

James Kelly Mountford Interview  
Interviewed by Loren Webb

Date of Interview: May 27, 2025

Participants: Loren Webb (Interviewer)  
Ron Carberry (Interviewer)  
Brady Fronk (Interviewer)  
James Kelly Mountford (Interviewee)

Location of Interview: St. George, Utah

Transcribed by: Susan Mower

Webb: Hi, welcome, everyone. My name is Loren Webb. I am the oral history coordinator with the Washington County Historical Society. Today we are interviewing Kelly Mountford who is long associated with the *Washington County News* and Classic Printing in the downtown historic district in St. George, Utah. Today's date is Tuesday, May 27, 2025, and we are in the Community Education Channel studios on the campus of Utah Tech University. So let's begin the interview. What is your full name?

Mountford: It's James Kelly Mountford.

Webb: When and where were you born?

Mountford: I was born in Heber City in Wasatch County in Utah.

Webb: What are your parents' names?

Mountford: My parents names are James and Doris Mountford.

Webb: Did other family members live nearby?

Mountford: Basically in Heber, I had relatives, my mom's family had relatives all over, and my dad's relatives were more down into the Payson and Spanish Fork area.

Webb: What did your parents do for a living?

Mountford: They basically ran the newspapers is what my dad did. And my mom was a homemaker.

Webb: What did your community look like outside of your family? Your neighborhood, what did that look like?

Mountford: Basically in Heber we were out in the farm country. Actually our house was on the property of an old flour mill that was in Heber. And my grandfather bought that and gave a piece of it to my dad to build our family home on. So basically we were out in the fields there east of Heber City.

Webb: How many bedrooms?

Mountford: It was a three-bedroom home.

Webb: On a fairly large lot?

Mountford: It was on an acre lot, plus it also had a two-acre field around the back side of it, also.

Webb: Where did your ancestors come from?

Mountford: My Mountford ancestors came from England and the Isle of Man.

Webb: What about on your other side?

Mountford: My McGuire ancestors came from Ireland. Actually, my great-grandfather on the McGuire side was down here in southern Utah. He was instrumental in the Cotton Mill over there in Washington City.

Webb: When did they come to the United States, approximately?

Mountford: Let me check my notes here. The McGuire came during the potato famine in Ireland. They immigrated to Canada first, and then they joined the LDS Church and came to Utah.

Webb: Where did they first settle?

Mountford: It was in Canada.

Webb: Where in Canada?

Mountford: I'm not quite sure. It was probably reasonably close to the Coast because they weren't in Canada very long because mainly they came over to North America to get away from the potato famine, and then they got interested in the LDS Church, and that's when they decided to move. They moved in to Utah.

Webb: Describe your grammar school and your high school years.

Mountford: Grammar school, I started grammar school in Heber City. I went to the Central School up there, which was one of the two elementaries there in Heber Valley. And then when we moved to St. George I went to East Elementary.

Webb: Which is now Atwood Innovation Plaza.

Mountford: Yes. I tell my family that the only school that's not been torn down that I went to here is East Elementary.

Webb: That's where I went. And high school?

Mountford: After East I went to Woodward Junior High.

Webb: You went to Woodward Junior High.

Mountford: Yes, because it was still Woodward before it changed to Dixie Junior High. And then I went to Dixie High School, also.

Webb: And graduated from there?

Mountford: And graduated from Dixie High in 1980.

Webb: What were your hobbies and interests as a child?

Mountford: As a child it was mainly, since my dad was really big into going to Strawberry to go fishing, we did an awful lot of fishing. And there were a lot of streams around Heber Valley that we used to go fish in. So that was one thing. And then my dad also enjoyed rockhounding, so we were always out running around because there were the red ledges that were just on, about three or four blocks up the street from our house, that we could just go wander through those rocks and look for all kinds of stuff up there.

Webb: That sounds fun.

Mountford: Yeah.

Webb: Did you belong to any influential clubs or organizations while you were at Dixie High, or in the community?

Mountford: Basically at Dixie High I was just in the usual things that high school kids do, like Science Club.

Webb: Did they have the Industrial Arts Club?

Mountford: Yeah, they had the Industrial Arts Club.

Webb: Did you belong to that?

Mountford: Yes, I was in with Harley Iverson, yes.

Webb: Education-wise, did you attend college or university?

Mountford: I attended Dixie College first, as most people from this area did, because it was handy, it was here.

Webb: Did you graduate?

Mountford: I graduated from Dixie College with an Associate Degree in Applied Science for Automotive Technology.

Webb: What year?

Mountford: 1983.

Webb: And then after that?

Mountford: After that I attended two years at the University of Utah because I was looking into mechanical engineering.

Webb: And maybe that will bring us, we'll come back to that. Tell us about your grandfather Frank Mountford and his purchase of the *Washington County News*.

Mountford: Well, Grandpa Frank, he was another printer's-ink-in-his-blood man because his father was a printer. Let's see, yes, James Henry, he learned how to print at Arrow Press Square in Salt Lake as a young man. He learned the craft there at Arrow Press and Gardner Press. But then Grandpa Frank, his father moved the family to Fillmore, and they bought the *Millard County Progress*. And then my grandfather Frank and his brother Harold both were in the business with their dad, and they operated that newspaper for eight years. And then James said, "Well, let's move to Payson." So they packed up, bought the *Payson Chronicle* and moved to Payson, and Frank and Harold ran the paper with him in Payson. Then Uncle Harold decided to go to work for the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

Webb: Doing what?

Mountford: He was a linotype operator. And so Grandpa Frank said, "Well, I'd like to investigate this newspaper in Heber City." So he went and bought the *Wasatch Wave*.

Webb: From whom?

Mountford: From the Buys family, which is quite a funny thing because when we sold the paper we sold it back to the Buys family because the son of the man who owned it when my Grandpa bought the *Wave*, so it stayed in their family, too.

Webb: Tell us about your father, Jim Mountford, and Uncle Asa Mountford, and their operation of the *Washington County News*. How did that come about, the *Washington County News* and the *Wasatch Wave*? Were they being operated at the same time at one point? How did that come about?

