

Mary Jane: This is Mary Jane Boswell, and I am at the home of Blain and Marge Adams, on 855 E. Gentile. It is February 4th and we are doing this interview for the Layton City Oral History Project. And we will now ask Blain Adams the questions about the depression times.

What is your full name? When were you and when were you and where were you born?

Blain: I was born on November 29th, 1907, right up Gentile Street. I lived there until I was 13 years old, and my dad built this house, down below where the Rock Garden is.

Mary Jane: Is this house still standing?

Blain: Yep, my sister lives in it. It's the big house where the Rock Garden is, right down the street. And he built that in 1920 so us kids could get to school easier.

Mary Jane: Where was your school at?

Blain: Right down where it is now, only that old building. It was in that old square building they tore down.

Mary Jane: Oh, across the street from Layton High?

Blain: No down at the Layton public school.

Marge: Right across from the old Tanner Clinic.

Blain: Down below, down Gentile street and to the left right there where the school house is. That was the only school in Layton, it was a big square building. It had four rooms upstairs and four downstairs. Had a grade in each room.

Mary Jane: How long did you go to that school? Your whole...

Blain: 8 years, 8 grades.

Mary Jane: How many students were enrolled in that school?

Blain: Oh, they'd be mixed up and I don't know. Sometimes there wouldn't be over 15 or 20 in one class and then the next week there might be 40. And that's the way it was.

Marge: They had two barns... And people would come in carts and horses, and they would have a place to put the horses.

Blain: We'd have to go in the buggy, to school, from the farm up there we'd uh, generally there would be about three of us. And we would have to take the milk, two of three ten gallons of milk. We'd take it down, we called it the Creamery and Mr. Anderson take the milk out of the buggy and we'd go on to school, unhook the horse, and give it a sack of hay. And after school we'd hook up and come to Adam's store and get the mail. And then come up and get the cans, and come on home.

Mary Jane: So you had a busy day?

Blain: Yeah and on this road there was no gravel just all dirt.

Marge: It was called the Muddy Lane.

Mary Jane: Muddy Lane. Gentile Street was Muddy Lane?

Blain: Right Down here, by Will Whiteside's was a real b(?) hole. And another one down by Maude Green's. That's right down by where you buy hamburgers now. Oh, there was a mud hole there. It was awful.

Mary Jane: Do you remember when they paved the street?

Blain: Well the first, I can remember my dad getting a lot of people, all the farmers, together. And they called it the Good Roads Association. And they hauled gravel on it. They didn't get paid, they just hauled gravel. That was the first gravel they had on this road.

Mary Jane: Was it a lot easier that way?

Blain: It's the only way they had. They hauled it with wagons and horses. They didn't have any trucks.

Mary Jane: So how old were you during the Depression?

Blain: How old what?

Mary Jane: Were you during the Depression?

Blain: The Depression? About when we got married. 1933.

Marge: It was in the twenties wasn't it?

Mary Jane: It started about '29, the fall of the...

Blain: Yeah, it was a depression there for several years, I thought. Because nobody had any money and there was no jobs to be had. The only work you could get a job would be at the Layton Sugar Factory and that would only be in the fall when they made sugar. At the Woods Cross Cannery, when they canned peas and tomatoes.

Mary Jane: Did you work there during the fall?

Blain: I would if I could get a job. But my dad had a lot of land and he generally would keep us busy.

Mary Jane: Did you get paid?

Blain: No just family, is all. He didn't pay us. Oh, if you needed some clothes, he'd buy clothes, but far as, or if you needed a little spending money like go to a show or buy some ice cream, maybe some chocolates, a little bag of chocolates, but that's all.

Marge: They had Home Dramatics every year, too.

Mary Jane: What are Home Dramatics?

Blain: That was the most fun, is being in the Home Dramatics.

Mary Jane: Kind of like a play?

Blain: Oh, we'd put one on for the mutual, and one for the Sunday school, and one for the firemen, and another on for something else. We'd have four or five during the year, and then they'd generally take us

if we made a 100 or a 125 dollars, they'd take us to Olden, to a big K<(?), and buy a meal. And oh, boy would that be something!

Mary Jane: How much did you have to pay to get into this play?

