

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

**Date:** 4 October 2006

**Tape Number:** PCOH 2006 ARG-15

**Location:** Providence, UT

**Interviewee(s):** Vada Rinderknecht

**County:** Cache

**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 Vada Rinderknecht about her memories of Providence, Utah. Vada Rinderknecht lives at 35 East 280 North in Providence, Utah.

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(Log #), Interview question, contents

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**Side A, Tape 1 of 1**

**(000) Tell me about your childhood.**

I was born October 5, 1919. I was born in Teton Basin, up by the big Teton area. I'm a twin. My mother had 14 children. My twin was thirteenth and I was the fourteenth. I just marveled at what my folks did to keep us going and alive, the efforts that they made to run a dry farm.

I do remember having a windmill, and my father going down to the river. It was called Big Bitch and Little Bitch. He would have a wagon that you hooked a floorboard to and he would bring barrels of water up from the river. My brothers would have a bath one night and my sisters another night. My mother would heat the water in a tea kettle or in the reservoir, which was from a coal stove, and get us each a little bit of warm water for the next event.

Then we decided to come to Brigham City, we got on a train. The conductor asked my sister and I how old we were. One of us said five and the other one said six, and yet we were supposed to be twins. If we were six we would have had to pay half fare. We came to Pocatello where one of my aunts lived. That was the first time I had ever been on a train. I was used to going in a buggy. I remember we had shoes that had buttons up past our ankles. We'd dress up on Sunday to go to church which must have been quite away. It was a very rural area. We had a windmill. We moved to Brigham City, down what's called Perry when I was five or six. My mother was afraid for us to walk down the road because we were just children but we had to go down there to go to school which was probably from a mile to half a mile.

We didn't start first grade until we had moved to Providence, Utah and then we started. They had eight grades in the Providence school. One of my very favorite teachers was Diantha Hammond. Then there was A.E. Allen. I didn't care for one or two, but kids had their favorites. When I graduated from the eighth grade, we started

high school. We had to go and catch a streetcar. Lots of times it was cold and windy. We had books to carry, we didn't have backpacks back then, so we carried our books and walked a block and a half up the hill to South Cache High School. I graduated in 1939.

**(056) What activities did you do in your school days?**

It seems to me that whenever there was a ball game, I would sit and get my lessons done so I didn't have to take so many books home. I worked for the librarian and I got ten cents a day. That helped me get my pencils or paper. I was in one or two of the school plays. I was sort of incidental, but I liked it. After I graduated from high school, I got a lace dress, my first bought dress. Because I had seven sisters, I always had hand-me-downs and makeovers. The librarian, because I had worked for her, gave Veda and I a beautiful corsage. I thought I was on top of the world.

We moved to Providence when I was six, we didn't stay in Brigham City only a year, and then we moved to Providence. After I graduated from high school, I went up to the College and I registered for business courses. My twin sister went for arts and music. We were quite different, she was talented. My maiden name was Robinson. I took my mother's maiden name, Vada Wheeler Robinson Rinderknecht. I went to school up to the College. I thoroughly enjoyed college life. I just felt more responsible. My older sister decided to take a civil service exam and so I did too. We both passed and we got hired by the government. We got hired and our destination was Washington D.C.. We went, and I went as a file clerk. We found a place to live on Calarma Road in Washington D.C.. We had to catch a bus, and then we found some friends at church that we could get into a car pool. We carpoled and went out to Maryland to work. I worked for the Navy department.

I came home on a vacation and I met Joseph Oliver Rinderknecht. We went horseback riding. I went with another friend of Joe's, and then Joe and I decided to go together and go before I had to go back to Washington D.C. We wrote to each other for almost a year. When I came back, he asked me to marry him. I worked until my contract was over and then I came home and then I got married, November 18, 1941. Then I moved up into the old Rinderknecht home. It's on 175 East, First North. His father had built it as a two room house. They added on and had a back porch and later on, an extra bedroom and a couple or three rooms upstairs. His father had died and his mother died when she was fifty 52. His father, I think, was 78.

