

THE SAME TEN PEOPLE (STPS) OF ROCKVILLE: VOLUNTEERISM,
PRESERVATION, AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN SMALL-
TOWN SOUTHERN UTAH

by

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ABSTRACT

The Same Ten People (STPs) of Rockville: Volunteerism, Preservation, and Sense of
Community in Small-town Southern Utah

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Situated less than five miles from the south entrance of Zion National Park, the town of Rockville, Utah, has no commercial businesses and depends on volunteers to carry out the majority of civil services within town. For this reason, volunteerism plays a central role in the sense of community that exists in Rockville. This thesis examines the relationship between volunteerism and the sense of community in Rockville. In order to better understand how the act of volunteerism helps residents feel membership within the community, I interviewed the STPs, or the “Same Ten People,” the group of Rockville residents who volunteer whenever the need arises. In this thesis, I present findings from my interviews with the STPs as they participate in town socials, clean-ups, and helping neighbors following natural disasters. I show how the act of volunteering helps residents feel a sense of belonging, and that they have earned their membership in the community.

(103 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

The Same Ten People (STPs) of Rockville: Volunteerism, Preservation, and Sense of
Community in Small-town Southern Utah

Tori Edwards

This thesis examines the central role that volunteerism plays in creating a strong sense of sense of place and community within the town of Rockville, Utah, located 4.7 miles from Zion National Park. Rockville has no commercial businesses within its boundaries and relies heavily upon the volunteer efforts of its residents to carry out the majority of civil services within the town. Drawing from interviews of the STP's (a group of Rockville residents who volunteer on a regular basis), this thesis highlights how the act of volunteerism helps residents feel membership within their community. This thesis also looks at how the STPs' participation in town socials, clean-ups, and helping neighbors affected by natural disasters, helps them feel a deeper sense of belonging within their community.

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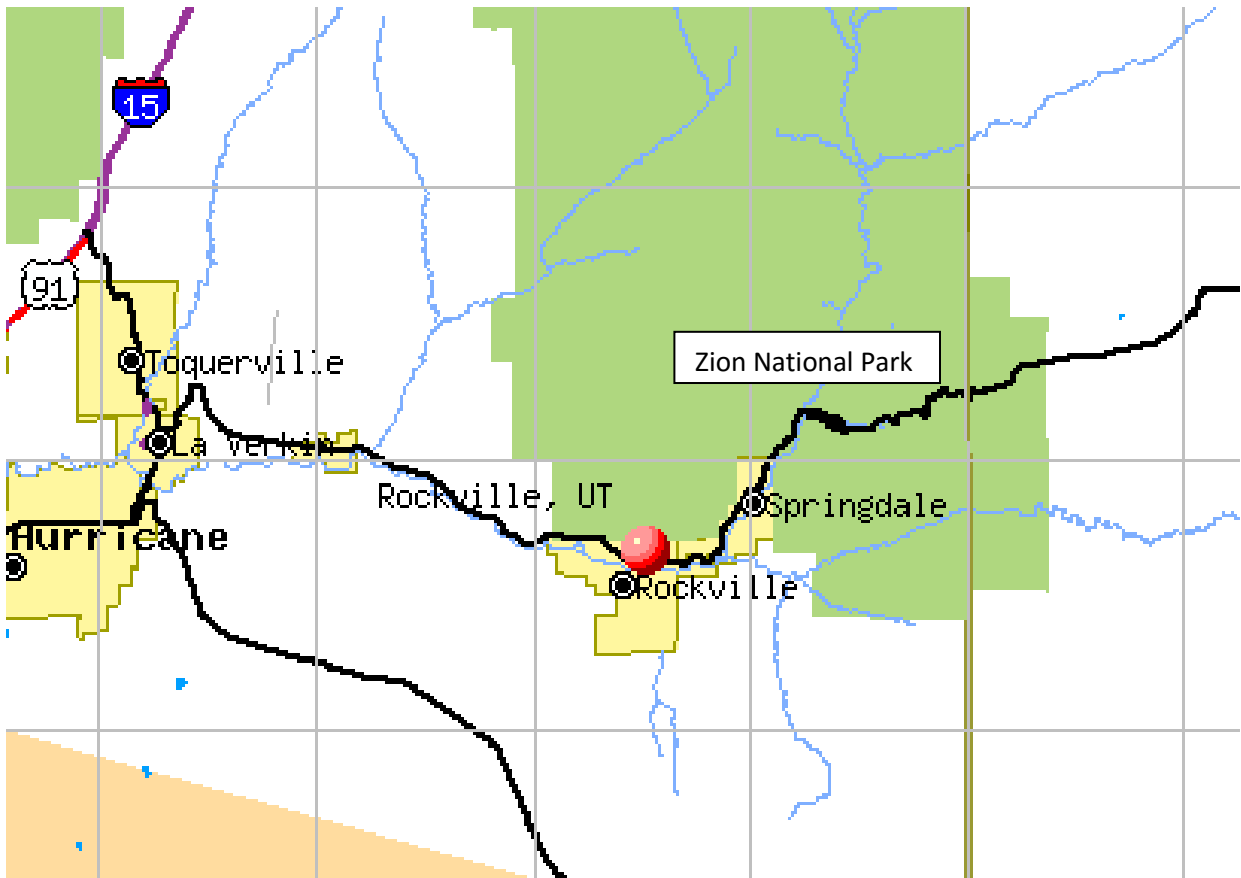


Figure 1. Map of Rockville, Springdale, and Zion National Park
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Half way up Observation Point Trail, I'm having a difficult time believing it's autumn. I've already passed a good number of hikers, more than I thought I would on this particular trail. I picked this trail specifically because I thought it wouldn't be as busy as some of the others; but seeing the amount of traffic here, even on a day like today, is a reminder that Zion National Park is a busy place. I'm not the only one who has come to find solace within the depths of its towering sandstone walls.

Judging by the number of people sharing the trail today, I'd almost believe it's the middle of summer; however, the October chill in the air tells me otherwise. The breeze that swirled around me at the beginning of the trail was a warning—perhaps I should have listened. Now, the breeze turned into a cold canyon wind, stirring late season Fairy's Trumpet, sage and Cardinal Flower, tugging strands of my hair out from under my tightly tied hood and whipping them around my face, twirling dry leaves in spiral dances up the walls of side canyons. It stirs the sand all around me, and I squeeze my eyes shut against it. I stumble up-trail for a ways, my eyes squinted half-shut, until the wind abates some. I brush sand from my hands, my jacket, my jeans. It seems as if sand covers every exposed place. Even my mouth—between my teeth—feels dry and gritty.

As the wind picks up again, I realize that it doesn't matter how much I try to brush the sand off—I will never get it all, because it is everywhere—coating the ground, the trees, the rocks, my hair and clothes. I wouldn't be surprised if it has seeped into my skin as well. And even if the wind took a brief rest and I *did* manage to brush most of the

sand off, the wind is a living, restless thing, bringing in a pending storm from the east. It will continue to breathe life into the sand throughout the day.

With a deep sigh, I stop fighting it—stop trying to brush the sand away and let my hands rest at my sides. I settle into an acceptance of sorts, as the sand and red dust settle on *me*, like second skin. As I continue to move up the trail, this new acceptance, this refusal to fight, feels right, somehow—makes this place feel like home in a way it never has before. I have come to Zion off and on since I was a child, and my visitation has increased significantly over the last two years to conduct research. But before today, Zion has always been just that—a place to visit. However, right now, in this moment, it feels like home—like my own place.

I wonder if this is the sort of experience residents of Rockville—retirees particularly—go through when they come to *accept* the land on which they've chosen to live—embracing not only its vast beauty—but also its harsh reality—its dry soil, its harsh climate, its sparse water. Is this what newcomers experience when they learn to value and respect the land? And is this what what Terry Tempest Williams meant when she said,

When traveling to southern Utah for the first time, it is fair to ask, if the redrocks were cut would they bleed. And when traveling to Utah's desert for the second or third time, it is fair to assume that they do, that the blood of the rocks give life to the country. And then after having made enough pilgrimages to the slickrock to warrant sufficient separation for society's oughts and shoulds, look again for the novice you once were, who asked if sandstone bleeds. . . . Pull out your pocketknife, open the blade, and run it across your burnished arm. If you draw blood, you are human. If you draw wet sand that dries quickly, then you will know you have become part of the desert. Not until then can you claim ownership. (2001: 23)

Beyond a forming an attachment to the land, what are the social components that make this area feel like home to those who take up residence here? What helps newcomers form a sense of community?

There is a joke among residents of Rockville, Utah, that the local phone book only goes through the Hs, and includes mainly four family names: the Ballards, the Coxs, the DeMilles, and the Hirschis. Each family has long-established ties to the area—some going back to the original settlers of Rockville. It is said you can get a sense of how long someone has lived in Rockville by whether or not they know these families. If you know the families, or at least know *of* them, you've lived in town long enough, attended enough social gatherings, and volunteered enough to be considered part of the community.

Rockville sits five miles from the south entrance of Zion National Park. Like other towns situated close to scenic areas such as national parks, Rockville has experienced an influx of retirees moving into the area within the last thirty years. For this reason, Rockville is no longer the homogenous community that existed when it was settled by Mormon pioneers in 1862. Greer Chesher, writer-editor for the Grand Canyon Trust and resident of Rockville, wrote, "I can only acquaint you with the conversation I've been having with [Zion National Park] for the last twenty years or so, and I can only use the language I have, inadequate though it may be. I carry a slight accent. Those from here can tell I'm not, but they can tell that after all these years, I am now *of* here" (2007: 9).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore what makes someone *of* a community; more specifically, how a sense of community forms for the residents of Rockville, and the central role that volunteering plays in this process. I will use McMillan and Chavis'

article “Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory” (1986) as a guidepost throughout my thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is also to look at how volunteering can function as a rite of passage for a newcomer—someone who has recently moved to an area—to become an accepted, fully-contributing member of a community. I will use Arnold van Gennep’s “The Rites of Passage” (1932) as a framework, examining how the separation, transition, and incorporation phases of volunteering help a newcomer gain the folk knowledge he or she needs to live a successful life in Rockville, and thus become an “established...high bonded, high rooted...participant” (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 7).

The Oxford English Dictionary gives two definitions for community: 1) a group of people living in the same place, and 2) the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common (oxforddictionaries.com). McMillan and Chavis also draw the distinction between community as a geographical concept—“the geographical notion of community” (as with neighborhoods, towns or cities), and the notion of relational community—the “quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location” (1986: 8). Though the concept of geographical community is important to consider, this thesis will mostly focus on the notion of relational community.

When looking at the sense of community that exists in a small town, having a concrete definition of sense of community as a reference point is crucial. McMillan and Chavis define sense of community as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (1986: 9). A sense

of community is an essential component to one's "commitment to a neighborhood and satisfaction with it" (1986: 9).

According to McMillan and Chavis, a sense of community has four elements: 1) membership: the feeling of belonging to a group; 2) influence: the sense a person feels that they matter to a group—that they make a difference to the group they belong to, and that the group they belong to makes a difference to them; 3) reinforcement: the feeling that a person's needs will be met by their membership in a group; and 4) shared emotional connection: the "commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences" (1986: 9). I will examine each of these elements later on, and how they relate to the sense of community that exists in Rockville; however, it is important to remember that "feelings of belonging...lead to self-investment in the community, which has the consequence of giving a member the sense of having earned his or her membership" (1986: 15).

