

**John Allred**

**Layton, UT**

**An Interview by**

**Tori Fairbanks**

**23 January 2025**

**LAYTON HISTORY COLLECTION**

**Verdeland Park Oral History Project**

**Tape No. HM2024.059.22**

**Layton City  
and  
Heritage Museum of Layton**

**GOOD MORNING, MY NAME IS TORI FAIRBANKS, AND TODAY IS THURSDAY, JANUARY 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2024. I AM JOINED TODAY BY JOHN ALLRED. I AM INTERVIEWING HIM AT THE LAYTON HERITAGE MUSEUM IN LAYTON, UT, FOR THE VERDELAND PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.**

**TF:** Before we start, I want to be sure that I have your okay to record.

**JA:** Yes.

**TF:** Awesome. Thank you for joining me today. I really appreciate you taking time to do this. If you could start out by giving me your full name, and telling us where and when you were born.

**JA:** I'm John Rodney Allred. I was born at the Dee Hospital in Ogden on August 16th, 1957. When my folks brought me home from the hospital, they brought me to A-27 in Verdeland Park, and I was there until the fall of '62, when we moved to Julie Dr.

**TF:** What were your parents' names?

**JA:** Ace John Allred and Phyllis Childs Allred.

**TF:** Where were they from?

**JA:** Centerfield in Sanpete County. Dad came to work at Hill Field, and when they first got married, they lived in a little house down on Angel St. But it was more of a "rent a room" kind of thing. I'm the firstborn, and when it came time for my mom to have me, I'm sure they were looking for other places to live, and Verdeland Park was one of the places everybody wanted to go. So, that's how they ended up there.

**TF:** What did your dad do at Hill?

**JA:** He was an instruments technician, and he worked there for 43 years, probably from the age of 21 until he retired.

**TF:** Wow. He was there for his entire career.

**JA:** Yeah. One time, he actually followed a friend to California for a few months. He said the reason he didn't like California was because he never saw the sun, but my mom's story is that she missed him, and he missed her. So, his friend stayed in California until he retired, but my dad came back to Centerfield. Then after my parents got married, but I don't know how long after that they moved here exactly. My dad's brother worked at Hill Field, and my other uncle, who lived in Brigham City ... his next-door neighbor was the personnel manager at Hill. So, that was a connection for my dad to get a job and move here.

**TF:** What did your dad do as an instrument technician?

**JA:** He worked on altimeters on different aircraft. I don't know what other instruments he worked on besides those, but I know about his work on altimeters because that's what he talked about all the time. He would calibrate those and repair them, but I'm sure there were other instruments he worked on as well.

**TF:** Tell me what an altimeter is and what it does.

**JA:** It tells you how high the plane is in the air, so it's a pretty important part of the instrument panel.

**TF:** So your dad had a really important job.

**JA:** Yeah, and he worked in instruments his entire career.

**TF:** What did your mom do?

**JA:** Well, my mom raised us kids until I was around eleven or twelve, then she went to work at the IRS with a family friend, Janeen. Then they both transferred to Hill at the same time, and they did keypunch, working with keypunch cards.

**TF:** How many siblings did you have? You said you were the oldest.

**JA:** I have three younger brothers: Bruce, Gary, and. Kevin.

**TF:** And where you were the oldest, were you kind of in charge of keeping them in line? Or was that mostly what your mom did?

**JA:** Well, yeah, I was as I got older, but I was too young when we lived in Verdeland Park. I saw some pictures of Gary in Verdeland Park, but I think Kevin was born when we lived on Julie Dr.

**TF:** I know you were young when your family lived in Verdeland Park, but do you any memories of living there?

**JA:** Well, we lived somewhere around the Layton High football field, and where the soccer fields are today. And something I remember is how a farmer who would sell vegetables out of his horse-drawn wagon, and I still remember the smell of those vegetables, like onions and peas. Mom bought stuff from him all the time.

We lived in a double unit, and Mr. and Mrs. Smithen lived on the other side. I remember the porch that went into the house. I fell off of that one day when I was messing around, and I couldn't catch my breath for the longest time. I thought I was going to die before I got my wind back. And I remember that my dad built a sandbox to the side of that stairway, and I remember playing in the sand there.

Kevin Hinckley lived across the street, and the Cortwright's lived somewhere close, as well as the Wrays. There are some pictures of my third or fourth birthday party in the book I have. I wish Mom would have written on the backs of them, but there are six or seven kids there. I'm not sure who all was there, but I think the Cortwrights, and the Wrays, and maybe Kevin Hinckley.

I remember the wood floors in the living room of our unit, and I think we only had two bedrooms. Our unit wasn't very big, but it seemed huge to me at the time. But we just outgrew it, and I think my parents knew that at some point, Verdeland Park would be closed. I don't remember exactly what year everybody moved out—maybe in the early '70s.

