

Connie McArthur Morby and Charles Jeffrey Morby
Interviewed by Loren Webb
For the Washington County Historical Society

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Participants: Loren Webb
Connie Morby
Jeff Morby

Webb: Good afternoon. My name is Loren Webb. I'm with the Washington County Historical Society, and this is the fourteenth in a series of oral history interviews that I'm conducting. Today I have with me Jeff and Connie Morby. I like to say that they're from Bloomington [Utah] because in a sense they really are. So I'd like to have you first state both of your full names.

Jeff: First? I'll go first. My name is Charles, my first name, after my father, Charles Jeffrey Morby.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: And, yeah, that's me.

Connie: And my name is Connie McArthur Morby.

Webb: Okay. Thank you.

Connie: And I am from St. George, but then to Bloomington, so—

Webb: Thank you. How did, Jeff, how did you get interested in real estate?

Jeff: Well, my interest started when I was going to school at [the] University of Utah. [I] graduated a little early in the spring, and was approached by one of my professors there, J. D.—

Connie: Williams.

Jeff: Williams, yeah, J. D. Williams approached me and said, and handed me, actually, in class, handed me a little note and said in this note, as I read it, "Jeff, there's a great company that's begun business here in town. Jim Kimball is the man I want you to go see and interview with him for a potential job opportunity. I didn't know J. D. Williams other than that he was my professor. But I didn't think he knew me. So I was just, well, okay, so I go down and meet with Jim Kimball, James N. Kimball, at the office headquarters for a company called Terracor. And he was the administrative officer there at the headquarters at 529 East South Temple. I'll never forget the address. And

he said, so I went down and met with Mr. Kimball after J.D.'s invitation for me to go, Professor Williams, to go to meet with him about a job opportunity. And so I do. I meet with Jim Kimball, and he offers me a job to work with him in Salt Lake in their corporate headquarters kind of as an administrative job with him. So I said, "Yeah, I'd be happy to." You know, I graduated early from the University of Utah, but, so I went to work for Terracor there in Salt Lake City in, I think it was March of 1970, 1970, I think it was, yeah.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: Yeah.

Webb: Let's talk with you, Connie. How did you get interested, and when did you get interested in real estate?

Connie: Okay, I'm not really in real estate. I mean I don't have a license or anything. But I got a job working on site at the project in Bloomington, the Bloomington project. A friend of mine was leaving that position, and I used to work for her at a little Mexican restaurant in town, so I took her place. And I wasn't a real estate agent or a salesman, but I would take people who came into the office, and I would show them the different aspects of why they would want to be in Bloomington, like skiing and horseback riding and all the, I forgot the word, amenities—

Webb: Uh-huh.

Connie: Of buying a lot there. And then I kept, I was the receptionist, and I kept track of the lot sales and colored in the squares and worked with the—

Webb: So you worked with Terracor, right?

Connie: Yeah.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: On-site, Bloomington, on-site.

Webb: And when did you start working for Terracor?

Connie: I think I was still, it was in college when I first started with Dixie College.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: 1969, '68, '69.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: So all these salesmen I worked with, like a bunch of salesmen that were on site, cute, young, married, young families. I mean they were just ideal, I just loved working with them. And I don't know, I just loved that job.

Webb: That's awesome. Okay. So when did you obtain your real estate license?

Jeff: I'll try and make this short.

Webb: And maybe talk about your broker license, as well.

Jeff: I'll do that, but, so I'm in Salt Lake working for Terracor which developed Bloomington. It had four or five other communities around the country—back East, one in Texas, one in Canada, and so, but their main one, their first, was Bloomington in St. George, and also a place up north called Stansbury Park which was theirs.

Webb: By Tooele.

Jeff: Yeah. By Tooele. So my situation was they, after I worked there in the office for a while, there was a little bit of a financial cutback when the company wasn't doing quite as well as they had hoped in selling of lots and so forth, and the economy was kind of taking a dip for sure. So they had to let go of a lot of people, and, but they kept me in the Salt Lake office there. And then Jim Kimball, who was my boss, said to me, "Hey, we want to send you to St. George, Utah." I was, "Where's St. George, Utah," kind of? I didn't know. I was from northern Utah. And I said, "Well, okay." You know, I was kind of at a crossroads of I wanted to go to law school, but I didn't know exactly if that was going to work, and so I said, "Yeah, this would be good." So I packed my bags, got in my little car, and drove to St. George.

Webb: What year was that?

Jeff: That was 1971.

Webb: 1971, okay. So how did you two meet and get married.