Mountford: Well, later on. But at the start, Grandpa brought Dad and Asa into the *Wave* up there.

Webb: And Asa was your uncle?

Mountford: Asa is my uncle. And so they, all three of them, operated the newspaper there for a while. But then in about 1958, the *County News* [*Washington County News*] came up for sale. And Grandpa Frank said, "Okay, let's do this. I will go down to St. George and run this paper down there. Jim, you stay here and run the *Wasatch Wave*. So my dad stayed there. But Uncle Asa said, "I'd like to go to St. George, too, and so Grandpa said, "Okay." So Dad was running the *Wave* and Asa and Frank were running the *Washington County News* back in the '50s.

Webb: And did they buy it from Clyde and Nora Lyman?

Mountford: Yes, they bought it from Clyde and Nora, yes.

Webb: So tell us about the St. George operation, the *Washington County News*.

Mountford: Okay. All right. Well, in 1972, that's when my grandfather, his health started to decline a little. Dad got thinking about it, and he thought, well, St. George is probably going to have much better growth opportunity than Heber City at the time. And my grandma said, "Come on down, Jimmie, we need you down here to run the paper and help out Asa," because Asa was having a little bit of a struggle running it on his own. And so Dad and Mom decided to pack up from Heber and move down here in 1972. Plus I had some arthritis problems with my knees, and they felt that the warmer weather down here would be much better for me and I'd be able to function a little better. So in '72 we moved down here. And at the time, the *County News* was your standard letter press operation. They still used linotypes with the hot lead to produce the newspaper and that. And Dad got to thinking about it, and he knew that offset was on the horizon out there, and he mentioned to Grandpa, he said, "Dad, we need to upgrade this paper up to offset to be able to compete." And my grandfather was kind of funny because he thought since he was a linotype operator himself, and he had learned letter pressing, he said, "No, no, no, letterpress will be around forever," and all that. It's funny because I was reading an article once that they said that letterpress was around for two hundred years, but offset only lasted fifty before digital kicked it off the scene.

Webb: That's incredible. Tell us about the equipment that was used for publishing the weekly *Washington County News*, how and where and at what cost, if you

remember, and how were these printing presses acquired and how were they used at the *County News*?

Mountford: Okay. Now this is from, I was nine years old when we moved here. But I had grown up in the *Wave* also. I mean I was in a bassinette on the front counter in the *Wave*. Me and my two brothers and my sister, I mean all of us were, I mean, babysat in the newspaper office, basically.

Webb: And your two brothers and your sister, what were their names?

Mountford: Peggy is my sister. She's the oldest of the siblings. My brother Jeffery is next, but he's passed away, and then my brother Kevin that is the third in our family, and then there's me. There were the four of us that were raised in the print shop.

Webb: So tell us about the equipment for publishing. How did you acquire that? What was the cost of it? How was it used at the *County News*?

Mountford: Well, when we came down, since they were still doing the letter press, they had the two linotype machines there in the office which are, basically they're hot lead casting machines that make a line of type in lead, so that's why they were called linotype. And we would set that all up on those, and then they would lay all that lead out on what they called the stone, and there was a form that they would lock it into the form. And we had a big web, letter press web press inside the building there downtown, if you can believe that.

Webb: And the address was?

Mountford: Twenty-three East St. George Boulevard. And they would take it over and slide those forms into that big flatbed press, and it was called a Goss Cox-O-Type type, and it was the web press that they, comparing it to the press we had up at the *Wave*, it was a sheet-fed press, as they call it, that they had to feed it by the sheet in there, where this press, it would run through, go through a folder that was hooked to the press itself and come out all ready to go, to be mailed, and all that down here. And so that was what we printed. And the mailing, basically we had two guys that caught those papers as they came out of the press, and they had an instrument called a wing mailer that had the subscription list on a roll in it with an adhesive, and then they would take the paper, hold it there, and then they would just smack it with that, and toss it, and grab the next one. And they would just sit there bam, bam, bam, bam, bam.

Webb: And it would stamp the address?

Mountford: Yes, they were addressing all those papers, just by using that little mailer.

Webb: And they probably took it up to the Post Office?

Mountford: Yeah, they would bag it up and then take it up to the Post Office [at 200 North Main].

Webb: What else? What other equipment? I know that you have so much equipment in there. So let's hear about each of those pieces of equipment and how and when you acquired them and what they were used for.

Mountford: All right. Up in the front area is where we had the job printing machinery. We had a Heidelberg Windmill press which was a letter press that, it was automatic feeding. Because previously, everything used to be hand fed, and you would have to stand there with the paper, and as the platen would come down, you would have to slide the paper into a set of guides that would hold the sheet, and then it would fold it up and push it against the form, and then you would have to grab it and take it out and put it on your finished pile. Where this press, you loaded the paper in a stack, started it up, and it had a set of suckers that would feed it into a traveling gripper that spun around and would hold it. The platen would go up, push it against, down, put it over there, and while it was delivering over here, it was picking up the next sheet to go in automatically.

Webb: That's incredible. When did you go to offset printing? Did that come later?

Mountford: Offset came in, let's see. Grandpa, they had the foresight that they did actually buy that big offset that we had at the back, they bought that in 1968. And amazingly, they only paid, I believe it was \$18,000 for it. But in 1968 dollars that was a lot of money.

Webb: That's kind of what I remember, when I came into your office, was the offset printing.

Mountford: Yeah. But that was, actually the only reason they bought that press was because of Wenzel Tent out there in the Industrial Park. They needed somebody that had a really big press that could print these labels for the tents and sleeping bags and stuff that they made out there at the factory. And so that's one reason they bought this press. But then Dad, we did letter press for let's see, I think it was 1975, and Dad kind of said, "You know, everybody else in the State is upgrading to offset," and so we investigated it, and that's when we bought the three-unit Fairchild News King that was out in the building on Dixie Downs.