**TF:** I think the city bought the land in '62, and that was when people started moving out. I think that continued until the late '60s.

**JA:** Yeah. They needed the land because they were going to build Layton High. I've seen some of those old units north and south of here. Some people bought them and used them for outbuildings or storage. I actually drove past one for years, going down to Provo, and there was also a couple of units up north at Smith and Edwards. I could tell you where the one in Provo is, but it's behind a retaining wall now, so you can't really see it.

**TF:** There's actually a peach-colored one on Kaysville Main Street, sitting in front of a trailer park there.

**JA:** Yeah, the units got surplused, and people moved to other locations. That was back in the day when some people still moved their actual houses. I had an aunt and uncle who moved their house from Axtell, UT, all the way up to western Weber County, because they'd built that house. So, they moved it up here, because they didn't want to rebuild a house.

**TF:** Do you remember what color your unit was?

**JA:** It was kind of a grayish-green, or a gold drab. I don't think any of those units were really a remarkable color, really.. (laughs) I don't remember exactly what color our unit was, but it was kind of like an army barrack.

**TF:** Do you have any specific memories of your tub?

**JA:** I don't. I know somebody on the Layton History Facebook page said that they were made out of cement, but I was too young to know the difference between cement, cast-iron, and enamel. But I don't really remember anything about the tub, other than it was probably someplace I didn't want to be. (laughs)

**TF:** You just wanted to get bath time over with. (laughs) So you moved to Julie Dr. after Verdeland Park. What are some of your memories of growing up in that neighborhood?

**JA:** There were a lot of kids. Our family had four boys, and our neighbors across the street had five boys. There were the Petersons, the Gates, and the Woods. They all had big families. Kirk Milligan lived up the street, and he was a good friend of mine.

We played all of the common games during the summer, like hide and seek, and red rover. I don't really remember playing kick the can; but we mostly played hide and seek, as soon as it was dark enough for the lights to come on, because the lights were usually our home, or our "base." I don't remember what we called it, but that's where the person counted from, and everybody took off. And we had one of those street lights in front of our house.

We played a lot of baseball at Whitesides Elementary. We could play baseball if there were just three of us: a pitcher, a batter, and a left fielder. We called it "Home Run Derby." And if you hit the ball somewhere other than left field, it was an out. Wherever the ball was caught by the fielder, they had to throw it to the pitcher, and if they did, it was an out; but if they didn't, then it was a base hit. If you hit it out into the road, or over the fence, it was a home run, depending on which field you played on. But those fields have all changed since I was a kid.

I played Little League football, Little League basketball, and Little League baseball. It was always a highlight to be able to play at Wendell Snow field, especially if you got to play under the lights. And we loved to go swimming at the pool. There was just the little pool when I

was young, and I remember we were just packed in there like sardines. (laughs) There was just no space. I don't think they ever capped the capacity—I think they just hoped people would get tired and go home, but we always stayed. It wasn't crowded in the baby pool, but we never went over there, because there were usually moms with small kids. And it wasn't crowded in the diving area, so we would go jump off the diving boards to get away from everybody who was climbing on you and getting so close. It was crazy. And we'd stay in the diving area as long as we could, clinging to the side until the lifeguard blew their whistle and told us to get out. (laughs)

I don't know how many kids were there at the same time during the summer, but it was definitely the place to be. But we couldn't swim on the same day we had a baseball game, because it would make us too tired to play. It would make us kind of lethargic, so our baseball coach made sure we didn't swim on game day. We played twice a week—either on Mondays and Wednesdays, or Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our season started before school got out, and I think it went until the end of June. Then there was the 4th of July parade, and then another season started. And then there was the championship after that. So back in those days, baseball lasted pretty much all summer long. My birthday is the 16th of August, and the championship was always around my birthday.

But anyway, playing sports was a lot of fun. Parks and Recreation was just over here in some of the old Verdeland Park buildings. That's where we'd to get our football uniform, to line up for a physical with everybody else, and where the coaches would pick up their bag of balls and bats.

**TF:** Do you remember any of your coaches' names?

**JA:** My dad and Wallace Kidd coached the Little League baseball team that that I was on, although when Wally's kids were no longer a part of the team, my dad coached without him. We were the Badgers, and my dad actually coached until my youngest brother was done playing baseball. I helped him coach that last year, and those kids ended up winning the whole thing. So that was lot of fun.

**JA:** J.L. Dixon was the coach my first year playing football, because I actually played with older kids my first year. It might have been because of my weight, although I don't know for sure. But I was with Curtis Kidd's team, and he was a year older than me. But after that first year, I was with Dick Berriochoa.