Jeff: Well, should I tell you or should—

Webb: I want to hear from both.

Connie: It might not be the same story. When I first saw Jeff, I was working at the Bloomington office, but I was going to go to Utah State. But I remember he came down with a girl who was darling. And I thought he was really cute. But, so it wasn't a big deal. He probably didn't even notice me or anything. But then after that I went away to Utah State, and the salesmen from Bloomington, one in particular, Guy Arnell, he says, "I want to line you up with Jeff Morby." So I was at Utah State when we got lined up for the first time.

Webb: Yeah.

Connie: And then, you know, he had other interests, I had other interests, and we were still interested in each other. And so it was kind of back and forth until I graduated and went back to St. George. And then he got transferred to St. George.

Jeff: We had dated once up here, well, not up here, once in Salt Lake.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: At Big H there and had a nice burger and fries and whatever.

Connie: That was after we were at Club 39, and he was trying to do the swim, and we had fun. But anyway, then we went to Big H.

Jeff: So anyway, that's how we met, and then we dated a little bit, but when I moved, she'd moved, she came back from school and was living back in St. George, then I moved to St. George and started working at Bloomington running their rental program for overnight lodging at Bloomington for second homes.

Webb: This is Terracor?

Jeff: Yeah, for Terracor, yeah.

Webb: Wow. Okay. So when did you guys get married?

Connie: Well, so he came down there, and I was really confused about what I should do, so I moved back to Salt Lake for a minute. And then finally figured it out and came back home and we got married. And then I wasn't, I was working for the School District office then.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: But I worked at Bloomington before there was a bridge, before the Country Club was finished. So I worked there in like the early stages.

Webb: Before the Bloomington Bridge was built?

Connie: I'd drive through the, they had a fleet of cars we could use to tour people around. I didn't take tours, I just, but if I needed to take something over to the golf shop, which I think was a trailer house at the time, the club, I would just drive through the river because they said I could and the river was low. Otherwise I would have to drive around the back way. But I loved to tell—

Webb: You drove through the river?

Connie: I drove, it was in their cars, you know, they had a fleet. So I drove through the river. I love to tell my kids that story.

Webb: Okay. So—

Jeff: I might add, we married on February 2nd, and this February 2nd is our fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Webb: Oh, wow.

Jeff: So it's been fifty years since that monumental meeting of us back in 1971, and here we are.

Webb: So describe your family, aspects of your family life and raising your children. How many children?

Jeff: Well, we have, we have been blessed with six children, three boys and three girls. And you know, when I first got here, I noticed all the families when kids were graduating from school and so forth, they were leaving town to find a job. And right now for us, all six of our children live here in St. George, and all of them have families and good employment and are doing well in the community, which at the time when I moved here was like 7,500 people in St. George. And now, you know, the numbers are what, 150- to 175,000.

Webb: Right.

Jeff: One stoplight. When I pulled into town, I hit one stoplight at Main and St. George Boulevard. And it was actually, flashing, I think. And then took a left down Main Street and found my way out to Bloomington. So—

Webb: Yeah. I remember that one stop light, as well.

Jeff: Yeah. What a change.

Webb: Who were the principal persons who developed Terracor?

Jeff: Well, I worked directly with James N. Kimball. He was the secretary/treasurer of the company, Terracor. But three businessmen in Salt Lake, Roger Boyer, Franklin Johnson, and Ellis Ivory, were the founders of a company called Johnson Land Company. And that land company then merged and then created a company they called Terracor Corporation. And it became the developer of Bloomington, Bloomington Hills, and several other communities around the country. But its main focus at the time was Bloomington. They wanted to have that be kind of their premier project to show, you know, investors and the financing world what they could do and how successful they could be. Those three men are unbelievable. You know, Roger Boyer now is

amazing up in Salt Lake, and Ellis Ivory, of course, is one of the larger, if not the largest real estate companies in the state.

Webb: Wow.

Jeff: And Frank Johnson was an attorney and at that time had a lot of influential brothers, Glendon Johnson was his brother who was out of Texas, big insurance executive. And so they were able to do a lot of the financing and get the initial financing for the company.

Webb: Okay. So what was your involvement with Terracor here in St. George.

Jeff: My—

Webb: And then I want to ask Connie, again, and expand what you've already said, what was your involvement with Terracor, Connie?

Jeff: They, when I moved here, I was responsible, became the property manager of their holdings.

Webb: In Bloomington and Bloomington Hills?

