

Oral History Interview with Edwin and Louise Oldham  
Morris Hill Neighborhood Association History Project

LMK: Today is Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and this is Linda Morton-Keithley interviewing Eddie and Lou Oldham for the Morris Hill Neighborhood Association history project. So, the first question – when I talked with you the other day, you told me you married in 1946, and you moved to this house [620 N. Pond St.<sup>1</sup>] in 1949. So, what I'd like to start with, if you would tell me, at that point; what was going on in your life, as a still fairly young married couple, that brought you to this particular location in Boise?

LO: Well, I was about five months pregnant, I think, at the time we moved into this house. We stayed with my sister over on N. 11<sup>th</sup> St. on Lemp. Then, we bought this place in December. I had a little gal, she was about a year and half, and then this was our second child that we were expecting.

LMK: And, professionally, what was going on with you at that time?

EO: First, I came to Boise from California, Santa Monica, California where we had moved from Paul, Idaho, to Santa Monica in 1942 or late '41. I went into the service, Air Corps – they call it Air Force now – and served in the South Pacific. And, came out of the service in '45, and went to college in Santa Monica. Her and I corresponded all that time. We came to Boise from Santa Monica, and I started working for First National Bank as a clerk, not a clerk but a clearinghouse employee. I worked there for just a few months, and I worked 13 years for a place called Engine Rebuilders. We built automobile engines. And then, after that, I applied for a position with the City of Boise as treasurer and purchasing agent, and that was in '46 [corrected to '62]. I served in that capacity for six years [corrected to four years<sup>2</sup>]. I went to work for the Boise school system as a purchasing agent and worked there for one year. And then, I went to the Meridian School District and served as its business manager, clerk of the board and treasurer, and supervisor of non-certified personnel. And, retired in 1983 and been retired and enjoying my retirement ever since.

LMK: So, in 1949, when you moved here, you were working for the City, correct?

EO: No, I was working for Engine Rebuilders.

LMK: Okay, thank you. What made you choose a home up in this part of town?

EO: Well, the price of the house was reasonable.<sup>3</sup> [laughs] It was brand-new; it was pretty close to the city limits, close to most anything we'd enjoy. So we came out here.

LO: We liked the Bench, too. We had been living down on Sixth Street in an apartment after we left my sister's place, so we decided we'd rather come up this way.

LMK: When I talked to you the other day, you said the house had been built by Bill Amyx. Is that correct?

EO: Yes.

LMK: Was this home built specifically for you?

EO: No. All these houses were built about the same time and not for us. But we just picked this house.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Boise city directories, the Oldham's address was listed as 620 Amyx until 1961 when the address was changed to 620 N. Pond St.

<sup>2</sup> Boise city directories list Eddie working for the City of Boise in the 1962 through 1966 editions.

<sup>3</sup> Off tape, Eddie mentioned the home, which was purchased with a GI Bill loan, was \$8,250.00.

- LMK: Okay...if you could, imagine yourself standing out in your front yard shortly after you bought the house. Could you, kind of, describe what you could see from this vantage point?
- EO: Well, all around us was pasture land, really, and there wasn't any houses too close. Roosevelt Street was the city limits. Houses started building around and businesses. This mall over here, this mini-mall, was built, and it gradually grew up.
- LO: Ours was the last house that was built on this particular street. And there was a lawyer by the name of [Drinkwine?] that owned the lot from this alley over to Emerald. And there were great, huge trees over there. After they sort of blew down or something – I can't remember what happened – but our kids played on those trees for a long time. And then, we had a vacant lot down at the end of the street, here, where they rode their little, two-speed, kind of mini-bikes, and they did a lot of that and played baseball over here in this lot, too.
- LMK: So, the other houses in this block, which I didn't count them as I came up, maybe 8 to 10 houses...
- LO: At least.
- LMK: Maybe a few more. They were built around the same time?
- LO: Yes, everything was built, and we saw this place and decided that we wanted to buy it, so we came out as it was being built. There were different things we couldn't afford on it. We couldn't afford a driveway and we couldn't afford a full basement. They accidentally put in a driveway. [laughs] Later on, when our youngest girl was just a baby, we had the other side of the basement excavated, because we liked all our neighbors, and the kids were playing here and didn't have any desire to move.
- LMK: Could you kind of describe the house? Is this a two bedroom?
- LO: It was two bedroom, with a half basement and a laundry room downstairs, attached garage with a driveway, and a dirt street out in front, with a farmer with some cows out back. We had them named, too.
- LMK: The cows?
- LO: Yes, one of them was Apricot, but I can't remember the other little baby. He was a Basque man; I think his name was [Izagarre?] or something like that. And, all around the back end of us was pretty open space; we could see clear over to Table Rock and up to Bogus [Basin] at the time.
- LMK: What about looking out the front of the house over toward Orchard? What was that view like at the time?
- LO: Well, these houses were there [indicates houses to the west, toward Orchard]. That garage [indicates across the street] wasn't built at the time; that was just a little house, without the garage. But that's what we saw; most of it was homes like ours, without anything done to them much. We started putting awnings on our house and putting the lawn in. We got the lawn in, and a horse came trotting across the whole place and left hoof prints in the dirt. [laughs] Just young people having struggles, no money, paycheck to paycheck then. Your paycheck would fix something...
- LMK: What about – Orchard is such a major commercial corridor now – what do you recall, when you bought this home, what some of the businesses over there were?
- LO: I think there were homes over there.