Joe was interested in Rambouillet sheep and also in Herford cattle. We had a couple of milking cows. When we had children, they milked the cows so they could have a little spending money. We lived almost entirely on the sale of our hay and wheat and our cattle in the spring and wheat and stuff in the fall. We didn't have a TV in our house for maybe ten years after a lot of other people had it in theirs. We had too much entertainment anyway. We had six children.

My children played Auntie I Over and Run My Sheepy Run and Kick the Can. We really had a lot of projects. We had cattle to feed, horses to get harnessed and ready to hook up to the plow and planting. My children had chores to do, feed the chickens. There were a lot of school activities. I think I was a room mother eight times out of the six children. A

room mother is one who is responsible for, if they have refreshments after PTA meeting, an activity.

I remember taking the children down to the ward bazaars where they'd made sauerkraut and all things. I remember we all had to cook turkeys and make pies and bring mashed potatoes. The Ward and mostly the Relief Society was responsible for that. The men would go down to the Pavilion and cut up the turkeys. They would have a big supper and then they would charge people. I think it started out at \$4.50 or \$5.00 a meal. It's been known to have been \$8.00. Then there was some sort of a health stipulation that you couldn't bring turkeys there, they had to be cold. We were supervised our last few years and then that quit.

My children, Jay and Judy were the oldest, I had twins, they got with a little group and square danced. When they were six and eight, I would take them over to Logan and they would catch a bus and pick beans. They took their little brother, Odell along and he did very well. We'd come home at night. They'd put their money, so much for tithing, and they had saved up quite a bit to get them new shoes, especially and some school clothes. My children always complained because I had four of them in September. They always complained that they didn't get anything for their birthdays hardly but clothes. I guess that meant that they would like more toys.

**(175) What were your children's activities when they were in school?**

Square dancing and 4-H for horses and cattle. I have two children now that make their living raising cattle. I had two girls go to nursing school and I'm certainly proud of their education. It seems like we took turns as mothers, taking the kids to different recitals or square dancing or picking beans or activities. I remember taking my children to church on Sunday morning and then having to go back for Sacrament Meeting in the evenings. I'd sit there with two and three little kids and they'd all be asleep by the time church was out.

**(189) What was the Old Rock Church like?**

I think it's fascinating now, but I didn't think much of it other than it was a rock building. I think it was similar to my parent's house. It had archways and big 14 inch mopboards, lots of woodwork and carved out. That's one of the things I disliked about living at home. The door frames went clear up and had a lot of curlicues on them. Once a month on a Friday, we'd have to do all the woodwork. We had transoms and high ceilings. I remember cleaning on Fridays.

(205) My mother taught me a wonderful lesson. She said, "Aren't you glad that you've got a twin sister? Someone to play with and do things with. You don't have to go anywhere to have someone to play with." I think my children got along very well for six of them. They really learned to give and take and look out for each other. I'm proud of those kind of things.

**(214) Can you tell me about the railroad?**

I don't know a lot about it except that we didn't have a car when we first moved to Providence. My mother would get a ride with someone to Logan and then she would walk home on the railroad tracks from Logan to Providence after she had been to the Temple. Once or twice, one of my older sisters took us to a show and it cost us ten cents. Then we would walk home in the dark with my older sister down the railroad tracks back to Providence.

**(226) What sort of groups were you in through the years?**

The Junior Literary Group, but it became a senior literary group, that's for sure. We met at different people's homes. We co-hosted sometimes and fixed a meal. Then, we'd have book reviews or a travel log. We did play some pinochle. Some of the women in our group had traveled quite a bit and they told of trips they had been on and showed slides. I thoroughly enjoyed that group. It dwindled down to three of us: Connie Hammond, Opal Chugg and me. There were two of them, Grace Smith and Pearl Rice that were sort of incapacitated. We still got together till there was just three, then we decided we'd have to dissolve the whole thing. We could take ourselves out to lunch but we got too busy with our grandkids. I thoroughly enjoyed that group.

