

**Providence City Oral History Project
AUDIO TAPE LOG**

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Interviewee(s): Nate Done
Interviewer: Rachel Gianni

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General description: This is a word for word transcription of an interview conducted by Rachel Gianni with Nate Done about his memories of Providence, Utah. Nate Done lives at 60 East 280 North in Providence, Utah.

(Log #), Interview question, contents

Side A, Tape 1 of 1

(000) **When is your birthday, and where were you born?**

I was born in Logan, Utah, in 1928, April 13th, a Friday.

(007) **Where did you spend your years as a child?**

Smithfield. I went to high school and grade school, junior high in Smithfield and Richmond up in North Cache. I graduated from Utah State.

(011) **What did your parents do?**

My father died when I was not quite four years old, so I've never really ever known a father. My mother was a mother and a housewife. There were three kids in my family.

(015) **Did you ever leave Cache Valley?**

When I graduated from college I went to work, I left for 32 years and then my first wife had a massive stroke and we kept her going for ten and a half years back here. She wanted to come home, she was from Providence. We came back here, she passed away and then I remarried.

(021) **What year did you move to Providence and what was it like then?**

1985. It was a sleepy little bedroom community which I wish it still was.

(025) **What were some of the businesses that were around then?**

Watkins Printing was in the building just north of the City Office. Then they built down on the Lane. There's another outfit in there now, I don't know when they moved. There was the gas station which is now primarily a place where they worked on vehicles.

There's been a number of them there, three or four of them. Across the street was what was known as Theurer's Market, a very, very small grocery store. That has since changed. They've had a number of businesses in there. I don't know if you want to call the Old Rock Church a business or not, they would take retired people in there. That's about the extent of the businesses. There was nothing down the Lane. It's built up considerably and still growing.

(042) What was the connection between Logan and Providence? Were they fairly separate when you moved here?

They were separate. The only relationship between Logan and Providence was to go over there and shop, that's about it.

(047) What was the community like?

A lot of family relationships, people who had settled this area many years ago. Families just seemed to stay here. A lot of them moved away for their businesses and came back. There was a lot of them that had small acreages of farmland and that's what they did. There was the Campbells, the Rinderknechts, there were many more than that.

(058) What was it like moving to Providence?

We were accepted very much so. I came back and had a lot of experience in administration. They asked me to supervise the installation of the sewer system, which I did. Then when election came up, I must have been asked by 50 or 75 people to run for mayor, and I did. That was back in about 1990.

(068) What did you do with the sewer?

I had to supervise the construction company that dug the sewer in, plus the engineering man who engineered it. I think it was called HR Construction from Idaho Falls. It took a couple of years. I did a lot of work to obtain the money to install the sewer. It was money that was awarded to the State of Utah but administered by the State. I went down to Salt Lake and worked with the State officials for quite a period of time. They gave us three and a half million dollars, interest free. Personally, I think that was quite an accomplishment to get that money interest free. I guess that was my contribution to the city, the installation of the sewer.

(085) What was the sewer installation process like?

They dug holes that went all the way from six feet to 25 feet deep. The slant of the sewer has to let gravity go. It's not the flow of the ground up on top, it's the flow of the pipe wherever you put it. Some of those holes down here, the connection of First West and Second North was 2550. In order to get down there and get that taken care of, we had three water pumps, pumping the water out while we were digging.

(095) How long were you a mayor, and what did you do?

A little over a year. When my wife and I got married, she was the city treasurer. It was Marion Demler then, it's Marion Done now. When we got married, within weeks, we went on a couple of missions for the Church to Australia. The man who had formerly been the mayor, he owed me one, so I asked him if he'd come back and serve as mayor

till my term was up, which he did. Gary Millburn, he was the one. Then we got back and we were here for about ten months and went on another mission. I really haven't been the mayor or involved with the city administration for that much. What I was involved with the city, in the short time I was mayor, was very concentrated work, putting that sewer in. There were negotiations that went on to get that sewer in. The sewer goes all the way down Providence Lane, crosses the street, goes across the golf course, across the river and down to Tenth West. We have a building down there that provides the pumping to pump it out to the sewage field down west of Logan. To get that thing across the highway, across the golf course, across the river, there was a lot of work with the transportation department of the State and the Corps of Engineers which have control of that area where the river is. That was basically what I did.

(128) What were some of the obstacles of the sewer's installation?

The people who didn't want the sewer. It was expensive. Before we put that sewer in, we had a vote. They were to come down to the city office and cast their vote, "do you want the sewer, yes or no?" When they did this, the old part of town, their septic tanks were backed up. They wanted the sewer. The people up on the Bench didn't, they said, "ours flows just fine." They were so lazy that they didn't come down and vote, so they lost. I think they would have lost anyway. There was a State law that was passed that all cities must have sewage disposal, which is not just in the ground like the sewage deals out west of Logan. I think that bill passed quite a few years ago. People were dissatisfied with me being mayor, but if you go back and look, they didn't vote. I call that dumb. If you don't want something to happen, and there's a vote, you vote against it.

