

# *“Always Lend a Helping Hand”*

## *Sevier County Remembers the Great Depression*

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### **Sevier County Oral History Project**

INTERVIEWEE: Revo Young  
INTERVIEWER: Megan Wilson  
DATE: December 6, 1997  
PLACE: Revo Young's house in Richfield, Utah  
SUBJECT: The Great Depression

**Megan Wilson:** This is Megan Wilson, and I am interviewing Revo Young on her remembrances of the Great Depression. The date is December 6th, 1997, and the place is Richfield, Utah.

When and where were you born?

**Revo Young:** I was born in Joseph, Utah, 1907; I'm 90 years old.

**Megan Wilson:** Do you remember the day the stock market crashed, and, if so, what do you remember about it?

**Revo Young:** Well, I remember that we didn't pay much attention to it. We lived in farming communities in Utah, and it didn't seem to make any difference to us, so I don't think we remember the day of it.

**Megan Wilson:** What were your family's circumstances during the depression?

**Revo Young:** Oh, we lived in the town of Joseph, where we had a farm so for a while it didn't affect us very much, and we didn't know much about it. Of course we had tramps come and people like that, but we'd always known about those. We didn't know much about the

depression until about 1933. Then there was a great drought in Utah and then we felt [the depression] because we were farmers.

**Megan Wilson:** How old were you during the depression?

**Revo Young:** It was 1929, so I was 22 years old. I was teaching school.

**Megan Wilson:** How many students did you have in your class?

**Revo Young:** Oh, my goodness! It was one of my first years teaching. I had about 30 to 35 students in my classes.

**Megan Wilson:** What was your economic situation at the time?

**Revo Young:** When I was teaching school, my wages weren't what you'd call great because I had taught a whole year for seven hundred and fifty dollars that was the year the depression hit. Then as the time went on people couldn't pay their taxes and wages were cut, so I was not receiving very much money.

**Megan Wilson:** How did your life change during the depression?

**Revo Young:** It changed for us because with me I was the only wage earner in the family and my mother was a widow, and we had a big family and I was the only one getting wages at all. The only money they had was the milk check which would come every week, which was about five dollars. And so I was really the bread winner in the family at that time.

**Megan Wilson:** How many people were there in your family?

**Revo Young:** Well, there were seven. Let's see, there were six children at home, I guess. In my mother's family there was one sister that was living in California and they had a real serious time and they came home to live. My brother was married, but they were having struggle too.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you get married during the depression?

**Revo Young:** No, in my contract I had said if I was to get married I was dismissed.

**Megan Wilson:** Oh.

**Revo Young:** Women weren't allowed to work, especially if they had a husband. So that was a good reason not to get married.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you date at all?

**Revo Young:** Well, sure.

**Megan Wilson:** What did you do for your dates?

**Revo Young:** Oh, we went to dances.

**Megan Wilson:** What were they like?

**Revo Young:** Dances are different than they are now because we just danced together and danced waltzes and two-steps and rumba and all of the dances.

**Megan Wilson:** What else did you do for fun?

**Revo Young:** A lot of people went roller skating. I didn't roller skate. We went to plays and all kinds of things like that. We had parties.

**Megan Wilson:** How have your attitudes changed because you lived through the depression?

**Revo Young:** Well, I think I appreciate money more and I appreciate having work, and I appreciate those who are not as fortunate as I am.

**Megan Wilson:** What were some of the things you and your family did to save money?

**Revo Young:** Well, we just didn't go places. We didn't take vacations. We stayed home and worked.

**Megan Wilson:** How much did things cost during the depression?

**Revo Young:** Things were very cheap. But that didn't make any difference 'cause we didn't have any money. Twenty-five cents then is as much as five dollars is to us now it seems like. I had a funny thing that I'll tell you, I went to Christensen's Store and they had a sale. I went down and bought a pair of house shoes for, I think it cost forty-nine cents. I was bragging to my sister about them and she said, "No wonder, one has a high heel and one has a low heel!"  
(Laughs.)