We won the championship game that first year, and J.L. Dixon took us to the Sands Cafe in Clearfield after the game and bought everybody lunch or dinner—whatever time of day it was. We all got hamburgers, and I remember just being impressed, because you had to pay, like, \$25 and change for all of us to eat. But I remember J.L. taking care of the bill. He was a great guy. I'm sure you've heard other people talk about Jay.

**TF:** Yes. I'm trying to pin him down for an interview.

**JA:** He was a fixture here in Layton for coaching. I think he coached everything—football, baseball, and basketball. He also had boys who played sports here, and he was just very willing to help wherever he could. He worked with all of us.

**TF:** What elementary school did you go to?

**JA:** I went to Whitesides Elementary. From my house on Julie Drive, there was a little walkway that cut between two houses, and if you took that walkway, you were right on the school grounds. Those walkways are gone now, but that's how we got back and forth to school, back and forth to play baseball and football, and the basketball courts were there.

**TF:** Do you remember any of your teachers' names?

**JA:** In kindergarten and first grade I had Ms. Bird. We didn't have a full year of kindergarten back then. We went to kindergarten for six weeks during the summer before the beginning of our first-grade year. But for second grade, I had Mrs. Griffith, third grade was Mrs. Dunford, Mr. Hall was fourth grade, and Mrs. Buckle, who lived just down the street from us, was fifth grade. And Dick Child was my sixth-grade teacher. He's still alive, and he lives here in Layton.

**TF:** I've heard his name before.

**JA:** I remember being in Mrs. Dunford's class one day, and for some reason. Kurt Milligan and I both stepped on a chair to get over it, instead of just stepping over it. We both stepped up on the chair, then down. And she said, "You don't need to follow Kurt and do whatever Kurt does." And that was kind of an interesting concept I'd never thought of. I thought I was just being a boy. I didn't think I was following the leader.

But anyway, they were all great teachers. I appreciated all of them. A lot of them lived around here. Mr. Hall lived not too far from where my wife lived, and Mrs. Bothell lived just down the street. I think Mrs. Dunford came from Centerville, or somewhere like that. But Whitesides Elementary was a good school. Dee King was the custodian, and he was also my scout master. He lived in our ward. And I also worked as a custodian there before my mission.

**TF:** Where did you go to high school?

**JA:** Layton high.

**TF:** What graduating class were you?

**JA:** '75. I think we were the 6th graduating class. I think they had school there in '68, but they didn't have a senior class until '69. I remember the auditorium had just been built when I finished junior high, and it was available for us to have our junior high graduation in, but we

weren't allowed to graduate because they wanted the high school to be the first graduating class there, not a bunch of 9th graders from Central Davis Junior High. So, we had to go to Davis High for our commencement for junior high, and that was in '72. It's crazy, all the things that come back to your mind after all this time.

**TF:** Yeah. Well, other people that I've interviewed who went to Layton High said that they really liked it because of the diversity, and others I've talked to who graduated from Davis High said they wished there had been more diversity. Can you tell me what you remember about the diversity in Layton growing up?

**JA:** Well, when it came to sports, everyone came together to play football, or whatever sport it was. You had the Black families like the Fairmans, the Nelsons, the Washingtons, and the Dixons. And I don't know exactly why all of those family came to town originally, whether they came were in the military at Hill Field, or they came to Hill Field for work.

But there were those families, and then you also had the Hispanic people like Mike Valentino, and there were the Japanese families, like the Miyas. That was the family I knew the most, because they lived close to me. There was Paul Miya, and John Miya. I think John has passed away.

But anyway, there was a lot of diversity in Layton. All of those guys were athletes. The Washingtons, the Dixons, the Fairmans, and the Nelsons were incredible athletes. Claude played at Utah State, and Orlando played on some NFL teams. I think he was three years older than me, and I remember him coming to practices and doing the workout routines on his own, just because he was so serious about what he was doing. He was either in his senior year at college, or he was trying to make a professional team.

But anyway, those guys were always very much invited to be on the Little League teams, and our junior high teams. Derrick Washington was our quarterback, and he was a really good athlete. After high school, he played with the University of Utah. So, there was a lot of diversity here, and I felt pretty lucky that I grew up with that diversity, especially when I went on my mission. I had companions from Idaho who had never even seen a black person, let alone been around one. They'd never experienced any kind of diversity.

I mean, I hope I had a fair mind when I was growing up. There were some things my parents would say, and jokes that they would tell, but they grew up in a different time, and those things weren't right.

**TF:** Right. Like you, other people I've interviewed said they were grateful for the diversity here, and that's why I think Layton's history, and Verdeland Park, is so unique to Utah, because of Hill Air Force Base brought in all so many different families from different places. I grew up in Cache Valley, and I didn't have that growing up. So, I think that was really unique for Utah during that time period.

