding. Course that was blossoms offen their tree instead of a plant, but ah, they used to always have plants around you know, around, and I think a lot of those was wild, some wildflowers too besides um, home grown roses and ah, daffodils or tulips or whatever it might have been. But flowers were just, just used a lot all my life. I remember using flowers a lot.

McGuire: If you gathered wild plants, what areas/places did you gather them from?

ALMA: Might go clear up onto Steamboat Mountain. Flowers used to come out *real* early up there. I don't know whether it was because of the heat from the mountain, it would get warm and would keep the ground warm and they would come out early up there. We used to go get a handful of flowers. Different kinds of flowers, you know, red bells and things like that that used to grow up there. But mostly, mostly the flowers that I got was from down on the farm. And they was just all of these kinds that I've already mentioned, you know, that they were growing *all* the time; snowballs was one of my favorites. They was just little ones with the real fragrant like um, an orchid or something. Oh, they smelled good.

McGuire: I think you've already answered this question, but was there a time your family stopped using wild plants? If so, when and why?

ALMA: Well, I just suppose that we had plenty of other things that we didn't need the wild plants too much so that we just, um, used what we raised of our own.

McGuire: What did you use to heat your house? (If wood, what kind and where gathered.)

ALMA: Well, we used ah, a lot of cedar and pine. And we would go up on the South Mountain to get this a lot. Everybody used to go up there to get wood and ah, a lot a times we'd gather wood that came down the river. And course, this was all kinds of wood, they was cottonwoods and ah, black willow and birch and oak and just about ever kind of wood that lives around in this area would come down and we'd gather oh, just load after load after load of that kind of wood. Mostly fir making sorghum with and sometimes for using in our homes too to help heat it.

McGuire: That was wood that gather in the river?

ALMA: Yeah, with the floods.

McGuire: I'm going to ask you a few very specific questions about plants that you may or may not remember. Can you remember the plant salt cedar (tamarisk) from when you were growing up and if so, what do

you remember about it?

ALMA: Don' remember it. I remember what we called tamarak. That's still around today. But I don't think it's that.

McGuire: Yeah.

ALMA: It grew by the river?

McGuire: Can you describe it?

ALMA: It's just a busy plant that grows up and has a lot of um, limbs that grows up from a base and ah, ...

McGuire: Does it have bark on it?

ALMA: Bark, well, no there just um, sometimes there's some real slender stems that come out quite long and we kids used to get them and use them for arrows. With the, when the, for a bowl. But that's the only thing I can ever remember that we used them for, well, we used to cut them for jiggers in our fence when they got a little bit bigger cause they were hard wood and they'd last a long, long time.

McGuire: Can you tell me what a jigger is?

ALMA: A jigger is just something to stablize the wires, to tie them the same distance apart from the bottom to the top between where ever the main posts were and they was jiggers between.

McGuire: How did they get that name, jiggers?

ALMA: well, sometimes they would bounce up and down if they wadn't touching the ground, but, I guess that's how come!

McGuire: But the tamarak was one of the types of wood that was good for that use.

ALMA: Yeah, that was, but that other thing that I mentioned there, that, I don't know what that's all about.

McGuire: Salt cedar or tamarisk? Yeah, they were introduced into this part of the country, I guess, I'm not sure when ...

ALMA: Maybe, do you think they're talkin about the same plant?

McGuire: Well, the tamarisk that grows along the river right now, it's a ...

ALMA: Is that the same one they're talkin about?

McGuire: Not sure.

ALMA: I'm not either. They called it tamarak, tamaraks. I don't know.

McGuire: Do you remember anything about the plant sacred datura (jimsonweed ... the one with the big white flowers)? If so, do you remember anyone using it for anything?

