

Family Memories and Thoughts

Interviewer: Jessica Robinson (granddaughter), 4/3/24

Jessica

Ok, we're going to talk about your family okay what were your feelings on becoming a father how...

John C. Elsey

Ohh...having a child makes you over. You see this little thing that comes out and it's basically you. I mean, you're responsible for it. You're going to take care of it.

You want him to have the, just good experiences. You want to make the world over and make it so it's what it ought to be to have him grow up. Yeah, being a father's amazing. The love that you have for your children, it's, you don't really appreciate it until you experience it yourself.

Jessica

Yeah. Has it? I mean, I guess obviously it's, it hasn't changed over the years, but like, how have you, like, I guess watching your kids grow up, like how, what are your feelings on that? Like, have you, not are you proud of your kids, but like, I don't know.

Has it just, has it been fun watching them grow up? Like, what are you, like, what are you, like, I don't know.

John C. Elsey

Oh, yeah, you get very involved in their lives, and then we have grandchildren, and now we have great-grandchildren. It's interesting to see them all come along and do the things they do.

Jessica

Yeah. get like, I don't know how to phrase this, but like, how do you feel just like kind of being the patriarch over all of your all of your posterity?

John C. Elsey

Well, it's been very interesting to watch your family, because, you know, you're one of seven, and we watched those kids come along, and we were really pretty involved with you guys, and we, I changed diapers and had you with us, you'd stay with us for days or weeks at a time when your parents would go somewhere or something, and so we had you there.

That was the next generation, I think I changed diapers.

Jessica

You did!

John C. Elsey

One time, when you were here, with one of your kids, so I'm kind of a generation back with the great-grandchildren, but it's very satisfying to see you guys as parents and taking care of your children and being so involved and so good at it, really.

Well, it's really interesting to see the generations as they come. We got three below us now, so it's really interesting to see, and see how well you do... well it is a marvel.

Jessica

Well, I'll just say that you've, I mean, obviously you got to play a huge influence in my dad's life, but you've all

also played a huge influence in my life and how I'm able to parent. And so, especially because we got to spend seven years in your basement.

And so I appreciate you parenting my kids in a way. So I, I appreciate that both you and grandma... were very loving for my children and they love you very much.

John C. Elsey

It was great to have you here and I'm glad you were able to stay so long.

Jessica

Um, what were some of your favorite activities that you did at home with my mom, my dad and Kristen and Mike and Susie? What were some of your favorite things that you did in your home?

John C. Elsey

Rolling on the floor with them...

Jessica

That tradition was carried on, I'll tell you that much.

John C. Elsey

Well, it was lots of fun. Throwing the kids around, rolling with them, playing with them, putting them in bed. I don't know...changing diapers in a way because you can tickle them, play with them. We had a good time.

Jessica

Aww, that's sweet. I like that. Was there anything particular that you remember at your home, good or bad, that happened?

John C. Elsey

our home?

Jessica

Yeah, is there any super memorable experiences that you remember, either you or Grandma?

John C. Elsey

Not off hand, I'm thinking... Well, Kristin was in Japan and she would come in the summertime and spend months with us in California. I remember thinking, wow, all across the Pacific those 12 or 13 hour flights with four kids, little kids, and she did so well and she just breathed a big sigh of relief when she got to her flight and just kind of relax and settle down and think about the trip back again.

Jessica

Growing up, do you remember anything like any stories or anything from when like my dad or Kristin or any of them were little do you remember anything like that? I don't know any stories about them
Maybe like your experience being a father to them

John C. Elsey

Well, I guess one that comes to mind, with Mike, and they lived in that bedroom upstairs, and he would stick his BB gun out the window and shoot at birds on the wire. Right behind our place was another house, another couple lived there, and talked to him later, we got to know the people behind there.

They were really nice. She took us in the kitchen and showed us a kitchen window that had a BB hole in it. She

said, this is from your son Mike, I think. She said that her husband was really good about keeping their house in pristine shape, a handyman deluxe.

She said that - Bonnie McKean was her name- She said, I wouldn't let him replace the glass. I wanted this here as a memento kind of, after your son's BB gun. That's a little tiny hole in the glass.

It was really kind of funny.

Jessica
that's so sweet
grandma do you have any thoughts

Mavis L. Elsey
I just remember, this isn't about the kids and all, but I remember when, was it President Kimball said that we should all try to grow a garden and have fruit trees and things and our yard changed.

Jessica
Oh yeah.

Mavis L. Elsey
Instead of being all grass, Grandpa took and made areas for fruit trees and a garden with raised boxes. And I just... and Sara says she remembers picking the berries, you know, maybe you do too, the Boysenberries.

Jessica
Oh yeah, I remember, and I remember specifically opening the gate and walking on the things and helping pick stuff and the trees were my favorite, picking the fruit off of the trees. But, well, and I remember, I'm sorry I might have shared this already, but, you know, going when we visited you guys in California and making, squeezing the fresh orange juice, that was my favorite.