**JA:** I would assume some of that diversity was also at Clearfield High, although I think some of the kids at Hill Field came to Layton to go to school. I know some of them joked about driving by Clearfield High on the bus just to get to Layton High. (laughs)

**TF:** Where did you serve your mission?

**JA:** I served in Indianapolis, and South Bend, MD.

**TF:** So the diversity you grew up with probably did really help you.

**JA:** It did. One time on my mission, we were in an area where Black people were yelling things at us like, "Hey, boys, you don't belong here." We'd go from point A to point B, and I'd just look at the map and say, "Well, let's just go on this road." Well, we were in a Black section

of town, and as we got deeper and deeper into that section of town, people were like, “You know you white boys aren’t supposed to be here, right?” So, there were times where things like that would happen that I wasn’t prepared for, even though I grew up with some diversity.

**TF:** Right. Well, another question I was going to ask is what do you remember about Main Street growing up?

**JA:** Well, Main Street was where you went shopping until they built Kings. And in the Fort Lane Shopping Center, there was Kings, Safeway, [unclear] Spot, and all those other shops and stores. I remember JCPenney. It was with two-level building, and when you got your shoes, there was a salesman who would measure your foot, then go get the shoes, and all of that. That really doesn’t happen much anymore.

Variety Plus was another store close to JC Penny, and they had all the five and dime-type stuff. I liked going there a lot more than JC Penny, because they had stuff you could actually pick up and touch. I remember getting a little toy where you hammer in pegs, and screw in screws, and it had bolts on it. Well apparently, I took the little hammer with me everywhere, and I actually left it at Variety Plus. I thought I’d lost it forever, but we ended up finding it when we went back to look for it. I’d set it down to look at something else and forgot to pick it back up.

When I was a young kid, Main Street had the Dipper Drive-in, and the Hires root beer place was across the street from it. There was the Arctic Circle close to there, and my folks really liked the Chinese place that was further north. I wish I could remember the name.

**TF:** There was the Noodle Parlor, but I think there were also other restaurants further north as well.

**JA:** Yeah, I think the Noodle Parlor was more in that main area of Main Street. But when we got hamburgers, we usually went to Arctic Circle, and The Dipper was more of a hangout. I

didn't really spend a lot of time there eating or hanging out. But there was also Dairy Queen, and that was further south.

**TF:** What about Kowley Drug?

**JA:** I went in there a number of times, but I don't remember sitting at the counter and eating French fries, or drinking Coke, or anything like that, because it was closer for us to go to Layton Drug. We would go down there and eat French fries and get an Iron Port. Having an Iron Port was the big thing. I don't know that we actually ate a meal there very often, but maybe sometimes. Lane Call was the pharmacist there. I don't know whether he owned the whole store, or if he just owned the pharmacy, but he's still alive, and he lives near Andy's Pond.

**TF:** I was able to interview him and his wife, Evelyn. I often go to Adam's Pond with my border collies, so I pass their house all the time.

**JA:** He'd be a great one to interview, because he's been here for a long time. He went to Davis High, and I think he graduated with my mother and father-in-law.

**TF:** Lane's wife Evelyn grew up in Verdeland Park, and I think he was right outside Verdeland Park. And I think Lane's family owned chickens. He talked about when the chickens would sometimes get loose and go down into The Hollow, or something like that. (laughs)

Do you have any memories of the 4th of July?

**JA:** Oh yeah, I think it was called Riata Days, and we'd go down at the park by Layton Elementary. Before they tore the old one down, there was a bowery there. I think that bowery might have gotten moved up here to be one of the coverings for Parks and Recreation. I worked for Layton City with Parks and Recreation for a summer. Our office had just been built, and it was up there. But I'm not sure who is in charge of what nowadays.

But anyway, the bowery was used not only on the 4th of July, but if we ever had a church event, it seemed like we always went to that bowery, and I remember a horseshoe pit there. But on the 4th of July then ... I mean, if you compare it to what there is on the 4th of July now, there were probably only about ten to twenty booths, whereas now, there are probably over 50. But we would go to those booths at Layton Elementary and play a bunch of games, like the fish pond, and the cake walk. I don't think anyone was really selling anything at those booths; I think they all did games of chance, where you could play and win prizes.

But we'd go the parade, then we'd go to the park. And at night we'd go back for the fireworks display. And I don't know that we were there every single year, because we camped and fished a lot too. But I remember the fireworks they hung on the screen of the softball diamond. They had an American flag that would turn into all the red, white and blue colors, with red stripes and stars. There were always things that spun around and shot sparks outside the screen.