Blain: Two bits. Two bits, and maybe if it was a good one fifty cents. Kids get in pretty free, but they'd let school out at noon and we'd put on a matinee for the kids. And then the grown-ups would come at night. That's the way they'd do it.

Mary Jane: Who was hit the hardest, during the Depression?

Blain: The farmers, 'cause that's all that there was here. All there was downtown was Adam's store and the Farmer's Union, and the bank.

Mary Jane: Was Adam's store yours, since it was your last name?

Blain: No, it was a distant relative. The farmers were the only ones, they were scattered all over, because they just didn't have any money. You couldn't get money for anything you raised. I remember raising carrots. I had two acres of carrots, and I thought, oh boy I'll make me some money. I had two brothers in the store business, the grocery store business. And I went and dug up a tub full of carrots, and cleaned them, and washed them all off, and I think I got thirty cents for 'em, so that ended that.

Mary Jane: You had a lot of carrots?

Blain: Onions, we feed the onions to the mules. We couldn't sell them. There was no price for them. And grain, grain was only worth 50 cents a 100. It wasn't anything to it. Marge and I used to live over on Fiddler's Creek, the next creek south. We lived there for 12 years in that old house. It belonged to my brother Dale.

Mary Jane: Is it still there?

Blaine: And it's still there. June Whitesides married Dale's son and they moved in and we had to move out. Anyhow I was farming 25 acres of land below 5 points. And Flinch wanted some hay. I told him ok they could have it if they'd haul it. And 40 or 60 days we'd measure the stack and we could tell how many tons they had. So when the time came to measure the hay, he told me he didn't have any money, so there's no use in worrying about it. And so it went on and on and on and he didn't have any money. Finally he said, if you want some pigs, then I'll trade you some pigs for what I owe you on the hay. So we told them ok we'd do that. So we round up trading a pig for a ton of hay. So I fixed up the wagon, and put some wire over the top, so I could haul pigs. I took the team of horses, and the wagon, and went down there. I think it took 2 loads of pigs to haul them home. Had something like 40 or 50 pigs. Blue Schultz. Worth about 4 or 5 dollars apiece, and that's all.

Mary Jane: How much was the hay worth.

Blain: That's all, about 4 or 5 dollars a ton.

Mary Jane: So it was a pretty even trade.

Blain: Now, we'd have to pay 2 dollars a bale, of hay, to fee this donkey out here. And it takes about 40 or 50 bales to weigh a ton. So I goes up close to a 100 dollars for a ton of hay.

Mary Jane: How much was a loaf of bread or a gallon of milk?

Blain: It was a nickel for a little loaf. You'd get a big loaf for a dime.

Mary Jane: Was it hard to...

Blain: No, it was fresh. Real good just as good as it is now. Just white bread. It was real good stuff. Wonder Bread.

Mary Jane: Where did you get your money, if you didn't have any money? What would people do if they didn't have any?

Blain: If you didn't get a job in the Cannery, you'd have to wait and see if you could get one at the Sugar Factory. And then, one time the railroad sent word out that each spring we'd have to repair the railroad. So when we go through Bountiful, we're going to hire all Bountiful men. And when we get to Centerville, we'll hire all the Centerville men. And come up right along the line like that, then when we get to Kaysville, we'll do the same. And Layton we'll do the same. So, I said, "Oh boy I better get a job on the railroad." And I did. I worked for two weeks and a gandy dancer on the railroad. And we got three dollars a day. That was big money then.

Marge: Were you in your teens then?

Blain: I'd have been about twenty years old, some years around there. Well, that's the only money you'd get. There was nowhere else to get a job.

Mary Jane: So if people didn't have any money, but they needed food. How would they get their food, would people lend them food to them?

Blain: Generally, down to the store, my dad had a charge account. And if my mother needed sheets, pillowcases, or if she needed some cloth to make a dress. She'd go get it and charge it. And then in the fall when my dad sold his grain, and his beef, and stuff. He'd go pay the bill.

Mary Jane: So did all the people have a reliable thing?

Blain: No, we all did the same thing.

Marge: There was two stores. One was the Adam's...

Blain: Some people would charge at the Farmer's Union and some at the Adam's store. Oh yes.

Mary Jane: And they were they were the main things in town, were those two stores.

