4milne

(Thelma Milne interviewing HENRY HALL)

T  Well, this is Thelma Milne interviewing Henry Perrett Hall for the Cardston Historical Society on June 13, the year 2000. Tell us, what is your full name, Hank, and the names of your parents and where you were born, please?

H  My name is Henry Perrett Hall. I was born in Cardston here. My father's name was Douglas Hall and my mother's name was Beatrice Hall.

T  Beatrice Perrett.

H  Oh, Beatrice Perrett Hall. She had different names but I can't remember.

T  That's enough. Tell us now, where were you in the family. Were you the oldest or the youngest or where did you come?

H  I was the oldest in the family.

T  So you had a lot of responsibility, did you?

H  Yes, I had a lot of responsibility.

T  Tell us, now do you have any memory of World War I, when the war was on?

H  A memory of the World War I, no --yes. We were living on a farm up west of the cemetery and when the war was over, why they celebrated in their, they had water ammunition going off, and we thought the Germans were right-- our mother and us children were home, and our mother thought there were Germans right outside the door, or it just sounded like it. If you looked out the window it looked like they was running around. She hid us under the bed and we got up the next morning and everything was right and everything was in place. We thought the place was blew up.

T  Was that the armistice?

H  And we didn't know the difference until somebody, some of our friends came up the next day and told us what had happened.

T  Then it was pretty exciting, wasn't it?

H  Very exciting.

T  Right. Now one important thing in the life of people your age when you were young was wash day. Tell us how wash day went in your home.

H  Well, we had to wash once a week, and you had to haul your water and warm it on the stove. You haul it from a spring or a well. We had springs on some of the places, and some of the places there was wells where we lived. And we had to haul it and then we had to get it hot on the stove in a boiler and you done your washing. We had one of these hand washers that you work by hand, and we had to do that every wash day, and carry the water out after we'd washed.

T  Did the clothes ever get clean?

H  Oh, they were clean. We had homemade soap and that had, that was tough stuff. You need your clothes up. And you'd have to have, hang your clothes out on the line. In the winter time they'd freeze before you got 'em hung on the stove, on the lines, and then you'd have to take them off, and they's stiff as boards, and bring 'em in the house and hang 'em around and let 'em dry. But we needed the cold air to make smell--

T  Nice.

H  --nice and clean.

T  I can remember your mother's clothes were spotlessly white.