And then there was a fireworks display. I don't know how long it actually lasted, but when you're a kid, it seems huge. But I remember being down there the year that a firework landed in a crowd of people, and some of them got burned. So, they moved it from Layton Elementary to Layton High School. But then the same thing happened at Layton High: a firework landed amongst a bunch of people. So, they had to start pushing people back, and now they do all the fireworks on the football field.

Once I got older and was married and lived in Syracuse, we would just watch the fireworks there on our front lawn, because we could see them basically from the driveway.

**TF:** It was probably nice to not have to deal with the crowds.

**JA:** Yeah, we didn't have to fight the crowds, or the traffic. A number of our neighbors would come over and watch the fireworks with us, and just visit.

**TF:** That's cool. Do you have any memories of some of the things you used to do in the wintertime?

**JA:** Well, like the post on the Facebook page about sledding, I remember the two main places that people have talked about, like the hill behind EG King Elementary. There was a really nice slope there, and I remember one year for Christmas, the kids got what was called a Snurf Board. It was like a board that didn't have any bindings or a place to stick your feet in, but it had a rope on the front. You'd jump on the rope and slide down the hill, and that hill was a good place to do that, because of the powder and soft snow. The Snurf Board had a similar form to snowboards today. I think those were, like, the beginning design of a snowboard; but I think the kids rode that for two or three years on that hill.

But if we wanted to go sleigh riding or tubing, we would go to Pill Hill. We called it Pill Hill because that's where a lot of doctors lived. But we would go to the south side of the draw, just next to the Bittner's house. We'd slide down into that big area—I'm sure the Morgans owned it—but we would slide all the way down. And depending on what kind of snow we had, sometimes a sleigh with rails was almost useless, because it would just get bogged down. So, we had to have something like a toboggan, or an inner tub, but I don't remember seeing saucers until a little later. We either used an inner tube, wooden toboggans, or one of those Red Flyer sleds that had the handle in the front for you to steer it. If you were on your belly, you could steer with your hands, or you could steer with your feet if you rode a different way. But it had to be icy for that to work.

I remember when we went tubing, we would keep going until we got clear down to the barbed-wire fence at the bottom. Well, some people weren't bright enough to bail out before they hit that fence, and they would come back up the hill with cuts on their face and hands. (laughs)

Then on the north side, Layton City also put in a tow rope.

**TF:** Where was that? I live close to where I think it was, but I can't picture where it would have been, geographically.

**JA:** If you're driving up Gordon Ave, and you look up on the left side of the road, there's kind of a big cement structure that's like a water-vault-type thing. It's 12 feet by 12 feet, or 16 by 16. I remember that because when I worked for Layton City, we went up there either to chop weeds, or just to make sure everything was ready for the fall, and for the tow rope to be operational in the winter.

**TF:** So there's a cement structure ...

**JA:** Right. It's on the hill, on the left side of the road, as you're driving east on Gordon towards Highway 89, just past the Call's house; there are some horses there now. But you couldn't get to it from that side; you had to go up the other lane—I'm not sure what the name of that road is. But there's a road past the sod farms, and it goes all the way up and connects to Cherry Lane. You had to go on that road in order to access the tow rope that went down into that hollow.

**TF:** I've heard some people mention the tow rope. Some people remember it, and others don't. Tell me a little more about it.

**JA:** I don't know that I ever really paid too much attention to it. They put it in when I was in junior high or high school, and by that time, I was involved in other things. I remember my brothers going to use it, and I don't remember if they had to pay a fee or not, but basically,

instead of people having to walk all the way back up the hill, they'd just grab onto the rope, and it would take them back up to the top of the hill.

**TF:** Was that run by the city?

**JA:** It was, probably by Parks and Recreation. But we called the hill on the south side of the ravine Pill Hill, and the tow rope was on the north side of the ravine. Pill Hill went down to the bottom on the south side, and the tow rope took you down the hill on the north side.

**TF:** Okay, that makes more sense now. When people have talked about it in the past, I tried to picture where was in relation to Valley View Golf Course?

**JA:** The golf course was basically a big ravine, with the tow rope on one side, and Pill Hill on the other. I'm not sure exactly when the golf course was put in.

**TF:** I think it was 1974.

**JA:** I got married in February of '79, and we had our reception there. My father-in-law, Gary Hanson, who coached football at Layton High, may have had some connections for us to have our reception there. But I know that by '79, the golf course was in full swing.

**TF:** Right. That would have been the place to have a reception.

**JA:** It was really nice, but our photographer was really into lighting, so all of our pictures were more about the background and the lighting than about us. (laughs) I mean, we're in the pictures, but he was trying to catch the background lighting more than spending time trying to actually get good shots of us. And all the pictures we have of family groups and people around the refreshment table were all about the lighting.