I started also with another group, sewing temple aprons and clothes. But I got too busy with six children. I finally quit that. We bought the material and Lulu Baer gave us a pattern and we got them stamped and started, the simple things like an apron and a shield. We did just our own. It took me a long time because I did not sew on them other than when we had meetings.

**(259)** I've had lots of good friends here in town. We had projects for the children. We had our lot and my children picked beans and took them in wagons down to the pea vinery and had them weighed and sold. It was a project that they could do together. We also had a garden. Each one chose what they wanted to plant. Then we decided what days they wanted to take for their turn for their garden. Mondays we had probably red beets, Thursday sometimes parsnips if the boys wanted parsnips. They chose what they wanted out of the garden. We'd eat our vegetables from the garden. That made a close unit for us, I thought, as a mother. We could work together. My boys often had to go about and help their dad in the hay. My girls helped clean and put up peaches. We'd put up a hundred quarts of peaches in a day and a night.

**(278) How did you make sauerkraut?**

The men mostly did it. The women would shred the cabbage and the men would stir it and salt it. I don't really know the procedure for that. Those were wonderful activity days of the older people. We used to have dances in our church house and school house, Christmas ones. I think, as busy as we were, we still had a good time being parents.

**(290) What are your memories of Providence, the town?**

I remember when we had a little old post office and one garage. I remember a Mr. Beard going two blocks down the road to open up the railroad to pick up kids, morning and night. I remember we didn't ever park our cars. We left our cars parked

right on the road in front of our houses with just the door open and the keys in the car. We never locked our house or door when we left. We just didn't have any worries about people stealing things or taking them. I just felt so secure.

**(309) What brought the Rinderknechts to Providence?**

Joe's grandfather, Jacob, settled in Providence where quite a few other Swiss people came from. He came from Bern, Switzerland. He went to Salt Lake once and got a girl who was coming to Salt Lake. She was coming to marry a missionary that she had met over in Switzerland and he wasn't there to meet her. So, he brought her home. It's interesting to find out that when he brought her home, his first wife didn't want her to live in the house so she lived in a little dugout in the corner. She had two children and couldn't take care of them so she adopted them out to Hansen's family. When the first wife died, then Joe's grandfather brought the other lady into their home and kept her till she died too. I don't think they ever looked upon polygamy as something they would accept. I think a few of them lived it.

Joe's mother died when she was 52. Her name was Josephine Reiser. She was a beautiful girl and had dark hair. Josephine and Jacob had nine children, three boys and six girls. They farmed.

I've been trying to find out for years who built that big barn. I have no idea. I asked four or five older, older people and I still can't find out. A girl wrote up a history of the barns and we couldn't find out who built that big barn. I can't ever remember Joe telling me. We had a big barn. We had horses up the one and the cows down in the lower part and hay up at the top.

(361) I remember when they used to have horse-pulled cultivators and the hay balers. One year we were able to get a tractor. We had land up on the hill, and Joe was afraid that the tractor might be climbing up the hill and go backward. Finally we got a Caterpillar and worked the land that way. It was mostly used as a dry farm. We had cattle in there in the spring and late in the fall. Joe raised Herford cattle. That's more or less what the name Rinderknecht means. People took their vocation and picked their name from it. "Rinder" means cattle, "knecht" mean tender: cattle tender. That's how our name originated and I think that's interesting.

**(381) What were winters like?**

Joe had horses and he hooked up the hay wagon and lots of times he took hay from the barn down to a feed yard. We'd go for a hay ride. It worked for him and us. The children had a wonderful time going and coming. My boys always kept busy and had chores to do. I had four boys and two girls. We used to get a bobsleigh. We had a big set of Swiss bells and we'd put them over the horses and we'd go up and down the streets before Christmastime. We'd bundle up warm and go to Joe's sister's place and have hot chili. I think it was roaded out pretty well for activities. We made our own, but it was fun. I have fond memories of those times, children growing up and happy. I've heard my children complain too, but I know they were happy and healthy, thank goodness.