Blain: Yep, yep. Up on the north end of Layton, there was a little bit of a grocery store, 'bout as big as this front room of ours. Arthur Elis ran it. And he sold candy and bananas and tobacco. And he had an old round stove in there and guys would go and sit around it and tell stories, and smoke and chew. And spit the stove. One day Cliff Perkins come in, and he was a guy who wasn't all there. And uh, and they said, "Cliff, if you eat a dozen of those bananas we'll buy them for ya." And he says, "I have think it over." So he went out, and down to Adam's store and he had enough money to buy a dozen bananas, they cost a nickel apiece. So he bought a dozen bananas and went out to the back of the store, by the coal pile and he sat down, and he ate that dozen of bananas. And then he went up to Arthur's store, and went in and told the guys that he'd take them on. So they bought him another dozen and he ate those!

Mary Jane: All of them?

Blain: All of them!

Mary Jane: Oh, dear. That would be a stomach ache. So how did you guys have money to get married in the Depression?

Blain: Didn't have any money. We didn't have any money, I never got to go to shows, picture shows. They had a show house, down there back of the Drug Store. And we didn't get to go to shows, when we was kids. You'd make your own show. Have Home Dramatics in Mutual and Sunday School. And then when we got older and danced. You'd save up from here and there, and get enough money to. Three guys would say, "Well, ok, we're going to the dance this weekend. And we'll take our girls, and maybe we'll go to the White City in Olden."

Mary Jane: What was that?

Blain: It was right in the middle of Olden. The White City Dance Hall. About east of Washington Avenue. So you'd go down to Dansy's and buy gasoline for 19 cents a gallon. Then the guy that was going to furnish the car, he'd use his folks' car, you see. He would be out, he would have to pay for gas, 'cause he was furnishing the car. So the other two guys would buy the gas for 19 cents a gallon, and maybe they'd get 5 gallons. And then in the evening you'd go get the girls and then go to the dance. How much did it cost to get in the dance? Two bits? Fifty cents? I think was two bits apiece.

Mary Jane: Is two bits 25 cents?

Blain: Yeah, then after the dance, you'd always go down to 25th street, to the Utah Noodle Parlor, and have a bowl of noodle. Pork noodles, oh, they were good, and they cost a quarter. A great big bowl. Half as big as your head.

Marge: Chinese people?

Blain: The Chinese people ran there. Oh they were good.

Mary Jane: Did you and your girl share a bowl? Or did you each have your own bowl?

Blain: Oh, you'd go and they'd have a bowl, just order your noodles, and they'd bring it to the table. And then next week, one of the other guys would have to get his folks car. Take turns you see. That's how you'd get around.

Mary Jane: Did your family have a car?

Blain: My folks had an automobile, the name of it was S-X. I used that one.

(Telephone Call)

Mary Jane: When did you have your children? Did you have them during the Depression?

Blain: We had one child, in 1938.

Mary Jane: So it was kinda at the end of the Depression, though.

Marge: It was getting over the Depression then.

Blain: You see all this time, I was farming here. My dad had a lot of land. And I was the last boy in the bunch, they'd all gone. The oldest one, was in the sheep business. Frank and Clay and got them a grocery store, called in the Adam's Supermarket. It was just south of Gentile Street, on Main street. And I was the last boy, there's 4 boys and 4 girls.

Marge: And the army, Frank had to go to the army.

Blain: So I thought I had the farm. After we got married, she tried to get me to quit farming and go get a job somewhere, so we could have a little money. You didn't make any money farming. But it would go in leaps and bounds. Now in 1930, I had two acres of early peas, four acres of late peas, and it was a bumper crop. And I had about 700 dollars, from that crop. So I went down here, to the Ford, where Lusas Laudie sold Ford cars, and bought a brand new Ford. And it cost 666 dollars.

Mary Jane: In 1930.

Blain: All sixes. 666 dollars. And he even filled it with gas. And put a spare tire on it. And I said, "I've got enough money to pay you in cash for the whole thing. But if I do, I won't have any spending money all winter long." Well he says, "Why don't you chare 200 dollars of it then." So I says, "That'll be fine. I'd like that." So we charged it to the Layton Bank. And things turned out so tough that I didn't even get it paid for, for 2 years.

Mary Jane: How did you get that money? Were you just saving up money to get that car?