ALMA: I remember that, that was a big plant and we had lots of 'em. They just grew wild and, you know, there's lots of 'em down on the farm. They grew wild and the only thing that I remember about them, they had a big seed pod on them, a round one, that was loaded with spines or whatever you want to call it. It didn't seem to be sharp spines that was on there cuz, we'd see some of our livestock, cows, that would take those seed pods in their mouth and chew them up and eat them. We thought they were eating them because of um, the vitamins that were in there, or maybe the oil that was in there cuz it seemed like they were rich. There was a lotta seeds in there, just loaded with seeds and we thought they were rich in oil. That's the only thing I can remember about tamarak.

McGuire: About sacred datura?

ALMA: Yeah.

McGuire: So the cows used to eat them but you had no use for them; your family didn't use them in anyway?

ALMA: No. Except we like to like those big trumpet flowers, the big old flowers, beautiful ones.

Section III: The Virgin River

McGuire: Tell me what you remember about the Virgin River from your childhood (or early time in the area) ...

ALMA: Well I been fighting the river *all* my life. Of course, not right now I'm not, haven't got the energy to fight it. But when them big floods would come down, of course we knew this Virgin River was mighty important to us cuz it furnished us our drinking water for a long, long time until we got our springs. And it furnishes us with our irrigatin water all the time clear up to the present time. But sometimes it'd come down and it'd wash away people's farms, crops and all. I remember it took a lot of our farmland away with the crops already on it. Cane all ready for cutting or harvesting,

you know, for making sorghum out of. And we had peas that we took to market, I don't know, we just took them down to the school so, Hurricane High School, for lunches and stuff like that. But they didn't, the floods didn't care about what kinds of crops was on 'em, they took, it just took 'em and took 'em away!

McGuire: Did it flood often when you were a kid?

ALMA: Oh lots a times. Lots a times.

McGuire: Especially in the spring and the fall...

ALMA: It wadn't in the spring, well they had high water in the spring but not, it didn't usually wash away stuff too much. It was when they had the bigger floods that come down in the late summer and the late fall. Like the 1966 flood, that was a big one and that was in December 5th, 6th, and 7th; that was a, well, I guess the biggest one that they've ever recorded. It come down the river.

McGuire: Those floods were caused by...thunderstorms up in the canyon? And the water accumulating coming down?

ALMA: Umhmm. That one was, the reason that one was so big, it snowed quite a lot up around, all over the place and then it warmed up and it rained on it and warmed up and melted it and rained on it at the same time so that brought a double dose down.

McGuire: So the Virgin River is something that you've had to fight all your life?

ALMA: Yeah, yeah. Stream bank protection.

McGuire: Did you plant along irrigation ditches or plant where you wanted to and bring the water to the plant through your irrigation ditches?

ALMA: Well, not really, not really. The ditches, open ditches, they had a tendency to use a lotta water; If you had a cottonwood growing on an open ditch, and it was a big cottonwood, they used to say that that would take a hundred gallon a water out a your system ever day because of the evaporation, you know. So we didn't do that but we planted things along the river if it wasn't, you know, if it was in a place where it needed protecting, fact they had a special project where they would go up on the mountain and get cedar trees, had to get permission to do that, they'd push them up with their dozer, I did that, push 'em up, roots and all, have a chain hoisted 'em, lift 'em right up in the back of the truck, and we'd bring 'em down and tie them where they needed to be along the river for protection.

McGuire: Did you or your family ever fish in the river, and if so, for what fish and were they common?

ALMA: Well, yeah, we fished, we, yeah we got suckers, mostly suckers and a few trout occasionally.

McGuire: There were trout in the Virgin River?

ALMA: Yeah, sometimes I guess, they planted trout up in the park, up in Zion proper. Once in awhile they'd plant them, you know, there, so that they would be up along the rivers where people could go and fish and that was just to encourage people to come up into the park, maybe.

McGuire: Rainbow trout?

ALMA: I suppose, I suppose.

McGuire: They don't do that anymore do they.

ALMA: I don't think so.

McGuire: And suckers, was there any value in catching suckers or just the fun of it?