John C. Elsey
You were sitting on the pass-through?

Jessica
Yeah, yeah.

John C. Elsey
You're sitting on the pass-through while I'm juicing.

Jessica
Yeah and I also and then we would sit there too while grandma cooked well not like on it but like you know we would just sit there and we put our feet there like in the sink yeah but then yeah it was well that summer that... well the thing I remember about that summer one of the things I remember a few things but one of the things I remember was squeezing that fresh orange juice making popcorn and we got to watch My Fair Lady for the first time... that was the first time I watched My Fair Lady yeah and that was I remember many things but that was one of the things I remember... so but yeah that was a great summer but yeah that was I have lots of good memories in that house but...

John C. Elsey
One tradition we did kind of have was on Sunday night, we came home from church and would show slides.

Jessica

Oh, I remember the slide projector.

John C. Elsey

Yeah, the slide projector- we would show slides and have popcorn. And we watched Disney, the Wonderful World of Disney sometimes too

Jessica

I like that.

John C. Elsey

The kids would all get their pajamas on and sprawl all over the family room and we'd show pictures.

Jessica

Oh, I remember the blue chair, and we'd spin in the blue chair. I don't think that was... and the pool table and the pool pants that you guys had. Those were awesome. Those were great. Who came up with that, by the way, the pool pants...

John C. Elsey

I don't know. I think it was you mother...

Jessica

Was it my mom?

John C. Elsey

I think she bought me mine.

Jessica

Grandpa grandpa and mike and my dad all had the pool pants, you remember, that they would wear

Mavis L. Elsey

Pool pants?

John C. Elsey

Yeah, they were brightly colored...

Jessica

...they were like terrible designs like they were that they would wear you don't remember and they'd usually like wear their family reunion shirts or stuff with them and they were really funny

I'll have to find a picture and show them to you

John C. Elsey

I think Charlotte bought them for me, I think. I can't remember.

Jessica

Yeah, they were really funny. I'll have to find a picture. It was yeah, pretty funny. So yeah, I think I wonder if they're in the... they might cuz I think they're in the Lake Arrowhead video too that we took.

Yeah, which I don't know if we'd even be able to watch that anywhere. But..

John C. Elsey
Are we off record now?

Jessica
Oh no, we're still on record. Still on. Nope. Okay. My last question. It's a serious one. Are you ready?

John C. Elsey
Ok, go ahead.

Jessica
It's getting too late, grandpa, I know I'm getting emotional about things. Um, what are your, um, Oh, okay. What influences or what are your hopes for your family? I guess.

John C. Elsey
We asked that at Thanksgiving at the table there. I thought, what do you wish or want? I would wish for my family that they would have a personal connection with their Father in Heaven, that they would have a relationship or connection there that was very important to them and one that they fostered and depended on.

Jessica
Yeah, I think that's very indicative of you and who you are as a person.

John C. Elsey
Well I think if you have that, you have what's really important and you can weather the storms in life, and you know it's going to be okay and you're going to be all right.

Jessica
It's very true, it's very true, well thank you grandpa for sharing all that with me.

John C. Elsey
You're very welcome. It's been fun to share that with you guys. We've had these interviews.

Jessica
Well, I think you've had an amazing life, and I think you have wonderful experiences, and yeah, I think you and Grandma have built something amazing.

John C. Elsey
Well, you know, they say I'm at the end. They say they don't expect a long... well, a few more months, maybe. But I have had a good life. We've done a lot of things. Grandma's been wonderful. I mean, I don't know where I'd be without her.

She's saved my life after that divorce. But anyway, we've done a lot of things that's wonderful. And in some ways, the best is yet to come. With the understanding of life and the hereafter and whatever, there's great things to come.

I remember looking out at the temple as its being built in Lindon, and thinking, I won't be here when it's finished if things go like they project. And I won't see that, but the thought came into my mind "but wait till you see what we've got over here".

Oh, wow. Oh, it's okay. We'll see how that is.

Jessica

I'm excited because I know that you're gonna be there anyway.

John C. Elsey

Well I don't know how that works.

Jessica

No, you're going to be there with all of us....okay again, again need to end this because I'm getting too emotional!

Alright- thanks Grandpa

Mavis L. Elsey

I remember, I just can't say this though, I remember you kids coming over to the house a lot, you know, and I just thought I would observe you and see what great kids you were, you know, and I just think there couldn't be, there couldn't be any better ones than these.

Honestly, that's the way I felt.

Jessica

Oh, that's so sweet of you.

John C. Elsey

We're amazed at the way you guys, parents, we just think you're wonderful. You're so involved with your kids and that's really neat. That was the most important thing.

Jessica

I agree. I agree, and I'm very thankful for both of you. I think you're wonderful.

John C. Elsey

Oh, I'm very grateful for you.

Jessica

Alright, I love you. I love you both, and I'm turning this off before I start crying because that's gonna be really embarrassing.