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| Oral History Assignment |
| Ray Alvin Petersen – January 14, 1932 |

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| Brian Petersen  2/22/2012 |

**Tell me about the home you lived in as a child?**

1st Home – This was the house that my Grandpa was born in. It was located in Uintah Basin and at first was a wood frame home. Later, when he was about three, they added a brick veneer covering to the outside of the house. When he was explaining his first home, he told me this story about his parents. His parents had attempted to have four children previously, but all of them died after being born. His parents were advised to not to attempt of having any more children, but they tried another time and were able to have my Grandpa, who obviously lived. They continued to have more children after that successfully with no difficulties.

2nd Home – After some years of living in the first home, they moved to some farm land that the owned nearby that they were able to buy from some of the local Ute Indians. Here in this location they lived in a log cabin that did not have a floor. Here as well, there was a river close by where they went to get there water supply. He said that this was during the depression years and that it was a small and modest home. From here they had to move locations once again.

3rd “Home” – My Grandpa had to temporarily live in tents while they were building the new home that they were going to live in. (Hearing about this was quite strange, I never thought about someone having to live in a tent as a temporary home!). This was during the summer and they needed to complete their new home before the winter came.

4th Home – Some background information is needed. The government wanted to build a road through their farm land, and my Grandpa’s family allowed them to do this. They cut a path from the top of the hill through the farm and down the other side of the hill, but while doing this, they had to clear a lot of rocks and trees. My Grandpa’s dad requested that they move all the rocks to one location. With these rocks, he made a concrete/rock mixture and was able to build a rock cabin to live in before the winter came! In this rock cabin, the floor was made of wood rather than just dirt, like the previous home. They got water from a natural spring just about 100 yards away from the house, and the house had no electricity. But the depression caught up with them once again and they had to move once again.

5th Home – The family moved to Orem and bought some land to have an orchard. This home had a basement with initially a small roof on top. My Grandpa explained that there was something called the Geneva Resort on the beach of Utah Lake and that they had wooden structures. And it so happened that they were no longer using the structures and that this is where they got the wood to build their roof. Years later they raised the roof to make more room for the growing family. They moved once again.

6th Home – This time they moved to Oregon with some family in order to provide for the family. They sold their previous home with a contract and were expecting monthly payments from the person who had bought the home. They monthly payments never came and they had to move back to their 5th home, which they had sold but reclaimed it. But the home that they were living in here in Oregon was a barrack on blocks in the shape of a T. They had no bathroom, no electricity, and no other conveniences.

**What were some of you playtime activities as a child?**

My Grandpa said that they played many games but a few that he can remember playing include Hide and Seek, Kick the Can, Marbles, and Tug of War. But he also played another game that I thought was quite interesting. He explained that he would dig holes in the ground and with a stick, he would hit cans, rocks, balls, and other round objects into the holes with his friends. It reminds of modern day golf but in a more fun fashion.

**What were some slang expressions you used as you were growing up?**

He explained that he doesn’t quite remember the slang expressions that he used, but he emphasized that the slang terms that he uses now and the other slang expressions that the teenagers now use were nothing like the ones that he used when he was younger.

**What was your favorite entertainment?**

He explained that he was able to buy a color camera and that he enjoyed taking many pictures. He also told me that he was the only one in his school who owned a colored camera. He told me of an experience that happened to him when he was in high school. One of his teachers knew about my Grandpa having a camera and asked him if he would bring in some of the pictures that he had taken, he explained that he did so happily and that it made him feel unique and special.

As well as taking pictures, every Saturday at the movie theater there was a matinee show. He enjoyed going to this weekly and spending time with his friends at the movie theater. I asked him how expensive the movie was and he told me it was only 25 cents. Lucky duck…

**Were you happy? Why or why not?**

He told me that he was happy and content. He said that this was because he is just a generally happy guy who enjoys his life. He said that he always enjoyed being with friends and that he always had friends to be with. As well, he told me a story about his elementary school years. In this story, he said that he noticed there was an obvious difference between the students, there was the rich kids and the poor kids. He was one of the few that were about in the middle and he noticed that the rich kids generally picked on the poor kids. He felt that that was wrong and not right and began having an appreciation for just how lucky he was.

**What is your favorite experience? Why is it a favorite?**

He said that his most favorite experience was just being with this family. He loved his family and enjoyed doing anything and everything with this family. He said that it is his favorite because he was always happy and felt content when he spent time with his family.

**How did you family celebrate holidays?**

He said that he celebrated pretty much all of the holidays the same way we do now except for some differences.

At Christmas he explained that every year the family would go out and pick a tree together. They would just have to go to the backyard, which was about 5 acres, and choose a tree they wanted for Christmas that year. As well, he said that they family bought very few commercial gifts and that most of the time it was something that the family had made themselves.

At Easter, he said that they used real eggs for a scavenger hunt. How cool would that be?

He also said that for every holiday his Grandmother would make delicious pies that were irresistible.

**What was your school like?**

He said that his school was very small. For high school (7-12), his graduating class was comprised of about only 30 students. He explained that his school was a small building where all the students would come and meet together. One of the classrooms had an outlet and this is where they would listen to the radio for some important announcements.

**What do you remember about WWII?**

He told me that the only distinct thing he remembers about WWII was Pearl Harbor. He explained that he was in 3rd grade at the time and that they listened to the radio on a Monday after the even took place. He told me that they met in the one room that had the radio and all the students listened intently. He remembers not having much of an emotional response because of his lack of understanding, but he remembers feeling that it has a serious ordeal mainly because of the reaction of the school teachers.

**Tell me about one historical event that you remember very well.**

The one historical event that he remembers very well was Pearl Harbor.

**What is your favorite book or story?**

He says that his favorite childhood book would have to be *Bambee*.

**What is your favorite movie? (Radio Show in this case).**

His favorite movie when he was younger was *The Robe*. He said that it had a big impact on his life in his teenage years.

**What is your favorite food?**

“Ice cream hands down!!” – Grandpa Petersen

**Are there any other experiences you would like to share with me?**

He told me about his mission that he served in Australia and of the many experiences that he had there. The part he emphasized though was the part of the trip coming back from Australia to return home in Orem. He explained that he took a boat from Australia and visited many counties coming back. He visited Egypt, Italy, France, Britain, and Singapore. One experience that he told was that when he and his companion were going to Italy, it ended up they had some stowaways on the boat and that they had to take a detour to deport the stowaways to a location near their hometowns. He also told me that he was the English announcer on many of the boats traveling to their next destination.

One other interesting story that he shared with me was that when he was visiting France, he met the person who was in charge of the Agriculture branch in the French government. And that since of his background in farming, they were able to talk quite a bit with each other and that he was able to eat dinner with them.

# Personal Comments

I thoroughly enjoyed doing this assignment and am glad that I was given the opportunity of being able to learn more about my Grandpa! He also commented that he thought that this was a good assignment that a teacher could assign (Kudos to Mr. Smith!)