ALMA: Oh, we used to eat them a lot. Oh we ate hundreds and hundreds of suckers. They'd come down the ditch. With us being the last ones on the ditch, I had a trap in the ditch, and instead of them coming out and going out on the ground it'd catch 'em before they got out of there and we'd clean 'em and cook a big batch of them and eat 'em. And sometimes if they were, they had lotsa bones in 'em, sometimes mom would pressure cook them so that we could eat 'em. But they tasted pretty good, they had a pretty good taste.

McGuire: These were suckers, not carp. Where their carp?

ALMA: I don't know.

McGuire: O.k., but you'd catch suckers. Were suckers the ones that have like, ah, ..

ALMA: A mouth that's ...

McGuire: They're bottom feeder type fish?

ALMA: well, they got a round mouth ...

McGuire: Other than the bones, which you could take out, they were pretty good eating?

ALMA: Oh, yeah. They, the meat tasted good. If you got big ones, if you got big suckers they were hard to get all the bones out of 'em. But if you would get six or eight inches or something like that, why, you could get most of the bones out and they were good.

McGuire: Do you remember what plants/trees were along the banks of the Virgin River and how many/how dense (more or less than now)?

ALMA: Well, cottonwoods and black willows and regular willows were along the river all the time. They'd been up and down the rivers *all* the time. That's what we used to use for the diversion dams. You know, we'd cut the cottonwood and use them into, put them acrost where we had dams to divert the water out into our ditches. And then the Russian olives is come in recently and they're the ones with the thorns on. They're not so comfy to try to find your way through them.

McGuire: They don't have any real purpose, do they then, the Russian olives?

ALMA: They, as far as protection for the river well, they just have a shallow root system and if they're where the river takes them away, it could go there and cave them off and they wouldn't have anything to help protect the, protect it.

McGuire: Was the vegetation along the river more dense in those days when you were a kid than it is today?

ALMA: No, I don't think so. Cuz with the Russian olives and the tamaraks and the black willas and the cottonwoods and regular willows and whatever grows along there its pretty dense, you know, today.

Section IV: Animals of Zion Canyon

McGuire: What wild animals did you see and/or hear when you were a child?

ALMA: Deer, coyotes, beaver, not too many beaver but they were beavers and they bothered us some, quite a bit, they'd build their dams where the, where they weren't needed along, to keep the water from going in our ditches! And course they was lottsa snakes, they was rattlesnakes and blow snakes and king snakes and racers. They were around all the time and occasionally we'd see a desert turtle maybe and cougars once in awhile. We'd see them occasionally.

McGuire: How about bighorn sheep?

ALMA: No, no they, they weren't any around here that I remember. But I guess there was a few sheep somewheres.

McGuire: And turkeys and tortoises?

ALMA: Turkeys? Um, I don't know about turkeys. We raised turkeys, course they was skunks! Lotsa a skunks. And civit cats and ringtail cats. I used to trap those, squirrels and chipmonks and eagles, we'd see eagles once in awhile and a course lots a hawks, we called 'em bullet hawks and crows, lotsa crows.

McGuire: Pretty much like it is today, huh?

ALMA: Yeap, umhmm.

McGuire: Did your family use many non-farm animals for food or hides or other purposes and if so, which animals and how were they used?

ALMA: Well, we used deer. We used to go hunting, you know, just when we needed the meat. We didn't go for the hunt. We went when we needed the meat. We used to go and we'd get deer everyyear and ah, and cottontail, a course that'un didn't amount to too much! But cottontails is good to eat! They're good meat. We, one time we kids got some cottontails when we was having a dinner and we got some squirrels that same day and we thought, "why don't we take some of this squirrel meat home and take it and put it in with the cottontail meat." And we did and we thought we'd fool the people who was at the dinner, you know, and they was a eatin away and enjoying the meat and we could tell the difference, because, well we could tell the difference between the two kinds of meat, and they got that squirrel meat, and "oh, why this is sure good." Shoot, we were there grinnin because we thought, "well, isn't that something, pulling a trick like that on 'em." We just couldn't stand it any longer, we had to get a piece of squirrel meat and it taste, sit and see how it tasted like and it was good too! Hee hee! Porkypine meat is not too good, it's kinda bad and all that and moist, and a course it'd save your life a lotta times and cuz they were around, they mentioned that they was, if you ever get lost and you're starving, well, hunt a porkypine. You can save your life.

