



Wasatch Hollow Community Council

Interview Summary and Index – John Christensen

Interviewee: John Christensen

Interviewer: Melvin Thatcher

Date: September 26, 2014

Location: At his home in Salt Lake City, UT

Summary
<p>An oral history of John Christensen who grew up on the corner of Logan Avenue and 1600 East in Salt Lake City, UT. John talks about boyhood friends and their activities in and around The Gully and along Emigration Creek, Boy Scouts, basketball, the shops at 15th and 15th, schools, churches, and local transportation mainly in the 1940's and 1950's.</p> <p>Note: John's circle of friends lived in the Edgehill LDS Ward area which extended down to 2100 South, so the geographic scope of the information that he provides goes beyond the current boundaries of the Wasatch Hollow Community (1300 South to 1700 South, 1300 East to 1900 East).</p>

Index	
Brief description	Time
Introduction	00:00:00
Logan Avenue. Moved into neighborhood in 1936. Identifies families and playmates on Logan: Holt, Robertson, Chrissie Hillam's mother. Describes Logan Avenue. Talks about games played. Neighbor's complaint to police.	00:00:33
Families on The Gully side of 1600 East going north from Logan Avenue: Hayes, Bowman, Schwartz, Liddle, Anderson (at end of Bryan Avenue next to entrance of The Gully), and Souvall. Dutch couple Vander Ende lived in The Gully, farmed land and controlled water going to the prison until it was moved.	00:05:05
The Gully. It was a real playground. Describes the cliffs and cottonwood trees and swinging from the cliff on ropes tied to the trees. Boys went camping near the springs above the current water diversion. In the haunted house above the creek, they found a trunk and floated it in the creek. The house turned out to not be haunted as someone tore it down.	00:08:32



Wasatch Hollow Community Council

<p>East of The Gully. Describes vacant lots between Logan and Bryan Avenues. A lot of houses north of Bryan and on the east side of the Gully. Boys hiked east to the Gray Rocks. Winter used cheap skis with a leather toe strap. Made a heel strap out of inner tube like a cross country ski. Went horse riding with friend at the riding academy. It didn't last long like Hottentot's by the zoo.</p>	00:11:00
<p>Logan Avenue boys. Talks of the Smiths and their sons Cordell and Dempsey. Made rubber guns and had rubber gun fights. Hid in Holts' garage. Most neighbors were sympathetic to kids. Keith Hawthorne from Bryan played Holts and Robertsons. Bob Taylor, my brother best friend. Gary. Keith cut the John and the Holts boys' hair. Describes haircuts. A picture was published in the newspaper. Talks of Cannon family at end of Kensington since at least 1928. House full of kids. Gully land was private to 1700 South. Always found golf balls from golf course upstream.</p>	00:13:30
<p>Shops at 15th and 15th. West side Safeway, Skaggs, grocery store, fountain. East side two gas stations, Economy Drug, Paramount Fountain, and Pat's. Pat was in a wheelchair and lived in back with his wife. Sold funny books and ice cream, pop and candy. Luden's Cream Soda would last all day with a nipple on the bottle. It was replaced by a kid's music store which failed and was replaced by the [King's English [B]ookstore. Einstein's Bagel seems to have taken hold.</p>	00:18:52
<p>Schooling. Most young kinds went to Garfield School on 15th and Garfield. Tells of first day at kindergarten. By second grade it was too crowded, so the school used some room from Edgehill Ward. Kids north of 17th South were put into Uintah [Elementary] and went to Roosevelt for junior high. Kids at Garfield went to Irving School.</p>	00:22:50
<p>Glen Arbor kids. Full of nice kids, the Menlove's and others. We would go there and play. You could cut across the block and run through yards.</p>	00:24:37
<p>Youth programs. Boy scouts: Mr. Menlove became scoutmaster. Edgehill Ward boundary went to 2100 South, so all of those streets were included. Many non-LDS boys came to scouts to become eagles and for activities and super trips. Basketball: Paul Hansen, a U of U professor took on the boys for basketball and produced many players who went on to East High. George Souvall, a Greek Orthodox, was welcomed by Hansen with open arms. He built a basketball standard by the Vander Endes. It became a community gym where anyone could play on Saturdays and became a gathering place for those with athletic inclinations.</p>	00:25:33



Wasatch Hollow Community Council

Transportation. A bus route along 15 th . Took bus to Utah Theater, see a movie, eat at the grabeteria, and ride home for a dollar.	00:28:04
Natural calamities on Emigration Creek. Water got real high in spring. Got bags from market where Presbyterian church is today. We would dam on the creek but it would get washed out in the spring. One time it did flood by Glenn Arbor where the creek goes under 15 th . Dove into water from Menlove's boat. This was the closest I came to swimming in the creek.	00:29:18
Youth playing along the creek. Clod fights in the center where the June grass would dry. Football games between neighborhood gangs. Robertson boys really helped us, but we weren't very good at it. Did a lot of skiing on those cheap skis with inner tube heel straps. Could leave from field across from our place. It was great skiing.	00:31:24
Road construction. Describes lowering of 1600 East road bed between a bit above Bryan and Logan and its impact on their front yard which had no sidewalk unlike the other side of the street.	00:33:45
Vegetation in the Gully. We called it "the jungle" from the cliffs on about where the Vander Endes was. Vegetation was real thick for about a block or two all the way up to 17 th South. On the east side by Logan were big cottonwoods and willows. Not many trees along the bottom.	00:35:08
Club. We made a hut in some brush. Had secret codes and words. It was a real club. It was an honor to be a member.	00:36:19
Misdventures. Sometimes fires would catch on June grass. One time fire engines came. One time we rolled a funny book and lit the end of it and tried to smoke it. It burst into flames and we decided that was the end of our smoking career.	00:36:48
LDS churches. Describes meeting places of stake and wards and boundary changes: Colonial Hills, about 1953; Edgehill; Stake Center, still being built in 1957; Wasatch Ward on Emerson had no parking has been razed.	00:38:14
Presbyterian Church. Built on 17 th South and 17 th East. They had a fire. LDS Church cancelled priesthood meetings and sent members to help fight the fire and clean up. Stake president got with the minister and provided places to meet. This created a lot of goodwill. They had a joint choir performance for years and did sandwich projects together for the homeless.	00:42:37
Community activities. We were let out of high school to help sandbag during spring floods.	00:44:10



Wasatch Hollow Community Council

Lasting friendships. Sonny Jordan. The Fords lived in big white corner house on 17 th and 17 th . They had a swimming pool. That was a big deal to go there and play. Sonny Jordan's dad drove a cement truck. Dug a hole in his backyard and made a swimming pool. Raised pigeons there. Sonny was a good friend.	00:45:14
End time	00:46:56