Webb: Was that a separate building?

Mountford: Yeah, we had that separate building out there. It was on 1100 West and about 1099 North out there. Actually, when we built it there was absolutely nothing out there.

Webb: Was that in St. George Industrial Park?

Mountford: No, it was, basically it was out, the Ence Brothers, they were starting an industrial park out there by their feed mill.

Webb: Oh, by their feed mill.

Mountford: Yeah.

Webb: That's interesting. So you had two separate facilities?

Mountford: Two separate buildings, yes.

Webb: Any other equipment that you wanted to describe or talk about?

Mountford: Oh yeah, there's plenty to talk about because, well, we had these two big lead casting machines. The one thing with the letter press was that anytime we had to do an ad or anything, we would get this little, it was kind of a papery mat that they would put in this lead casting machine, and it would make a mold of the ad on there, and they would cast that. They would attach it to a piece of wood, and then they could put it in the press and print. And the pictures came in as engravings. Everything was on a metal engraving back then. That's why you didn't get a lot of pictures in the older newspapers because it was quite a process to do a picture for the newspaper.

Webb: And we're talking just black and white pictures at that time, too?

Mountford: Yes, just black and white.

Webb: So tell us a little bit about the transformation to color, too. That must have been a process, as well.

Mountford: It was because the first thing they did is they came out with this machine called a Scan-A-Graver. We still weren't using film for pictures. What it was, we would take a photograph that somebody brought in. You would mount it on a drum on one side of the machine, and then there was a piece of plastic that wrapped around that drum on the other side, and then there was a hot engraving head on that. And then the machine would spin, and there was a scanner head that would scan the photos as it spun around on the machine. And on the other side, that engraving head was over there going bzz, bzz, bzz, basically making a half-tone on that plastic on there.

Webb: So when you got your paper, when the weekly paper came out, the *Washington County News*, you put them in some kind of binders, didn't you? I mean so that they were in year binders that were available at the front counter? Is that right?

Mountford: Yes, yes.

Webb: Tell us a little bit about that.

Mountford: Every week they would send a copy of the paper to a company called Newsfile. And they would gather them all up, and at the end of the year they would bind them up into a big old binder and that, and we kept them in the front cupboard. And if you wanted to come in and look something up from the past, you could do that. And at the same time we were sending copies up to the University of Utah, was doing it, I believe Utah Tech has it in their special collections that we had sent.

Webb: It was Dixie College at the time, later to become Dixie State College, etc.

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: There was something else I was going to ask you about the, oh, at the newspaper there, you had staff writers come in, right?

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: Like Dorothy See?

Mountford: Yes. Dorothy See was one of our staff writers.

Webb: What did they do, and did they have any offices in there, in the building?

Mountford: Basically, Dorothy kind of operated out of her home, and she would just, she would do things like she would cover the City Council and any other County stuff, things like that, and then she would compile it at her home. And then every Tuesday morning she would come in the door and give us everything she wrote. And she'd hand it to the type setters, and they'd take off and start setting the type to put it on paper.

Webb: Bill Heaton, too.

Mountford: Bill Heaton was there. And we also had Bill Cooper. He used to work for *The Spectrum*, and then he came to work for us as a photographer and writer also.

Webb: I want to talk a little bit more about the more modern part of the *Washington County News* later. Were there any other staff writers who wrote for the *Washington County News*, and what was their particular level of expertise? Any ones besides those three?

Mountford: Mainly back in those days we relied an awful lot on local people. You had correspondents in each town.

Webb: How many correspondents did you have?

Mountford: We had a lot, because, well, we had, correspondents, we had people in Springdale, Hurricane, LaVerkin, Toquerville, Enterprise, and we had one out in Mt. Trumbull, Mrs. Bundy.

Webb: Mrs. Bundy wrote the Mt. Trumbull [news]. And hers was very well read. They were all very well read, right?

Mountford: Yes. We had Gerd Ence in Santa Clara, I mean, and let's see, Emma Fife did the Ivins news. And let's see, Georgina Hunt did Washington, and Sylvia Gifford was in Springdale. And May Hall did Enterprise, yeah.

Webb: Did we cover all of the towns?

Mountford: That's pretty much, I think that's, because correspondents, they would write as they felt, as long as they wanted to do it, basically. Dad did, he did pay them to do that, and so—

Webb: Let's talk about your involvement with the *Washington County News*. We kind of left you where you were finished at Dixie College, and you went on to where was it?

Mountford: I went up to the University of Utah for two years.

Webb: In what?

Mountford: In mechanical engineering.

Webb: And then what happened after that, before coming to the *County News*?

Mountford: After that, well, basically, I was up there going to school, and Dad sat me down, and he says, "I would like you to come and work in the business here," because basically I was having a little trouble getting funds to keep going to school at that time. And I thought well, if I go back and work for Dad for a couple of years, maybe I can get the money so I can continue on with my education. So I decided to go into the business, well, basically I had been running printing presses since I was 12.

Webb: That's amazing. What year did you come to the *Washington County News*?

Mountford: Let's see. Well, I started working there at 12 because I was helping out. I was kind of learning things. I would help with the mailing of the newspaper, and also we used to deliver copies to all the businesses in town. So I would take that and basically do a paper route.

Webb: You were like an apprentice.

Mountford: Yes, an apprentice. Yes. And then when I came back from college I got in to doing an awful lot of the heavy-duty press running. I was running the big presses, and I started running the newspaper press, also.

Webb: What year was this?

Mountford: That was about 1986, I believe.

Webb: Why did the *Washington County News* end publication?

Mountford: Basically what happened with the *County* is when we sold it to John Rogers, who was formerly the editor and publisher of *The Spectrum*, and they had a conglomerate come in and buy up *The Spectrum*.

Webb: Which was Thomson Newspapers.

Mountford: Thomson Newspapers, and they terminated John, and so he thought, "Well, I'd like to stay in the newspaper business." So he came in and had a discussion with my dad and Asa, and they decided to sell the paper to him.