- EO: They took some homes out and built businesses, later. There were homes just like this one. I think, most of these homes on the inside look about the same because they were built by the same person and used the same blueprints, probably.
- LO: The Finch Stationary, owned a business downtown...
- LMK: Finch-Brown?
- LO: Okay. Their property was, just, right out beyond Orchard, and when I was in training – my sister lived here in Boise – they [Edwin's sister and another unnamed person] were friends of the Finch's daughter. And, we'd go out to see them and it just seemed like miles and miles from the hospital downtown to out here to visit. They moved that house away. I don't remember where they moved it, but it wasn't torn down, but it was moved. All those businesses sort of followed suit after they started moving the houses out, then businesses started to build up.
- LMK: I have noticed, just driving up and down the street that there are still a few houses that have now been converted into small businesses. As far as where you could go for your shopping needs, whether it was groceries, the drug store, where were the places that you went for those services while living in this neighborhood?
- LO: Well, I think Albertson's [19-27 S. Orchard St.] was built, and M&W Market [11 S. Orchard St.] was right over here on Orchard. And, there was a Shelton's variety store [610 N. Orchard St.] there, too, and a bar. And, I think a laundry and across the street was a furniture store – a couple of furniture stores. Different people move in and move out, you know. M&W didn't last all that long. Albertsons is down on Overland and Orchard. And, this little area over here [gestures to the north] was a farmland. And, those people sold out, and when they sold out, then it became a little place like there is now – just a little village area where you can...Bowling alley [Emerald Lanes, 4860 W. Emerald St.] has been there for quite a while, but before that there was a store.
- LMK: What kind?
- LO: Grocery. And we had a fire over there. I can't remember what burned down but something burned down over in there, and it caused quite a ruckus. And then, there was a little café where that theater [Stage Coach Theater, 4802 W. Emerald St.] is now. Our son worked part-time over there when he was in high school. Things haven't changed too much over there except after the bowling alley went in...why, it has stayed pretty much the same. We've got Asian shops now...a couple of grocery stores. They've stayed pretty permanent.
- LMK: Do you remember other businesses that were along that Orchard corridor? Anything else?
- LO: Well, we had a service station on the corner, two corners. One right over here that's still sitting empty.
- LMK: You had three children.
- LO: Yes.
- LMK: Where did they go to school?
- LO: Borah [Borah High School, 6001 W. Cassia St.]. They started out at Franklin...
- LMK: Franklin Elementary [Franklin and Orchard]?
- LO: Grade school.
- LMK: Which is not there anymore.