In her book *Winter Carnival in a Western Town: Identity, Change, and the Good of the Community*, Lisa Gabbert found that "positive emotions and ideals associated with community [are] generated through feelings of accomplishment, bonding, unity, and togetherness" (2011: 33-34). Gabbert examined the sense of community that exists among residents of McCall, Idaho, and how participation in the annual, all-volunteer Winter Carnival, affected that sense of community. She says that the most common reason residents participate is because they believe it is good for the community. She also says that "community benefit was the single-most-important factor that people gave for [Winter Carnival's] existence" (2011: 47).

In her essay on groups and networks, folklorist Dorothy Noyes suggests that the concept of community is a “felt reality,” the “naming of a situation,” or “an imagining” (1995: 466). She stresses that to “declare the community to be a product of the social imaginary” is not “to consign it insignificance.” On the contrary, “a felt reality is quite real enough,” and in some cases, an “imagined community can be worth dying for” (1995: 466).

Noyes goes on to say that “the reality of a community with which to identify comes from collective acts,” and that individuals are able to identify themselves as members of a community when they take repeated, collective action—that “acting in common makes community” (1995: 468). She says that “identity is performance,” and adds:

The community exists in its collective performances: they are the locus of its imagining in their content and of its realization in their performance....A rhythmic slogan, a song in stanzas, a soldiers’ chant imposes a rhythm on collective motion and enlarges the individual voice by coordinating it with all the others. The crowd that becomes one body and one voice becomes more than the sum of its parts. The strength of the individual is identified with the strength of the whole....With the coordination of collective action...participants achieve what James Fernandez calls ‘con-sensus,’ from its etymological root of ‘feeling together.’ This confluence of feeling happens both within the individual...and in the collectivity, as individuals undergo the same experience in concert. (1995: 469)

In the case of Rockville, the concept of community is made real to its residents through the performance of volunteering. Through repeated, collective acts of volunteering and working as a group to make their town a better place to live, Rockville residents “act in common [to make] community”—reaching the “con-sensus,” or feeling of togetherness, that Fernandez refers to.

I propose that volunteerism can act as a rite of passage for newcomers to form a strong sense of community, and to become an actual member of the community. Granted, volunteering is not the *only* way for someone to become part of a community. For example, if someone lives in a neighborhood for a significant amount of time, and gets to know his or her neighbors during that time, chances are they will eventually feel a sense of belonging to their neighborhood, and a shared emotional connection to their neighbors. However, I propose that, for a new resident, volunteering acts as a rite of passage that can “speed up,” so-to-speak, the process of gaining a sense of community.

A rite of passage is defined as an event, usually marked with a ritual or a ceremony, that designates a person’s transition from one social status to another. French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold van Gennep noted that most rites of passage can be divided into three stages: 1) separation, where an individual is separated from other members of a group, 2) transition, where an individual passes “from one social situation to another” (1999: 106), and 3) incorporation, where an individual is accepted into his or her new social status.

At first glance, it may seem difficult to fit the volunteerism within van Gennep’s framework, because there are no ceremonies or rituals connected with volunteering. However, I propose that, in the process of volunteering in a new community, a newcomer experiences the stages of separation, transition, and incorporation—gaining folk knowledge in the process—and thus becomes a contributing member of the community, gaining a sense of community in the process. Thus, although these stages are not connected with ceremonies or rituals in volunteering, I would argue that it is still possible

to use van Gennep's framework when looking at volunteerism in Rockville. I discuss this more in chapter four when I look at participation and community building.

Rockville provides a unique atmosphere for this study because it is a "bedroom community"—a town with no commercial businesses within its boundaries. Because Rockville has no commercial businesses and a very limited tax base, the town's budget is small. The services available to its residents are limited as well. For this reason, the town quite literally depends on volunteers to get things accomplished. Putting on social gatherings, cleaning up the ditches along Main Street, and maintaining town buildings are the responsibility of town residents. Volunteerism is a way in which Rockville residents not only form a strong sense of community but "[weave] a rooted companionship with [their] homeground" (Stafford 1986: 6).

Articles have been written on other bedroom communities, including "Bedroom Communities: More Than a Place to Sleep" by Rebecca Bond (2012), "Sleepy Bedroom Communities: The Untold Story" by Lawrence Downes (1999), and "Economic Development and Planning in Bedroom Communities: A Case Study of Chatham County, North Carolina" by G. Jason Jolley, E. Brent Lane and Lukas C. Brun (2011). However, notably missing is research on bedroom communities with *no* commercial businesses, and how volunteerism plays a key role in these communities. Also missing is scholarship concerning bedroom communities situated close to national parks—communities that are committed to remaining a *location* for its residents, as opposed to a destination for tourists. My thesis covers both of these topics.

In order to better understand how volunteering affects the sense of community in Rockville, I interviewed most of the STPs of Rockville, or the "Same Ten People."

Presumably coined by Rockville resident Carol Harlan, the term STP describes the group of people that can be found volunteering whenever and wherever there is a need, be it cleaning up from a natural disaster, setting up tables, chairs, and decorations for a social event, or marching in a local parade. Although other residents volunteer for different events at different times of the year, the STPs can be counted on to show up whenever there is a need. While some STPs grew up in Rockville, others are retirees who moved to the area from California and Nevada.

In her book *Habits of the Heartland: Small Town Life in Modern America*, Lyn C. Macgregor found that the residents of Viroqua, Wisconsin, “had different ways of producing and accessing a sense of community,” and that they “had different ideas about what community was, and how it ought to be made” (2010: 23). Although Rockville is a town of only two hundred and fifty people, a similar scenario also exists there. There are different views of what community is and how it ought to be made, depending on who you talk to.

Old-timers see volunteering and community participation as a way of life. The STPs—some of whom are “middle-timers,” or residents who have lived in Rockville at least ten years—also share this view and have the hope that newcomers will come to adopt this view as well. It should be noted that although people of different religious backgrounds have moved to Rockville in recent years, there is still a strong Latter-day Saint (Mormon) influence within the town. Service is central to the lives of most Latter-day Saints, who believe that to truly live their religion is to serve others. Volunteering falls nicely under this umbrella, and this may be one of the reasons many Rockville residents feel so strongly about volunteering as a way of life. Having said this, however,

it's also important to point out that not everyone in Rockville who volunteers is LDS, and not everyone who volunteers does so because they feel it a religious obligation.

In addition to interviewing most of the STPs, I also conducted interviews with other Rockville residents—former mayors, old-timers, and middle-timers. It should be remembered, however, that, although Rockville is a very small town, the opinions of its residents vary and are diverse. Since my research has been conducted over a period of two years, my work represents only a small percentage of Rockville residents. The opinions expressed in this work should not be considered as representing all of Rockville's residents. In order to represent a more diverse range of opinions, more time would be needed.

In addition to conducting interviews, I personally took part in the Rockville Sesquicentennial Celebration. It took place in October 2012, and celebrated the one-hundred-and-fifty-year anniversary of Rockville being settled. This celebration provided an opportunity for me not only to see the STPs in action, but to observe the shared notions of community that exist among them. I helped the STPs set up flags along Main Street, sell raffle tickets before the community dinner, and marched with the Rockville Drill Team in the Rockville Days parade. By participating in this way, I was able observe and experience first-hand how volunteering within the community helps one become accepted.

In chapter 2 of this thesis, I look at the history of Rockville and Zion National Park, examining the relationship between the town and the national park, and how Rockville has changed over the years as a result of increased visitation to the park. Then, going over Rockville's more recent history in chapter 3, I explore the changes that have

occurred in the town within the last thirty years, including the town gaining official, incorporated status in 1987, as well as an increase of retirees moving in and making Rockville their home.

In chapter 4 I look specifically at volunteerism—how it functions within Rockville’s community, how it plays a key role in community-building, and how it is central to the sense of community that exists among the STPs. In chapter 5 I look at the STPs in action, discussing the different celebrations that take place and how each celebration is made possible by the efforts of the STPs and other volunteers. I also discuss the sesquicentennial and how the STPs and other volunteers came together to put on such a big production.

Chapter 6 looks at Rockville residents coming together under different circumstances—natural disasters, including rockfalls, flooding, and fires, and how this shared experience strengthens the sense of community felt by those who volunteer together. Chapter 7 examines the implications of Rockville having no commercial businesses—and thus, little revenue—and what this means for the town and its future. It is also in chapter seven that we learn more about the challenges Rockville faces not only financially, as its infrastructure ages, but also the challenges that come from increased traffic, noise, and pressure to allow commercial and residential development.

In chapter 8, I summarize the findings of my research, with emphasis placed on the key role volunteerism plays in the sense of community felt among the STPs, and other Rockville residents who volunteer.

It seems that the best way to learn about a place is to listen to the stories and narratives of those who live there, for it is the stories that truly express the nature of the

town and the sense of community that exists there. As Terry Tempest Williams so eloquently said, “[M]ay these stories be a reminder of pink sand underfoot and ravens overhead and the joyous sensation of finding red dirt in every pore of your skin” (2001: 17).

CHAPTER II

BRIEF HISTORY OF ROCKVILLE AND ZION NATIONAL PARK

There is nothing like a visit to Zion National Park to make you feel small—but in a good way. And I don't mean finding yourself in the middle of the sea of tourists that descend on the park during high season. No—I'm talking about visiting the park during one the more quiet times of year—very early spring, late fall, or even winter—when the park is still quiet enough that you can actually hear yourself think—can actually feel and measure the tangible weight of each individual thought.

As you sit on a good-sized, riverside boulder and pause to take in the grandeur of massive sandstone mountains, listening to the steady rhythm of the Virgin River, it's easy to find yourself daydreaming, wondering what the first humans thought when they laid eyes on Zion for the very first time. Did they stare up, wide-eyed and motionless, at the sandstone monoliths for a long while? Did the sight before them steal away words, thoughts, and even breath? Did the sight make them dizzy? Did they feel more than a little overwhelmed at the sheer immensity of it all?

Interaction between humans and Zion's picturesque landscape dates back some nine to eleven-thousand years, and included the "Paleo- and Archaic peoples to Ancestral Puebloans...Southern Paiute to modern Europeans" (Chesher 2007: 17). The first European settlers—Mormon Pioneers—settled the area in the early 1860s.

Rockville was settled in 1862 and was named, appropriately, after the many large boulders that had fallen away from the red hills just north of the townsite (see Washington County Historical Society 2011). Rockville was settled around the same time as the neighboring communities of Grafton, Springdale, Adventure, Shonesburg, and

Northup. Today, only Springdale and Rockville still have living populations, though “all [former towns] are discussed as if they still exist, as they do in their descendants’ memories” (Chesher 2007: 18-19).

Though much of Rockville’s history has been written in the family histories of individual residents, looking through them all was beyond the scope of this thesis. However, looking at the history of neighboring communities, which has been recorded in many different books, can give us a better idea of what took place in Rockville as well. One thing that *is* clear is that this was not an easy area to settle. One pioneer who settled Grafton wrote in his journal that “many of the first plantings of trees died due to lack of water,” and that “garden and fruit trees had to be tended daily for a successful harvest at summer’s end” (Platt and Platt 1998: 20). It has also been said that

Only men with an unfaltering faith in the leadership of the [Mormon] Church, and possessing an immense capacity for ‘hard knocks’ could be depended upon. Some said of the early pioneers called to the Dixie Mission that they were so loyal to their Church that had they been called to build their homes on a barren rock they would have done so willingly, and would have remained there until released from that call. (Platt and Platt 1998: 16)

In the *Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon* oral history collection, done in early 2000 among modern-day descendants of those early pioneers, one resident talks about the pride he feels as a result of being a descendant of the pioneers:

I’m proud of my pioneer heritage. These are the people who came and settled this part of the country. And they’re strong people and I’m proud of that. I’m proud to be a part of that, those people. And they’re what built this area up. And so I take pride in the fact that those were my ancestors, those were my people [who did] that. And when things don’t look right or things get messed around I take it personally. You know...it means a lot to me, this area...I try to take care of my piece of earth here. I try to remember my ancestors...I admire those people so much. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 83)

Though Paiute Indians first led Nephi Johnson, a white man, through Zion Canyon, in 1858, the canyon wasn't actually given its name until 1862. The name "Zion" came from Mormon pioneer Isaac Behunin. It is said that when he first laid eyes on the canyon in 1862, he was so amazed by its beauty that he exclaimed, "These are the Temples of God, built without the use of hands. A man can worship God among these great cathedrals as well as in any man-made church—this is Zion" (Taylor 2008: 75).

