

Palisade Historical Society  
 Oral and Video History Project  
 Interview

Mesa County Oral History #0739

Date: 02/17/1984

Place Mesa County Library

Length: 60 min.

Address: 3632 G 4/10 Rd., Palisade, Colorado

Interviewee Max A. Sisson

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Interviewer L. Ciavonne

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This is a summary of a handwritten Tape Index, which contains notes from an interview with Max A. Sisson on February 17, 1984, conducted by the Mesa County Oral History Project at the Mesa County Library. The interview was recorded on one cassette tape. This digital rendition of the Tape Index follows the original format as closely as possible, in order to preserve the document as it was originally created. Syntax and spelling errors were corrected and abbreviations were spelled out, as possible. The original document can be viewed at the Museums of Western Colorado library.

*(Clarifications and comments from other sources appear in parentheses and italics and are not a part of the original document.)*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subjects Covered</b>	<b>Names &amp; Places</b>
Tape 1, Side 1	<p>Max was born May 7, 1912.</p> <p>Graduated from high school in 1929 and from college in 1933. Worked on the peach mosaic disease. Program was to combat disease by removing trees. W.P.A. (<i>Works Progress Administration</i>) helped remove trees and Max had to train inspectors. Growers took a beating, and he had to serve notice, so he had to have protection. Office in Chamber of Commerce Building, then was a Government-furnished office. Many strains of disease. Looked for pattern on leaf to diagnose disease. Mite was the cause but spray did not work and some years were worse than others. By the late 1970s, it was almost eliminated. Max trained another man to take over and then retired.</p> <p>Some peaches were resistant to the disease. Some did not show. Had to experiment with grafts, cross-budding to diagnose disease. All trees coming in are inspected. Farmers were given so much time to take out diseased trees and some had to be forcefully removed. News media helped out with program.</p>	<p>Peach Industry – Peach Mosaic</p> <p>Peach Administration Committee</p> <p>USDA</p> <p>Colorado Dept. of Agriculture.</p> <p>Entomology Degree</p> <p>A, Bodene</p> <p>Utah, Mexico,</p> <p>Sheriff Lumley</p> <p>Wayne Aspinall</p> <p>Silmon Smith</p> <p>Carman's orange clings, Rochesters, white flesh, nectarines</p> <p>Norm Luchion  <i>(probably Norman Leupschen, Mesa County Horticulture Pest Inspector)</i></p>
7 min.		

15 min.	<p>One farmer lost 35 acres and was going to take it to court. Federal, State, and County monetarily supports the peach mosaic program.</p> <p>Locates various office locations and experiences.</p>	<p>Daily Sentinel, Radio, TV Ivan Cladder Rex Howell Rena Mary Taylor</p>
20 min.	<p>Wrote summary of work for Peach Administration Committee</p> <p>Men who helped out.</p> <p>He was also a pathologist and joined the society. Took twenty years to find the cause. Sprays did not work.</p> <p>Peaches in other areas were wiped out.</p> <p>Mexican Government did not cooperate and peach industry along the border was wiped out. Mosaic was found in 1931 and diagnosed as a disease in 1934 and 1935. Relates progress of disease and control. Never could clean it up but much better now. Distance between orchards helps. Not in the soil, and peaches are worst carrier. Young trees not so susceptible. Have to check nursery stock. Other diseases that affect fruit. Mosaic not a problem in California and cannot explain why it is worse some years. Max covered three counties but it was worse in Mesa County.</p> <p>END OF SIDE 1</p>	<p>Palisades National Bank Building Mountain Lion Building</p> <p>USDA, A.R.S. Washington Eddie Bodene Dr. D. Hutchins Lorin Anderson Carrol Wade Leroy Ball Lawrence Jones Wilson Eriophyid Mite N. New Mexico, Utah</p> <p>Rio Grande River</p> <p>Vineland, East Orchard Mesa</p> <p>Delta, Montrose, Mesa</p>
30 min.		

Time	Subjects Covered	Names & Places
Tape 1, Side 2	Had to go over a diseased orchard three or four times, and spring was the best time. Lots of orchards were replanted. Peach industry is one-third of what it used to be. If peach mosaic comes back, there will be many more varieties of peaches and also other fruit. Mosaic is limited to stone fruits. The W.P.A. help created some problems. Government programs were not easy to handle.	Elberta, Hale
9 min.	Max traveled to the U.S. programs and names some of these. Oriental Fruit Moth program was one. They all had to work together.  He purchased orchard property and still owns and leases other orchards. Retired from Government work in 1972. On the board of Federal Land Bank and director of Palisade Bank. Has different fruits now and other farm crops. Thinks Peach Board ( <i>of Control</i> ) is useful.	Mr. ( <i>Lorin</i> ) Anderson, Carrol Wade  William T. Sisson  United Fruit Growers
19 min.	Colorado only state really working on the problem. P.A.C. ( <i>possibly a reference to FARM PAC, a political action committee</i> ) funds program along with county and state.  Inspectors must recognize diseases by sight and they are trained to do so. Gumosis is localized in the tree, and Mosaic is throughout the tree. Believes the disease came from Old Mexico by way of the wind-carried mite. Research covered twenty years. He planned a forestry degree but was influenced by teacher to study entomology. Early work before coming to Grand Junction and events leading up to his Government appointment. Depression probably helped the mosaic program along. Program was helped by many people. This was an emergency program because the disease was far advanced and the cause completely unknown. He almost resigned a few times.	Georgia, S.E. Utah, Arizona  Leroy Ball  Dr. List, Denver  B.M. Gates, Lorin Anderson, Carrol Wade, Wayne Aspinall, Roland Bancroft, Lions Club, Frosty Tilton, Lee Toothaker, Silmon Smith, Safeway Stores
24 min.	National conferences and State conferences were held. Wayne Aspinall was a great help in funding.	Jamie Whitten
30 min.	END OF SIDE 2	

Summary by Gary Hines – 10/14/2015

Reviewed and edited by \_\_\_\_\_

(Name)

(Date)

Oral History Tape Index Summary

MAX A. SISSON

02/17/1984

Page 3 of 3