- LO: No, they tore it down. And then, they went to West [West Junior High, 711 N. Curtis Rd.], which is torn down. And, they all went to Borah. There was almost 10 years difference between them [between the oldest and youngest child].
- EO: They all three, have college educations now: one of them is a registered nurse, one of them has their own CPA business, and my son is a nuclear engineer, (retired).
- LMK: Good professions. How did the kids get to school?
- LO: Well, they walked. [laughs] And, once in a while, why, they'd fudge, and they'd get on a school bus. We were barely a mile and a half from Borah. Every once in a while, our son would get a [bus] ticket from a kid that lived further away. He finally got caught, and they booted him off the bus. [laughs] They usually walked and then, I think, when they went over to West, they did have a car. The oldest daughter, she would have been a sophomore. And, our son would have been two grades below [her]. And then, our littlest one, she was further away than that [in age], so she was over at Mary's Child Care Center over on Orchard, there was a place. They walked a good deal of time until they got to high school, then they, pretty much, had a car all the time.
- LMK: But there was some bus service?
- LO: Yes, there finally was. It didn't start out that way. Before they finished West Junior High, there was bus service.
- LMK: For the kids in the summertime, what kind of activities...let me re-phrase that: were there organized activities for the kids to take part in?
- LO: No. We had a big bunch of play things in our back yard. My uncle had built most of them and... one was a teeter-totter that went up and down and around and around, and they were here an awful lot, and they were next door a lot. She had every game that ever was. They just sort of circulated around like that. My daughter and the girl next door, the oldest, they'd usually devise something to do for the others. They just entertained themselves. We just didn't worry unless we heard some hollering out there, or somebody had gotten hurt, because we said we didn't want any screaming because that was out of the question. They just played for hours, and I don't recall a lot of quarrelling or fighting. That's the way the summers went. And then we had a – South Junior High had a swimming pool, and then they went over there. [You] could get a season pass. And, they rode their bikes over there.
- LMK: Were there organized clubs, organizations for adults that either of you did join, or could have joined, if you had wanted to?
- EO: I was a Mason, and my oldest daughter was a Job's Daughter. And, I was Associate Guardian of the Job's Daughters. In my working career, I was a Kiwanis Club member and a vice-president.
- LO: Junior Chamber.
- EO: And Junior Chamber, I was a member of the Junior Chamber.
- LMK: Where did those organizations meet? Up here in this area?
- EO: No.
- LMK: Okay...so, they were citywide organizations?
- EO: Yes, pretty much – pretty good [sized] area but I think they were mostly Bench people.
- LO: The Jaycee-ettes were an offshoot, too, so we often did things together. We'd have picnics, and go up in the hills and get Christmas trees now and again...just activities like that. The fellow, who was president, practically, the last year that Eddie belonged, instigated that cross on Tablerock.

That was Glen Lungren. That was quite a big deal at the time. Other than that, we went to church and later on, when the kids got older, I went to evening Bible study. I started working part-time for a doctor and his wife about the time the youngest one was three, and I worked there for almost 20 years.

LMK: Were there ladies' clubs or organizations?

LO: Just the Jaycee-ettes.

LMK: Driving around the neighborhood, I've only seen a couple of churches. Do you remember what churches would have been here in those early years?

LO: Well, I think Whitney Methodist on Franklin – it was here. I think there was a little church over in here, but I can't think what it was, because it's still a church.

LMK: Over toward Garden Street?

LO: Yes, it's Roosevelt, down in there. And then, this church over on Roosevelt [First Bible Missionary Church, 375 N. Roosevelt] that has a school attached, it's been there for quite a while, too. We went downtown to the First Presbyterian [First Presbyterian Church, 950 W. State St.] at the time.

LMK: Well, that leads me to the next question. When you first moved up into this area of the Bench, how did you get downtown?

EO: Well, I had a car – always had a car – so we drove.

LMK: What route would you have taken from this neighborhood to go downtown?

EO: We'd go down Emerald Street...

LO: Americana [Blvd.] wasn't there for a long time, so we went over to...went down to the end of Orchard here and turned up on Fairview and go down from there. Or, we could go to Garden [St.] and go down a little loop. They took that road out. It was really handy. I miss it, even today, because it was so handy. Then Americana – I can't remember what year that was – it was about the time Joe Albertson, or somebody, donated a lot of that land down there. It was nothing but a swamp! So, then they put that Americana Boulevard in there. It was only three miles to where I worked, down near the hospital; so it was not very far, you know. Three miles out to the airport, three miles downtown, is really nothing, nowadays. And then, I had a bicycle I rode quite a bit, and had a moped (used to ride that to work once in a while). That's the way we got around.