The first home in Rockville was built by Edward Huber, a French immigrant from Paris. Huber's home—as well as the mulberry trees that grew from seeds he brought from Paris—still stands today. His home would later house the Deseret Telegraph Company, which operated a telegraph line that served all of the neighboring communities, enabling communication with towns as far away as Logan (see Platt and Platt 1998: 26).

Up until the establishment of Zion as a national park in 1919, Rockville remained isolated from the outside world. Said one resident:

We were very isolated here...We had to make our own way. We learned to love this canyon. And so maybe that does have an effect on our whole lives, I don't know. I think it probably did. But we made our own entertainment, we made our own food, everything had to be pretty much what we could do our selves for a very long time. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 90)

Rockville residents—both past and present—depended on the Virgin River, not only for drinking water, but also for the water it provided for their crops and their animals. Bob Cox told me how, when he was a child growing up in Rockville, his family had to distill the river water in order to make it drinkable:

Our water was obtained from the river—the Virgin River. We had it on a sled—a fifty gallon barrel. The sled would be about, so wide, and the barrel would sit in this, and one horse would pull it. He'd pull that sled down to the river, and we'd usually head upstream and turn a little bit off, and then we'd dip the water out of the stream, put it in the barrel. When we had it stationed by the house, uh, we'd

put a gunny sack around it, and if there was any little bit of water that you weren't using, you poured it on the gunny sack, which helped keep it cool. And...a little bit of milk—just a cup of milk—we poured in that water, [and it] would clear it up, just make it crystal clear. If it was a little bit riley from—a riley water [has] a little bit of mud in it...We called it “riley water.” (Cox 2011)

Bob went on to list the many different foods his family raised, using irrigation water from the river, including apples, pears, pecans, potatoes, and corn. He added, “We raised just about everything that we had, maybe except for salt and pepper, [which] was about all [we] had to buy” (Cox 2011).

Other families in the area grew watermelons. Larry and Nelly Ballard, who grew up in Rockville and Springdale respectively, told me the following:

Larry: Well, when you cross the—we called it the green bridge—to go over the field, [Marvin Terry]...had a great, huge watermelon patch...So us guys would go up there and steal the melons and put ‘em in the river, and [they would] float down to the ball diamond down there, and we would and have a great big old melon bust. I know he knew we were takin’ ‘em, but he didn’t care.

Tori: [Explain] a melon bust.

Nelly: You just dropped it, broke it open, and ate it!

Larry: Watermelon has a core in it—what they call a core.

Nelly: Oh, that’s the best part!

Larry: [The] core inside doesn’t have any seeds in, generally, and it’s the best part of the melon. So you just slam it down, and everybody’d just grab the core, and eat it. (Ballard 2011)

Though Rockville residents could not live without the river, the Virgin was—and still is—a double-edged sword. The same source that provides drinking and irrigation water can also cause devastating floods that can destroy crops, farms, and even homes. One old-timer in Springdale recalled how, as a child, flooding caused by the river took out dams built by residents there. When this happened, the ditches connected to the dams,

as well as the fields of crops the ditches watered, remained dry until new dams could be constructed. One resident said,

Well, I've been fighting the [Virgin] River all my life....[W]hen them big floods would come down, of course we knew this Virgin River was mighty important to us 'cuz it furnished us our drinking water for a long, long time until we got our springs. And it furnishes us with our irrigatin' water all the time clear up to the present time. But sometimes it'd come down and it'd wash away people's farms, crops and all. I remember it took a lot of our farmland away with the crops already on it. Cane all ready for cutting or harvesting, you now, for making sorghum out of. And we had peas that we took to market...but...the floods didn't care about what kinds of crops was on 'em. It just took 'em and took 'em away! (Smith-Cavros 2006: 63)

Later on, in chapter six, I will discuss floods that Rockville has dealt with in more times, and how floods, and other natural disasters, affect the community as a whole.

Before moving on to discuss the establishment of Zion as a national park and how it transformed the lives of people in surrounding communities, it is worth taking a brief look at the strong connection early residents had with the land, and how growing up in the area affected the way they viewed the world. One woman said:

[We had] the freedom to go up there in the hills. We climbed the rocks and searched for diamonds up there [in] all those beautiful rocks....And it was just a wonderful place to live....I felt so fond [of it]. I always felt so fortunate to have been born there. It was a wonderful place to live....We slept outdoors in the summertime. That was a big thing, to have a bed outside. We all had beds outside...oh, just out in the open air, you know, and the stars above and all the good fresh smell of everything....I'm so used to color and living in southern Utah, you know, 'color country' that I don't think anything's very pretty unless it's colorful. I remember going through Wyoming and Montana, just these big plains and nothing but sagebrush and I thought, 'Oh, there's just no color in this place...' I think it's so beautiful, looking out in Rockville, too, and seeing all of these beautiful mountains. Ah, the picture, it's just picturesque. Still, I'm so intrigued with it when I go back. I wish I could paint them. I think they're beautiful. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 88)

Dan Crawford shared a similar sentiment about the Zion of his childhood: "I thought that every place in the world had mountains around, and I thought they all had a

river running past. I grew up and enjoyed the land....Best place in the world” (Smith-Cavros 2006: 93).

Another woman said that no matter where she travels in the world, Zion always feels like home: “I think there’s something spiritual...that talks to you here [in Zion]. I’ve always felt it. I could be gone a day, I could be gone weeks, I could be gone years...but I keep coming back to the land, coming back to this area...it gathers you in and says ‘okay, you’re home and you’re safe’” (Smith-Cavros 2006: 86).

In talking with many people in Rockville, as well as reading the different accounts from residents involved in the *Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon* oral history project, it seems to me that residents who grew up in the Zion area not only felt a very strong connection to the land, but also found a sense of pride, courage, and independence in their ability to survive, make a living from, and even enjoy the land. Old timers in Rockville still share childhood memories of playing in the river and among the rocks, and going for picnics with friends and family up the canyon.

It is interesting to note, however, that controversy exists regarding the early pioneers who settled Zion, and their relationship with the land. It has been said that the pioneers didn’t truly appreciate the beauty of the canyon, and that if a national park had not been established, the landscape would have been ruined because of the early settlers’ need to “tame” the land. In reading through many books and articles written on the history of Zion, and talking to many Rockville residents, I have been unable to determine where the belief originated. I suspect, however, that it may have formed when Zion National Park was established—a move that some residents at the time, staunchly independent and protective of their land, felt was very invasive on the government’s part.

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all the opinions and arguments surrounding this issue, it is worth noting that old-timers in Rockville believe very strongly that their ancestors *did* appreciate the beauty of the land. One person said,

There was an erroneous rumor that went around for years. You used to hear that ‘the natives, they don’t appreciate the park, we’ve got to get in there and preserve it so they don’t destroy it. They want places to farm, they don’t want a park to look at.’ But that was a mistaken idea. All the people I know . . . they loved that park. They loved those mountains. . . I’ve always, all my life I’ve continued to love nature and the outdoors because I grew up in it. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 83)

Another resident said:

We admired [the mountains] and were happy to live among. . . [them]. . . . A lot of people had the idea that the Mormons, they early settlers didn’t appreciate the beauty of the area. And of course I think the reason is that they didn’t have a lot to say about it and they didn’t write about it very much. Because they were busy twenty-four hours a day making a living. And didn’t have much time to lay around. . . however, I’m sure they did have an appreciation. A lot of people noticed well. Joseph Black who was one of the first settlers in [the canyon]. . . come back raving about the beauty of the canyon to the extent that people got to calling it ‘Joe’s Glory.’ So somebody noticed the beauty. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 84)

One specific example is given in which a grandfather—the first superintendent of Zion National Park, went to great lengths to protect the land he loved:

I also remember [Grandpa’s] great love for this park. He was a woodcarver and I remember he carved a sign. . . . He nailed it up to one of the trees in the [Zion] campground and it said ‘This is God’s country. Don’t make it look like Hell.’ I think it was a mistake to take that down because it was a part of this history and it was a part of the way we felt about our connection to the land. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 86)

On the flipside, it is interesting to note that some interviewed for the Pioneer Voices project felt that there is not as strong of a connection to the land for those who live near Zion today, because they’re *not* directly involved in working the land and making a living from their work. One interviewee said,

The [pioneers] loved the land and they loved the reason they were here. They took good care of everything that they had and not a thing was wasted. I think people lived closer to the land in those days...I won't say they worshipped the land—they respected the land. And they knew that it was the way they would make a living. And nowadays that isn't the way they make their living, and so they don't have the same relationship that they used to have. (Smith-Cavros 2006: 90)

It is important to note that the mindset of the pioneers who settled the area was very different from the mindset of people who live there today. The pioneers were called to settle the area by their church leaders. Their primary focus most likely was not appreciating how beautiful the land was, but figuring out how to survive by making a living off the land. It is difficult to say if they ever, like Thoreau, “would rather [have sat] in the open air, for no dust gathers on the grass, unless where man has broken ground” (Horan 1988: 27), because they wrote so little about the land itself.

I find it unlikely that the early settlers didn't notice the beauty around them. It is impossible to be in Zion and *not* notice it, and I'm reminded of this every time I board a shuttle driving through Zion and watch dozens of tourists with their cameras trained to the windows, their mouths hanging open, in awe at the scenery surrounding them.

I'm also reminded of an interview I did with old timer Garland Hirschi, who was raised in Rockville. During our interview, I brought up this controversy—whether or not the pioneers appreciated the beauty around them—and asked him what he thought about it. He proceeded to tell me about his leaving Rockville to serve in World War II, and then about his mother and sister picking him up at the train station after the war's end, and driving him back home. He said,

“I'll tell you one thing. When I come home from the service...as you come from La Verkin—I seen Steamboat [Rock], and that's the best thing.” (Hirschi 2012). He

stopped speaking then, and it was sometime before he could speak again, as he was so overcome with emotion, and so touched with the memory. For Garland, coming home from the war, once he saw Steamboat Rock—otherwise known as the Great Temple today—he knew he was almost home. This was a powerful memory for Garland, even after all these years. It was also a very powerful, and moving experience for me—seeing the power that landscape can have over a person.

It's important to remember that Zion was one of the first national parks established in the United States. When it was established, those living in the area had no idea what a national park even *was*, let alone, how it operated. Zion was set aside as a National Monument in 1909, before the National Park Service was even created. The concept of “national monument” or “national park” was foreign to everyone in the area. What it *did* represent was “change—that awful beast,” as well as “regulation in a largely unregulated area”—regulation on how residents could use the land and water—a debate which still ruffles feathers today, not only in southern Utah, but all throughout the west (Chesher 2012). And the fact that this major change was proposed by outsiders not actually *from* the area—proposed by the government, which the early settlers didn't trust anyway—was not lost on early residents.

The reaction of early residents to the establishment of Zion as a national park was mixed at best. The land available for farming near Zion was extremely limited. So for those forced off their land when the park was established, simply finding new, arable land, was very difficult. Some were forced to leave not only their homes and farms, but carefully managed orchards and fields as well. The establishment of the national park represented the loss of a way of life, and gave many a reason to resent the park. Today,

for many residents in Rockville, feelings towards the park are, as in most towns close to national parks, still mixed.

Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, a landscape artist and topographer, said about Zion,

Never before has such a naked mountain or rock entered into our minds! Without a shred of disguise its transcendent form rises preeminent. There is almost nothing to compare it to. Niagara has the beauty of energy; the Grand Canyon, of immensity; the Yellowstone, of singularity; the Yosemite, of altitude; the ocean, of power; this Great Temple, of eternity. (Taylor 2008: 75)

On November 20, 1919, President Woodrow Wilson signed the bill that created Zion National Park. Though not everyone was thrilled at the changes this brought to the area, others recognized the potential for the national park to boost the local economy. One resident interviewed for the *Pioneer Voices* oral history project said, “I think we were all glad to see the park come along because it brought livelihood for the people that lived here. And then they started building roads and that brought more work” (Smith-Cavros 2006: 78). Another person echoed this sentiment: “Well, we liked [the national park]. We were always business-oriented, and that was our source of business” (Smith-Cavros 2006: 78).

With completion of the first lodge in the park, as well as the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway in 1930, visitation to Zion greatly increased. Today, visitation has soared to over 4 million tourists annually, making Zion one of the top ten visited parks in the United States.

CHAPTER III

INCORPORATION OF ROCKVILLE AND BEGINNING OF THE STPS

I am driving through East Zion on the Zion-Mt. Carmel highway with my friends Jim and Carol Harlan. We've pulled to a stop behind a line of cars at the head of the tunnel, waiting for the southbound cars and RVs to come through the tunnel in the other direction so we can have our turn to drive through. Two lanes of traffic can no longer fit through the tunnel at the same time, like when the tunnel was first built.

Traffic has been heavy today—even for October—so we know we'll be stuck here for a while. Carol and I get out of the Land Cruiser to take a few photos, and we laugh at the oversized RVs—or “corks,” as Jim calls them—that begin to emerge from the tunnel in the opposite direction. We laugh not because they're so oversized (which they are), but because there are so many. We try to count the number of “corks” that pass, then give up, settling on the consensus that today is a record-setting day for corks.

When the final RV emerges and the ranger signals that it's our turn, Jim starts the engine as Carol takes one last look at the East Temple. “We are so lucky to live here,” she says. “We like to say that Zion is our back yard, and the government takes care of it for us.” This brings a laugh from everyone.

The completion of the Zion Tunnel in 1930 made it possible for increased visitation to the park, creating more jobs for people in the area. After World War II, visitation to the park increased dramatically. By 1950, annual visitation had reached 323,402 people, as opposed to 78,280 visitors in 1945. By 1961, annual visitation climbed to 700,000, and then to 900,000 by 1969. In 1975, the park saw one million visitors (Taylor 2008: 123).

VeNeta Shannon describes growing up in Rockville during the sixties as a carefree time:

It was just mellow, just great for a kid. I mean, you didn't have to worry about anything, just be out playing in the road—you know, 'cause there wasn't a lot of traffic. So, we played in the road a lot, and up on the hills, and wherever. Morning till night, out playing...it [was] just relaxing here. And boys, girls played together. You know, it was just Kick the Can at night, and, you know, just playing all the time. (Shannon 2012)

Although Rockville was settled in 1862, it wasn't actually incorporated as a municipality until June 30, 1987. It was incorporated at this time “in order to establish and protect the unique identity of the community and to exercise greater control over the Town's future growth and development” (Town of Rockville General Plan 1997). In 1988 a Master Plan survey was conducted among residents of Rockville in order to better establish what it was they wanted for the future of their town. And as a result of the survey, a master plan was created the following year.

Another survey was sent around to residents in 1997, and the master plan was reviewed. The city ordinances, which the town still uses today, were formed as a result.

Dan McGuire, current Rockville mayor, said:

I think our ordinances were really well designed....They keep us where we are, to maintain what we have, and that's basically what everybody wants. We do a survey every four or five years, and that's what most people say. “Let's keep what we have.” It's a rural, agricultural area. And that serves most people. Now, there's always people who want to change a few things...but I think we convert them. They maybe make a little noise in the beginning, you know, like, “We need more lighting,” or, “We might want to redo the sidewalks,” or, “How come we don't have mass transportation?” But after a while they realize this is not going to happen, you know....I think it really begins with the ordinances. (McGuire 2012)

As McGuire stated, Rockville is a rural, residential, agricultural community, and most residents wish, in the future, to continue to emphasize its “quiet, small town

atmosphere and its agricultural values” (site.infowest.com/personal/r/rockville/). This is a challenge, considering the town’s close proximity to Zion National Park. For this reason, many stipulations have been put in place that curb future growth, as well as lighting, pollution, and noise within the town.

One such stipulation is that the town will stay small—between two-hundred-fifty and five-hundred people. The biggest reason for limiting growth is because of Rockville’s limited water supply. McGuire said:

[Rockville has] been mischaracterized as a no-growth [community]. “Oh, they don’t want to grow out there. They have an ordinance against growth.” We don’t. We don’t have any such thing. We just haven’t got the water. We do have an ordinance that says, ‘If you want to build here, you have to have water.’ That’s reasonable. You have to have a Southwest Public Health approved water source. You could take water from the Virgin River if all the paperwork was correct, you know—you had the right. But it would have to be an approved water source. It would have to be cleaned. We’ve had water surveys done by...an engineering firm [who said] ‘You could probably issue a few more [water] shares.’ But then the very summer they said that, we had a terrible drought—much worse than normal, and so...they couldn’t keep water in the [water] tank. And so, even though the engineers thought we could issue a few more shares, we’d better not, as a bumper. You’ve gotta be able to provide water to the people that live here. And you have to have firefighting capability. (McGuire 2012)

More about Rockville’s water issues will be discussed in chapter six. Along with stating the community’s desire to limit growth, the master plan is also very specific regarding land use. It states that ninety to ninety-five percent of the land area within Rockville boundaries is to be used for agricultural purposes or devoted to open space, and no commercial or industrial businesses are allowed. There are five bed-and-breakfasts in town, as well as a few home-based businesses.

More about the issues concerning businesses will be discussed in chapter seven. For now, it serves our purpose to note that public lands surrounding Rockville have

historically been used for recreational purposes as well as grazing. The town's culinary water supply also originates from this land.

As visitation to Zion National Park has increased over the years, Rockville has felt increased pressure to allow commercial development along its Main Street—the same street that serves as the major highway leading into Zion's south entrance. Also, Washington County of which Rockville is a part, has experienced an explosion of growth in recent years. Rural communities in Washington County are seen as desirable not only for their rugged beauty and recreational opportunities, but also for their presumed quiet atmosphere. As a result, increased residential development has increased, which has created a strain not only on existing infrastructure, but on culinary water systems as well, in a landscape that doesn't have a lot of water to begin with. These problems are not unique to southern Utah. Many gateway communities have experienced similar problems, as more and more people seek to live in locations where they can have direct, daily contact with nature.

The majority of Rockville residents have repeatedly stated, in different surveys, their desire to keep commercial businesses outside of town boundaries, and that existing home-based businesses be compatible with the rural character of the town. The master plan states that if “any activity...is polluting, water-intensive, generate[s] additional traffic, parking, noise, or ha[s] intrusive signage or appearance,” the activity is unacceptable (Town of Rockville General Plan 1997).

A trend many gateway communities face is the sale of homes as vacation properties, which, in turn, drives up the overall price of real estate. This makes housing unaffordable for many, which, as Jeff Ballard told me, is a current problem in Rockville,

as many houses for sale are sitting vacant. When homes are sold as vacation properties, the owners occupy the homes for only a small portion of the year. This becomes a problem when no one is present to properly care for the home. Luckily, most residential property in Rockville consists of single-family homes, as opposed to vacation homes.

Dan McGuire said:

Springdale has a lot of those part-time people [living in vacation homes]. And the other thing is the size of the homes—our ordinances restrict the footprint, you know, based upon the property size. So you don't get these mega-homes, you know, like are all around St. George, and [it] looks like King Arthur lives up there. We don't have that problem. When people come here, they accept what we have because they want it to be like this. So they build a home that fits within the guidelines. (McGuire 2012)

Another issue that Rockville residents feel strongly about is lighting. Before I began doing fieldwork in Rockville, I usually drove through Rockville and Springdale during the day, and usually during high season, when there was a lot of light from cars. The first time I drove through Rockville at night, and really took note of Rockville's lighting—or *lack* thereof—was during the winter, a couple of weeks before Christmas. What I saw—or more correctly, what I *experienced*—was a shock to my senses. Besides my headlights streaming down the road ahead of me, and strands of Christmas lights on houses here and there, everything around me seemed completely dark and empty. The difference between this dark scene, and the bright, streetlight-infused neighborhood streets I was used to back home in Salt Lake, was striking. Besides a few camping trips to Yellowstone, and various other locations in southern Utah, I couldn't remember ever seeing a scene *this* dark!

Rockville's "streetlights" are actually 100-watt light bulbs that hang from a wire over Main Street for the whole length of the town, and it is said that when someone

becomes mayor of Rockville, “the first thing [they] get is a box of light bulbs and a ladder” (Rachlis 2009). The bulbs light the street just enough that it’s not *completely* dark at night; however—and more importantly for Rockville residents—they help preserve the night sky above the town. For many residents who moved to Rockville from big cities containing much light pollution, this is key. As McGuire put it, “[We] don’t want it to look like Broadway out there” (McGuire 2012).

Rockville residents feel so strongly about their street lights that they adopted the image of the 100-watt light bulb as the city seal—their town emblem, if you will. A plaque depicting a light bulb has even been placed on the front of the post office, and it is said that if you want to get a lot of people to show up at a town council meeting, announce that the discussion will be about lighting, and people will show up in droves. More about the light bulb in chapter seven.

One final point that is worth noting is the limited amount of services available to residents. Because there is so little economic activity within Rockville—aside from the few existing bed and breakfasts—the town operates with a very limited annual budget. Pam Leach, current activities director and town council member, said, “The town’s only source of revenue, really, is property taxes that the county collects, and some [taxes collected from]... the bed and breakfasts. And that’s basically it. We have a really small budget” (Leach 2012). Jeff Ballard, also on the town council, spoke to me about a meeting he attended in Springdale in which town budgets were discussed. He said it is like comparing night and day, trying to compare the budgets of the two towns. Springdale has commercial businesses, and therefore, operates with a much larger budget than Rockville.

The majority of Rockville residents have stated their desire to keep property taxes the same, as opposed to raising taxes and having additional services available. For this reason, “the [t]own can provide only the most basic municipal services” (Town of Rockville General Plan 1997: 7). These “municipal services” don’t include clean-up or maintenance; thus, the responsibility for such tasks rests on the shoulders of volunteers. This is where the STPs come into play.

As mentioned in chapter 1, STP stands for the “Same Ten People” who can be counted on to show up and volunteer at almost every event held in Rockville. Their job can be as simple as showing support by *showing up* at a social gathering, or it can include setting up and decorating for an activity, then cleaning up after the activity is over. Their job can also include providing man—and woman—power, (as well as lending heavy equipment such as trucks and front-end loaders), for community clean-up days. But it doesn’t stop there—they also help put up and take down the flags along Main Street for Memorial Day, Veteran’s Day, and other patriotic holidays, and help hang Christmas lights on the Rockville Bridge each year.

The STPs include five core couples: long-term residents Leon and Warda Lewis, their daughter VeNeta Shannon and her husband Mike, current mayor Dan McGuire and his wife Aleen (who moved to Rockville from Las Vegas), middle-timers Bob and Megan Orton who moved to Rockville from Los Angeles) and long-term residents Jeff and Shirley Ballard. There are other residents in Rockville who volunteer at different events throughout the year; however, this is the core group of people who have become known throughout town as the STPs.