Blain: Pea crop. The pea crop that year was a good one. Generally something would go wrong with one of your crops. For instance, in 1944, we, when I say we, the neighbors around here right close here neighbors. We'd all kinda talked to each other and see when to plant tomatoes and stuff. So we got our tomatoes in, the first week in May, and they'd only been in a few days and we had a terrible east wind. And it whipped them around and broke them off and killed them. So we dug up the ground and planted them over again. And everything went just fine and they were ready to be picked, the tomatoes were ready to be picked. In this field where this house is. Had tomatoes in this field, and they had two mole hole japs. We were going to do this field, and we had about 10 or 12 acres out yonder. I have to have some more help, so I got a guy named Ray Lee and he had married Harriet Hayword, she lived down below five point. So he and his dad came to pick (?). So along around the sun-up, the next morning. I went and got on my horse and drove up to see how they were coming. And he was a big tall funny looking guy. And he was throwing those big red tomatoes at least 8, 10, 15 feet towards the box. I said, "Oh, he don't know how to pick tomatoes, they'll be smashed." And when I got pretty close to where he was, he raised up and he said, "My, they sure firm this morning, aren't they?" And they were all froze just as hard as bullets. They were all froze 16, 17, 18th of September. And I after the years went by I had forgotten what year it was, so I called his wife, she says it was 1944. 'Cause she said, Ray went to Hillfield and got a job as a fireman, in '45.

Mary Jane: So your crop was frozen.

Blain: They were frozen and then in the meantime, the Davis County, a lot of guys were in the army. I was just a little bit old to get in the army. And so the Davis Count had brought, I don't know how many Mexicans. They had a tent twice as big as this house.

Marge: Excuse me, but it was froze on the farm too, don't you remember?

Blain: Well right then, what I had done was in the winter I went over and got a job Ogden Arsenal, making bullets. You got 4 dollars a day over there. Oh, that was great, and if you work two months they'll raise you to a 6. And so in two months, the boss came out and took me away and says, "Hey, you're a farmer, you're froze on the job. You can't work here. You can either go in the army or on the farm." And he says, "You're froze on the farm. That's because we got to have food for the soldiers." So they fired me and I had to go on the farm and plant all this stuff. They told me what to raise. I had to raise carrots, and onions, and tomatoes, sugar beets, potatoes, and corn, wheat, and alfalfa. They told me all this stuff I had to raise on these acres out in here. Out in this subdivision, where all these houses are, that's what I was farming, from here clear over to the high school. Well, I got some neighbors to come with his tractors to help dig the potatoes, then I went up to the Mexican camp, and got eight Mexicans, brought them down to pick potatoes, so Evert Taylor brought his tractor, and he just moved up the field. Then I had Rick Phillips with his truck to haul them to the potato factory. And we was doing just fine until noon. Then right after dinner, Evert hollered over and said, "Blain, what's the matter with your men?" They were all sitting there, they had quit working, they were all sitting in the middle of the field, here and there. So I hollered at the foreman, he could speak our language. I asked him what was a matter, and he says, "We quit, we gotta have more money." And Evert says, "Blain you can't pay more money." He says, "It's costing you two bits a sack to get them washed, a new sack is costing you fifteen cents, and it's costing you ten cents to get them dug, and when they sell them they are only selling them for 50 cents a sack." He says, "You're not making anything." So we told them, "Out the door." We couldn't pay them anymore. And they could walk home, and that was the end of the deal. And we had turn the horses and the mules in there and cattle to eat the potatoes. And that was when I quit farming. I have never farmed since.

Mary Jane: You don't want to?

Blain: Never farmed since.

Mary Jane: Did you have to sell all your land after that?

Blain: No, I just quit renting it. I was a renting. I was a renter. Then I went and got me a job at Davis Supply Depot. Then I went from there to Hillfield.

Mary Jane: So what are some major changes you've seen through Layton City through the years?

Blain: The biggest change is when they built Verdeland Park. They filled that place right full of houses down where Layton High School plays football. One house after another. Do you remember that?

Marge: Oh yeah.

Blain: That's the biggest change in Layton, all those people were working at those places at Hillfield. That was the biggest change.

Mary Jane: Kind of by the library? Behind the library?

Marge: All the folks would ask how many in a space, three...