Webb: And this was about 1986?

Mountford: This was about 1986. And so John took over the paper, and he ran it until about 1988. But what kind of happened over those two years is that the market forces in the town kind of changed, that Thomson decided we don't want any competition in St. George any more. So John would go to try to sell advertising to the local businesses, and they'd say, "Well, Thomson's offering this super low price on their ad rate," and John said, "Well, I can't match that." So it got down to a point where he just couldn't afford to keep in business any longer.

Webb: But at one point John went to twice or three times a week, didn't he, to compete with *The Spectrum*?

Mountford: Yes. He was trying to do that, and it just got to the point where the costs were just too much.

Webb: And *The Spectrum* was offering not just the daily newspaper, but they had all these other side publications, too, right?

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: That all really contributed to hurting the *Washington County News*.

Mountford: Yes, that was kind of their goal was to put the *Washington County News* out of business at that time.

Webb: It was really sad.

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: So this happened in March of 1988, right?

Mountford: Yes it did.

Webb: What happened after that, as far as the Mountford family involvement with that location, all of that equipment? When did Classic Printing get started?

Mountford: Classic Printing basically started when they sold the *County News* to John Rogers. Dad said, "Well, we're only selling the newspaper. We still have our job printing operation here. And basically that was the bread and butter of most weekly newspapers through the years was that to supplement their income they had the job printing shop where they would go down and do all kinds of extra printing around town for that.

Webb: So Classic Printing started in 1986?

Mountford: Yes, right when we sold the *County News*.

Webb: You sold the *County News*, and your family said, "We're just selling the paper; we're going to stay in the business of printing."

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: So who was involved in Classic Printing?

Mountford: Classic Printing was my father and my Uncle Asa [Mountford], and my mother was the bookkeeper.

Webb: What's your mother's name?

Mountford: Doris.

Webb: Jim?

Mountford: Jim and Doris and Asa and me, and at that time we did have a few other, we had one employee that was Stewart Giles, and he actually worked for my dad at the *Wave* in Heber [City], and he moved down here because he thought that, again, that the economic opportunities for growth in St. George were much better. So he asked Dad if he could move his family down here, and Dad said, "Okay."

Webb: What type of jobs did Classic Printing undertake?

Mountford: Basically we were still printing the newspapers, because we still owned the newspaper press. We just sold the newspaper itself.

Webb: So you were printing the *Washington County News*.

Mountford: I better get my paper here. This is a major list here.

Webb: And we want to hear every one of them.

Mountford: Okay. The newspapers that we printed were the *Washington County News*, the *Bloomington Desert Beacon*.

Webb: Which was published, the editor was Ron Ahrens.

Mountford: And *The Iron County Record* that was in Cedar City, *The Southern Utah News* in Kanab, *The Lake Powell Chronicle* in Page, Arizona, *The Beaver County News* that was in Milford.

Webb: In Milford?

Mountford: Yeah, in Milford. There was *The Beaver County News* was in Milford. *The Beaver Press* was in Beaver. So they had two papers in Beaver County. Then we did *The Desert Echo* in Mesquite, and *The Moapa Valley Progress* in Overton, and then back here in St. George *The Red Desert Digest*, *The Senior Sampler*, and this was an oddball one. It was called *This Aint News*.

Webb: *This Aint News*?

Mountford: It was a project that was done by a couple of Dixie College professors. It was kind of a satire of anything that happened in St. George.

Webb: I've never heard of that one. How about, didn't you print at one time *The Big Water Times*?

Mountford: Yes, *The Big Water Times*.

Webb: Which, by the way, was run by Alex Joseph and his polygamous wives.

Mountford: Alex Joseph, yes. Okay, let's see, And then now we'll move on to the school newspapers: *The Dixie Sun*.

Webb: *The Dixie Sun*, which was the Dixie College newspaper.

Mountford: The Dixie College newspaper. The *SUU Thunderbird*.

Webb: Southern Utah University.

Mountford: Uh-huh. And then we had Canyon View High School's *Canyon View Chronicle* out of Cedar City, the *Cedar Post*, which was Cedar High, the *Dixie Flyer Flash*.

Webb: St. George.

Mountford: The *Pine View Predator*, the *Snow Canyon Warrior*, and then we had the *Parowan Ram* that was out of Parowan High.

Webb: Isn't that incredible. It's just amazing that you contributed to so many publications in southern Utah and southeastern Nevada. That's quite the legacy.

Carberry: Yes—printing your competitor's newspapers while you still owned the *Washington County News*.

Mountford: Basically, yes, we were.

Carberry: Okay. So you had the second contracts.

Webb: So what other services did Classic Printing offer to the local community? Did you do business cards?

Mountford: We did business cards and envelopes, business forms. That's what our smaller presses did that was in the downtown location. The one press that I was telling you earlier about that we brought in for Wenzel, we used that press that if anybody needed big posters, because nobody else in the area had a press that could print an 18 x 24" poster, where we had this press that could print one that big. So any large poster like for the Lions Dixie Roundup or anything like that was done on that printing press.

Webb: This is something I should have asked you earlier. Do you have a logo of Classic Printing? Did you ever come up with your own logo?

Mountford: Yes we did.

Webb: Maybe we can look at that afterwards and add that to the transcript, because I think that would be kind of neat to see what your Classic Printing logo looked like.

Mountford: Well, to kind of give you an idea of what it was, it was paper running through printing rollers.

Webb: How cool. That's really awesome.

Carberry: Did you print maps?

Mountford: Actually, we used to print some maps for Zion Park. In fact, that was another thing that we did on the newspaper press is that Zion Park over there at the Lodge, they used a newspaper-style menu for the restaurants. So every summer we would do, because we had a contract with the company that preceded Xanterra. It was TW Services. So we printed all the menus for Zion Park, Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon.

Webb: Grand Canyon North Rim?

Mountford: Yes, everything that TW had.

Webb: Why did Classic Printing cease business operations, and what year was that?