I first heard the term “STP” while talking to my friend Carol. We were discussing the various activities that take place in Rockville throughout the year. Carol briefly mentioned the STPs, but I was unable to clarify just what or *who* the STPs were, as I was rushing out the door to interview VeNeta and Mike Shannon.

Then, during my interview with VeNeta and Mike, we discussed volunteerism in Rockville, and I asked them off-handedly if everyone in Rockville volunteered—if it was something residents just *did*. VeNeta said that, if there is ever work that needs to be done in town, there are about ten people you can always count on showing up and helping out. I remembered what Carol had said earlier about the STPs, and mentioned this to VeNeta. She said, “Yeah, the Same Ten People. Those are the STPs.”

As previously mentioned, the lack of extensive community services available in Rockville has made volunteerism a necessity. Without volunteers, nothing gets accomplished. The town’s survival quite literally depends on the STPs, and other volunteers like them. In chapter four, I look at the work the STPs do, how volunteerism is central to their sense of community, and how volunteerism serves as a rite of passage for people being accepted *into* the community.

CHAPTER IV

VOLUNTEERISM: PARTICIPATION AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The first time I was asked to march with the Rockville Drill Team was in 2012 for the St. Patrick's Day parade held in Springdale. The drill team was started by Geri Walker, (wife of Rockville's first mayor, Eldon Walker), and it marches in all the local parades. Indeed, a Zion-area parade isn't complete without participation from the drill team, who jokingly refer to themselves as "world-famous." Before I was invited to march with the team, my friend Jim had told me a little about them, and I had seen several photos he'd taken of them marching in different parades over the years. So to say their invitation to march was an honor is an understatement—I was excited!



Figure 2. Rockville's "World Famous" Drill Team

Day Parade. Photo by Jim Harlan, jimharlan.zenfolio.com

The morning of the parade was cold and blustery, a reminder that spring weather in Utah—even southern Utah—is fickle. Wearing a green long sleeved t-shirt and an oversized, plastic shamrock necklace, I headed up Lion Boulevard in Springdale, before the parade began, to find the drill team. It was their banner that caught my attention first. It would have been difficult to miss—a large sign proclaiming, “Rockville’s World Famous Drill Team” in large letters. And standing behind the banner, making sure their props were all in proper working order, were members of the drill team, all wearing green, and each holding a drill.

Some held fancy, high-tech drills that looked like they could assist in piecing together a mean tree house in a hurry. Other drills were of the old fashioned, hand-cranked variety, whose likely sum total of use in recent years was acting as a prop for the drill team. But whatever type of drill each team member had decided to use, they all stood armed, and ready to practice their maneuvers and formations—everyone, that is, except me. I’d forgotten to bring a drill. Although, *forgotten* may not be the correct term, as a drill isn’t exactly the type of thing you think to include when packing for a weekend of field work in southern Utah.

However, the team told me not to worry—they were just happy I’d come to join them. I was quickly ushered into the ranks, while someone procured an extra drill for me to borrow. And before I knew it, I was being instructed on how to do all the formations the drill team would perform throughout the parade route. (And here I thought I was going to simply hold my borrowed drill up high and march.) Everyone assured me I’d get

the hang of it, but I wasn't so sure. This team was experienced—they knew how to really *represent*.

For the next hour along the parade route, Carol, filling in as the drill team master, blew her whistle as we marched and called out different formations. If she called out “circle,” everyone held their up drills and marched in a circle. If she called out “dosey-doe,” everyone linked arms with their neighbor and skipped around in a dosey-doe. If she called out “dizzy,” everyone ran around in a crazy, unorganized pattern, until she again blew the whistle, signaling it was time for everyone to reorganize in nice, neat lines. And while I may not have gotten all the formations correct—okay, if I'm being completely honest, I flubbed most of them in a big way—the drill team members still took me in and overlooked my flaws, treating me as if I was the newest, coolest member of their club. It felt as if I had crossed over some imaginary line of belonging, gaining a new—if still limited—insight into what it is like to take part in the relational community that exists for many Rockville residents.

The dedication the Rockville Drill Team has for representing the town they love so much is the same dedication I have witnessed repeatedly with the STPs—as well as other residents who volunteer—as I have watched them give their time and talents in an effort to, in their eyes, give back to their town. When I asked Pam Leach, current Activities Director in Rockville, about the STPs, she said, “It is the same people that, when they know something is happening, and that hands are needed, they always show up. . . . They are limited in their time, but they're still there, and they want to be part of the activities, and helping wherever they can” (Leach 2012).

Bob and Megan Orton described the STPs in this way:

Megan: They are the ones that are community-minded, and care about the community cohesiveness.

Bob: They're the ones that put away the chairs [at community events], put up the chairs, put up the flags [for Memorial Day], you know.

Megan: They do the volunteer work.

Bob: All are volunteers.

Megan: And not everybody does *everything*, but...it's always the same small group of people that seem to get it all done, and find time in their day, and time in their lives for the volunteer work in the community. We absolutely depend on it. (Orton 2012)

The STPs not only live in the same geographical community—within the physical boundaries of Rockville—but they also belong to a relational community which, as mentioned in chapter one, is “concerned with the character of human relationship” (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 8). The STPs also share a strong sense of community—the feeling of belonging, the feeling that they matter to others in their group, and the feeling that their needs will be met through their membership and participation in the group (see McMillan and Chavis 1986: 9).

McMillan and Chavis state that membership “is a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has a right to belong...It is a feeling of belonging, or being apart” (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 9). For the STPs, and other Rockville residents who volunteer, participating in town events, as well as putting forth the effort to improve the town and preserve its character, is synonymous with living there. They see Rockville as a place where you can step back in time—a town that is quiet, small, and where neighbors can be counted on to help each other. They feel a

strong sense of rootedness to their community, and a strong sense of belonging *to* the community, because of their participation *in* the community.

For Dan and Aleen McGuire, their connection with the area began when they spent their honeymoon in Zion, and then returned to Zion in subsequent years—always on their anniversary. Aleen said, “When [our] kids got a little older and we could ship them out to the neighbors, we came back every year for our anniversary. And so we did that for many, many years, and then decided that this would be a good place to retire, because we liked the area” (McGuire 2012). For Mike Shannon, it was the beauty of the mountains that drew him to the area, along with the feeling that “[he] should be here” (Shannon 2012). For VeNeta Shannon, who grew up in Rockville, then returned to the area later to raise her children, Rockville has always been home—where she feels grounded.

Jim and Carol Harlan loved the timelessness they felt existed in the area. Their first exposure to Zion National Park happened during a business trip to Las Vegas. They decided to make a side-trip to Zion, and stopped for lunch at the then-Bumbleberry Restaurant, directly across the street from Springdale Elementary School. As lunch was brought to their table, school was just letting out for the day. The scene was very endearing for the Harlans and made a lasting impression on them, reminding them of their own school days back in Detroit during the fifties:

Jim: We noticed . . . at Springdale [Elementary], the kids were getting let out—

Carol: Oh yeah. So sweet.

Jim: And, you know, the bell must have rang, and all these children started running out into the streets. And that’s really unusual for us, because in Detroit

[now], when the school bell rings and the children come out, [imitates sound of loaded gun] there's armored cars to pick them up.

Carol: You know, the mothers—every mother—is picking their kid up right at the school.

Jim: [The kids] don't—they're not free. And they gotta go with [school] escorts to the car to be taken home. And here, this is like, you know, how we were brought up in the fifties: you get out [of school], you go home!

Carol: You know, you play, and you have all your friends, it was just like that. I said, 'Wow. That's really cool.' (Harlan 2012)

It is interesting to note the idealized view that exists when thinking about life in a small town. According to Lyn C. Macgregor, it's a view that many Americans subscribe to: "When asked about their perceptions of rural life, Americans overwhelmingly describe idealized, even nostalgic versions...remain[ing] focused on a timeless idealization of village life" (2010: 6-7). It's also worth noting, however, that this idealized view seems to exist not only for those living outside small towns, but *inside* as well. As one Rockville resident said on the 2008 town survey, "In a world near out of control on so many fronts, stability is a precious commodity. That is what Rockville represents. It's a nostalgic trip down Memory Lane to a simpler time, a simpler life. It's what makes living in Rockville so appealing" (Rockville Survey 2008: 38). It is this same nostalgia that Henry Glassie referred to when he talked about researchers taking an interest in the mumming that once took place in Ireland:

Betrayed by the future the scientists promised, lost in alienation, we have a deep need to understand people whose sense of community...required them to push out into personal contact with everyone in their neighborhood....Without community we are vulnerable to manipulation as interchangeable parts in a system scaled beyond our ken or control. There is nothing to prevent the momentum of competitive self-indulgence from carrying us past comfort to isolation and despair on a blasted landscape. (1983: 141,143)

In part, it is STPs' sense of their community representing a simpler time that motivates them to volunteer. They are motivated to *act* in order to help ensure their community stays small, quiet and rural. Not only is volunteering a way to give back to the community and act in the community's behalf, but it is a way to be an actual *part* of the community—an actual member. The STPs view “a public commitment to civic involvement, such as taking on a volunteer position...as evidence of concern for the community and hence a badge of one's membership” (Gabbert 2011: 29).

Some of the words the STPs use to describe Rockville are “small,” “rural,” “unique,” and “home.” Rockville has also been referred to as “the last treasure in Utah” (see rockvilleutah.org). Bob Orton described Rockville as “really special.” He and his wife Megan discussed how the sense of community that exists in small towns—and, particularly, in Rockville—is different than what is found in cities:

Bob: I think any small community, whether it's in Utah, or anywhere—I think you have that sense of community, where everybody knows everybody. Where in the city, I mean, you don't hardly sometimes even know your next door neighbor. I don't know what makes Rockville unique, except for the weather and the people here—just really special, you know? But any small community has to be that way. If they're not, then—

Megan: Nothing gets done.

Bob: Well, no. And . . . you can tell. I mean, you drive through a community, and there *are* some. I mean, you know, I can think of a few . . . you know, there's no *community* there. I mean, the place is a mess, and it's junky, and [it]... looks like—

Megan: Looks like nobody cares.

Bob: Nobody cares. Right. (Orton 2012)

Aleen McGuire agreed with this sentiment when she said, “in a small town, you need good volunteers—good participators.” (McGuire 2012)

The idea that you can actually *see* the difference between towns in which a relational community exists, and towns in which there is no community feel—and thus, the town is “a mess,”—fits within McMillan and Chavis’ concept of membership within a community. They say that in order for one to feel membership within a community, they must feel they have a place within the group, and that they are accepted by the group. If a person feels this way, then they will be more willing to sacrifice their time and energy to make their town a pleasing place to live. This concept is plainly demonstrated by the STPs and the time they spend trying to make Rockville a better place to live.

McMillan and Chavis point out that “personal investment is an important contributor to a person’s feeling of group membership and to his or her sense of community” (1986: 10). They also add that “working for membership will provide a feeling that one has earned a place in the group and that, as a consequence of this personal investment, membership will be more meaningful and valuable” (1986: 10). Work is something that is important to the STPs—something they view as central to preserving the character of Rockville.