H  Yes, she was very--
T Now, tell us about your school. Did you ever have a teacher that you particularly liked?
H The only teacher that I can remember that I really liked was Cora Bizzett, and she was in grade one, and she was very nice to me, and I got along fairly good in school. I never was very good in school. I was too lazy, I guess, and I was too shy and I didn't mix too well with people.
T When you misbehaved, how were you disciplined at school?
H Oh, I don't think I ever got the strap, but they used to, if you was naughty at school, they'd strap you. They had a strap and they'd strap you on your hands. But one time I was at school and this here kid kept kicking me in the seat, and so I stood it as long as I could, then I hauled off and hit him in the, tried to hit with the back of my hand. Ed Low seen me and so he took us up in the gym and said, "You put your mitts on and have it out." It was a disaster. I never fought anybody. I tried to keep peace.
T Now, if you were disciplined like that with a strap or something at school, what would your parents do to you when they found out?
H When my parents found out I was, wasn't doing things right and getting in trouble, they would, I remember one time going being, my cousin went down and we wanted to see if we could turn the lights off. We used to turn the lights off at twelve o'clock at night.
T That was a very common thing in Cardston. If you stayed up after twelve the electricity was cut off, eh?
H Yes. And so we wanted, we and my cousin, we wanted to go down and see them turn the lights off. I didn't tell my folks. I just went down and they were looking all over for us. They didn't know where we were and we were down here watching them turn the lights off. When I get home, I really got it. Dad took mother's rubber and if he didn't give me a good trouncing on my seat! I didn't go watch the lights off any more.
T Was that quite a sight to see them turning the lights off? Was it anything to see?
H Oh, it was interesting you know. They had to pull switches.
T Oh, yes.
H Turn the motors all off.
T What were your chores when you were growing up? Did you have any chores to do? Or did you--
H Yes. I had a lot of chores to do. We always had cows and chickens, sometimes we had a pig. Sometimes we had pigs and--
(Leone Loud as you can, Hank.)
H I had to milk cows and feed the chickens, if we had a pig I had to feed the pigs, and help my dad. He done crating, and I went and helped him. There's always something to do. We always had a big garden and we had to take care of it. It, we always had plenty to do.
T Do you think that was a bad thing in your life, working like that? Was that a bad thing in your life or a good thing?
H Oh, I think it, work is good for anybody. I don't care who you are. I've worked hard all my life and it hasn't hurt me one particle.
T That's why you look like sixty now when you're ninety? That's right.
H But work, it tells you you work for your living.
Right.
For your livelihood.
Tell me what kind of clothes you wore. Did you have lots of new clothes?
No, I had clothes that was made. Mother used to make some and used to buy some overalls, I used to wear. I never had anything fancy. We never had it. We always had enough to eat and had a happy home, but as far as all frills, we didn't have too many frills. We enjoyed--
Your mother was a wonderful cook, wasn't she?
She was a great cook, so we always had a good meal, and they really took good care of us.
What did you do for entertainment in your teens, or even as a child. What kind of entertainment?
Well, we used to go 'round to our aunts and uncles and they used to have an organ, and sing. They, some of them played the organ.
Did you play games?
Well, not too many games. I never was much of a, to play games or athletic. There was no good.
I'm just going to add one thing in here. Once, when Mr. Hall retired, we got him a fishing rod and he went out one day with Ben Higgs and he came back and he says, "Take it away. I'd rather stick my neck in the sink," than go, fishing. Right? Any religious observances in your family. What did your family do at Christmas or Easter?
Oh, we used to, at Christmas time we had a big time. We'd go around to our relations and visit, and they'd come to our place, and we, on New Years, we, or Christmas, I think, Christmas Eve or New Years we'd always get together and my mother would bake up a lot of stuff, and we'd have a kinda get together, and we always had fun. And--
Did you ever have a Christmas tree?
Oh, yes, we always had a Christmas tree. My dad would go up and cut a Christmas tree down.
And then did you hang up a sock?
Yes, we hang up, you have to hang up our sock.
And what kind of things would get in your sock?
Oh, just candy and nuts and--
Maybe an orange?
Yeah. And probably an orange.
Okay. Now, you've been through two world wars. You went through the first world war and you told us a little bit about that. Now tell us what you did during the second world war.
Second world war. I was too young for the first one and I was too old in the second one, but I just done what I, I just worked.
Tell us what you did.
I was a plumber and I worked at plumbing and I went around to get a lot of work and a lot of air force stations up in Calgary, Currie Barracks, east Calgary, deWinton, High River and Lethbridge.
The war was a busy time for you too?
Yes, it was. Yes, we were really busy.
Today, in Cardston, we don't have a train and we don't have a bus. Tell us how people got to Cardston when you were young. Were there trains and buses, and how did the freight come in when you were young?
They had a train come in, and they would haul all their stuff on the train, and people rode on the train and then they would charge more for it where they used to have a stage coach and used to go over to the train and take the travelers or anybody that wanted down to the Cahoon Hotel, and I went with her a few times.

That would be pretty exciting, wouldn't it?

Yes, it was. I wasn't very old but it was exciting.

Your father played a part in the freighting to Cardston. Tell us what he did.

Oh, my dad. Dad used to dry all coal and gravel and he hauled a lot of gravel for the temple here, for all the contractors. They had to shovel it on, they had dump forks that they just dumped it off, but you had to shovel it all on. You used a scoop shovel.

That's when men were men. Right.

Yeah. When he used to haul coal all around town to different places.