McGuire: How so? Because they had such high fat content?

ALMA: Well, because they can't get away from you.

McGuire: You can catch them.

ALMA: You can catch ‘em, you know, you can take a stick and flip ‘em over and once you get them flipped over on their back you got ‘em and then you can kill ‘em. And I know that when I was a boy scout leader we decided we wanted to see what it tasted like and they got a porkupine and they cooked it and all that, but it didn’t taste that good. They had a little bit of sand on it so didn’t help it taste any better!

McGuire: That goes for all boy scout food.

ALMA: Ha! I guess so!

McGuire: Did you use the hide from any of these animals?

ALMA: We didn’t. We used to always keep the hide and somebody’d pick them up and they would use them, take them to market or whatever.

McGuire: Did your family keep domestic animals, farm animals, bees (for honey) etc...and if so which ones and why were they kept? Did you seasonally move any of the farm animals for grazing and if so, where?

ALMA: Well, of course, bees. Well, of course, we had our horses. We had to have the horses then for our work and for riding. Cows, of course, we’ve already mentioned that for their milk products and the meat. And sheep for meat and wool and pigs for winter use. I guess we already mentioned that didn’t we? Bees we mentioned that. Sorghum, mentioned sorghum. Oh and a chicken’s a course, and turkeys, we raised turkeys for market.

McGuire: Did you have to move larger animals to grazing areas?

ALMA: We didn’t have any BLM grazing rights at that time. But we just had our own pasture so we’d just move them from one pasture to another’un. And that’s the way we did our moving ours.

McGuire: Do you think your religious beliefs influenced in any ways the way you felt about the animals around you or the ways in which you took care of them?

ALMA: Well, I suppose so. We felt that our animals were important to us and we well, like we’ve already kind of mentioned it, um, that they’re necessary for family living and things like that. If you had a pet maybe you had to kill it for meat sometimes and that was kinda rough.

McGuire: Like what kind of pet?

ALMA: Oh, a sheep, you know, you might hand raise it from a lamb and the kids might have had it for a real pet for a time or a turkey or something like

that and the time would come when you wanted to have it for use, for family use for meat. “oh, I can’t eat any of that! That’s one of our pets!”

McGuire: So you became attached to your ... some animals.

ALMA: Oh yeah! Sure you do, you do. And ah, yeah you do.

Section V: Zion National Park

McGuire: Do you remember the early years of the Zion National Park and if so describe them?

ALMA: Well, I remember yeah, I remember when they had mention something in there about the CCCs doing the WPA, it doesn’t say anything about the WPA workers, but I remember when I was a kid we celebrated, one 4th of July, we celebrated and I can’t tell you, 30? 29? Or 30? We celebrated right here in our own town, the completion of the Zion Park Tunnel! They completed it. They started on one end, well, they started on both ends and when they come together they was only off a little itty bit. Course they’d a just scraped that out and nobody’ d ever known the difference. And that was a major project and I remember we celebrated that right here in town. And it was mentioned. And I remember my dad, my dad worked up there. And he um, he had a scrapper or a Fresno, and I think my brother Bob is got the Fresno that was used up there on the switchbacks, when they was making the switchbacks going up there to the tunnel.

McGuire: Tell me what a Fresno is.

ALMA: Its just like a scrapper only it’s metal. It’s got some runners on it so that you can push it up and you can hold it and it’ll spread the, instead a dumping it all a one, you can hold it with the handle that comes up and a rope on the end of the handle and you can hold it so it’d a spread it. On your farm, or wherever you’re working, makin road ...