I asked Pam Leach what characteristics she thought were important for a newcomer to possess, in order to fit into the community. She said,

Well, I guess being aware that [Rockville] is a small community, and having an interest in participating in the community itself. Having a willingness to pitch in where you can in any small way. And not everybody has the opportunity or time to help with every event, or everything in town. But we have clean-up days, you know. We do have people who will get-together and help clean up somebody’s yard that isn’t able to, those types of things. When we were trimming the trees in the town, we had professionals come and trim all the trees, but left all these big chunks of wood. Well, then we had...people—[who] lived here—that came with chainsaws, and handsaws, and hacked everything up, and carted it away. And, so [I think] those people that move[d] into the area and they [didn’t] want to be part

of the community—I think they’d have a hard time. They’d miss out...on what makes [Rockville] so special. (Leach 2012)

It is interesting to note here Pam’s use of the word “special” to describe Rockville, the same word used by Bob Orton. I would argue that the town itself—and the ideal people have of it being “the last treasure of Utah”—has come to serve as a motivating symbol for residents who actively volunteer there. L.A. White defines a symbol as “a thing of value or meaning of which is bestowed upon by those who use it” (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 22), and McMillan and Chavis note that a common symbol system serves many important functions in “creating and maintaining sense of community” (1986: 10).

As already noted, the STPs see Rockville as a place *apart* from other communities—even neighboring communities as close as Springdale, a mere five miles down the road. Rockville residents see their town as a location, as opposed to a *destination*. This distinction is important, because it shows that they see their town as a place that doesn’t—aside from the few bed and breakfasts in town—need to cater to tourists. Resident Al Cooper referred to Rockville as a “neighborhood town,” as opposed to a “town of neighborhoods,” like Springdale (Cooper 2011).

Again, it should be remembered that this is not a view all in Rockville share. Though it is a town of only two hundred-fifty people, the views and opinions of residents are varied and diverse. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to include them all. However, what is important to note is that the town itself can be seen as a symbol which unites and motivates many of its residents to actively participate in its

preservation. I will discuss more about symbols, and the role they play in sense of community, in chapter 7.

During my interview with VeNeta Shannon, she mentioned how there are many towns where you can move and keep to yourself, but that Rockville shouldn't be one of them. She added that in a town like Rockville, it's easy to get involved. Both Pam Leach and Megan Orton talked about how all newcomers have to do is have the desire and “stick up their hand,” or show just up and help (Orton 2012). Both women had never been involved in a city council before moving to Rockville. But after both were encouraged by friends to run for office, they did, and both were elected. They have been involved with city council ever since. Megan told me how nice it was for her, after moving to Rockville from Los Angeles to discover how easily accessible the city council was to its residents:

I started attending council meetings when we first moved in here. I just went, because they were right down the block. And in urban areas, you don't know where the city center is...you don't know how to get there, you don't know anybody there, and it seems out of reach. The idea of running for office in my community in L.A. was not even on my radar. But [in Rockville]...everything's so close. And so I [started] attending council meetings, and they needed a planning commission member...I didn't raise my hand, because...I didn't know anything about [the] planning commission. And so they appointed two planning commissioners, and then I found out they didn't know anything either, but they got trained! There were trainings to teach you the job! I didn't know that. So the next time they needed somebody, they wanted somebody to run for council, so I stuck my hand up! If you want to get involved in a community like this, all you have to do is show up, stick your hand up, and that's it. (Orton 2012)

I would argue that the act of simply *moving* to Rockville isn't enough to remove a newcomer from their former lifestyle, so to speak—that it's possible for a person to move to Rockville and bring their lifestyle from their former city or town with them—keeping to themselves, not interacting much with neighbors, and not feeling motivated to attend

social functions or participate in Rockville clean-up days. Actively participating middle-timers I've spoken to have said that if a person wants to live this type of lifestyle, it's probably not a good idea for them to move to Rockville.

When a newcomer makes the effort to volunteer in Rockville, and thus communicates to those within the community that they are willing to take an active role in contributing *to* the community, they are demonstrating their willingness to become a member *of* the community. For this reason, I propose that volunteering acts as a rite of passage, helping a newcomer form a sense of community, and thus, become a member of the community. In looking at volunteering as a rite of passage in Rockville, it is possible to see van Gennepe's three phases—separation, transition, and incorporation—throughout the process.

When a newcomer, through the act of volunteering, communicates their intent to become part of the community by volunteering, they separate themselves from a former lifestyle—a lifestyle that most likely did not involve living in a town that relies so heavily on volunteer participation as Rockville does. Through the act of volunteering, a newcomer signals their intent to become an active participator in the community, to become “visible,” and thus, interact with other community members. This is the separation phase.

I have heard Rockville residents mention, on more than one occasion, the importance of “being visible” within the community. Dan McGuire talked about how he and Aleen made the attempt to be visible from the time they moved into Rockville:

Frankly, we were quite worried in the beginning that we'd fit in, you know. . . . It's like—small towns, sometimes, you don't fit in. Not for a while, anyway. And so I think we made an extra effort early on to get up here on weekends and be

known. Just be visible, you know. And we were accepted quite well. (McGuire 2012)

Resident Al Cooper said,

My expectations of any small community are kind of based on a reality which I have come to understand a lot during the years, having lived in New England communities....I mean, you don't want to move into a small town in Vermont and think they're going to...accept you right away. So my expectations [moving to Rockville] were based on what I thought was going happen. I moved in here as 'me,' hoping that [people] would buy into me—that they would discover that I am a resource, if they wanted to use me, but being perfectly content with being left alone, if that's what they preferred. And it's become a happy marriage of the two, because...I'm a guy that lives to serve. I spent my whole life doing public service in one form or another. So, they would've had a hard time not accepting us. But...my expectations have never been that I'm all of a sudden going to be seen as a third generation Rockvillain, because I'm not. And so, we try extra hard to—if they have a clean-up day, or if they have a breakfast in the park, or, you know—we make it our business to be there, so that people know that, you know, we do take citizenship personally. (Cooper 2011)

By becoming visible and showing a willingness to invest personal time and effort into the community, a newcomer shows their desire to work towards membership in the community (see McMillan and Chavis 1986: 10). And as a newcomer volunteers, getting to know members of the community in the process, they gain a better understanding of what it takes to live “successfully” in Rockville—the ins and outs, so to speak of being an active citizen. They learn what is expected of residents—how much lighting on your property is too much, how much noise is too much, how water rights work, and how, if they come in expecting to make major changes, they won't get very far. By interacting with other active residents, newcomers are able to gain knowledge that, short of sitting down and actually reading through the city ordinances word-for-word, or living in Rockville for a lengthy amount of time, is difficult to come by.

The period during which a newcomer becomes an active participant and gains folk knowledge necessary to become a member of the community is the transition phase. Folk knowledge is the knowledge “learned from each other, not from instruction books” (Toelken 1996: 23). To illustrate how folk knowledge is passed along, Barre Toelken gives the example of children learning to sing in western cultures:

In Western cultures children usually learn music harmony the same way they learn their early language: they pick it up. They come to know how to harmonize even though they cannot articulate the technical rules in musicians’ terms. Some never learn and are encouraged to keep quiet. But how does someone learn how to harmonize? And why do we learn? And why is it pleasant for us to harmonize with others when they are singing? These questions cause us to become conscious of what people learn in a close society, how they come to learn it, why, and from whom. (Toelken 1996: 23)

In order for a newcomer to gain the knowledge necessary to live successfully in Rockville, and to become a rooted member of the relational community that exists there, it is necessary for them “be visible,” and interact with others. If all a newcomer did was interact with his or her neighbors over a long period of time, it would still be possible for them to gain this knowledge; however, it would take much longer than if the person actually volunteered on a regular basis.

It is in the transition phase, then, that “the sense of belonging and identification” begins to form—“the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group” (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 10). We see, then, that as this transition takes place, the relationship between the newcomer and those already belonging to the relational community is reciprocal: the newcomer invests their time and energy to help residents already volunteering, and in return, the residents

pass along knowledge to help the newcomer be a successful member of the community.

This concept was illustrated for me when Dan and Aleen shared the following story:

Dan: When our home was being built, Leon, who didn't work for the builders, was out on our porch pouring cement. He had boots on, and he was in the cement, and they were pouring cement. And we realized later that that was Leon. He was just up here helping.

Aleen: He'd been over tending his calves, and came on over to help.

Dan also added, "We've experienced a lot of support from local people. We try to reciprocate. We try to be helpers too." (McGuire 2012)

This reciprocity provides community members with a shared emotional connection. McMillan and Chavis said, "When people who share values come together, they find that they have similar needs, principles, and goals, thus fostering the belief that in joining together they might be better able to satisfy these needs and obtain the reinforcement they seek. Shared values, then, provide the integrative force for cohesive communities" (1986: 13).

As newcomers separate themselves from their former lifestyle by volunteering on a regular basis, gaining essential knowledge and forming emotional connections with other community members in the process, his or her sense of community, and sense of belonging *to* that community, begins to form. As a result, the person is accepted as a fully participating, contributing member of the community—someone who is seen as wanting to contribute and "give back," as opposed to being strictly a "consumer." Thus, by publically showing their commitment to be involved, a newcomer effectively earns their "badge of membership" (Gabbert 2011: 29).

Even though Rockville is a very small town, there are still many opportunities for residents to get involved with different activities throughout the year, besides serving in

town council positions and attending council meetings. As mentioned earlier, a common joke in Rockville is that people only show up to council meetings if the agenda includes big changes to things such as water rights, or lighting. Greer Chesher mused, “When city hall is [made up of] your neighbors, that makes it *really* touchy, because your feelings [can] get hurt” (Chesher 2012). And Pam Leach said,

I come home [from council meetings] and...tell my husband about everything that’s going on, try to encourage him, you know, ‘The public is welcome at our town council meetings!’ That’s something that we wish we could encourage people to [do, is] come and listen to what’s going on, find out what’s going on. We post things, and most of the time, it’s just us [council members at the meetings]. There are times that that’s disappointing. (Leach 2012)

VeNeta Shannon said she feels that if someone is not willing to volunteer, or to help the community in some way, then they have no right to complain. She pointed out that there are several ways for residents to get involved: “[People can] help out the community...you know—financially, or physically—something. Pitch in. If you can’t be there, at least donate or do *something*. Get out and show up to the socials—*try* and be a part” (Shannon 2012). Her father, Leon Lewis, agrees with this sentiment, once telling me, “The town belongs to everyone,” meaning residents should get involved to help take care of it if they are able.

What is interesting and unique about Rockville is the mandatory nature of volunteerism. Because of the no-commercial-business, very-limited-municipal-services factor, there is added tension between those who are able to volunteer—whose schedule permits them to be actively involved—and those who still work for a living and are thus unable to volunteer or “be visible” as often. In order to give this tension any sort of in-depth analysis, it would be necessary to spend a great deal of time in Rockville,

interviewing not just the STPs, but the OTPs—or “Other Ten People”—as well. This is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, we can gain some interesting insight into this tension by looking at comments made on the 2008 Rockville Town Survey.

When asked what they would change about Rockville, one resident said, “Attitude. Volunteers make a small town run. We have too many whiners, not enough doers” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 26). Another person said, “More involvement from the citizenry” (2008: 26). Other comments included, “More community participation!” and “People should volunteer more to help the city.” One person made this frank observation: “Being a small community, volunteerism is almost mandated in some form to provide services and care for the town and its citizens” (2008: 29). Another person commented, “The volunteer base is active but too small” (2008: 29). And a non-resident property owner said, “If I ever lived here I would be very supportive. [Volunteering] is always done by a handful...sad!” (2008: 29).

However, under the “Additional Comments” section of the survey, comments from the other side of the argument can also be found. One resident said, “Too many committees and tasks for such a small town is draining for the same people. Perhaps we should do less and not complain about not having participation. Less [things] done better could be more enjoyed” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 29). Another resident said, “I agree residents should get involved and volunteer when the can, or if health issues do not allow [them to], or work hours do not allow, people shouldn’t be chastised for not helping” (2008: 29). And one resident stated, “Volunteering is a personal choice and cannot be forced” (2008: 29).