Jeff: In Bloomington, uh-huh. And at the time James Ward, Jim Ward, was the engineer on site, and he was the project manager. And then they moved Jim, not happy about it, moved him back to Salt Lake. He was running all the engineering for the whole company. And then they named me as the project manager for Bloomington [and] Bloomington Hills.

Webb: Okay. And what did that involve?

Jeff: Well, it was just overseeing all the development that we had to do and construction and building of the roads and subdivisions and working with the County and the City and so forth as to trying to bring the services to the lot owners that were buying lots. And then I worked with the sales staff that was headed up by a lot of sales people. Dusty Fannesbeck was in charge of sales for quite a while, and just a lot of great men that were over the sales department. And I was coordinating with them.

Webb: How many lots were in Bloomington, and how many lots were in Bloomington Hills?

Jeff: These are approximate numbers. Bloomington was about 1,200 lots, total lots, and Bloomington Hills was around 1,400 total lots.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: So—

Webb: Connie. Again, tell us a little bit about your involvement, and did you have any connection with the stables, the horse stables?

Connie: How did you know?

Webb: If you did, I really want to hear about the horse stables. Because nobody remembers the horse stables.

Connie: Oh, I, yes, I remember them so well.

Webb: Right.

Connie: Okay. I was the receptionist in the sales office, and the project office was right next door. We'd just walk across the lawn, and it was so fun. They had all these things that you could do. And since I worked there, I could do the same thing. Like boats over in Lake Powell, we could go take the ski boats for a weekend or something. I could ride horses in the stables, the stables. Where the Bloomington school is now, there was a beautiful riding stable. And I always wanted to be a cowgirl. So I loved to go there. I'd take my brother and my friends. And they were basically trail horses. But one day I took one of the workers there [who] was working on a horse, you know, trying to make him nice. And so I had my friends with me, a couple of friends would come down from school because I'd still work there in summertime and that kind of stuff. So I said, "I want that horse." I think it was Finley John. Do you remember Finley John? He lived with Andruses.

Webb: Oh, yeah, I do, I actually remember that.

Connie: Anyway, he was, he was working on that.

Webb: Yeah.

Connie: I said, "I want that horse that you're working with." And he was so shy and so nice. He said, "Okay." And so I got on that horse and my friends got on theirs. And the minute I got on that horse, he ducked his head and took off. You know how they kind of rear their head. He took off out, there was kind of a stable thing like this, I mean an entry to the stables. He took off and started running down the side of the road which goes toward the river. And I was so scared. I don't think he bucked me off. I think I fell off because he was running so fast and I was so scared. But basically my dad beat the ambulance there, and I ended up in the hospital for a minute or two, had a, I don't know, concussion and a few scrapes, a few stitches. But, so that was my stable story. I just loved the stables, and it made me sad to think that, I mean I love the school there. Our kids went there. But the stables, it was beautiful stables. And it was just a fun thing for us, for me.

Webb: How tall, how tall were those stables?

Connie: How tall?

Webb: Yeah. They were pretty tall, weren't they?

Connie: They were tall. Well, yeah, because they had a thing over the front. But the stables, it was beautiful. It was just like you'd see on a TV show. It was really beautiful, and to see them taken down, it was sad. But—

Webb: I know. I think I was really sad about that.

Connie: Do you remember the stables?

Webb: I do.

Connie: Oh, that was so fun.

Webb: Yeah.

Jeff: I think for me, though, the turning point in many respects for the community was, it was designed to be a second-home community. Come and be at Bloomington and enjoy all the great things of southern Utah and St. George, and then go home. And so, but the change became when people saw, you know, what St. George was like, and this community—they wanted to live here. So they started moving here permanently. And guess what, you know, they had children. They had, and so for me, I know the stables was kind of a nice thing, for sure, a nice amenity. But for me, it kind of represented that change in the whole dynamics of Bloomington and St. George a bit where we now are raising children as opposed to boarding horses. So as I drive by there every day I think, wow, you know, what an amazing little monument that little elementary school is. Our kids all went there, and—

Webb: Right.

Jeff: And I think marked a whole shift of what Bloomington was about, and that was people as opposed to, you know, recreational community.

Webb: Right. So how did both of you become involved with Ian Cumming's Leucadia Corporation, and what was its connection to Terracor properties and the two Bloomingtons?