Mountford: Classic Printing was going along great until 2017. That's when my health took a major crash. September of 2017, I was at home, and I had just said goodnight to my mom, and she said an hour later I shouted her name out, and she went in there, and I was laying flat on my face on the floor in the bedroom. And I had a grand mal seizure. So they got me over to the hospital, and they did an MRI, and I had a tumor the size of a tennis ball in my head that had finally got so big that it pressed down on my frontal lobe and caused me to have the seizure. And so at the time it was just me and my mom running the business.

Webb: When did Jim and Asa retire?

Mountford: Dad basically retired when he passed away in 2010. And Asa, he had retired about five years earlier—it was about 2005. He decided that he was tired of working hard and running that printing press all the time, and he was having troubles with his back, so he decided to pull out. So there was basically just me and Mom in there working away at it.

Webb: And your access was from the rear of the building, too, wasn't it?

Mountford: Yes, from the rear.

Webb: You had to park in the back.

Mountford: Yes, you had to park out back and walk down the walkway. It was the ramp that went, if you went right, you went into the print shop. If you went left, you used to go into Snow's Grocery Store that was there. But anyway, after surgery, the rehab, and that, Mom said, because the doctors told me they didn't want me anywhere near any large equipment there until after I'd been through some extensive physical therapy because actually after surgery I had to learn how to walk, talk, and write, and do everything again because it was just like having a traumatic brain injury. So Mom said, "Well, let's close it at the end of 2017." So that's when we decided to shut it down in 2017. And fortunately, like I was discussing with my siblings about it, and they said, "Well, you know, the way the market conditions are,"—and that was the other thing, too, was technology was changing so fast in the printing

industry. And I mean we were still trying to hang on to offset printing and that, which at the time I was having a hard time finding litho film, because that's how we would put, like, your copy, we would put it in a big camera, make a negative of it, and then we'd take that negative, strip it up in what we called a mask, then put it on an aluminum plate and burn the image into the aluminum plate that went on the press. And it was getting down so we couldn't find film anymore because everybody had gone to the digital stuff there. And then the plate companies started going out of business, also. So offset was dying slowly. The last time I got a box of film, they had to source it out of Mexico because Kodak went bankrupt at that time.

Webb: Right. It was a terrible thing when Kodak went out of business. So did you sell the location, the business, the equipment? What did you sell?

Mountford: When we closed the business, we had been approached by Randall Richards who owns two of the restaurants over in Ancestor Square, George's Corner and Painted Pony. And he had approached us probably back in 2014 that he had this, because he had been on a trip to San Francisco, and there was a restaurant in San Francisco that had been put in a converted newspaper office. And so he kept saying, "Come on, come on, sell me this, I'd like to do this." So in 2017, when we decided to close it, he came in, and he said, "I will buy everything in this building. You don't have to clean it out or anything. I want everything in there." And so we sold him the entire business.

Webb: What year was that?

Mountford: That was in 2018 when we sold that to him.

Webb: Would you mind disclosing the amount of the sale? It's okay if you don't want to say that.

Mountford: Basically we sold it, I believe it was \$70,000 at the time.

Webb: And what year was that?

Mountford: That was 2018.

Webb: Before we move on to my next question, Ron has, I think, three questions he'd like to ask you about the building itself.

Carberry: We received an anonymous request from the Washington County Historical Society basically to research this, and we understand that the building was originally in the old mining town of Silver Reef, and it was a saloon. Do you know what the name of the saloon was?

Mountford: Unfortunately, no. That's, the whole thing is, my father and I, we did try to sort of do some research on it. We never could really find out which one it was because we

found out that there were supposedly six saloons in Silver Reef. And the only clue we really had, this is quite funny because everybody used to come in and say, “We want to see the wallpaper.” Because we had these cupboards that were along the wall in the front office, and if you opened up the cupboard, there was the original saloon wallpaper in back of the cupboard. And so that was quite—

Carberry: Was the bar still there?

Mountford: No, that front counter was probably built by Clyde and Nora Lyman. We got looking at it, and it was too recent.

Webb: It looks more recent. So the only original part of that building was the building itself? Nobody really seems to know how it was transported down or anything like that?

Mountford: Basically, we kind of figured that what they did is they probably detached the front of the building, laid it down on a wagon, and then probably took—because a lot of people think it was that big long building that’s in there. But actually it’s where the wood floor ended right, because you remember when we go in there we had cement up to a certain point until you got up into the front part of the building, and then there was the old wood floor.

Webb: So how many feet would that be?

Mountford: I think it was about 30 feet.

Webb: Any other questions about the building?

Carberry: Was the façade on the building changed at any point?

Mountford: No. We had a discussion with this with the City at one time because I can’t remember what year it was, but we had a car go through the front of the building.

Webb: A car went through the front of the building?

Mountford: There was a van come off of Main Street and lost control on the slick road and hit the corner of our building that’s there by the front door, took that corner out, and then took out that whole shop that was in the Snow building next door at one point. So we had—

Webb: Did you put up Washington County News, that façade up at the top?

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: You had that done?

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: Did you do it yourself, or did you have it done by someone else?

Mountford: I think Lymans did the original sign because there used to be a really big sign that was on the front of the building that later we repainted to say Classic Printing on. But there was a big sign that said Washington County, and then my grandfather, he decided that he wanted it easier to see from the sidewalk, so he had a sign maker come in and paint Washington County News on the front window.

Webb: Who put up the historical marker there at the front?

Mountford: Montrue Larkin was instrumental in getting that put on there. She decided that we had a lot of historic buildings in St. George, so she kind of spearheaded that push to get that marker put on that building. I think there's one down on the Hardy House and the old Courthouse, you know, and a lot of the historic buildings, it was all Montrue that kind of got that done.

Webb: Do you have any idea what year the saloon was brought down?

Mountford: Not particularly. This is another story that it's actually in the *County News* about what happened to that building at one point, also. That one side of the building had a rough time because there used to be a two-story hotel next door where the Snow's Market is now. In fact, I think there's a historical picture of the hotel. But at one point that hotel caught on fire, and it took so much water to put the fire out that the wall of the building of the print shop was adobe, and it melted the adobe. The roof actually fell down on the building. Now this is what we always laughed [about], a typical newspaper man—they jacked the roof back up and put the newspaper out the next day!