Our photographer's name was Rudy Drobnick. He was from Ogden, and he was a WWII vet. If you ever see those KUTV war-type programs, he was one of the vets they'd interview, because he was part of the group that went in and liberated Europe.

**TF:** I'm guessing he's not around anymore.

**JA:** No, I'm sure he passed away quite a few years ago.

**TF:** Yeah, there are very few WWII vets left.

**JA:** My dad was too young to serve in the war, but his five older brothers were all involved.

My grandma Myrtle had the flag with five stars hanging in her window. The second to the youngest son was only in the military for less than a year before the war ended, but all the other brothers were there, and they all survived the war.

**TF:** Do you know what theaters they served in?

**JA:** Two of my uncles were in the Navy, so they served in the Pacific. I want to say the oldest was on the USS Enterprise three days out of Pearl Harbor and headed to Northern Africa. The Japanese thought they'd destroyed all of those battleships during the attack on Pearl Harbor, but he was on one that left just before the attack.

The other brother, Max, was in the army. He joined the Army and was stationed somewhere stateside, but he thought that was boring, and he didn't want to be there anymore. So then his unit was sent to Europe, and he actually got captured during the Battle of the Bulge. But he told me some stories, like how they ate worse food than his mom would drain down the sink, or would put in the hog slop bucket for the pigs. I think he was in a POW camp for about eight or nine months. But I'm glad they all came home.

**TF:** Well, I have just a couple more questions. Do you remember any division between East and West Layton, and the neighborhoods in the center of Layton and Verdeland Park? Anything like that?

**JA:** Yeah. I was probably eleven or twelve when the Layton Stake and the Layton West Stake were separated. So, there was West Layton, and Layton itself. And East Layton was part of our

stake. East Layton basically tried to be their own city, until there was no money coming in to be able to support the infrastructure they needed in order to be their own city. The only businesses they had were two gas stations up on Hwy 89 and Cherry Lane. So that's why they merged with Layton.

Some of the kids from East Layton went to Whitesides Elementary, and some of them went to Crestview. But when we all went to Central Davis Junior High, I don't remember there being fights or anything like that, but there was definitely Layton City, and then West Layton with people who owned farms, and ranches, and cattle.

When East Layton was trying to be its own city, people would say they were lived in East Layton, and not just Layton Cit. I'm not sure exactly where the boundary to East Layton began, but I think they had a city office for a while. I think it's a daycare now. But it seems like in the late '70s or early '80s, all of Layton became one city.

**TF:** What are some of the changes you've seen in Layton over the years?

**JA:** Well, I lived in Layton until I got married, then we rented a place in Kaysville. After that, we bought a house in Syracuse. We also bought a house and some property in Taylor, out West of Ogden. Then we went to Spanish Fork for a few years, but we ended up coming back to Layton, and we're up on Valley View Drive now. But the biggest change has been the growth, and to me, part of what spurred that growth at that time was the mall. When the mall got built, then a lot of people came to Layton to shop, and there were people who wanted to live closer to the mall.

When the mall went in, Hill Air Force Base was still probably the first or second-biggest employer in the state, maybe behind Kennicott. But it's crazy now to see condos or apartments where somebody's house and two or three acres used to be. That happened to Dorothy and John

Adams' property. Both of them were on Fairfield. And the Dansies, who lived down south—their home is now gone. There are multiple family units there now. So it's not just the growth of the city itself, but all the multiple family homes that are going in, especially in places where we used to go pheasant hunting, for example, or places where we would go to just goof off.

I remember a friend of mine saying to me one time that a teacher told him some day, Layton would be bigger than Ogden, because of the amount of land that Layton had, versus Ogden. I don't know how their populations compare today, but you can see that that's going to happen, because Layton still has a lot of places where it can grow.

The Bamberger went away, then The Layton Sugar Factory did as well. I don't know if there are even any buildings left from the old sugar factory. One of the things I remember about the sugar factory was how we would go down and see the big piles of sugar beets in the fall. For us, it was a Sunday-drive-type thing. There was also a sugar beet factory in Centerfield, Utah, where my folks came from, so that was kind of a connection for them—wanting to see the sugar beets, and the sugar beet factory here.

Farming is going away now. There used to be Love's Dairy, and Harris Dairy; but as all of those agricultural things started going away, I guess it was inevitable that they became strip malls. Harris Dairy was up by North Layton. I think their house is still there, but nothing else. It's all either subdivisions, or strip malls.

**TF:** It's hard to see all of those things go away.

**JA:** To me, what's hard is that when I was a kid, I'd always see people I knew, and I'd stop to chat and visit. But now, you can go to the store, or the movie theater, or walk around the mall, and not see anybody you know. So all that growth makes everything less personal, because you don't have that connection of just waving and saying "hi," or being able to visit with somebody

that you haven't seen for a while. I mean, occasionally I'll run into people I used to know who are here on vacation, but it's nothing like it used to be.