Jeff: Well, I was working in Salt Lake at the time, and most of the financing was happening, you know, where our, the principals of the company would go to outside investors to invest in big, huge projects like this, what they called real estate trusts. And they funded the development over time, because it takes a lot of time to do what you do and then sell the end product. And so that's really what got Terracor into trouble was we got so spread out, and then in 1971, well, excuse me, in 1980, '78, '79, [the] economy took a dip and the market was, everything went south as far as development was

concerned. And the only thing that really could happen, frankly, to save what we were doing was to file a Chapter 11 bankruptcy. So Terracor did. And as they did that, the court got involved, and the court demanded that the administration of the company change. And so Roger Boyer, Ellis Ivory, Frank Johnson, all moved on to other things. And Ian Cumming was named pretty much by the court to come and replace those administrative jobs, the executives, and run the company during those difficult times. He basically came to—

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: He came from Boston, and we'd borrowed some money from his institution, and he really came to protect their interest, as I understand it. Now don't, I'm not privy to all of that info. But that's why he came. And he basically started doing things that would allow us to walk through that bankruptcy and then come out and provide what we had sold to people, their lot they could build on. You know, that it wasn't going to go, become a desert wasteland. It was going to be a home that they could build on those lots. And I think from that point of view he did an amazing job.

Webb: Okay. How did that tie in to Bloomington and Bloomington Hills application or proposal to the City of St. George to become annexed into the City of St. George, and did you, did both of you support the annexation, or oppose the annexation?

Jeff: Well, I was, I was basically given the charge to locally administer the needs to make that happen. And so that was a challenge because most of, a lot of people in Bloomington bought Bloomington. They came here because it was out and a way, it was way down the road, pretty much on its own. And that's what they wanted and liked. And so annexation wasn't what they wanted. But the reality was we could not survive or continue onward without water. And we didn't have any resources to go find the water and to develop the water to serve the community. We just didn't have it.

Webb: You had to get the water from the City of St. George?

Jeff: Yeah. We were, we bought the water from the City when we were in the County. But when that ended, when the bank and all that happened, basically the source of the water from St. George was not going to be anything that could support, if we were in the County. And so we, we had really no option. We had to annex in at our request, and of course St. George wasn't jumping up and down about it. But they were very cooperative in knowing that we were basically, without it, you know, we'd be gone.

Webb: There was a vote taken, right?

Jeff: There was a vote taken.

Webb: And?

Jeff: And they, the approval by the City Council was that they would annex Bloomington, Bloomington Hills into the City.

Webb: Okay, okay.

Jeff: That's solving the water issue which meant the City had to go out and make sure of their water resources that they did have the water to serve both those communities.

Webb: Okay. Can you talk just briefly about [attorneys] Ron Thompson and Ralph Atkin's involvement with this, about this time?

Jeff: Ron and Ralph were involved with the community. They were representing the, in the bankruptcy, they were representing the people and just handling all of the necessary details that had to happen in the bankruptcy procedure. And those two gentlemen were unbelievable. I have tons of respect for Ron and for Ralph and what they accomplished. And without them, I don't know if it would have happened, frankly. Yeah.

Webb: Tying into this, Dixie Escalante REA [Rural Electric Association] comes into play somewhere along here because they provided the power, electrical power, for Bloomington and Bloomington Hills. And apparently the boundary between the City of St. George services was the Virgin River. Is that correct?

Jeff: Correct.

Webb: Would you describe a little about Dixie Escalante's involvement?

Jeff: Well, when we started Bloomington, you know, back in the early days, the power was a big question. St. George didn't have a lot of interest in serving power. But Dixie REA, which is a REA company for ranchers, farmers, you know all that, that service as opposed to municipalities. But at the time, Terracor bought up 14 farms, you know, so they became the user of the power. We grew hay, and we did all the things, you know, in between times. A lot of great people—Stan Staheli, Jack Adams, and all that crew, Doyle Sandberg. Those guys were the crew that worked at Bloomington, but they were there kind of tending the fields and doing the, all the things necessary before houses started to get built, and ran the whole company there from the ground, so to speak, and did a great job there.

Webb: And then Dixie Escalante had their Beryl office, but eventually they opened an office in Bloomington.

Jeff: They did. They were out of Beryl [Utah]. We did all our business out of Beryl. They served us. They were fan—you know, Leon Bowler [Dixie Escalante Rural Electric Association general manager] was amazing. And they, they just took care of us, wanted us to be a part of their vision, I think. And so from all of that, yes, they eventually

bought the old sales office, moved in there, and then they bought pretty much the old complex there.

Webb: The old Terracor complex became Dixie Escalante, interesting.

Jeff: Yes, uh-huh. Then they tore it down and built their building now that they're in and administer, you know, from the rest of their services, which is, you know, not only us, but now all of, a lot of Washington Fields and out through the old farms that—

Webb: Right.