Webb: That sounds just like the news and newspaper. Any other questions, Ron?

Carberry: No.

Webb: We have Brady Fronk here in the studio with us, as well. Did you have any other questions, Brady, for Kelly?

Fronk: You can hear me well, I'm sure. Do you know what the earliest print order that was physically in that building is?

Mountford: Well, if you counted the newspaper files that were in the building, there was actual copy from 1908 that was in there in one of the files.

Fronk: How many artifacts are currently in the building that you can think of, an estimate?

Mountford: Rough estimate—pretty much everything in there is an artifact. I mean, we always said that the building was like a museum because when you start at the front, and then as you go farther back in the building, everything gets newer in there.

Webb: So approximately how many pieces of equipment do you think are still in the building?

Mountford: Pretty much everything. He's done nothing with it, basically, since we—

Webb: Numbers-wise?

Mountford: Numbers-wise, let's see. There would be four offset presses, one letter press, there's two linotypes, and here's a bit of trivia—there is one press that's buried in the floor.

Webb: Buried in the floor? Oh, wow.

Mountford: Yeah. We had, it was the letter press, the web letter press. See, at the time when they put that in, there was, the doors were right there on the back of the building, but then they built that extension on there later on, where we couldn't get anything out because we had that elevator in the back that went up to the loading dock that was up on the next level. So when we decided to take the press out, and it had, to put the forms in it, there was a pit underneath the press that you could stand in and then reach up and put the forms into it. And so the press disassembling guys, they looked at it, and they said, "We can't." It was the big heavy flatbeds that the forms went on, and there was no way that our elevator could hoist that out of the building. So what they did is they just cut the frames off and let those fall down in there, and then we cemented over the top of the pit. So there's half a printing press in the floor of that building.

Webb: Wow. So any other pieces of equipment that you can itemize?

Mountford: Let's see. There are two large process cameras in there, two film processors, and the type-setting equipment the same thing. We have photo typesetting equipment from the very first ones that came out clear up to the desktop publishing machines. So let's see, there's very vintage photo typesetters and two medium-vintage photo typesetters, and there's a headline setting machine, and the desktop publishing machinery.

Webb: What happened to all the bound volumes of the *Washington County News* and any other publications that might have been in there?

Mountford: The bound volumes, at one point Doug Alder approached us because he wanted to help the College complete their collection of the files that they were missing.

Webb: Was this while he was president of the College?

Mountford: This was while he was president of the College. So he would come in and take them and they would scan them, and then he would bring them back to us. And at one point it was, he asked Dad if we could consider donating them to the College at one point. And Dad had been approached by the University of Utah, also, because they wanted to scan them all for their Utah Newspapers Project. And so we kind of hung on, and then Dad passed on before we even really got anything done with that. And basically, who has them now, is Randall Richards has them now.

Webb: Randall Richards? Do you know what he's done with them?

Mountford: Yes. Him and his father-in-law, Brooks Pace, I think that they built a room, I think it's in Brooks's house that they built a room to store them in because he couldn't stand it because they were in the front cupboards up there in the shop, and he just said, "I think they're getting ruined," and all that, and I said, "Yes, it's probably not good for them to be here in the building like that."

Webb: So is the digitizing completed, or not?

Mountford: I think they digitized them up to 1945, I believe.

Webb: At Utah Tech?

Mountford: No, up at the University of Utah. I think what happened with that was that their grant money ran out, so they had to put that on pause for a little while.

Webb: So do you know how far it's gone at Utah Tech Special Collections?

Mountford: I don't really know.

Webb: What about microfilm?

Mountford: Microfilm, I believe—

Webb: It's current, right? All the way up to '88?

Mountford: Yeah, I believe it's current, yeah.

Carberry: When was the first edition of the *Washington County News*?

Webb: It started around 1901, and then it stopped. And then it started again on January 30, 1908.

Mountford: Yes, because the original paper was called the *St. George Union*, and John Wallis, he started it, and then he decided, "Well, I don't want it." And so basically, my sister told me, because she kind of researched this, that he went up to Idaho and started

another paper up in Idaho. Then he came back to St. George and started the *County News* up.

Webb: Right, in 1908.

Carberry: So in 1901 was the newspaper being printed from that building?

Mountford: Yes.

Carberry: So that would mean the building had to have been moved from Silver Reef prior to that?

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: Brady, do you have any other questions?

Fronk: Anything of historical note in the warehouse?

Webb: Do you still own that warehouse?

Mountford: No, we don't. The only thing that's historic in there now is antique cars. The guy that is in there now is rebuilding old cars in there. But in the other building there are a few historical things in there still.

Fronk: How many additions are on that building?

Mountford: Oh, there are a lot.

Webb: A lot of additions to the Washington County News Building?

Mountford: Three.

Webb: Three additions, oh my gosh.

Mountford: Well, you have the original Silver Reef Part.

Webb: Somewhere prior to 1901.

Mountford: That's the front. And then somebody put in an addition about where the paper, remember where the paper cutter was in the building, it was about right to there where the first wall, where that doorway is that goes into the next section. That was the first addition on there because they built that on there when they brought in the linotypes and the newspaper press. The first newspaper press was up there in that part of the building, too. Okay. Then the next addition to it was what we called the adobe section, and that was where the second web press was and the big offset press that's sitting there back in the back corner of that, and then the two lead casters are

in the corner of that building. So that was the second addition. And then what you probably know as the yellow part, it was painted bright yellow back there, that was Dad trying to make it happy, happy in there at one time. But the yellow part was built in about 1969.

Webb: So that was the third addition?

Mountford: The third addition on there.

Fronk: And it was in the hillside, so the loading dock was on the second floor.