**Megan Wilson:** At what point in the depression did you feel like you and your family were financially stable?

**Revo Young:** I think it was clear up to before World War II before we felt that things were approaching normal.

**Megan Wilson:** How were people around you affected by the depression?

**Revo Young:** Some of them were really in bad circumstances and there was no work for people. Prices were low, but they didn't have money.

**Megan Wilson:** How bad did the depression get before it started to get better:

**Revo Young:** Really bad. The government tried to help people, but some people were able to get jobs but a lot of people weren't. Then the government, if there was a surplus of food they didn't seem to affect us because we were on a farm. My mother was of course the head of the family and the cattle were already selling for seven cents a pound for steers and the government had us call the cattle they had us kill them and they gave us three cents a pound for them. That would be a big steer [that] would bring about thirty five dollars. It was really bad.

**Megan Wilson:** Was it hard not having your father?

**Revo Young:** Oh, yes. I was the only bread winner. My older brother was married and he tried to get work, but because mother had a farm he couldn't get a government W. P. A. It was bad.

**Megan Wilson:** Did your whole family help out on the farm?

**Revo Young:** Oh, yes.

**Megan Wilson:** What kind of things did you help out with?

**Revo Young:** Hay, beets, and grain. We had to feed the cattle.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you just have cattle or did you have other kinds of animals?

**Revo Young:** We had a sheep herd. We had pigs. We had turkeys and things of that sort.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you ever go to the movies or anything like that?

**Revo Young:** Oh, yes. The movies would be about ten cents.

**Megan Wilson:** What were they like?

**Revo Young:** Oh, they were, I can't remember the movies. They were beautiful movies, but in our town they were only once a week.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you go to them often?

**Revo Young:** Oh, yes, we tried to save our money to go.

**Megan Wilson:** Would you go with your family?

**Revo Young:** Oh, yes, and sometimes with dates.

**Megan Wilson:** What advice would you give to young people if there was another depression?

**Revo Young:** Well I'm sure that the next depression would be harder than our depression, because people are using credit cards and using credit and they have much borrowed money. A banker told me that during the depression a big loan was two thousand dollars. Now he says

they don't bat an eye asking for a half of a million dollars. When another serious depression hit, there would be lots of sadness like there was in the first depression. The rich people who lost all their money just committed suicide. It was just terrible.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you know anybody who committed suicide?

**Revo Young:** No, no, but I knew people who lost their homes and lost their farms, lost everything. Our neighbor talked to us, and he had a government loan on his home, and he thought that the government would never take his home, but they took their home, and they thought they'd still stay, and they put up a tent out in the middle of the street hoping that the government or somebody would have pity on them, but they eventually had to move away and find work someplace.

**Megan Wilson:** Were there a lot of people who had to move away?

**Revo Young:** Yes, there were lots of people who moved away, and lots of people who lived in cities who came home to live because they were able to have gardens and stuff like that. So there were lots of people on the move.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you ever go to the cities during the depression?

**Revo Young:** I don't think so, except when I had to and we'd go up for UEA.

**Megan Wilson:** What was the atmosphere in the cities?

**Revo Young:** Well, it was just the same as it was in the country, except there would probably be lots of bread lines and things like that. That I didn't ever see, but I know that was going on. If there was a job opening, there would be maybe 150 applications for one job.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you ever meet people who hopped trains, like hobos?

**Revo Young:** Oh yes, we lived close, we lived in town. I know that there were lots of people who rode the trains. Of course, our train ended in Marysvale, so ours probably wasn't as much as it was in bigger centers.

**Megan Wilson:** Were you frightened at all of the people who rode the trains, or were they just normal people searching for jobs?

**Revo Young:** Well, they'd be searching for places to go. Lots of young boys. We had always been used to tramps and people looking for work

**Megan Wilson:** Did you have any tramps come by your house?

**Revo Young:** Oh yes, it'd be quite often, but we lived in the town. We were farther away from the railroads, where there'd be lots of people.

**Megan Wilson:** Were they just desperate to have a job?

**Revo Young:** Oh yes, and something to eat.

**Megan Wilson:** Did you ever take anybody in?

**Revo Young:** Yes, we fed lots of people.

**Megan Wilson:** Is there anything that you would like to add that I haven't asked you already?

**Revo Young:** No, I don't think so.

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