Blain: There was only, when we got married there wasn't any people in Layton. Maybe 700. That would be from the highway up to the mountain. And from that creek that runs down by Kaysville. That's Fiddler's Creek. From there to Hillfield. And Clearfield's down at the bottom you see. And the old town

of Layton was only 700 or so, and then the war started. And they started hiring people at Hillfield, and they built all these homes down there for people to move into. It just changed everything. Oh, you'd see people walking up the streets that you'd never seen before. And you was wondering where they were going. Oh, that was Jack, yeah.

Mary Jane: You used to know everybody in town?

Blain: Everybody!

Marge: They were grateful to be out here and have a home. Southern states, and all over.

Blain: In fact, last fall I got the map out of the phonebook.

(Side 2)

And mapped where the roads were in 1930 or 1933, and then I wrote on there where all the people lived. If you want one I'll get one for you.

Mary Jane: Do you have a copy of it?

Blain: Oh, yeah.

Mary Jane: That would be a neat thing to do.

Blain: This is how it was in 1933, those are the roads, I've got them numbered you see.

Mary Jane: You drew your own little map about how it used to be.

Blain: Then right here I wrote number 1, that east of Highway 91. Ok. This is way we walked there is 1, 2, 3, right there, and then the first one is George Hen Adams, number 2 is Reggie Adams, and number three is Trish Findley. Then there is Antelope Drive, right there and then each of the roads like that. That's where the people lived.

Mary Jane: That's how many people lived there in 1933.

Blain: On each road, see. There's Fiddler's Creek. That's where we lived, over on Fiddler's Creek, that's the road that goes from five points up along there.

Mary Jane: What I was going to ask you, if I could take all of this and get copies of it, and give it to my teacher, 'cause I think that would help a lot.

Blain: You can have that.

Mary Jane: Do you need a copy of it?

Blain: No, I've got another one.

Mary Jane: Are you sure?

Blain: Yeah.

Mary Jane: 'Cause I'll make a copy of it.

Marge: Annie wanted a copy. So she should make a copy of it.

Mary Jane: I'll make a copy of it. Because I need to come back and get your signature, about this thing, if it was ok, I kind of forgot it...

Blain: I don't know who's in charge of the county or whatever it come from, this lady came here, like you said from back east somewhere, and she knew that show, it was a two hour show. And she knew it all right off by heart every bit of it. And I remember we all ended up in this big house where I told you my folks lived, where the Rock Garden is. And she told each one of us, about eight of us in there, and she told each one what it was and how to say it. And in two weeks we learned a two hour show. Boy that was something, to do that in two weeks.

Marge: I can't remember her, how she choose the ones to be in it.

Blain: That was fun to be in it.

Mary Jane: How did they choose you to be in it?

Marge: Was it because you'd been in the show before?

Blain: I guess it was because you went to Mutual, all the guys and girls went to Mutual.

Mary Jane: Was everybody in Layton City, Mormon, back then?

Blain: Yeah. That's the reason they named this street Gentile, no Jews on Gentile Street. My folks were Mormon.

Marge: There was one Jew, wasn't it way down...

Blain: Way down the road I believe.

Marge: That was what I was told.

Mary Jane: That there was one person.

Blain: Sometimes I wondered why, are you a Mormon?

Mary Jane: I'm a Mormon.

Blain: Sometimes I wondered why they came out clear to Utah, my grandson, Steven is taught a lot, over at Weber Collage, and he the biggest reason was they got kicked out of every town they were in back east.

Mary Jane: They needed someplace they could come where nobody else...

Blain: Yeah, and he figures that Joseph Smith, they wrote a book about him, just like these guys are writing a book about O.J. Simpson. That one guy said he went in there and sat with him for 30 hours, did you hear about that the other day? He sat in jail with O.J. for 30 hours, and he wrote down the things he said then wrote a book. And I don't know how many million dollars he got for that book. And there's another one, there is about 3 o 4 books that are being written, now, about O.J.

Mary Jane: Do you think he's guilty?

Blain: I don't know. Well it sounds like he might be, I don't know.

Marge: He's guilty.

Mary Jane: Oh, he is, he has everything to do with it.

Marge: He said he had a dream, because he didn't want to take that lie.