One resident said, “I’m too old to help, but I would if I could” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 29). Another observed, “Maybe there could be more activities to bring residents together more—but I don’t know what they would be. I participated in a work project and liked it, but I don’t go to other activities” (2008: 29). And another resident shared this same sentiment: “We do not feel it’s important to attend all the goings-on in town” (2008: 29).

One resident questioned why not everyone in town feels motivated to volunteer: “From newsletters sent out, there appears to be less service and volunteerism than is needed/desired. What are the reasons? Apathy? Overloaded needs on [a] population of 250? Can non-residents help?” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 29). And one person who rents a home within town said, “It is a small town—there will only be so many who get involved and others that work. Life!” (2008: 30).

Rockville isn’t the only place where tension is felt due to the perceived pressure and obligation to volunteer. In her fieldwork among people who volunteered for the annual winter festival in McCall Idaho, Lisa Gabbert found that obligation plays an important role in motivating people to volunteer, and that “the idea that there was ‘no one else to do it’ was pervasive when [she] asked people why they volunteered” (2011: 53). She said,

Most people in McCall worked hard. Many people worked two, sometimes three, jobs, so putting in extra time did not come easily, particularly if they were struggling financially. People were tired, and they valued their free time. However, they sometimes could be cajoled into participating because it was easier to say yes than no to the requests of friends and neighbors. (2011: 54-55)

Gabbert found that many McCall residents feared Winter Carnival wouldn’t take place, if enough volunteers weren’t found in any given year. Similarly, the STPs have

expressed to me their concern that if the spirit of volunteerism and participation among community members dwindles in the future, not only will things in town not get accomplished, but—and perhaps more importantly—the character of their town will be lost. Former mayor Allen Brown also expressed concern over who will replace STPs, once they get older and are no longer able to volunteer themselves (Brown 2012). There is a real fear that, when Rockville’s STPs become the old timers themselves, there will be no one there to fill their shoes—that newcomers will not feel the same motivation to preserve Rockville as it currently exists—and the spirit of volunteerism that the STPs embody will fade from memory.

Aside from the fear of the spirit of volunteerism fading, the STPs are also concerned with the lack of participation they see taking place at town socials. Many have told me that, if residents are not able to volunteer at town clean-up days because of time constraints, it’s good if they can at least show up at town socials once in a while, showing support in the process. (Again, we see the importance of being visible within the community). But the STPs have expressed to me their concern over dwindling numbers of residents showing up at town get-togethers.

As I sat down and talked with Jeff and Shirley Ballard, they talked about a perceived apathy they see happening—an increasing lack of motivation they see among residents to participate in socials. As we talked, they questioned aloud the reasoning behind this apathy and lamented the difficulty in getting people motivated to simply *show up* and participate (Ballard 2013). In the next chapter, I will discuss the socials that take place in town, and examine their importance in forming a sense of community.

CHAPTER V

ROCKVILLE SESQUICENTENNIAL AND OTHER SOCIAL GATHERINGS

By the time Rockville held its sesquicentennial celebration in October 2012, six months after the St. Patrick's Day parade in Springdale, the members of the Rockville Drill Team had apparently decided I was competent enough at doing maneuvers with them while holding a drill that, that I could move up in the ranks and actually hold the team banner, alongside the team's official banner-holder, Barry Shochet. (Or, more than likely, they decided that I was dangerous *attempting* to do maneuvers while holding a drill, and that I would be less of a danger holding the banner instead.)

For the sesquicentennial parade however, instead of lining up and marching from Springdale, we lined up along Dennett Lane in Rockville—excited to take part in a parade that belonged to Rockville itself. As the drill team lined up behind the banner, testing their drills and practicing their maneuvers, we all waved at Leon as he passed us in his little wagon, pulled by his trusty pony Lucy. And we all cheered when rumor floated down the parade line that the Park Service was adding its fire engines—which normally service the park—to our little parade. Fire trucks would add some muscle—now we were big-time!

But then, as time drew closer for the parade to start, we noticed police officers sectioning off the main highway—Rockville's Main Street—for the parade. We realized they weren't blocking off the *whole* highway, like they normally do for Springdale parades. They were only blocking off one lane of the highway for *our* parade—forcing us to march on the *side* of the highway.

“Why are they only giving us one lane?” Barry asked me. “When Springdale has

a parade, they get the whole highway! This is a sesquicentennial. This only happens only one in a lifetime!”

I laughed. “I know. If they blocked off *both* lanes, people driving through would have to get out of their cars. Then we’d have a big crowd to watch our parade, like Springdale always does.”

The parade began, and we made our way up our small, half-lane parade route. As I waved to the meager crowds of people who had come out of their homes long enough to watch us march past, I started wising the police men *had* blocked off both lanes of traffic. I was missing the crowds of people I’d seen during Springdale’s St. Patrick’s Day parade.

“Where is everyone?” I asked Barry.

Barry shrugged. He waved with his free hand and called out to them, “Remember this! You’re a part of history!”

McMillan and Chavis say that the emotional connection shared between members of a relational community is “based, in part, on a shared history” (1986: 13). They point out that in order for members to share a history, they don’t necessarily need to have *participated* in the history, but need to be able to identify with it. This was certainly the case with Rockville’s sesquicentennial. Some residents—though certainly not all—had family connections to the pioneers who settled the area generations earlier; however, *everyone* who participated in the sesquicentennial identified with the history that has taken place in the town—even if that history is recent.

According to McMillan and Chavis, shared events are also an important part of a shared emotional connection, because “the interactions of members in shared events and the specific attributes of the events facilitate the strength of the community” (1986: 13).

They say that events shared between community members are important for the following four reasons: 1) The more people interact, the more likely they are to become close; 2) The more positive the experience and the relationships, the greater the bond; 3) The more important the shared event is to those involved, the greater the community bond; and 4) Investment determines the importance to the member of the community's history and current status. They add that "strong communities are those that offer members positive ways to interact, important events to share...opportunities to honor members, [and] opportunities to invest in the community" (1986: 14).

To outside observers, Rockville's sesquicentennial celebration would probably not have appeared to be more than a town get-together involving dinner, entertainment, a parade, and lunch in the park the following day. However, to Rockville residents, as well as the out-of-towners who had either grown up in Rockville, or had lived in Rockville for some period during their lives, the sesquicentennial provided an opportunity to interact in an atmosphere where their shared history was not only emphasized, but celebrated. As a result of participating in this shared event, people were able to strengthen their relationships not only with each other, but with their community as well. Though the sesquicentennial was an event that was bigger, and more important, than most social events in Rockville, other get-togethers that happen regularly in town provide the same function for residents, if only on a smaller scale.

The events that took place during the sesquicentennial—as well as the planning for the events, which began months in advance—could not have taken place without the help of several volunteers, including the STPs. During my three days participating in the different sesquicentennial events, I saw each of the STPs helping out in some way. But

the STPs showed up not only to volunteer, but to participate in the events as well, reinforcing McMillan and Chavis' claim that positive experiences and interactions between community members strengthen bonds between them.

Set-up for the sesquicentennial began on Thursday, with placing flags along Rockville's Main Street, and the majority of the STPs showed up to help. Larry Ballard, an old timer who grew up in Rockville, carried the flags in the back of his truck, driving slowly along the side of the street until all the flags were set up. While most of us helped set up flags, Aleen also helped pick up garbage along the road. And, like he does at all Rockville events, my friend Jim was there to take pictures. When I asked him why we were setting up flags, when the sesquicentennial wasn't connected with any patriotic holiday, he responded, "Well, a sesquicentennial only happens once. Why not?"

Both Thursday and Friday were spent setting up for the community dinner held Friday night, as well as for the town-wide get-together that was held after the parade on Saturday. Inside the old Rockville church, displays were set up that harkened back to the pioneers who settled the area. Items in the displays included a metal horse shoe stretcher, a child's shoe from Grafton, a metal scale used in the old general store, a washboard, a metal flat iron, a butter churn, and wooden spools of various sizes. The display tables were set up underneath black and white photos hung on the walls, which depicted various people who have lived in Rockville throughout the years. These photos were accompanied by the pictures of the four mayors who have served the town since its incorporation—Eldon Walker, David Hatfield, Dan McGuire, and Allen Brown.

At the front of the room, beneath the veterans quilt, a TV was set up playing a DVD that was put together by Willard Hirshci. The DVD gave the history of each World

War II veteran whose name is displayed on the quilt. And set up on a table next to the TV was a display case holding the Purple Heart medal, as well as other awards, that Mike Shannon—also an STP—was given for his service during Vietnam.

The displays set up in the historic LDS church house, as well as the flags lining either side of Rockville's Main Street, spoke to me of the pride many residents have—not only in the town's pioneer past, but also of its spirit of patriotism. It was also a reminder to me of just how much Rockville has changed, not only since pioneer times, but in the past twenty to thirty years—the period that has brought the most move-ins from out-of-state. In the past twenty to thirty years, Rockville has experienced a tremendous amount of change, with many people moving in from other areas, and many old timers passing away. Greer Chesher once told me, “When I first moved here in the early eighties, it was mostly—well, it was all old-timers. And, unfortunately, I've been to so many funerals in the last five years. It's been horrible” (Chesher 2012).

As a beginner folklorist, there is always the desire to talk to as many old-timers, and to record as many of their life stories, as possible. Throughout the process of researching for this thesis, I have been no exception to this rule. What I've found striking, however, is the number of times I've heard middle-timers tell me, “Oh, it would have been great if you could have interviewed so-and-so. They had so many wonderful stories! But unfortunately, they died a few years back.”

I've thought a lot about the changing dynamics of Rockville, with so many old-timers passing away. And I've wondered how a town goes about preserving the legacy of the original pioneers, once the last of the old-timers pass away—taking their stories with

them. I asked Dan McGuire about this, and he had some interesting thoughts on the matter:

You know, we've worried so much about the pioneers, and we recognize what they did for us. They came here when it was not popular. They put up with an awful lot because they *wanted* to.... You know, they made [a life] for themselves. Life was difficult. And I have respect for them, but I don't think we need to live in the past. I think we need to honor the people who live here today, who are trying to keep Rockville as their [own] legacy.... I, for one moment, don't want to show any lack of respect for the people who settled [Rockville], but I think you need to consider the people who live here today. There are young families, and they are trying too. They're trying to make a decent living, and make a home worth living in, and be proud of, you know.... [The pioneers] kept [the community], they maintained it, and there's a lot to be said for that, but... now, the focus is giving to the community and making it a better place.... [When Aleen and I] came in—we didn't have any real ties here, but we did something we think was pretty—the community can be proud of—we built a nice home, we got involved with the community, and we actually feel like we've done something for the community. (McGuire 2012)

I found this juxtaposition interesting, as well as apparent, during the sesquicentennial celebration—current residents paying respect to the pioneers and the sacrifices they made while, at the same time, showing an appreciation for and celebrating the people who currently call Rockville home—many of who have moved in with no family ties. During the celebration, there was a sign posted in the community center which thanked not only the sponsors who made the celebration possible, but also made a point to thank all the volunteers as well.

Friday afternoon, before the dinner took place in the community center, the Utah Western Heritage Foundation Trek—a group who reenacts pioneer treks in different locations every year—ended their six-day trek in Grafton. The Foundation had agreed ahead of time to be a part of Rockville's sesquicentennial, and as they rolled into Grafton, they were met by Jeff Ballard, Dan McGuire, and Leon Lewis. Everyone gathered inside

the historic Grafton LDS church house, where Leon spoke about the history of Grafton, Rockville, and Zion National Park, sharing this quote from Freeman Tilden:

There it is, the strangest, most majestic rock carvings in the world. Illuminated such pigment, such a frenzy of consummate color, that the eye and bright sunlight may look and turn away, hurt, to look, again and again. Color and form, form and color, and the form is the unpremeditated artistry of nature—beautiful, because it could not be otherwise. (Lewis 2012)

Leon also talked about the connection a person forms with the land when they work on the land daily, and are willing to “get mud on their boots”—an important component to the relationship many old-timers have with the land.