Jeff: So they, and their power is very reasonable, you know, nation-wide, frankly, probably one of the lowest, very efficient, amazing group of men that run that company now. Yeah.

Webb: Okay. So what are your, both of your primary duties and responsibilities working for Leucadia Corporation? Do you still work for them, or what did you do at the time, before you opened Holiday Realty? I guess that's—

Jeff: Well—

Connie: First of all, we got married, and I started having kids. So, and I just wanted to be sure after the bankruptcy went through that we were going to be okay.

Webb: Yeah.

Connie: Then he's—

Webb: So you were, I guess your involvement with Leucadia, and then tell me a little bit about how that transformed into Holiday Realty, I guess.

Jeff: Once the bankruptcy was resolved and we moved out of bankruptcy, then Leucadia Financial Corporation became the company that bought all, or became the owner of all the assets of the old Terracor.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: And that's where Ian Cumming came in. He was running, he was working for Terracor when the bankruptcy happened, the court ordered him moving out of the office in Salt Lake at 529 East South Temple. He moved out and then waited until they went back to court to buy the remaining assets of the company and basically presented those assets to the public to purchase. And then Mr. Cumming ended up being the buyer of those assets. So he then, through Leucadia Financial Corporation, which was his company, bought all, you know, bought the assets of Terracor not only here but other areas. And then proceeded to finish the development of the projects.

Webb: Okay. Describe the, what the City of St. George acquired when they acquired Bloomington and Bloomington Hills. Tell us what are some of the amenities or things that make Bloomington and Bloomington Hills stand out.

Jeff: Well, I think, I don't know, maybe St. George wouldn't agree. Connie grew up in town and so forth. But I thought, you know, what Bloomington brought forward was kind of a new development in the land development business, you know, master-planned communities with amenities that go with that, that was designed to try and keep people in the neighborhoods. Originally, Bloomington, you know, Terracor didn't want any commercial activity in Bloomington. But St. George City would sell us water, but they didn't want any commercial activity because they didn't want to move it from downtown. And I can understand that totally. But after you, after a lot of people moved out there and were living there, once we annexed in to St. George, those properties that were around the freeway were subject to the potential of having zoning approved for commercial use. And that's what happened. That was a lot of difficulty for me, personally, and a lot of the folks that had lived in Bloomington that didn't want commercial there. There were more, they were happy without it.

Webb: Yeah.

Jeff: But, so there's not a lot there, as far as a lot of commercial corners, you know, in the freeway system. But enough, with Walmart and a few other things now that are there that provide, I think, a good service. So hopefully, it works—

Webb: This became the first subdivision in Washington County, right, Bloomington and Bloomington Hills?

Jeff: Pretty much. I mean, there were others, for sure, in the old town.

Webb: Maybe the first significant subdivision.

Jeff: Well, large, you mean you're looking at, yeah.

Webb: Large subdivision.

Jeff: You're looking at, you know—

Webb: Yeah.

Jeff: How many lots, 1,200, you know, 3,000 lots times four people. That's a lot of people, you know, and—

Webb: Well, and you brought in the Bloomington Golf Course and the Bloomington Hills Golf Course, which later became, I'm not sure what is the Bloomington Hills became?

Connie: St. George.

Webb: St. George Golf Club.

Jeff: St. George, yeah. Well, the Bloomington Country Club was there and in place, opened in '69. Billy Casper, I had a big deal with that. And then, and it remained a private club. And then Bloomington Hills which started, we built five holes, and that was about it, in the old Terracor. And then the bankruptcy, and then the bankruptcy awarded enough money to finish the golf course, and so they finished the 18 holes. And then that was deeded to St. George City. And then they became the operator of the course.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: Connie's brother, Reed McArthur, was the first golf pro.

Webb: First golf pro?

Jeff: Golf professional.

Connie: He was like 12; no, he was young, he was young.

Jeff: But—

Webb: He became the first golf pro for, was it Bloomington?

Connie: Was he the first golf pro over there?

Jeff: I can't rem—

Webb: In Bloomington? In Bloomington, right?

Jeff: Bloomington Hills.

Webb: Oh, Bloomington Hills.

Connie: Bloomington Hills.

Webb: Okay, Bloomington Hills.

Connie: And he and Jeff had, they went into business and had a little, because they just had a little tiny pro, a little tiny pro shop where you start them off the golf course. And so they invested in a few golf shirts and golf balls. It was called M & M Golf. And it was for McArthur and Morby. And it was just a tiny little place. And then somebody stole everything or broke into it, or I don't know what. But then they built the big one, and—

Jeff: It was kind of a temporary arrangement before, until the clubhouse got built, which was, that was done at the, with, through the bankruptcy, they had money to build the clubhouse, yeah.