If you'd had a choice, would you have spend you life in Cardston, or now knowing you've been out of Cardston and seen other places, how does it compare? Would you choose to live here?

Cardston is a paradise. I love Cardston. It's a wonderful place to live. There's wonderful people here. When I was in business they were so nice to me, and everything, and I can't say anything but nice for Cardston. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Oh, that's really nice. Tell us what business you had and if it was on, was it on Cardston's main street?

Yes, I worked for Fleck, F. W. Fleck, for twenty years or more for $50 a month, and I really had to work hard when we worked six days a week, and you put in--

Tell us about asking for a holiday.

Yeah. One time I wanted a holiday and I asked him if I could have a few days off. He says what in the heck do you want a holiday for, you don't need one. And I never got, either. You had to take it those days, if you wanted to make it, so I took a lot of guff in learning a growing trade, but he was good for me. I don't regret any of it and far as Fleck goes, he was, he learnt me the trade and he was a good master. He learnt you to work, and that never hurt anybody, and then my brother, Vern, we decided we wanted to start a business of our own, so we offered to buy flat out or we was going to start up, so he decided to sell, and so he put the price up pretty high. He knew he'd get it, and so I went around to everybody trying to borrow the money. Everybody wanted me to start in business but they didn't want to lend me any money, so I was just going up the street, and I was feeling pretty sad about it, though we'd, oh well, just couldn't bring the money up, and Lloyd Cahoon come along and he said, he wondered what was the matter with me, and I said I was trying to borrow some money to go in business. He says, "I'll make you the money. How much do you want?" So he lent me the money and we bought him out and I paid him back in about three or four years. We didn't buy any frills or anything till we got all our debts paid, and it was a thriving business. We tried to do the best we could to serve the public and they were good to us. It goes both ways. You've got to give the service to get a business.

What was the name of your business?

Hall Brothers. It was, we really had a wonderful business, and me and brother had a wonderful relationship working together. We had
no problems and of course, the first two jobs we did, see I never learned how to figure jobs, Fleck wouldn't let me. He just got it all, and so I, we kinda, the first few jobs we didn't make, we lost some. But anyway, we sure got on to it, and things went well, and we done real well because the public was good to and they, we tried to be fair, and I don't regret one bit of it.

T  One thing I remember about your business. If you ever installed plumbing then you gave them life time fixing everything. If it ever broke down, Hank said, "I put it in, I'll fix it." Have you any advice for the young people today?

H  Pardon.

T  Have you any advice for the young people today? How would you tell them how to have a happy life?

H  Well, I would say to have a happy life, you have to be kind to people and not think you're the only pebble on the beach. You have to get down to their level and you know, life is what you make it. You can make it a lot of trouble or you can have a happy life. It's all in yourself, because it's your mind. Whatever make you mind up to do, why you can do it if you set your mind to it. But sometimes it's pretty hard, but if you, now like if you marry somebody and you don't cooperate, it's a hard life. But if you work together, it's a hard job. You have to work at it. You can't think you just got no errors, and you both have to work at it, and you can just make it a real happy life. And I've had a happy life all my life. I've been married twice. The first wife, we got along just wonderful. I had two boys, and they're wonderful boys. And the second marriage, I married Leone Sheffield, and she's been a wonderful wife, and she had two daughters, and their daughters couldn't treat me any better if they were my own. I just love them all. They're just wonderful and I've had a wonderful life, and I'm so thankful for everything I've had, but I did fall down, I didn't do much church work. I went to church but not as much as I should. I worked in the Sunday School with Gregson, Sunday School presidency, and worked in the seventies presidency with Fielding Thomas and Bob Daynes, and we just had a wonderful time. It was, I enjoyed every bit of it. Then I've worked in the temple. That's a wonderful place to work. I can just say I've had a wonderful life.

T  Well, thank you very much. I appreciate this and I know when see this written up, that you'll enjoy reading it too. Thanks very much.