

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

**Date:** 21 September 2006  
**Location:** Providence, UT  
**County:** Cache

**Tape Number:** PCOH 2006 ARG-13  
**Interviewee(s):** Seth Alder  
**Interviewer:** Rachel Gianni

**Recording equipment & mic:**

Sony TCM 200 DV/150, mic: Radio Shack 33-3013

**Transcribing equipment:** Panasonic VSC RR-830

**General description:** This is a word for word transcription of an interview conducted by Rachel Gianni with Seth Alder about his memories of Providence, Utah. Seth Alder lives at 1685 South Highway 165 in Logan, Utah.

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(Log #), Interview question, contents

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**Side A, Tape 1 of 1**

**(000) Can you tell me about when you were born and your family?**

I was born in Providence. Maybe it was Logan, I don't know for sure, November 20, 1914. Leon Alder was my father and Vesta Campbell Alder was my mother. I had one sister and four brothers, one only lived a few days. My father was a homesteader out west of here. That's where we lived the first ten years of my life. We lived in Ridgedale, Idaho, just over the line into Idaho, just 60 miles southwest of here. It was dry farm country. Neighbors were a mile or more apart. We had a one room school house my first four years. We stayed there winter and summer.

In the winter, we were snow bound. My father used that time to haul the wheat that he grew to Malad, Idaho on a sleigh behind a team of horses. I often wondered how he kept from freezing to death. Seems like in those days, snow got a lot deeper. Very seldom we had a light winter. When winter came and he'd be hauling his wheat, he'd just make one bee-line. He didn't follow a road or anything, just the straightest line through the field.

When we moved over here when I was ten years old, I had a brother older than me, two years, we didn't have any way of transporting anything. We kept the family cow. My dad sent my brother and I on a trip driving the cow from over there. It took three days on the trip. I was ten and he was twelve. We stopped two nights on the way. We didn't have any way of having any recreation in those days. We didn't know what a football, baseball, basketball was. We didn't know anything about those games. The school house was in the corner of a field, no houses around it. Sagebrush fields were on one side. The teacher would have to get out and holler fairly loud to end recess. We'd be up there in the sagebrush.

**(048) What was Providence like when you moved back to Providence?**

Providence was set up pretty much in blocks. The poles for the power lines were in the center of the road. In the wintertime, most cars were left in the garage. They used to jack them up and use a horse and sleigh to move around. In the spring when the snow began to melt and it got a little warmer, they'd bring the cars out of the garage. Their tracks would melt and they would have ruts. You got in one of those ruts and you couldn't get out unless you went to a corner. There was no way to move in the snow, it would just build up. We used to hitch our ponies up on a sleigh and go for a midnight ride. Each group would get together and do that. My best friends were Mark Theurer and Emil Gessel. They were a little bit younger than I. When I graduated from high school, things were so tight that I didn't go to college for a couple of years. I missed a couple of years and that put me back with Mark Theurer and Emil Gessel. Before that when we had a party, it would be the whole school class.

**(076) What was school like in Providence?**

We had a big school house, two floors. The higher grades were in the upstairs. The math class I went to, moving from out there here, the teacher had a quiz, she asked us to name the counties in Utah. The only county I knew was Cache County, so I didn't do so good. Another teacher I had, I won't forget her too much, I think it was her first year teaching. She was to have speed tests of the multiplication tables. The one that got the most correct multiplication problems would get a star on a piece of paper up there. I had no trouble staying in front of that. Her name was Miss McCallister. Fifth grade.

**(094) What sort of school activities do you remember?**

For recess, they would play baseball. They'd turn the class out for recess and immediately they'd have two people chosen to make the two teams to play baseball. I'd never played before so I was always the last one to be chosen on the baseball team. That lasted for a short time and back to the classroom we'd go.

(105) We went to high school and rode an electric train. It was just a passenger train with seats on two sides. Up along the edge on the ceiling there were two cards, one was white and one was red. If you pulled the red card, you'd stop the train. That happened a few times. It stopped in all those tiny communities and picked up kids.

**(117) What do you remember of the Pavilion?**

They used to hold parties in there on a ward basis. It was a basketball court, it was an entertainment for the whole town. Once a year they'd hold a turkey sauerkraut dinner. The First Ward would hold it and the Second Ward would hold it. They went for three days and they put on plays and sold tickets to the dinner and then had a dance at night. They'd find enough live music to come and play and everybody danced.