LMK: Eddie, your offices were where – when you were working?

EO: Let's see, Engine Rebuilders was on 14<sup>th</sup> Street [corrected to 1417 Grove St.].

LMK: So, downtown?

EO: Downtown. Boise school, the head office was over on Fort Street. City Hall was downtown on Sixth Street. Then when I moved to Meridian, why, it was on Meridian Street – that's where I retired from.

LMK: I want to go back for a minute to some of the other businesses. You mentioned the grocery stores – Albertsons, M & W – a few of the businesses in that Orchard/Emerald area. Clothing shopping - what was available in those early years? Where would you go?

LO: The Merc, down near the railroad tracks and Franklin [S. Orchard and Franklin]. It was right across from where Franklin School was and where Fred Meyer is now. That was the Merc. And there were some other little shops in there, too – maybe a dress shop and a hair salon. Not much but that's where we went for clothes and what. They had Easter hunts in there once in a while and we'd get the kids...

- EO: There was a drug store over here off Orchard.
- LO: And then, we had a furniture store, which is still there – CHF [Commercial Home Furnishing, 104 S. Orchard St.]. It's kitty-corner from where Franklin [School] was. It's been there for a long, long time. I don't think that bank's been there very long.
- EO: Easy chair store on [interviewee struggles to remember street name] and Orchard – that was a storage building.
- LO: Peasley, I think.
- EO: Not Peasley.
- LO: How about the place where they drove trucks? I was thinking of a storage for him. And, that U-Haul [1121 N. Orchard St.] has been there a long time, too.
- LMK: And, I've heard mention that the McDonald's [510 N. Orchard St.] over on Orchard was the first one in Idaho.
- LO: Oh, was it?
- EO: It's much later, of course.
- LO: It's been there a long, long time.
- LMK: Was there city bus service up here in those early years?
- EO: No. They have bus service down Emerald – takes them out to the mall.
- LO: But not in the early years.
- EO: No, none.
- LMK: What about some of the city services? Actually, let me re-phrase that. At the time you bought the house, you weren't incorporated in the city yet.
- EO: The sewer line – that was built much later. We had cesspools and then they came along, the Bench sewer system. The street wasn't even paved then. And, they come in later and widened the street a little bit and paved it. One of the best moves they made was that sewer system.
- LMK: Do you happen to remember where water and power service came from in those early years?
- LO: Well, let's see. The water company – it was downtown someplace. Idaho Power was in that building on 11<sup>th</sup> and State Street. But, I can't quite remember where the water company was located. Bench Sewer is still right over here [4828 W. Emerald]. It's been there for quite a while.
- EO: I think the water system was over there by the Veterans' Administration.
- LO: Could have been, but it wasn't out on Curtis like it is now.
- LMK: Before the time period when you were part of the incorporated City of Boise, what was your access for fire or police protection?
- EO: We had county police, of course, that was it.
- LO: We didn't have much fire protection. They didn't even put this fireplug out here until about three years ago. And, they had a big discussion over that. And nobody wanted it in their front yard – said if it went down this way, it would in the way of the gas and if they went the other way...The only place they could put it was over here. I didn't think it was...I think it bothered Eddie, but it didn't bother me too much. As a result of that we got a few pieces of our sidewalk fixed. [laughs] It hasn't been in there all that long, four or five years, maybe, at the most.
- EO: The city fire department couldn't go into unincorporated areas so there was a volunteer...
- LO: I think there was a fireplug down there on the corner.
- EO: Much later.