(152) What were the effects of the installation?

We made a mess of this town, we had dirt piled up. You take 25 feet of earth out of the ground, you've got to stack it someplace until you get the pipe and everything in. It was just a lot of mess that had to be cleaned up.

(157) Was the work hired locally?

No, it was all that construction company. In fact, they didn't hire anyone locally. The engineering company didn't either.

(158) How long did it take?

Two years.

(164) What else went on while you were mayor?

That's it. That's all anyone ever talked about was that sewer. I can't think of one single thing that stuck out in my mind that happened during that period of time.

(170) What do you think is notable that's happened in Providence since you got here in 1985?

I think the growth got out of hand, I really do. Both businesses and residential. They're building houses up on that hill that, number one, I question if they've got enough water for it. Number two, I question if the roads are adequate. For example, you go up

Center Street and you go up that road by the sheds. You go up that road, and it's the only road from the Bench, down off of the Bench, to go to someplace else. If they got in a real bad situation up there, let's say an earth quake, they've only got that one place to get out. They've got some problems. How that came about, that's where we took the sewer up, was that road. While we were doing that, you should have seen the traffic we had on that one road. I think they've got it now where you could go over to Canyon Road and out that way. It does a little winding around. I owned some property up on the Bench and I had a way designed that I could get cars going down through the fields and out of there, but I had to go through other fields to get them out. We never had that problem, so maybe we never will, however, we're pretty close to sitting on that fault line.

I don't have any problem with it, to the south of Providence Lane you've got all those businesses that have moved in there. There's a bunch of them, I don't know what they all are. They've built some big buildings, they've built some smaller buildings, the theater, a few restaurants and now we're going to see what's going to happen with Macey's. I think it's going to be a traffic congestion disaster, but I could be totally wrong. They may have that worked out to where it's not going to happen. I hope it ends up that way.

(214) What are the benefits you've seen from the growth?

None. They've got the Discount Tire Center which is closer, but most people go into Logan anyway. I went down there not too long ago to price some tires. I said, "You're not very busy." The remark he made to me was, "We haven't been busy since we've moved here." Then you've got that furniture store down there, Edwards. Now they're building a new doctors office down there. Just north of Edwards, there's been a small building that some doctors are in. Now they're building a larger building to the north of that to house more offices for doctors. Maybe they need them here, I don't know. We go to the hospital three times a week and go to cardiac rehab. I guess we could do it down there if they had the facility, but they want us to go to the hospital. Personally, I don't think it's been very beneficial and something we have had to have. I think it's convenient that it's there, but I don't think it had to be there. I don't know whether that's a fair statement or not.

(239) What are some of the celebrations that you've seen in Providence?

The only thing that's happened that I really remember is we had a nice celebration when they put in the monument down there at Zollinger's Park. It was a one time thing. It's a recognition of the people in Providence that served in World War Two and Korea. I think there's some on there from the Asian War, Vietnam. That was nice. I'm guessing that was about five years ago. They built a stand there and had a couple of military people come in, a general from Hill Air Force Base came in, Elder Tom Perry offered a dedicatory prayer for that monument. It was a good crowd.

They've had few parades occasionally. The sauerkraut dinner is always successful. It draws them in from all over. They're having one this year. Rather than having the wards like they used to, the City now does it. The Church got in trouble with the State of Utah. The Church didn't declare the profits from the sauerkraut which were big. So they said that's finished. That change happened while I was here. Each ward had one separately for their area. That's changed through the City doing it one time.

(273) I was a city manager for a while and then the mayor. We built that Zollinger Park down there and put the baseball diamonds in it and the soccer fields and all that. That's been a big plus for the youth of this community. That started about 1988. They gradually improved it over the years. We have baseball teams that schedule that from Hyrum. They've got a baseball diamond out there, but they like this one so well. Brigham City scheduled it one time to come over here and play a game. It's really been successful. The reason it's named Zollinger, is that that they donated most of that land. Right on that corner used to be what was known as the pea vinery. There was a big vinery where they processed the peas before they sent them up to Smithfield to get canned. It stunk. It got to the point where they said, "We've got to do something about this. This has been too much." They finally started building baseball fields. They're pretty nice, I think. Much used down there. I'm enjoying them more than ever now because I've got three grandsons playing in the little leagues.

(300) How was the land acquired for the baseball field and where did the money come from to build it?

The land was donated. Most of the money came from donations. The current mayor, Randy Simmons and another fellow were really red hot baseball fans and they really got it going, as far as the baseball is concerned. I credit the present mayor and a couple other people for really pushing it. You've got to have a pusher doing some of the work. He probably ends up doing more of the work than anybody else. I think the present mayor was one of those pushers.