**(134) What other city celebrations do you remember?**

I remember the one I took the pictures of. I had just come home from a mission and my uncle, David Theurer, was mayor and he knew that I had camera. It was 1940. He told me to do what I could and take some pictures of it. I got quite a few pictures. It's a movie. It was the whole town. The young folks were all dressed as Indians and the

older folk in the group were dressed as pioneers. We never did get a story of the Pageant written down. The Pioneers chased the Indians down. I took the movie to preserve what they were doing. They had quite a parade. We had a blacksmith there, we had a picture of him working with metal. We had 4-H people on a float. The blacksmith was Ross Pickett. Morland Thompson was another one on the float. He was repairing something.

**(163) What are the businesses you remember?**

About the only business Providence had over that period was Theurer's store. There was another store kitty-corner across the street from Theurer's. It was kind of a confectionary. You go in and buy an ice cream cone or soda water, you could get a sandwich. It was Cederland's at that time. It changed hands a couple of times. Keith Matthews managed it for a while. There was a blacksmith shop right there in the center of town.

The main occupation of the town at that time was hauling lime rock out of Providence Canyon. I never did that. I was involved in the dry farm out of here. Most people in town in that day had a team of horses and a wagon. They'd go up to the rock quarry and bring one load a day. It was quite a deal. Nearly every family owned a cow and a pig and some chickens. That was their living, along with a garden and a little fruit garden and vegetables.

**(188) What did you do for a profession?**

I grew up on that dry farm and then we began acquiring some property here because there was nothing to do in the wintertime while we were there. We moved here and just stayed here in the winter and went to school. I've done nothing but farm.

When I came off my mission, I still had another year of college to graduate. One day the professor called me in and asked me if I was interested in going up to Seattle, "I have a letter from one of the alumni that thinks jobs would be opening up in Seattle if you'd like to go up." So I left college that day and I walked downtown, and my cousin, just a year younger than me, had a body shop. He fixed fenders and wrecked cars. I told him I was going out there, and he said, "If you wait till I get this car fixed, I'll go with you." He was working on a '39 Pontiac. His name was Rowland Crabtree. So we went to Seattle, seeking our fortune. He got a job immediately because he knew how to weld. I had been studying accounting up here at the college. I was hoping to get something in that line. It took me a little longer. He went into the shipyards and immediately was hired. I was looking for a job for several weeks and finally got one with Puget Sound Power and Light Company.

I had a low number in the draft, I knew I was going to be drafted right away during World War Two. I thought I better join one of the services rather than be drafted. I went down to the Navy recruiting office and talked to them about the Navy. They pushed a few papers in front of me, and "sign here and you're in the Navy," he said. I said, "I have a wife here and I want to take her back to Utah before I join." He didn't want to accept that but I stuck to it. Finally he went back into another room and another fellow came out with that same handful of papers and said, "Take this and go to Salt lake and do the joining down there." When we got home here, I went to Salt Lake with the idea of joining the Navy. They saw that I was a college graduate and said, "Why don't you go down to the Coast Guard and see what they've got." The Coast Guard is part of

the Navy in times of war. I went down there and they gave me the same story. They had already brought in enough officers to man what men they had. The only way you could go in was at the bottom. I joined the Coast Guard. I was in the Coast Guard four years. I spent most of the time on the coast of Oregon and Washington. I made one trip back to New York, Lake Hurst, New Jersey to learn how to be a weather forecaster. They chose a group of us to go back there. That was a Navy school. I came back and reported the weather the rest of the War. My wife was able to be with me out there on the coast part of the time.

**(258) What do you remember of the Old Rock Church?**

The first I remember of it was before they added the red brick building to it. They had curtains in there. They had two stoves to heat the building. They'd pull those curtains out to have classrooms. George Albert Smith attended a meeting on the outside to dedicate something. I forgot what he dedicated. There were quite a few people gathered together for the dedication.

**(275) Did you have shares in the irrigation?**

I was president of the Providence Black Smith Fork Irrigation Company for quite a number of years, maybe 20. The President had helpers, a board. We had to make sure the ditches were cleaned off and ready for water, that we had a water master hired. During the time that I was president, we put a cement liner in the canals, starting at the river, coming two miles north. There was so much loss of water and an open canal that we arranged and had a liner put in, two miles of it. We worked with the government to finance it. I had to be responsible for keeping the water running through town. We got along with the people pretty good.

**(304) What other things were you involved with in the community?**

I'm not a politician. I haven't held any positions in the city government. I was involved in a couple of co-ops. We held rights in the Logan Canyon Cattle Association. I served as secretary in that association for a while.