- LO: This pretty well covers us now, but it's not been very long since they put that in.
- LMK: So, you didn't have too much in those early years?
- EO: No. When I became city treasurer, they moved the city limits out here in our front yard so I could be in the city and work for the city.
- LMK: Oh, was that a rule at that time?
- EO: Yes, that was the rule. Mayor Shellworth was the mayor. Then they started moving the fire departments out farther (branch offices).
- LMK: Were there any changes that you recall when you were incorporated into the city?
- LO: I think, taxes went up! [laughs]
- EO: Taxes doubled, of course. Not immediate – I can't remember any changes, can you?
- LMK: Access to services, clearly.
- EO: You didn't see a policeman for ages.
- LMK: One of the big functions...one of the properties up in this neighborhood that we're interested in for this project was the state fairground. Was that something you participated in?
- EO: Yes. As a Jaycee, we had the beer franchise, and so I worked out there selling beer to the crowds. It wasn't too long after that [when the fairgrounds] moved out.
- LMK: From the research we've been looking at, it was in that location from 1902 until 1966, and then it moved out to its current location.
- EO: That's about right.
- LO: Our kids learned how to sneak into that fairground because it wasn't very far away. Somebody always had access under the fence deal, you know. They spent a lot of time over at the fairgrounds when there was something going on. Sometimes legitimately getting in. [laughs] But, it wasn't very costly at the time, as I recall.
- LMK: What about you?
- LO: Oh, we went to the fair. You know, take your kids and go to the fair.
- EO: We try to avoid crowds now, so we don't go now – try to avoid as many crowds as we can. We do quite a bit of traveling now.
- LO: Flying!
- LMK: The fairground left in 1966; the connector came through. Do you have any recollection if there were feelings in the neighborhood? Was that good? Was it not good?
- EO: Never heard a thing about it. Never heard anybody complain.
- LO: I think it was a loss to the kids, you know. By 1966, both the oldest children were in high school, one of them about ready to graduate. And my youngest, I don't know if she has any memory much of the fairground even being out here – the connector, I think. That's kind of exciting. It's far enough away; once in a while we can hear traffic but not any more than the train, which is down this way just half a mile. I don't think it affected us; it probably made it convenient for us. I remember using the freeway a lot. I stay away from it now, but I really used it a lot at the time.
- LMK: Lou, you were telling me the other day that you trained as a nurse, and you did your training here in Boise.
- LO: Yes, at St. Luke's.
- LMK: St. Luke's – what was that like at the time?

LO: When I went into training, I was already a year out of high school. My mother wanted me to stay home about a year and so I was close to 19 when I went in. Of course, the war started that year, too. That was 1942, in the fall. At that time, they wore black hose at St. Luke's and I was just dreading having to wear these black hose. Just before we got there, why, the nurses that were there, they had voted against that and they were going to go to white. They had caps that looked like—they called them prairie schooner caps because they looked just like the little top of a prairie schooner. That changed too, but we didn't get our caps until four months after. You had to prove yourself; you were a probie [on probation] for four months, and then you got your cap. Then you were really into it. It took three years. You got no time off, except a couple of weeks during the year. So you're working at the hospital all the time, plus book work, and then, if you'd been on night duty, you had to get up and go to class whether you'd been up all night or not. It was really three years of solid training, where now it's more like a four-year course where you get off in the summer.

A lot of the older girls, I remember, went off to the service. You learned a lot more in a big hurry because it seemed you were a senior before it was time. The Cadet Nurse Corps came in and my folks were so afraid of us getting drafted into the service. They're farm people. I had three brothers. One of the brothers was a cripple; he had a clubfoot so he had to stay home on the farm. He was in his third or fourth year of college. My sisters, I think they wanted to go in, especially my twin sisters, really wanted to join the service. My folks didn't like that, and they were happy that I was not any further along in training because just as I was graduating, the war ended. One of the twin sisters went into the WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service] so she was the only one of a family of eight that saw any military service. The cadets, which they didn't let me join, they get so much [of a] stipend. And, of course, when the government steps in, they control their hours. Whereas the girls that weren't cadets, they worked long hours because they just worked us anytime they wanted to. I actually learned more because I was there all the time; that was part of the experience. I would have really wanted to join and I could have because I was over 18, but you just minded your parents until 20 then. I wouldn't want to displease them, so I just went along on the way they liked. It was hard work and different work because patients that would come in the hospital...very few of them would be dismissed in two or three days, especially the women that were up in the OB [Obstetrics] department. They'd stay seven days, so you became quite well acquainted with a lot of people and that was nice...not so good when you had a patient you didn't like. [laughs] Nursing and medicine changes so rapidly that three years after you've gotten your training, you almost need a refresher course (to go back to school and learn how to run some of the equipment). And, they get people that can draw blood and they called them phlebotomists. And I just loved to start an IV. I would sneak one in once in a while if somebody wasn't available. Couldn't start any transfusions, but I did a few of those, too – because the doctors were scarce, just like the nurses. That was more my experience of nursing during the war and not being able to be in the war. A civilian nurse was what you were.