Webb: So when did, when did you both open Holiday Realty?

Jeff: Well, following the end of the bankruptcy and so forth, there was no place for me to go, and so I opened up the Holiday Resort Realty at that point in time.

Webb: And what does that do? It seems like you have a niche there.

Connie: Well, he, he was also what do you call when you're kind of on call with Leucadia, or you're as a consultant?

Jeff: Yeah, I stayed on and worked with them in liquidating their assets. And so for me, I opened up my own office, and then was able to work with them on selling a lot of the excess ground around the Bloomington development.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: And then we opened up our—

Connie: So that was good, that was good for us.

Jeff: Our own business there as a real estate entity, and—

Webb: And your Holiday Realty office was in Bloomington, right?

Jeff: Yeah, right there, yeah.

Connie: Yes, it was.

Webb: Which is really cool. Okay. So has the majority of your work with Holiday Realty continued to be working with, to develop Bloomington and Bloomington Hills? If not, what other areas are you—

Jeff: Well, we've stayed there, and then hired some great, we didn't hire, we had a lot of agents join us—Ken Graff and a lot of amazing local guys. And we, our co—we then branched or formed another company that went out and did quite a bit of development in the area, in, oh, up in, oh, Green Springs and a bunch of other developments around town.

Webb: When did you leave Leucadia?

Jeff: Well, I finished there in 1982.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: When the bankruptcy settled and so forth. And then I opened up my own business there.

Webb: So Holiday Realty came in 1982, as well?

Jeff: 1982.

Webb: Okay. So how do both of you feel that you have helped with the development of St. George and/or Washington County?

Jeff: Well, Connie, what do you think?

Connie: I wouldn't, I don't take any credit for anything. But Bloomington was just a really neat place to live. A lot of new people came in. I had met a lot of them, some of them through selling the properties—not me selling but through them buying through the company. And it was just such a neat place to live. We first got married and lived in the condo. Then we moved half a block and built the first house because they were trying to get a housing market going. Leucadia or Terracor? Anyway, so they built a second house, and then right after that we got to move another half a block and built where we are today on a piece of property that wasn't really in the subdivisions. It was part of Leucadia's property. And it's where the old Bloomington schoolhouse was. The foundation is still there. And across the street is the, like, farmhouse that still stands. So we just have a lot of, just a lot of neat things out there, and a lot of changes. We used to have cattle on our front lawn grazing.

Webb: Oh, wow.

Connie: A few times we had that, remember, Jeff?

Jeff: Oh, yeah.

Connie: And we've just seen a lot of, a lot of growth and neat people and sad things and a flood and it's just been a great place to raise our kids.

Jeff: I don't think we have the corner on the market on great places to live, for sure. But, and you know, you just go around St. George and Ivins and Santa Clara and Washington and Hurricane. I mean it's all amazing spots for sure, and I think for us personally, you know, I moved here from Salt Lake, and Ogden was my home. But I met, you know, when I came here, it was like meeting, I think for me, the real essence of, of strength and love of home and love of their community, you know. I loved Ogden, but it was, you know, it was bigger. But St. George was just small enough that you could just say, "Hey, this is, this is an amazing place." And we later had an opportunity to serve in, as, over the historic mission for this, for St. George, for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And then we, you know, for me,

personally, I just then began to study the early pioneers that settled this valley, and, you know, knowing this campus, you know, the monument that's here on this campus.

Webb: The Encampment Mall.

Jeff: Yeah. And the first, you know, we've read and learned about the, that first group that came here, some 300 families, when, I think in the first year, Connie, was, it [was] like 95 of their children died before the age, you know, those between birth and 8 years old.

Webb: It was a tough time.

Jeff: It was.

Webb: Really tough.

Jeff: Yeah. And so, so from that we, I just have gained a huge respect for the historical foundation that this community is with St. George and Washington and Hurricane. So yeah.

Webb: Okay. So what other—

Connie: [Unclear.]

Webb: Oh, go ahead.

Connie: That I loved, of course I lived right down in the middle of St. George by the Brigham Young home, and I could walk to the movies or to Hurst Variety or anywhere. So we get to Bloomington, and it was a big deal to get commercial zoning there. It was a big deal. And he was trying to get a market with some other people. And it got kind of ugly at times. But the market prevailed, we got the market. And our kids could ride from our house on their bikes across the river to the market and charge a video or charge. You know, we had a charge account at the market.