We as a family were involved in Trenton Feed. That started out to be a turkey processing plant. We used to raise turkeys on the dry farm. There were quite a few people in town who would raise turkeys. They found a building out there that fit what they needed to kill the turkeys and freeze them and do what they needed. I served as secretary of that organization for possibly 20 years. We had a rough time when they quit the turkey business and started making feed and selling it to the dairy farmers and whoever else had feed. Until we found the right manger, it didn't go very good. We were nearly broke. We had to go to the bank ourselves and borrow money and sign for it to keep going. We found a man by the name of Meelker. He was a pretty efficient guy in taking care of business. He pushed the business along without any trouble. He had a big feed business going.

**(340) How did your family get to Providence?**

My family on my father's side comes from Switzerland. They joined the Church sometime around 1850. After they joined the Church, neighbors didn't like them too well so they went to England and got on a boat. I don't know too much of where they landed

in America, but they got to Nebraska. My great grandfather and his wife, Conrad Alder and her name was Mertz, they had a handcart. My grandfather had two sisters, one older and one younger than him. The younger one stayed with him and pushed a handcart and the older one had been in business in Switzerland and had enough money to buy a team of oxen and they came with an ox wagon. They spent about the same time on the road. They didn't come at the exact same time, they were about two or three weeks apart, but it amounted to be about the same time. When he got here, he came to Providence. His trade in Switzerland was a weaver. He did a little of that here.

They had a project, they sent a group of people up the canyon to get logs for a house. They'd bring them to a place they called the "roll off." They'd pull them out on the edge and it'd drop down to where they could load them on a wagon and bring them out. Somehow he got in the way of some of those logs coming down the side of the mountain and broke his leg. They never had any way to set it good. Finally from preventing him from getting gangrene, they sawed that leg off. He died a few days later. At the time he died, he had two daughters and a son. His wife remarried and went down to southern Utah and they left the kids with families. My grandfather stayed with the Theurers. His name was Conrad. He stayed with the John Theurer family. I don't know for sure where the daughters stayed. I believe one with the Baer family and I don't know the other. John Theurer went on a mission, and my grandfather, just a kid, took care of his farm while he was gone. Then when he got back, he married a cousin to this family. Frederick Theurer was a father to my grandmother.

The Theurer family did things just about like they do in Switzerland. They'd take the cows up the canyon in the summertime and the girls would have to go up there and milk cows in the summertime. That happened quite a while. Then my grandfather got a few acres of land. He was the first to go out West and get a homestead. There was quite a group of people from Providence that went out there and got homesteads. He didn't get his proved up on when he went on a mission. When he came back, he proved on it. By then my dad was old enough that he filed on the homestead. That's the business he stayed with all his life, and I did too.

**(435) How have you seen Providence change through the years?**

It's not Providence anymore. There were just scattered houses. My dad rented for a couple of years when we first came and then he built a home just north of the school grounds and that's where we spent most of the time.

There's a lot of new blood. They move in and then they want to do things their way. They don't want to listen to the olds timers. There's really not many old timers left: Fuhriman, Zollinger, Tibbitts, Stauffer, Braegger, Leonhardt.

Providence used to have that railroad go through there. There was an old gentleman who used to go down to meet the train when it came in to pick up the mail. I forgot his name now. He used to drive a buggy with his horse and pick up the mail.

The post office was part of the Theurer's store.

**(474) What are your memories of the pea vinery?**

I knew it was a lot of work to grow peas. My dad picked up enough ground there that we kept two farms going, one here and one in Pocatello. We grew peas for a couple of years. We'd haul it down to the pea vinery and shell the peas. There's not much to it

other than that. It provided a little work for a few people. I never worked there, I was out in the field.

**(490) Do you remember when the sewer was put in?**

I was down here by then, I wasn't in Providence. We always felt sorry for the people who lived down on the Providence Lane or up on the Bench because they had to walk to school. When I was first married, after the War, we bought a place up in Providence. My neighbor came over one day, he was an old gentleman, and he said, "Old people should have old houses. I want to buy your house." I sold it to him and built this house in 1958.

**(519) What else do you remember about Providence?**

I just lived there as an ordinary kid; went on a mission and came back. We went with my cousin out there to seek our fortune. He found his and I went in the Coast Guard. Rowland Crabtree didn't have to go in the Service. He worked as a welder for a while and he began building homes and things like that. He was on a project for 1700 homes. He had it plotted and was going to put in a little community. He got that far along. He met an accident and it killed him. His wife donated this start of a town to BYU. A few years later they sold that property for \$13 million. They named the building in his name. There's a Crabtree building down on BYU campus. He met his fortune.

**End of interview.**

**There is nothing on Side B of the tape.**