



## Wasatch Hollow Community Council

### Interview Summary and Index - 004

**Interviewee:** John Christensen

**Interviewer:** Melvin P. Thatcher

**Date:** July 30, 2016

**Location:** Salt Lake City, UT

#### Summary

John Christensen (b. 1935) tells about playing basketball at the Edgehill Ward gym in the late 1940s and 1950s. He speaks several times about “the pattern” followed by Mormon boys in the neighborhood—scouts followed by basketball (for many), college, and mission.—and reflects on the good group of kids that were his friends.

John recounts basketball skill drills during practice, being taught sportsmanship, (especially respect for referees), and memorable basketball games. He recalls scout leaders and basketball coaches in Edgehill Ward. And he remembers a number of outstanding basketball players and playing in the All-Church Basketball Tournament.

*Note: This is the fourth interview with John Christensen. The first three interviews are found on his page in the “Memories of Growing Up in the Neighborhood” section.*

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Time	Brief description
00:00	<b>Introduction.</b>
00:34	<b>Basketball at Edgehill.</b> Played in late 40s. Paul Hansen’s (Hans) early 1950s teams got into All-Church Tournament. Saturday and weeknight games. Kids paid to work in gym.
03:29	<b>Scouts then basketball (“the pattern”).</b> Good scout program. Produced a lot of eagles. Al Jenke, Roy Menlove. Went into basketball when older. Practiced at George Souvall’s backboard and in the [Edgehill] gym. Started at age 14, 1949.
05:44	<b>Hans’ gym training.</b> Dribble drill. Moving zone defense. Defense. Offense. Foul shooting. Hans’ training method. Always positive.
09:10	<b>Hebgen Lake.</b> Paul Hansen’s cabin. Menloves.
09:40	<b>Church and high school ball.</b> After Scouts play basketball at Edgehill Gym with Paul Hansen or at East High. Paul and Howard Menlove. East High



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	players could practice with ward but not play. Played in All-Church games as sophomore.
10:48	<b>Church and high school ball (cont.).</b> Auto accident. Joined national guard in senior year. Split ward. Edgehill and Colonial Hills ward. Played at East High in junior and senior year. Trained by Hans in sophomore year.
13:57	<b>George Souvall and Hans.</b> Practiced at Souvalls. Hans took interest in [George] Souvall. Helped get university scholarship. Welcomed all boys regardless of religion.
14:52	<b>All-Church tournament play.</b> Played in sophomore year and after graduation and mission,
15:23	<b>Friends and “the environment.”</b> Alan Smith, Rollie [Williams]. Orderly environment. Scout leaders- Al Jenke, Roy Menlove. [Roy] transported scouts to the Plunge for swimming. Fishing on North Fork of the Duschene. Primary to Scouting to basketball to college and missions. Good youth leaders. Friends doing the same things.
18:26	<b>Friends and “the environment” (cont.).</b> Menlove Construction Company hired ward kids -- Ken Clark, Howard and Paul Menlove and self. Most got degrees in accounting and business. Fortunate to fall into this group.
20:43	<b>Colonial Hills Ward team.</b> Played for Colonial Hills after mission. Basketball at Edgehill Ward, movies at Wasatch Ward.
23:42	<b>Basketball coaches.</b> Edgehill Ward – [Bill Paul, Sr.] Dickie and Bill Paul’s dad, seniors coach. [Bill Paul Sr.] stressed sportsmanship. Hans [Paul Hansen] filled in. Willard Ward. Can’t remember Colonial Hills coaches.
26:54	<b>Colonial Hills again.</b> Played a few games after senior mission (age 65-67).
28:20	<b>Referees.</b> Hans wouldn’t let players get out of line. Referee Glenn Cox reminded South High coach George Souvall how Paul Hansen would be hurt by disrespect of referees.
32:15	<b>Outstanding players.</b> Looked up the older group with Allen Brown. Conducted themselves on high level. Good teams. Jim Christensen. Good models.
34:15	<b>Games played.</b> Junior team. Played against Douglas Ward in All-Church, couldn’t miss a shot. Rassmussens had a car. Deseret Gym behind Hotel Utah and Tithing House. Rassmussens owned sky resort at Brighton.
38:00	<b>All-Church tournaments.</b> Softball. Played Arizona. Got too large. Changed to regional tournaments. Wasn’t the same.
39:56	<b>More memories.</b> Played a community team. Blocked my shot. “You got me.” Became friends. Does not recall getting too angry. Coaches always kept players level.
42:39	<b>Friends and “the pattern”.</b> [Allen] Smith conversation. Decent bunch of



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	kids. Followed the pattern- Eagles, College degrees, missions. Decent leaders, unusual men. Paul Hansen, Al Jenke, Roy Menlove
44:11	<b>Non-member [Mormon] players.</b> Recalls U of U football player who wanted to play basketball, had to come to Mutual. Later he joined the Church because of association with kids who went on missions. Menloves, Smiths, Woolleys.
46:46	<b>Paul Menlove.</b> Best athlete. [Wife] Pat. Tally Stevens, East High football coach. [Don] Jesperson, basketball coach
48:22	<b>Closing reflections.</b> Good kids. Brought along by leaders. Camping, fishing, merit badges, Eagle rank. Fortunate environment. Supportive parents.
51:06	<b>End time</b>