LMK: Did you have any interaction at all with the base [Mountain Home Air Force Base]?

LO: Yes, we played baseball against them – at Mountain Home. It wasn't anybody out here [referring to Gowen Field]. We had some soldiers out here, but I don't know what they were doing.



Mountain Home was the big base, and they had a baseball team. And we had a baseball team, so we played baseball against them. But other than that...

LMK: When you say "we," do you mean Boise...?

LO: The girls in the nursing program – my nursing pals. [laughs]

LMK: Who generally won?

LO: We did! We won half the time. That was a big deal, because I was pitching. [laughs] It was underhanded, fast-pitch; then, they went to the slow-pitch. But, I was never in on that; it was always fast-pitch, and I couldn't pitch like these gals do now. [laughs]

LMK: Eddie, you said you went to college in California?

EO: Yes, Santa Monica City College.

LMK: And what were you majoring in?

EO: Accounting. That enabled me to get the job as city treasurer and kept stepping up further in my career. I think it opened a lot of doors for me.

LMK: Yes, it's a good field of study. What was the City Hall like at the time you were there?

EO: A two-story building on Sixth and Jefferson? Sixth and Bannock. It just had moved from that old building downtown and moved into the building on Sixth Street. It was a two-story building.

LMK: And, you said Mr. Shellworth was the mayor?

EO: Gene Shellworth was the mayor. He was responsible for hiring me.

LMK: And, how large, just kind of in general, would the staff of the city be at that time?

EO: Well, the City had control of the highway department at that time and all the engineering that went on in the city. Now they don't have the highway department. They had the park department and the airport. Probably 100 to 150 people, I suppose. They had the city clerk and her people, and they had the courts (clerk of courts and her people), and the engineering department, and then they had parks and recreation. All of that was part of the city.

LMK: And police?

EO: Police was part of the city. They had an office right behind the city hall.

LMK: And fire department, was that part...?

EO: Fire department was part of the city, still is. Maybe there was close to a couple hundred [staff members] there – hard to say; I don't remember. I was the treasurer but I didn't write the checks. I signed them but I didn't...

LMK: How large was your department?

EO: Me and a clerk.

LMK: That was it?

EO: Me and a clerk.

LMK: Do you remember what would have been, kind of, the burning issues of the day?

EO: Annexation – it was one of the big things. A lot of the people didn't want to be taxed so much by the city. Didn't figure they'd get enough city services to pay for what they would have to pay for. So, I think that was the big issue.

LMK: Did you have to participate in City Council meetings and those sorts of activities?

EO: I had to because I had to go to City Council for approval to buy things over a certain amount of money. They had to approve all the purchases over a certain amount.

LMK: Okay...coming back to the neighborhood, what would the two of you say are the changes from those early years when you moved in to today? What would you characterize as pretty substantial changes?

LO: Locking the doors.

LMK: Locking the doors.

LO: Never did that before. You could walk right in the front door and out the other, and all the outhouses, garages, were open. Anybody could just help themselves. All that changed.

LMK: And, when we visited the other day, you mentioned that not as many people in the neighborhood today own their homes.

LO: That's right.

LMK: So, much more of a rental market?

LO: Yes. They were mostly families with kids (had close to 10 to 14). Plus kids were picked up from off of Denton and they came over here, too. I don't even think there are any kids...

EO: You knew your neighbors; now you don't know anybody.

LO: I don't think there are any little children here. Last one just moved away. That's a big difference. I didn't tell you but when I took my biology and the sciences, we walked over to Boise State [Boise State University, 1910 University Dr.] from St. Luke's for those courses. We were affiliated with Boise State for a while and I think they took over the nursing program entirely. But, at the time I was there, we did take several—we took nutrition and we took biology, and another science course I don't recall.

LMK: Did you have any affiliation or interaction with the other hospital in town when you were going through your training?