Mountford: That's why the loading dock, that's why you had [unclear word] because originally before they built, the back door was down there, and there was just the flat back of the building. And that was all open, that cement ramp. There were no walls around it. You just walked down the ramp and went into the grocery store.

Fronk: And that ramp is still there, I believe.

Webb: So they used that ramp for what?

Mountford: It was so they could roll the grocery carts in and out of the grocery store up to the parking lot.

Webb: But I mean did you have a loading ramp?

Mountford: Yes. The loading dock was next to that.

Webb: And the loading dock was used for bringing in supplies and anything to—

Mountford: Yes. We used to bring, the rolls for that web offset were like double-wide newspaper width, so the roll was roughly about 8 feet wide, and so it would fit right through that door. And the elevator that was behind it was built to fit that roll exactly, because we would just roll it out of the truck, put it on that elevator, and downstairs, and they had a dolly they would roll it on there and just roll it up into the press up there in the front. But all the other paper came in there. We would stack it on that elevator, run it downstairs, use a hand truck to move it over by the printing machines that we were using. So that's how we got it. And then when we were done, everything would go back on that elevator, up, and out into the delivery truck.

Webb: Your delivery truck—what kind of a truck was it, and how long, what—

Mountford: Basically, it was whatever pickup truck that either Dad or Uncle Asa had at the time, because I know it started out with a '67 Chevy pickup was the first one. And then it was roughly about a mid-'70s GMC. And then it moved up to about a 1981 GMC. And when I got in there, it was an '83 GMC pickup that my dad had. So we just used to deliver out of the pickup trucks that everybody had.

Carberry: How did you deliver? Did you actually go to the mailboxes or to the doors, or—

Mountford: On the newspaper, most everything was all delivered by the Post Office and that. We had a machine out there at our other building with the newspaper press out there. We had a machine called an address-o-graph, and so we would put the addresses on them and backhaul them.

Webb: That was modern, that was more modern.

Mountford: Yes, that was modern. It had a little stencil that we would type out a stencil in it, and then it would feed that stack of stencils, and you would just sit there and take the newspaper and stick it in, stamp, stick it in, stamp, and keep sitting there doing that. And then somebody would come and pick up all of the addressed ones, and they would bundle it and put it, stick a sticker on it for the Post Office if it was going to SEF840 or going to Las Vegas or whatever, we would just do it all like that. So the newspapers were all done like that. But the job printing we had to physically deliver it to everybody because, that's what I ended up doing at first. I would be the one who would have to load the pickup truck and then take envelopes over to some of the real estate offices or deliver somebody's business cards or their business forms.

Webb: Some of the computer programs that you used were like Photoshop, and what was the other, the text, what was that called, and then it just sort of lost its excitement.

Mountford: QuarkXPress.

Webb: Oh, my gosh, I forgot about QuarkXPress. Tell us about QuarkXPress.

Mountford: It's really funny how, the desktop, when we bought our first Macintosh everybody in town hated us because we had the very first Power Mac that Apple had built because everybody else was still using Mac 2s and Quadra 800s, and we got the first Power Mac. It was so much faster. I had two typesetters over at Kinkos who just literally hated me because of this. We bought a big scanner to go with it. But then the programs we got were QuarkXPress, Photoshop, Illustrator, and so that was, the thing was, at the time, I don't think that InDesign and that had even been conceived at that point. QuarkXPress is what everybody was using at the time. And it was basically, it was an extremely powerful page layout program at the time.

Webb: It was. But then, you know, I had a major failure with it. I was keeping journals, a journal on there, and it just up and disappeared, and I was never able to get it back. So there were, once in a while there were some quirks with QuarkXPress.

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: Brady, you had one more question?

Fronk: Yes, one more question, and for clarification. So first, for the clarification, coming directly from Randall Richards, exempting four years, the entirety of the run for the *Washington County News* is actually sitting here at Utah Tech in Special Collections?

Mountford: M-hm.

Fronk: I believe they have scanned it up till 1958 at Utah Tech. But I could be wrong on that, at least. And the question is could you tell a little bit about the Federal work you did? Because originally when the BLM came down here when Zion and Dixie National Forest opened up, they did not have their own printing presses, so it would be interesting to kind of hear a little about those Federal documents.

Mountford: Okay, yes. We did an awful lot of work for the Government at that time.

Webb: You did?

Mountford: Yes, we did.

Webb: Such as?

Mountford: We did an awful lot of like, say their, well, they needed letterheads and envelopes and whatnot. We used to print some of the materials that they handed, what they hand out like the Recreation Division down there, brochures about the area, maps, things like that. We used to do an awful lot of stuff for the Arizona Strip office.

Webb: The Arizona Strip BLM Office?

Mountford: BLM office.

Webb: Did you do any work for the Forest Service?

Mountford: Yes, we did some work for the Forest Service, also.

Webb: A little bit of work?

Mountford: Yeah, we did, actually like I said, we did a lot of work for the Courts and all kinds of things. I mean, basically—

Webb: Fifth District Court?

Mountford: Fifth District Court, then the Justice Courts.

Mountford: And all that. Yeah, we—

Webb: Did you do anything for the Ninth Circuit Court while it lasted?

Mountford: I think, yeah, we did some work for them also.

Fronk: Anything for the Atomic Energy Commission?

Mountford: You know, what's funny about it is I could say we did something for the Atomic Energy Commission, but it wasn't for the Atomic Energy Commission—it was for a movie that was filmed here. I mean any time, in fact, there's a movie that they filmed here that was called Harry's War that we printed all the signage that you see when the Government foreclosed his home and all that in there. And plus there is also a little picture frame that's full of election buttons that was actually out of our front office. It was in his antique store.

Webb: So did you do anything else for any movies that were made here?

Mountford: Yeah, I can't remember, there was another movie that we printed a whole bunch of posters and bumper stickers that said "Save Mono Lake" on them, and I thought Mono Lake is in California. But apparently they were pretending something was Mono Lake around here when they did that one. But yeah, we did, in fact, let's see, there were two or three movies that we did some printing for around here.