McGuire: Pulled by either a tractor or a horse?

ALMA: Well, yeah. A course it was horses at that time. And ah, and he worked up there. They were working seven days a week. And the horses were tired and the men were tired. They were just dragging all the time, they was so tired. Somebody suggested, “why don’t we have a day a rest?” and ah, so they decided that, ah, on Sunday they’d have a day a rest! So they did that! Well, Monday the horses were rested, the men were rested. They were ready to do to work! They found out they got more work done in six days then they were getting done in seven days!

McGuire: So they kept that tradition up?

ALMA: I suppose. I suppose so.

McGuire: Did your father work for a contractor or a company or was he just an independent worker up there? What was that relationship?

ALMA: I guess he was working for a contractor. I think it was WW Clyde, that had the contract for, maybe that was building the tunnel too, or maybe that was just the switchbacks, but I can't tell you that for sure.

McGuire: Your dad worked on the switchbacks.

ALMA: I think that's, yeah, where he was out making the roadway up to the tunnel.

McGuire: How long did he work on that project?

ALMA: Can't tell you. Couldn't tell you that. But it seemed like it was quite awhile.

McGuire: Was any of your family's land bought by the government for inclusion in the park and if so where was it located (describe)? How did your family feel about selling their land?

ALMA: We didn't have any that the park bought.

McGuire: Do you remember how your family felt about having a new national park in their backyard?

ALMA: Well, I felt it was all right. I felt it was alright. Like we already mentioned before that we, we'd take our family, they'd come to visit us and our friends and we'd take them up and show them where the Weeping Rock was and where the Grotto was and where the, where you waded up to the Narrows and all of that, and the Temple of Sinawava and that little cliff dwellings too that shows up there. And ah, we knew enough about it that we could kinda explain a little bit and where you could see the Great White Throne and that. And a few things like that. And so I guess we've always been interested in the park!

McGuire: And you've liked it?

ALMA: Yeah!

McGuire: Were there many non-local visitors once Zion National Park was established? If so did you have much contact with them? Do you remember what parts of the state or country they were from?

ALMA: Oh, like I mentioned, when I was postmaster for a long, long time and they came from all over the country! I remember one time people from New York, I was cancelling my things out and they come in with a lot a cards, and I was really, really busy. I just couldn't keep up with things and so they left me a whole pile and they said, "would you please see that these things are cancelled out with your hand stamp so that they'll have Rockville, Utah on them like you been doing these others, cuz we like that." And I says, "I'll do that." And they left their whole pile of stuff back there with the money to pay for them. And when the business was over, or whenever I was free, I decided to straighten it out, well, they left too much change. They left too much, what am I gonna do? Put it in my pocket? I put it in the drawer. I've gotta report it and if I'd got too much, that won't work. If they'd a been short I could a sent them postage due and sent to them. So I took one of the things and got the address off from it and I took the change that shoulda gone back and I sent it to them. I said, "Will you please see that whoever spent the money for the postage gets this?" They wrote me back the sweetest letter and said that nobody would ever do that, nobody would ever do that! They'd put that money in their pocket and nobody would be the wiser! Except me.

McGuire: As postmaster you had more insight than most people as to where the visitors were coming from.

ALMA: Oh, yeah. They came from all over.

McGuire: All over the United States.

ALMA: Yeah, they were ...

McGuire: Any international visitors? Europeans?

ALMA: They were, I remember one time they was a group from Japanese people come. And they were in a group, you know, and couldn't understand, they talked their own language when they was talkin to theirselves and when they needed to talk to somebody else they could talk English. But they were really excited about it. They'd been up in the park too, and things and that's the only group that I really remember of that was outside of the United States.

McGuire: What years were you postmaster?

ALMA: From late 60s to the early 90s. Long time.