LO: Once in a while. St. Al's had a swimming pool, but I don't remember ever being invited to it. [laughs]

EO: It was very small downtown by St. Luke's, and when they bought this Finch property out here, then it started growing and it [is] still growing.

LO: Their hospital – it wasn't much bigger than – St. Luke's and Al's were pretty much the same size.

EO: One building.

LO: And, they had about the same amount of girls, too. I don't remember even attending any classes with the St. Al's, so what they were doing for their science classes, I don't know. Because it was just St. Luke's that was going over to Boise – BJC [Boise Junior College] at the time.

LMK: And, what year did you graduate?

LO: 1946.

LMK: Well, can you think of anything you'd like to add that I've forgotten to ask about?

EO: You've been pretty thorough; it's pretty hard. [laughs]

LO: Well, I can't recall anything. If [there is] something, we'll think of [it] as soon as you leave. [laughs] [recorder turned off, then on]

LMK: Tell me how the houses themselves have changed over the years. You said this was a pretty basic house.

LO: They were just board sides, painted. It wasn't too long before we got really sick and tired of painting, so we had the first aluminum siding house on the block. I don't know how many roofs we went through but I can think of four.

EO: Three.

LO: We started out with a red one with a grey house; I remember that. And, I remember a yellow house with grey trim. I remember two...green roofs?

EO: I can only think of three changes.

LO: We're probably due for another one. We added the extra part to the basement, as we told you. Put a patio out in back, with cement. When we put the basement in, we put the entrance to it so we could get in from the garage and from there [the patio]. And then, we had this garage put in back – way out. Went through three or four sets of awnings. Two or three sets of windows.

EO: Most of these houses haven't changed. They finished their basement next door; it was an unfinished basement.

LO: They had a full one, though, to start with.

EO: A full one but it was unfinished. They did some work on that house over there in the basement. But other than that I don't think many of these houses have changed.

LMK: Are they all basically the same plan, then?

EO: I think they're all pretty much the same.

LO: The house two houses over—there is a house between us and the other house – that wasn't here. That belonged to a fellow by the name of Armstrong and he owned that property. Finally sold it and somebody built a house there, and the house on the corner was his garage. And, the people that bought that – they just made that into a house, so that wasn't there.

EO: Put a big addition on it.

LMK: And, you mentioned to the north of us, here, that was a big pasture.

EO: That was all pasture.

LMK: When did they start to build on that?

LO: Let's see...I remember when the wall blew down.

EO: [Murphy's] built a building...

LO: They had Lock, Stock and Barrel [restaurant, 4705 W. Emerald St.] that was over here before they moved down there. I bet it was 19...Let's see...Leslie got out of high school in 1980. I'll bet it was probably in late '69,...'60s, when they built that. They put the cinder block up there and blocked our view of Bogus Basin. No more than got it up and a big wind came up and blew it down. I thought that was so funny! Missed our fence and everything, which was unfortunate because we could have gotten a new fence. [laughs] Another thing that happened is they put this division out here [behind the Oldham house to the east], where the Basque man owned it, then a man by the name of Jones owned it. Well, he sold the whole thing off and they started building these homes. We had quite a big ruckus about this down at City Hall – trying to keep it from less homes from what they wanted. Called them patio homes. Then we said we wanted this alley [north side of the Oldham property] paved because we knew two homes would be using the alley. We were right on the alley here; our fence was right on the alley. We used to have a fence. Well, my son-in-law's brother is a lawyer and I asked him what to do about the situation. He said, "Well, just sit on it. The client that you're going to have to sue is one of mine!" [laughs] He already was working for the City and he said just pay no attention to it and he thought it would go away. And, it did. They oiled right up to our fence and nothing ever happened about it because we figured we had grandfather rights. So, that was the last big trauma we had.

LMK: How long have those homes been back behind you there?

LO: Six years – six to seven years.

LMK: So, you have had quite a few changes in the neighborhood in the time you've lived here.

LO: That was really a big change. Now we're just boxed in.

LMK: Okay, let me turn this off.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Linda Morton-Keithley, July 1, 2013; audited by Linda Morton-Keithley, July 12, 2013; corrections provided by Lou Oldham and entered by Linda Morton-Keithley, July 23, 2013.