(316) Another thing that I got involved in, but it wasn't as the mayor, is the assisted living here, Cache Valley Assisted Living. That has about a 44 bed capacity. I don't believe I've ever heard of that being up ever higher than 32. This condo area, we were the third family to move into here. The man that was running this thing is a pharmacist down in American Fork. He came up here one day and talked to me and brought me all of the records of this condo association and said, "You're it." I started looking around and I said, "Well, I guess I am it. There's nobody else to do it." So I took that over and I got quite involved with the assisted living and was responsible for quite a bit of the building. That was about 1998. That area down there has just been finished in the last couple of years. There's a big vacant spot north of the assisted living which they've told me that the new owners of the assisted living "conglomerated" out of New York. He's going to build some buildings north of that. They told me it was going to start in July but nothing has happened yet. I think it will.

The one biggest problem that this assisted living has is that they don't have a full time nurse. Most people when they go up there need to have nurse. Maybe there's four of five of them up there. There's certain things they can do and certain things that they can't. For example, my sister who was living with us, she was the second person put in there, Carma Reese. She got along just fine till her health got worse. She needed a full time nurse. Then she got really sick and passed on. The night she died, this is where I got quite upset, they had to have a nurse or doctor to come in and say, "Hey, you're dead." They couldn't get either one. Here I am from about 1:30 in the morning till about 5:00 waiting for a nurse or a doctor to show up to sign the death certificate. It's not as much needed for that as it is for people who need a nurse at that time to do something for

them to help them along. They still don't have one. I think it's a good thing up here, but it's just missing something.

(379) What did you do in the construction of the Cache Valley Assisted Living?

I basically did a lot of overseeing of construction. I was the only one here who could handle it. Somebody had to get into it. I'm the type of guy that there's a lot of things I don't have to do, but there's a lot of things I can see that I can contribute. They put a door in the wrong place, they plugged up a door. The developer who was down in American Fork, he came up and gave this contractor 1.3 million dollars to pay the subs. He absconded with the money. I have had sitting on that chair right over there over a period of time every one of those subs that did not get paid, 15 of them. They came to me because maybe I could get the money. I did get some money out of this guy. He took out bankruptcy. This is still in the mill someplace. He took out bankruptcy, started his business under another company down in St. George. I went down there and took him to the county attorney. I said, "This is what we've got. He owes some people some money." He paid some of them some of the money, but never did pay all of them what they were owed. This has been a very unpleasant situation. I hope it's over with but I'm not sure. I'm not sure how this new owner is making amends for that or if he is.

(430) I'll tell you what I'd like to get involved with: I'd like to see the streets in this town repaired. They're terrible. Maybe they need to be dug up and new streets put in. If they're going to do it right, that's the way they're going to do it. I don't think they'll ever do it right, they'll just chip and seal. Put some chips down and roll over it and seal. There's some of that that's gone on in the city this year. I'd like to see some of the streets dug up, they're so bad.

(448) I came in and did the job they asked me to do and then left. I don't regret that for one minute. There's one thing that I did. The neighbors up there and the school think it was wonderful. The elementary school has got a great big block of grass, a softball diamond in one end of it. I don't have a clue how this happened, but that was not that square. It was jagged. I went over to the county office and got some prints. I took that home one night and I sat there for six hours, trying to figure out why. I never could come up with an answer. I took those prints and worked them out with the school and the city. I squared that thing up so they could do something with it. On the south end there, there are these portable classrooms. I got two of those for the south end of the school so they could have additional classrooms and relieve some of the congestion in the school. This is while I was mayor.

Another thing that I did was I set up that parking lot on the northeast corner of the building, that's where they park all their cars. I had that built to take the cars off of the streets. All those people had cars parked in front of their places. If someone came to visit, they had no place to park. That made them happy. It worked out quite well. I could never figure out how it got that bad in the first place.

I suggested that they get crossing guards. They close that street off just south of the school. I remember talking to the principal, "Why don't you just close that off during certain hours so the kids can go out and go on the buses without worrying about it?" They've done that.

(522) I didn't want to be a mayor, I really didn't. But I did, and I did the best I could and that was about it. It's a wonderful little town.

(528) I owned 25 acres right up on the Bench and I sold that about a year ago. Stan Checketts's great grandfather owned just about all that land up on the Bench and he sold it off to different people. Stan's come along and he's trying to buy it all back so he can have his great grandfather's property back. I would have sold him this 25 acres of mine, but a lady offered me three times more than Stan did. So I said, "Stan, you're running late and short." I don't know what she's going to do with it, but there's a lot of very nice homes being built up there.

End of Interview.

There is nothing on Side B of the tape.