McGuire: Did you have any contact with people who worked in the park, including people in the CCC? If so describe it.

ALMA: I think my dad worked for the CCs for a couple a days, if I remember. But ah, I never did have anything to do with 'em. I think they were the ones that put our curbs and gutters in our town. Maybe that was the WPAs, I don't know. I can't ...

McGuire: It's not clear to you then, what members of the CCC and any impact they may have had on you.

ALMA: They didn't have any impact on me. I don't, they had a kind of a bad name as far as I remember. Oh, I couldn't say that on here!

Portion of tape cut here at interviewee's request.

I wouldn't want somebody else to hear that! But that's naughty! That's naughty. But that's the only thing I remember about the CCCs!

McGuire: So they didn't have a good reputation in this town.

ALMA: Well, I don't know who, well, I guess not. Maybe that came from other towns too. I don't know how come the, that saying came about. Cuz I just don't remember that. That's the only thing I do remember. That's naughty, I shouldn't have remembered. You should get those kind of naughty things out of our mind! But sometimes they'll, those dirty things are hard to get out of your mind! It's not really dirty as far as I'm concerned, except it's not putting a very good light on them. There might have been a lot of good, good, good ones in there. Good, good members as good as *anybody* else. Not members of the church maybe, maybe, but. So you just can't judge a company or whatever it might be, or an organization or association by some individual that you, it's kinda like our church, people judge one individual that's a bad egg, rotten apple in a barrel...

McGuire: Do you think people felt differently about the land and the park during your early years in the Canyon area than they do today and if so how and why?

ALMA: I don't know whether they think any differently. We had lots of people from our town of Rockville that were employees up there maybe all their lives.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A

ALMA: I don't feel like they think much different. It seems to me like people have enjoyed that park. And the opportunity they have of going up there for a little outing, you know, and maybe just for a drive and ah, and today I guess maybe it's the same way, people like to go up there, go up there with the shuttle busses and things like that now. And that is one of the main things of their tours that come in here for visits. I mean like tourists from out of town. And I guess our own people take their friends and that on this shuttle buses and go up there to see the beauties of the park.

Section VI Conclusions

McGuire: Can you give us an overall feeling of what it was like to be part of a Zion pioneer family and to grow up in (or just outside) Zion National Park?

ALMA: Well, I didn't really figure that I was a Zion park pioneer. I figured I was a pioneer, right from the time we came in here in Rockville. And we homesteaded down on our farm which we still have to this day. I figure we were pioneers! We were starting out all over again. Pop didn't have a job and we kids weren't old enough to do any work much and so we started right from scratch like pioneers would and we just come out of that and blossom like a rose or whatever! and ah, always figured that we were pioneers.

McGuire: Absolutely. What did that, it was kind of exciting and fun for you to grow up in this area.

ALMA: Oh! It's been a, a wonderful experience and um, something I guess that was necessary to help people know that, that's the reason we're placed here on this earth, is to prove ourselves and show that we can take the, well, there's hardships come along the way and everybody had problems and things and you overcome the problems and profit by the experiences you have and it's um, it's a great life.

McGuire: Do you think your early years in the canyon area influenced who you are today and if so, how?

ALMA: Well, ah, I guess um, with me and LDS and believing in a creation and a God that created all of these beauties that we have here in our own area right here in Rockville and Springdale, and up in the park, they're beautiful places, like there are all over the world, beautiful places, they're God's creations and when you believe in something like that, well, you have to, you have to just believe in how beautiful it is to be in this area.

McGuire: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you would like to share?

ALMA: No, I'm just um, I'm thankful that I'm still living here so I can enjoy these things even though I don't get around very much anymore, like the song says.

McGuire: It's more than the visual too, isn't it? There's a feeling up here.

ALMA: Yeah, that's great. That's great. And going to church here in the Springdale ward and ah, there's they show their love one for another, and how they're there for each other, the families, you see how close they are and it's just wonderful.