**TF:** Yeah. Different people I've interviewed say they don't really even know their neighbors now, and they miss being able to see people they know when they just go out just shopping, or whatever.

**JA:** Yeah. Now we're more of an everything-you-need-is-at-your-own-house society. You don't very often hear of anybody showing up at their neighbor's house with that cup of sugar, or that cup of flour, or that cup of milk that their neighbor needs. I mean, where I live, they tore down a house, then they put in four in its place. I know two of the people who moved in, but I don't think I've ever met the third person. It's just less personal than it used to be.

And the diversity of the workplace has changed. When I was growing up, people worked at Hill Field, and if they didn't work at Hill Field, then they worked for the Layton City or the school district. Or you were a businessman on your own. But now, people commute in from all over the place. When we lived in Spanish Fork, I was working at BYU but my wife said, "We need to move north." I said, "All right, although I'm not sure how that'll work." But our current house became available here. So, we move up here and I commuted to BYU for, like, eight years.

**TF:** That's a bit of a commute.

**JA:** I spent a year riding the train, but I wasn't able to get anything done, because I was gone all the time. But then I decided to buy a natural gas vehicle and drive in the carpool lane. So then it took me an hour in the morning, then an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes on the way home, depending on how much traffic there was. But it seems like everyone commutes now, whether they're going to Ogden to the Weber Industrial Park, or the Freeport Center, or wherever

But anyway, I think one of the reasons growth happened in Layton is because the Freeport Center went from a government agency to all of those different businesses that came in. The Job Corps also came in. But there were areas that you went to for something, but they were out and away, similar to what you've talked about with Cache Valley: now, it's just one big, long city with different towns, and different main streets.

A lot of the shopping on Main Street in Layton pretty much went away when the mall was built. And it wasn't just Main Street, but also Gentile. In the past, there was Brailsford and Biggs—B & B—and Western Auto. That was our go-to place for sporting goods, or Dansie's Market. I think one side of Dansie's Market had some sporting goods, and there was a bar on the other side.

But anyway, as growth occurs, it just gets more and more impersonal, and there's less and less connection. Your connection becomes more tied with church or school. I mean, it was a lot different when we just had Layton High, versus when they built Northridge High School, and even North Layton Junior High. I think the first year that opened was when I was in seventh grade; prior to that, everyone went to Central Davis Junior High. So then, there was a division between Central and North Layton.

Layton is still a good place, it's just big. They've done a lot of things to try to keep the community together, like building the amphitheater, and the Vietnam Memorial Wall, recognizing all the veterans. There have been people who've had some foresight to create those things, and even this museum, where people can come and see different things.

I think Lee Woodward, who was part of the Parks and Recreation department forever, was part of that tow rope, and they had an archery range at the bowery that ran all through the

winter. They'd enclose it and keep it heated, and you could shoot your bow down there. Then in the summer, it was opened back up, and it was just part of the bowery again.

I was part of the Layton East Stake, and another good memory I have is how they would do an annual fundraiser. They would cook turkeys in these pits, and we had this big dinner. The money they raised went towards the building fund. But there was corn on the cob, and fresh tomatoes, and all the beef or turkey you wanted. And as a kid, that's where it was at. (laughs) You wanted to be where the food was, and that was all the food you could possibly eat. That was the prime summertime event, and it was a lot of fun.

I remember somebody dropped their tractor down into one of those pits. They tried to hurry and get it out before it burned up, but it still burned off the two front tires. (laughs) But they would have that dinner up on the Morgan's property, and the Morgans would provide the turkeys and the beef. We don't have activities like that much anymore, where the whole stake gets together. And when I say "stake", that included all of Layton, plus East Layton. It was a huge geographical area, and everybody was there to play softball the afternoon.

Some stuff like that continued up until COVID, but unfortunately, a lot of it stopped with COVID and never started back up again.

**TF:** Yeah, that changed a lot of things.

**JA:** Although there is pickleball now. (laughs) That's one thing that's brought people together since COVID. I don't play pickleball.

**TF:** Well, how do you think growing up in Layton shaped you as a person?

**JA:** Well, being raised around diverse families—and when I say "diverse," it's more than just race, or ethnicity, or skin color. It was the diversity of people who worked at Hill Field and stayed here, or people who moved in for other work. My folks moved here from Sanpete County,

so I didn't have a lot of cousins or family members who lived nearby. That made it was easier to get to know whoever, without having those family "cliques," for lack of better word—the nearby family connection that can be stronger than other connections.