Webb: Yeah.

Connie: And it was just so neat. Or they would ride a four-wheeler down the river. The kind of things that I did, you know, that you could feel safe. And I don't know, it was such a neat, a neat growing up for the kids. And then to have the school right there.

Jeff: I couldn't be remiss, it just came to me for sure, that Atkinville, which was another historic town, and Ralph Atkin—

Webb: Yeah.

Jeff: And his family. And they were, I, you know, Ralph in particular was a great supporter of Bloomington. And for us it was huge because here he was, one of the founding

families of this area, and supported it. You know, he lives in Bloomington, has done, and just has been an amazing support of what I think we were about, which was to have a place for people to come and love and enjoy and raise their family.

Webb: Right.

Jeff: You know Atkinville where Sun River sits now, I mean, can you imagine the change there. We've got 2,000 homes, when that little town there was trying to struggle and survive. It's amazing. It's a miracle, to me. Yeah.

Webb: So what other civic or religious organizations do you participate in, if any?

Jeff: Well.

Connie: He does more civic organizations. But we've had an opportunity to serve a mission in Oregon as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That was, that was a great time. But I was so nervous and scared to do that. But we did it, and it was wonderful. It still, you know, missionaries still contact us at this, to this day, and we see a lot of them. And I was involved in a few things like the St. George Princess contest. I headed that up a few times. But he's the one—I mostly was at home tending the kids.

Jeff: Well, yeah, I mean, I graduated from the University of Utah in political science. So I thought I wanted to be involved in that world as far as politics. I enjoyed it, frankly. I loved working with the City Council and the County Commission and respect them a lot for their jobs and what they do. But, so I decided to run for City Council. After we got moved into St. George I opted to run for City Council and didn't do very well. But that kind of told me, it said, hey, maybe that's not where things are at.

Connie: Well, the reason was we were trying to get commercial zoning in Bloomington. And so.

Jeff: But anyway, it was—

Connie: That kind of had, I think, played a big part in it.

Jeff: But—

Webb: So let me, let me go, so where and when were each of you born?

Connie: I was born in St. George, 1950.

Webb: Okay. Jeff?

Jeff: I was born in Ogden, Utah, in 1945.

Webb: Okay. So who else was in your family, Jeff, and then Connie?

Connie: Growing up?

Webb: Yeah, growing up.

Connie: Okay, I had a sister Gayle three years older than me, a brother Robert, I think he's three years younger than me, and my brother Reed, who is about four years younger than Robert.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: So two boys, two girls.

Webb: Okay. Jeff?

Jeff: I grew up in Ogden, had a mom and dad. My dad worked for the railroad, and my mother worked at the school where I went to school, which was not good for me because she watched, kind of a "What are you doing, Jeff?" type of thing. But then I had one brother, my brother Mike, and it was just the two of us. Mike just passed away here a couple of months ago.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: So that young. I went to school there in Ogden and then went on a mission for the Church and then came back and went to Weber and then on down to the University and graduated there.

Webb: Okay. Connie.

Connie: School?

Webb: Where did you go to school?

Connie: I went, I graduated from Dixie High School, class of '68.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: Rah, rah.

Webb: All right.

Connie: And then I went to Dixie College, Dixie Jr. College, and then I went up to Utah State and graduated from Utah State.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: In fashion merchandising, meaning I wanted to be a buyer for a store. I got, my mom worked at Evelyns Dress Shop, which you probably know, for a long, long time. So I'd get to go there, and I'd model in their fashion shows, or I'd get to open the clothes that they'd just ordered, and I even got to go to market with Evelyn. So I was, I just wanted to do that. I thought that would be so great. And I did have two job opportunities to go, one to California and one to Salt Lake. But I was, I just couldn't leave home. I couldn't leave home without it, without whatever, I just couldn't leave home on my own. My friends were going different ways, and—

Webb: Did you go to college, Connie?

Connie: Yeah, Utah State, graduated.

Webb: Utah State, and got your degree in?

Connie: Fashion merchandising.

Webb: Fashion merchandising.

Connie: Yeah.

Webb: And yours [Jeff] was in political science?

Jeff: Political science, m-hmm.

Webb: Okay.

Jeff: Yep.

Webb: So when you look back, what were some successes and accomplishments or challenges or frustrations for both of you during those times?

Jeff: Well.

Webb: Anything that stands out?

Jeff: Do you want to go first, Connie, or should I?

Connie: Did you say accomplishments?

Webb: Yeah. Accomplishments, successes.