**411) What are some notable historic events that have happened in Providence?**

I can't remember what the occasion was for, but my husband was an Indian and they had the settlers and quite a powwow. They'd dress up for it and color their chest and come around bareback on horses and ride around. That was fun. Then they used to try to catch a greased pig. They always had lemonade in barrels.

(428) I think the Swiss people were quite a happy people. When Joe and I first got married, we used to go over to the Tenth Ward in Logan. It was called "German Town." The people that came from Switzerland and Germany would sing and yodel and get on the tables and dance. Everyone would bring a basket. When it was time to eat, they would grab somebody else's other than their own. We had a fun time doing that for several years. They spoke German there.

It really thrilled me when we would go riding in the canyons to take salt out. On Labor Day rides, he yodeled. It was so thrilling to hear him. I had a tape of it for a long time. I think someone taped over it. Those were fun times, our fall horseback rides. I'd ride up the canyon with Joe to take salt up to the cattle. Those were special times. If we could ever manage, we'd have one or two of our kids go with us. I think our life was quite happy. It was hard, we didn't have little extras. We didn't know what cake mix was. But we had real genuine good friends.

**(461) Who were some of the families you remember in Providence?**

The Alders and the Campbells, the Chuggs and the Rinderknechts and the Demlers, Spuhlers. I can't pick out any particular group. I think quite a few of their families settled here too.

**(472) What sort of German or Swiss traditions do you remember? Do you have any recipes?**

I don't remember any of those traditions. I more or less stuck to my mother's recipes, a little bit of that and a pinch of this and a handful of that. That's the way we had our recipes. We tasted until it tasted OK.

(484) I remember when my mother got a bathroom and fixtures installed and she said, "This is the happiest day of my life." That was probably when I was six or eight years old here in Providence. We used to have an old outhouse out by our old chicken coop.

(497) I liked winters and I liked summers. I was glad when winter came because I felt like I could go to bed earlier and not find myself getting up and just been to bed. Joe would come in late, he'd work till dark or dusk and then he often irrigated up at four in the mornings. Sometimes he'd sit to eat lunch and drop his spoon, he went to sleep. He worked hard. He had a good brother to work with, Elmer William Rinderknecht.

**(513) What was irrigating like?**

It was difficult because they had crews every spring time. Each owner of property worked on the ditch at least a half a day. That earned them the right to have their ditches dug out each year. Then they didn't have culverts and a lot of pipes in at that time. They had to kind of force the water over the ground and land and some places

was higher. It was difficult. A lot of times you didn't have enough shares of water to irrigate your land. I think it was possible to have gardens and Lucerne fields. We didn't have any water sprinklers or sprays.

(537) I think church played a big part of our lives too. It was quite an effort to get six kids dressed and ready for church. I won't give Joe very much credit for helping me. He would always rather load another load of hay and come in late, so it was me to get them to church. But, he wanted us to go.

We've had wonderful people in our ward as bishops and Relief Society presidents too. I remember Thair Allen and Alder and Zollinger. I can't remember them all. There was a bishop Hammond that was a bishop in the Providence area for 23 years.

(572) I lived up at my other home up at 175 East until six years ago. I lived there since 1941. Joe died when I was 64. I thought he was so young and still handsome, such a hard worker. I just felt that it was awful to go that young. And he seemed that young to me. He would have been 78 the next month, but he died in July and he would have been 78 in August. He was young to me. He had climbed the hills and he knew all of the mountains. He was born a natural cattleman. He was so proud of his cattle taking the highest spot on the market. I think he's got a couple of boys that he'd be so proud of. They're still in the cow business. I'm sure he'd be proud of all of these boys simply because they did what he liked to do.

(617) I like this little area I'm living in now. But, I've said that if Joe had a chance to come back, he'd get lost. It has built up since we went down the bare roads. They used to ride their cows down to the pasture and walk home. My husband used to drive a rock truck and break little pieces of rock to go to the limestone to go to the sugar factory. Lots of things have changed. It's hard to recognize Providence to what it was once. I think when I moved here there was 1200 people, two wards. I have good neighbors.

**End of interview.**

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