Blain: What I tell Marge, some lady was coming here to talk about the Depression, she says, "Irrigation?" I said, "No, Depression." He said, "No, it was irrigation." Some lady called from Ogden, with the Standard Examiner, the other day and asked me about the irrigating system. And they put a little piece in the paper. All from this street, north, me and my next door neighbor, we're the only two people that get water out of this big reservoir that's up here. You know that big reservoir that's on the other side of the, above the golf course. That's where we get our irrigating water. Out of an open ditch, the open ditch comes down the road, and runs on out on the ground, that's the way we've been getting water all my life. It's coming to an end. It's all running into houses. And it keep drizzling down until people started saying, "We got to have some of that water on our lawn," so we get two hours, and they get four hours. And they are going to bite this thing from clear up by Copper's then up across, by those new condominiums. Around the bend and then up in them hollers where Arthur Findly lives. That's where I have to take the water now to water the lawn. And we having a big water meeting the night before last, and Weber Basin, wants to take it over and put in a new water system. It will cost you so much a month, according to the size of your lot. So that's what they might do.

Mary Jane: Do you still have a big backyard? Or did you have to sell it?

Blain: It's big, we've got a whole acre.

Mary Jane: Did you have to sell a lot of your land?

Blain: We were just fine when we were first married, and we had our own house own house here, and everything was just fine then, but now when it's getting down to this, there's too much drought. We don't need that much. Lord, I can't even mow the lawn anymore. Get your grandson to do it.

Mary Jane: Do you only have one daughter? And she lives next door. Does she have a big family?

Blain: Nope, just two kids. A girl and a boy. We get the boy to do our irrigating and mow the lawn.

Marge: Her daughter is 23 years old, and I get her to help me. She comes in 2 times a week, and I have her vacuum and push it around. I couldn't for a while, now I can a little bit.

Mary Jane: Well it's been very interesting to talk to you and I thank you for letting me come. Is there anything else you want to tell me about the Depression? Before I leave?

Blain: Well, nobody had any, well there was no jobs, so there was nothing to worry about. When the farmers thrashed, all those farmers scattered around, suppose I wanted to thrash my grain. Oh boy, I go over and say, George Talbot, George Morton, Lylell Adams, Main Whitesides, different ones, the neighbors, and say, "Hey my hay is ready to haul let's get at it. When can you come over?" "Oh, day after tomorrow," "Ok, tell Ralph." "Alright." When it would wind up there would be about 6 or 7 guys, come over, and haul your hay. Help each other. You wouldn't hire anyone, because there was no one to hire. And then when they wanted their hay hauled, go over and help them. Pay them back you see, trade back and forth. The deal was if you haul hay for me and it comes dinner time. I have to furnish them dinner. So right after we got married, Marge would have to be the cook, Dave Green and those

guys, come in with that thrashing machine, it was one of those great big, big steam engines. The wings are about that wide, you've seen the picture? There are about that wide, great big round wheels, and they parked it out in front of the kitchen, just be right out here where that tree is, for the night, we'd thrash in the morning. It went like this and had a big belt on here. The separator that separates the grain from the straw. And I remember in the night, they left a big fire going in the firebox and it got too hot, steam exploded. And I thought the thing had blew up, boy, it made a noise just like a shotgun. Anyway the next day here comes the neighbors from far and near, a lot of them come just to look, and Marge had to do the cooking, how many did you have for dinner? 25? 30?

Marge: We didn't have enough room in the house. I had them out on the lawn.

Blain: She had them out on the lawn everywhere. She put a tub out there for them to wash in.

Mary Jane: That's a big job, to feed that many people.

Blain: There was one family, when we got their crops ready to haul, everybody went over there to haul, and we had to eat dinner there. And the poor bugger, we so poor that the only thing they had to eat, to feed 15, 20 or 25 men, all these thrashing machine guys, was a dozen eggs, and about that much salt pork. A piece of pork, like bacon. Only it's salted instead of baconized. that's all she had, and homemade bread. That's all that poor women had to feed all that bunch. They all just looked at each other, and started thrashing, nobody said a word.

Mary Jane: What did you guys feed, when you had.

Blain: We'd give them meat and potatoes and gravy. That's what they wanted.

Marge: Vegetables, I'd have a big thing.

Blain: Vegetables like corn and peas and beets.

Marge: See there was eight in our family.

Blain: She come from Clearfield, Marge did.

Marge: I helped mother so I was used to it.

Blain: Do you have that thing running now?

Mary Jane: Yea, but I'm going to stop it right now.