Connie: The greatest accomplishment is marrying him. But his great accomplishment, greatest, is getting me to marry him. No. We both had to kind of settle in.

Jeff: It was a challenge.

Connie: Because, yeah, but it was, it was. It was the best decision and I'm glad my mom was choosing him over—anyway.

Jeff: I decided early that I had to get, I had to be approved by the mom, you know, her mom, who is now 97 years old, still alive with us. She's in a Beehive home, but just amazing. And so once I thought I had her kind of liking me and so forth, I was confident, even though Connie was kind of giving me a hard time. But I knew if I was patient, I'd be fortunate enough to have her marry me. So—

Webb: So as you look back over our lives, what would you like to be remembered for?

Connie: I would like to be remembered that I cared about people, about my kids, my family, but I think I genuinely love people, and I sometimes I want to talk to everybody. I want to stop them on the street and see how they're doing. But no, just that I hope I'm remembered as a caring person.

Webb: Okay. Jeff?

Jeff: Well, I, my mom used to call me a worry wart. I don't know if you know—I would always worry that my dad would go to work and then he'd be gone for several days driving some trains. And then he'd come home, and my mom would go down and pick him up down to the train station. Often times I was alone, and my brother was gone somewhere. And I was, I just got worried, you know, hey, where are they, you know, they're not back yet, you know. Just a worry kind of a thing. And my mom came home one day, and she, and I was just kind of where you been, and she said, "Jeff, you're just a worry wart, you know. We're okay. We're fine." And so I think for me, I've always worried about making sure that I didn't offend anybody, that I was not going to be someone that they say, "Oh, don't talk to him," you know, that kind of a feeling of just don't do that and be honest in your dealings and try and work hard and do the best you can. And so I think I've followed that.

Connie: He has.

Webb: That's great. So is there anything that I haven't asked either one of you that you feel is important that you would like to share with us now? We're just about to wrap it up.

Connie: I think one of the things you said is what do you feel like your greatest accomplishment is and maybe you already asked us. But I feel like, that we've raised good kids that are honest, and they are loving. They have children that they treat well. And I don't know, just the whole thing that, looking back, that's about all I can, maybe I shouldn't take, I got to take credit for it. I was in there, I was doing it.

Jeff: Absolutely.

Connie: Just, I'm just so proud of my children. I'm happy with how they act and treat people and treat each other and their spouses. Anyway, that's—

Webb: Okay. Jeff, anything else?

Jeff: Well, for me, I think, first of all, let me thank you, Loren, because we've known each other for a long time.

Webb: Yes, we have.

Jeff: And you have been a, you have been an amazing part of this community in trying to get the word out to people about what's about, you know, what's going on in the world, and so forth. So thank you for your contributions.

Webb: You're welcome.

Jeff: To this community. It is been—

Webb: I want you to know how much I appreciate both of you.

Jeff: And your dad, Murray, right?

Webb: Yes.

Jeff: You know, I worked with him when I first got to town, and he was, he was kind, and he and Truman Bowler and those, you know, who headed the County Commission at the time. They were, they were my idols in a lot of ways. I was very, very impressed to watch them and how they handled people.

Webb: Yeah.

Jeff: And so I think for me that has been a great example for me, what I should be about, yeah.

Webb: Well, thank you both. Oh, go ahead.

Connie: I need to tell you one thing. I'll hurry.

Webb: Okay.

Connie: Maybe it's just my age, and I'm sure it is. But I drive around town a lot of times in my old neighborhood, which my house is still there, even the house I was born in is still there. And I, I get sad, and I thought today I had to take a walk, excuse me, I had to take a walk while he was in a little business meeting for a minute. So I just walked up and down the street where Center Department Store used to be.

Webb: Yeah.

Connie: If I can say that to you. And it made me sad because I thought, “What was there?” Not Center, but I was looking at the old courthouse, and now they’ve built the big—and I couldn’t remember what was there. And then I looked at another place, and I thought, oh, my gosh, what was there? But I can go to other places and remember that or this. And I miss it. I long for it. I long for it to be like it was. But I’m happy to see what it’s becoming.

Webb: Yeah.

Connie: And I hope it keeps becoming good, good.

Webb: Bank of St. George. That’s what was there before the County, County building.

Connie: Yeah, there you go.

Webb: Well, we want to thank, yeah, we want to thank both of you for the time that you’ve spent with us. And thank you to our audience. Again, my name is Loren Webb, and this is the Washington County Historical Society’s oral history interview series. And again, we appreciate you joining us, and take care.