Webb: So what kind of legacy do you think the *Washington County News* and its later successor Classic Printing has had on the local community?

Mountford: Well, I think it had a substantial effect on the community, the *County News* did, at least, because it was something that, it basically gave people the information about things that were going on around town, and they liked reading. I know that was the thing about the correspondents, people liked reading about that, oh, hey, so and so's son came to visit them this weekend, and things like that. Plus, I think it helped the City grow by providing the advertising and that for the businesses to subsist in the town. And I think Classic Printing did the same thing because we offered an awful lot of printing services and things. And like I said, where we had the neatest computer in town there for a while, and actually I think we did have the first fax machine for the public in there, too.

Webb: And didn't you belong to the Utah, what was the name?

Mountford: Yes, we were in the Utah Press Association.

Webb: The Utah Press Association, and did you win any awards?

Mountford: My grandfather won a Master Editor award. I believe my father did, too, because I know my grandfather's portrait is up in the State Capitol.

Webb: In the Newspaper Hall of Fame?

Mountford: Yes, in the Newspaper Hall of Fame; Frank's picture was up there in the Newspaper Hall of Fame.

Webb: When you look back, why did you choose this career?

Mountford: Mainly because I actually enjoyed working, because that was one reason, when I went to college, because I liked working on mechanical things, and that's why I was taking mechanical engineering at one time. But then running a printing press is quite an art to learn how, the nuances of how to operate a printing machine and be able to produce the printed product. And I actually loved doing that because that's one reason that I asked Dad if I could start learning how to run a printing press when I was 12, 13 years old was because it was just fascinating to watch that blank sheet go in and then come out of the machine with the printed product and be happy that it looked good and that you were doing a good job for somebody.

Webb: Right. When you had that tumor, was that essentially the end of your career, or have you done anything since then?

Mountford: Pretty much that kind of ended my printing career. And then after that my mom's health started to decline, so I decided that since I'm the only one of the family that stayed here, I thought, well, I should become her caregiver. So I did take care of her for about three years before she passed away.

Webb: When did she pass away?

Mountford: She passed away in 2022.

Webb: Describe, did you, you got married, right?

Mountford: No, I never got married.

Webb: So I can't ask you if you had any children or grandchildren.

Mountford: No, no.

Webb: What other civic, community, or religious [activities] did you participate in, if any?

Mountford: Mainly I was in the Boy Scouts quite heavily. I got my Eagle and all that. I did participate some in the Chamber of Commerce. I don't know, that might have been about it that I can think of.

Webb: Did any experiences stand out, from any of those organizations, besides work? I know sometimes work was probably over, I mean it encompassed most of your life, didn't it?

Mountford: Yes, yes. Basically in a newspaper family your whole life revolves around the deadline of producing the newspaper.

Webb: And that's significant—the deadline of producing the newspaper.

Mountford: Yes, because every Tuesday you knew it was time to compile everything and get it ready to be printed, and Wednesday morning it went to the press, and then Wednesday afternoon you spent mailing it to have it all out so it was in the mail and delivered by Thursday morning.

Webb: What was your circulation?

Mountford: Oh, let's see, I think, I believe it was 11,000 at one point.

Webb: Which was really good. That's good.

Fronk: What year would that have been?

Mountford: That probably would have been about 1978, I think.

Webb: So everyone knew about the *Washington County News*. That's where they got their news.

Mountford: Yes.

Webb: As you look back over your life, what would you like to be remembered for?

Mountford: Basically, I'd like to be remembered as somebody who has had some honesty and integrity and that I tried to be nice to everybody and do good things with that, and that I helped a lot of businesses get on their feet and get rolling by doing their printing and designing things for them to be able to get their businesses up and running good. So that's sort of my legacy there, plus the fact that I have all this knowledge of the industry and the building itself.

Webb: And that's significant.

Mountford: Last night my sister said to me, last night she said, "Yeah, you practically grew up in that place." And I said, "Well, yeah, I did."

Fronk: How many hours a week typically did you work?

Mountford: As a kid it was mainly after school except on deadline days, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On Tuesday nights, sometimes I would get there after school, and we would work until we basically put the paper to bed. We would work until 10 o'clock at night.

Webb: And that was a normal thing for a weekly newspaper.

Mountford: Yes, it was.

Webb: That's what you did.

Mountford: Yeah.

Fronk: And as an adult?

Mountford: As an adult I would be in there, I would probably work about an 8- to 10-hour day, sometimes, on regular days. Then other times when there were things that had to be produced, I sometimes could spend a 12- to 14-hour day in there, easily.

Webb: Is there anything else that you feel is important that we haven't asked you that you would like to share with us and with our audience?

Mountford: I don't know. I mean we pretty much covered an awful lot about it. Going back to my ancestors, my pioneer ancestors on my dad's side, Lyman Curtis was my great-great grandfather, and he was in the original company with Brigham Young coming into the Salt Lake Valley. He was the 9<sup>th</sup> Horseman in the original company. And then I know that the Historical Society actually has a page on Patrick Henry McGuire on the web site. It talks about him, that he was the recorder over there at the Cotton Mill and that in Washington City. So there's a whole—

Webb: And that's pretty amazing, too. What a great legacy that you've left this community. I was thinking, Brady, why don't you come over here where we can get you in the picture here towards the end so that we can at least, so everybody will be able to see Brady as well, before we close this. I just, we really want to thank Kelly Mountford for taking the time to be with us today. We'd also like to thank Lauren Golden and the staff of the Community Education Channel studios for allowing us to use their studios and for their technical expertise. This is the Washington County Historical Society's 23<sup>rd</sup> interview since I began conducting oral history interviews in 2021. Again, we want to thank Ron Carberry to my right for being here and Kelly and Brady Fronk for his technical and background information about the *County News* and the building, as well. So thank you for joining us.



**Interviewer's Note:** Kelly Mountford provided the Historical Society with a copy of the Classic Printing logo for inclusion in the transcript. The Mountford family operated Classic Printing from 1986 to 2017.