When you say "Hill Field," there were the civilians who worked there, and then there were people who belonged to the military. But I think some of the military people finished up at Hill Field and thought, "This is a great place to raise a family, so I'm just going to stay." So there was all that diversity here: economic, racial, and religious. There were different churches, more than just the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I had friends who were Catholics, and there were religions other than Christians.

So, I felt like growing up in Layton gave me a great start in life. It was small enough that I got to rub shoulders with doctors, and bankers, and businessmen, as well as farmers, and people who worked on Base, and people who owned different stores. To me, that meant diversity, and it was great to be raised around all of that. I mean, Wallace Mulder lived down the street from us. He was a former coach at Weber State and was dean over one of the departments there. I went to Weber before my mission, and one time, I had a few minutes, so I just walked up his office and say "hi." He was just "Wally" to me, because he was Wally back when we played softball—"Mary Ann's dad", or "Kinley's dad".

He had a receptionist, and I said to her, "Where's Wally?" She kind of looked at me and said, "Do you mean Doctor Mulder?" And about the time I said "yes," I heard him yell, "Hey, tell John to come in." (laughs) She thought I was being disrespectful by calling him Wally, until he called my name and told me to come in. But I felt comfortable around people like that: Doctor Mulder, Doctor Bitner, Doctor Bosworth, Doctor Kelly, and Lane Call, the pharmacist. Layton was just smaller back then, and we were all in the same environment, day in and day out,

whether those guys were your coaches, your team physician, or the doctor who gave you your physical before school started, or before the sports season started.

It was great. I really enjoyed and appreciated growing up here, and it's been fun to come back. I still have a lot of memories from that time. Like, "What did that area used to be?" or "What did we used to do over there?" When I'm driving around with my grandkids, they probably get tired of hearing stuff like that; (laughs) but they'll say the same things to their grandkids.

**TF:** Right. People who grew up in Verdeland Park will say things like, "That's where this and this used to be." or "We used to do this here." or "That's the tree Dad planted," or "This is where The Hollow was."

**JA:** We walked through The Hollow every day to get to Central Davis. We would walk over past Layton High, then we'd cut through the ball field. There was a sidewalk that went right through where Surf and Swim is now. Kids would walk up and down The Hollow, then right over to Central.

We didn't really claim much of The Hollow. I remember one time when I was a scout, we were looking for somebody, and we crawled through The Hollow. Then our Scout leader kept us going, because we ended up finding the lost child in one of the dugouts at Wendell Snow field. But other than us just walking in, and up and down, and through The Hollow, that's where kids would go to smoke, and that's where all the fights happened. So, we just tried to avoid that kind of stuff.

**TF:** It's kind of funny how The Hollow evolved from a place where kids in the '40s and '50s built the tree forts and stuff, to kind of being a seedy place later on.

**JA:** Well, all of those kids grew up in that subdivision along The Hollow. The Hollow was a little bit further away from where I grew up, so we didn't go there to do things like shoot frogs. We went further east to do that kind of stuff. (laughs) But I'm sure the kids who lived along The Hollow went down into there all the time and shot frogs, or tried to catch a fish out of the creek. I don't think there were really any ducks down there at the time.

**TF:** Well, is there anything we haven't covered during this interview that you would like to include?

**JA:** I've tried to just say things as they came to mind. The questions you sent were good, and I wrote some other things to talk about. The one memory that really stood out to me was the farmer with that old horse-drawn produce wagon that my mom would buy vegetables from. And like I said, I can still smell that produce.

**TF:** It's fun when memories like that come up that you haven't thought about for a long time. Is there anybody else you can think of in the area that you grew up with—friends, or anyone like that, who you think might want to be interviewed?

**JA:** There's Jerry and Curtis. Jerry's down in Rose Park. I just don't know how you'd get a hold of Gerald Kidd. There is a guy who was older than me that I didn't know personally at the time, but he talked about Verdeland Park all the time, because he lived there. And then he and I worked together at Kimberly-Clark. His name is Mike Romero, and I'm pretty sure I have his number.

**TF:** I think I've heard his name before.

**JA:** He probably would have been a teenager when he lived in Verdeland Park. His number is (gives Tori Mike's number) Tom Neal would have been a good person to talk to, but he's in a memory care facility in Idaho. And there's Lee Palmer. I don't know if he lived in Verdeland

Park or not, but you'll see him on Facebook. He posts stuff on the Layton History site. But he would have some good memories. I think he's lived in Layton his whole life. His wife Alicia recently passed away.

Have you interviewed Kevin Hinckley?

**TF:** I haven't.

**JA:** He lived in Verdeland Park, and now he lives in the Dallas-Plano area. But he's somebody you could do a FaceTime interview with. (recording stops)