Early Friday evening, after listening to Leon’s talk in Grafton, I went over to the community center in Rockville to see if I could do anything to help out before the dinner started—to “put my hand up,” as Megan Orton would say. The tables and chairs for the dinner had already been set up, and the tables were decorated, so I was put to work at the welcome table with Shirley Ballard and Aleen McGuire, taking money for dinner, stamping people’s hands to show that they’d paid, and selling raffle tickets for prizes that would be given out the next day. Sitting at the table and meeting everyone who had come for dinner, I was struck by the number of people who no longer lived in Rockville, but had called Rockville home at some point in their lives, and had returned to celebrate what the town still meant to them. It said a lot to me—not only about the powerful, lasting affect that a sense of community can have on individuals, even after they leave a place, but also about the power of shared experience.

At the dinner, a band named Sunset Corner performed a song called “I’m Headin’ Home to Rockville”, which expressed the way the STPs, and many others feel about their town:

There is a place I long for among the rocks and pines;
 Beneath the cliffs of Zion where the Virgin River winds.
 My heart still wants to live there. My heart still wanders back.
 Lay me down by the banks of the [Virgin] River by the well-worn dusty track.

CHORUS: I'm headin' home to Rockville;
 I'm headin' home once more.
 I'm headin' home to Rockville by the Virgin River's shore;
 With red cliff heights and small town lights,
 Where friends and family care.
 I'm headin' home to Rockville, my home town fair.

BRIDGE: The single bulb that cars drive past;
 And mulberry trees that came from France;
 Rockville's bridge, a metal expanse;
 In my mind, they'll always last!

OUTRO: I'm headin' home to Rockville;
 I'm headin' home once more.
 I'm headin' home to Rockville by the Virgin River's shore.
 My heart still wants to live there.
 My mind still wanders back.
 Lay me down by the banks of the [Virgin] River!
 Rockville! I'm home at last! (Young 2012)

This song speaks not only of the memories of Rockville that residents take with them when they travel or move elsewhere, but it also speaks of the virtues the town possesses that has drawn (and kept) people there over the years—the character that the STPs and other volunteers are so intent on preserving.

As already mentioned, over the course of three days I saw each of the STPs involved in the events of the sesquicentennial in some way, from setting up, to taking down and cleaning up, to simply showing up and participating. (There were also many other volunteers who helped as well.) This showed that not only does volunteering play

an important role in the STP sense of community, but that it is important to them to take part in activities that strengthen the community.

The next day (Saturday), following the parade, a get-together was held in the city park, behind the community center. There was entertainment, activities for the kids, and a luncheon, followed by an auction. The closing event was a raffle, where names were drawn and prizes given out. This part of the celebration was reminiscent of Rockville Days held in previous years—an annual celebration which is usually held in September or October. Jim once described Rockville Days as a get-together for the community—an end-of-summer party. He told me that in years past Rockville Days was not only a get-together for the community but a reunion of sorts, where they would “try to get all the people who ever lived here, members of the families, to come....The last [reunion] was in 2004....And last time we did that, we had...maybe three-hundred people. It was pretty big....Usually, they try to do them every five years. But because [2012 was] the sesquicentennial...we’re having the big Rockville Reunion” (Harlan 2012).

Jim also told me about some of the auctions they had at Rockville Days in years past, and some of the big ticket items people would bid on:

We’d get some of the really good artists who’d contribute, you know, thousand-dollar pieces. You know, like Kate Starling would do a painting. And those paintings sell for fifteen-hundred bucks now. And we’d auction them off, and they’d get auctioned off for five-hundred bucks, or two-hundred bucks, or one-hundred bucks. It’s almost a crime. (Harlan 2012)

In addition to Rockville Days, Rockville has four other main social events throughout the year that bring the community together. The first is the Appreciation Breakfast, usually held in February, at the community center. Dan McGuire said,

We started the Appreciation Breakfast in February, when winter's on its way out and things are kind of dreary, you know, Christmas is over—we have an appreciation breakfast which we've been doing now for several years. And the town provides all of the food—bacon and eggs and, you know, sausage, and drinks—everything. And we get a lot of people that come out to that stuff, and it's all just to show appreciation for the people who help the town. (McGuire 2012)

The next event is Pie in the Park, or “Dessert in the Park,” held in May at the city park. This event was combined with Arbor Day six years ago, and is a chance for residents to “get-together and have dessert, and then plant a tree somewhere in the town” (Leach 2012). Pam Leach said of this event, “It's nice because it brings people together for a social occasion, and not just the, you know, ‘I work with you, I live next door to you, I'm your cousin, I'm your brother,’ you know—that kind of thing. It really— [people] get to come and socialize, and eat, and you know, help plant a tree...somewhere in town” (Leach 2012).

Following close on the heels of Rockville Days, Rockville holds a Halloween get-together at the community center. One year, VeNeta Shannon dressed up at a member of KISS, and enjoyed the fact that—for a short time, at least—in a community where mostly everyone knows her, she was unrecognizable.

Then towards the end of the year, Rockville holds a Christmas party. Someone dresses up as Santa, and children can sit on his lap and tell him what they want for Christmas. Then the community gathers around the piano as Bob Cox plays piano and his wife Mary leads everyone in singing Christmas carols.

And last but not least, a list of Rockville social events would not be complete without giving mention to the small, unofficial get-together that brings the old year to a close, and ushers in the new—Barry Sochet's New Year's Eve fireworks on the Rockville

Bridge. What started out in 2007 as a protest against the War in Iraq has turned into an annual gathering to light fireworks on the Rockville Bridge—“out with the old and in with the new,” as they say.

It’s worth noting that the main Rockville social events—the Appreciation Breakfast, Pie in the Park, Rockville Days, the Halloween Party, and Christmas Party—are all held at the community center and, when the weather permits, outside in the park behind the community center. During his time as mayor, it was important for Dan McGuire to get the old church and community center restored, to the point that they could be used by the community on a regular basis to hold events where residents could come together and thus make the town “a little more of a town” (McGuire 2012).

He talked to me about the importance of taking care of Rockville, and preserving it for future generations—something that has been important to him during his time as mayor. He discussed the process of securing grants for some much-needed renovations for the community center, as well as the old church. He views his contributions as giving back to the community and leaving a legacy that the town can be proud of—reinforcing McMillan and Chavis’ suggestion that “personal investment is an important contributor to a person’s feeling of group membership and to his or her sense of community” (1986: 10). Dan gave examples of how financing was found to refurbish the town buildings, put in a new town clock, and purchase heavy equipment for future town maintenance, and his narrative shows just how much effort volunteers in Rockville put forth:

Dan: Having an influence as the mayor, for example, [I] could set the tone about what we ought to be doing. And the tone, I think, was to preserve what we have—let’s take care of what we have, and then kind of add some things as we can. And so the focus was on providing funding for renovating our buildings [the church house and community center]—putting the roofs on them, and

flooring...refinishing the flooring. [We] worked on a couple of grants...to help do that. And then [we tried] to provide an identity to Rockville, because everybody that you ever meet says, 'Where's Rockville? Where's that?' 'Have you ever been to Zion Park?' 'Well sure.' 'Then you've been to Rockville.' Well, they—nobody knows that....

So we got a town clock [in front of the church house]. I had one person criticize me, and say, 'This is not New England.' That's where I come from. I said, 'What's that got to do with it?' [Laughs] That—that's a *people* place. That was the whole idea of [getting the clock]. We have a town clock and we have benches. We have a people place. That's where people can meet. And, you know—thinking that a people place is important. It used to be just the post office [where people would meet], but now it's outside the post office as well....And so we put finances into renovating our buildings—painting and stuccoing, or whatever was needed.

Aleen: Have you been in the old buildings?

Tori: I have been in the town hall.

Aleen: Well, the floors in there are maple, and they were installed in 1932. So they're in great shape for their age. They hadn't been refinished in I don't know how many years.

Dan: Probably ever. They were gray, stained—they had carpeting in there that just looked terrible, you know. We kind of looked at it like we would look at our own house. 'This has gotta go!' So we got money to buy carpeting...and we had a pile of curtains. I don't know if you've been in the big hall where we have the orange curtains, but there [were] no curtains up there forever, but a huge pile of fabric laying on the floor. So Aleen basically took it upon herself, and yanked it all out, and sewed it up, and put it together. And, you know, we got hooks, and put up the curtains. That's the first time it had curtains!

Aleen: Well, they were donated from a church, I guess, in Las Vegas—

Dan: But nobody ever did anything with them.

Aleen: —but they didn't fit, and so they were in this big pile forever. And they are stained, and they're not in great shape, but—

Dan: They're a lot better than what we had!

Aleen: But, then, we had nothing before, so—

Tori: And it's just something that's free as well....Curtains can be expensive!

Aleen: Especially when they're that long!

D: So we did things like that, and then we—in the small building where we meet, we . . . upgraded the heating and cooling. It was wall heaters and—

A: [A] swamp cooler.

D: —a swamp cooler. You know—noisy, and not efficient. So we, we budgeted money for that, and . . . we also wanted to upgrade our town back hoe. We have a small back hoe, but we always have to hire Allan if we want anything done—Allan Lee. So we were putting money aside for seven or eight years to get a back hoe, which we did this year . . . We had received money from a trust, so they left a share of money to Rockville—it was quite a bit of money—[we] only get some of it at a time, and we kept funneling some of that money towards the back hoe. . . . And we personally donated a lot of dough for the town park, to get walls built, and to get things done, you know. They were there, but they weren't quite finished. And so when we did the clock, I had written letters to a lot people who don't live here and told them what we were trying to do, and we raised thirteen-thousand dollars just for the clock, and for some maintenance, you know, as . . . time goes on.

So stuff like that that I think, you know, when you have the leadership role, you can focus and direct the town in that respect, and work gets done. It's not that we did it, but we've, I think, put the emphasis on taking care of what we have. This is all we got. . . . So we, you know, built up the equipment inventory, we took care of the buildings, we provided an identity with signage on the end of town, and a clock. That's—I think that's one of our focal points, that clock. You can identify Rockville.

A: Well, and the new town office, [and] post office.

D: Yeah. So things like that. I think we kept pace with the needs of our local people without getting crazy, without getting big.

A: Without neon signs.

D: Yeah. We have a nice town, nice post office, and meeting buildings. (McGuire 2012)

The perception that face-to-face interaction is important, and that it's important to have central locations—“people places”—that foster connectedness between community members, is not unique to Rockville. Lisa Gabbert found that in McCall, Idaho, “people

living in the area traditionally had post office boxes, rather than mail delivery, for example, so the post office, along with the grocery store, was a social place. People visited and exchanged news as they do in any small town. They knew who had gotten married, who was in jail last weekend, who had lost his or her job, and who had moved away” (2011: 50).

Thus, we see that living in a small town can be a mixed blessing, in the sense that mostly everyone *does* know your business, but by the same token, when members of the community interact in a positive way, and have a shared emotional connection, they are more likely to help each other in a pinch. Greer Chesher commented,

I’ve always felt that if something happened, that I could knock on anyone’s door, and say, ‘I need help,’ and they would, you know, bring me in, and give me something to wear, feed me, without a second’s hesitation. And so I think—the sense of community, the sense of caring for each other, and watching over each other, is, is good. [But] I know a lot people wouldn’t like that, because it is kind of a fish bowl. You know, it used to be people would say things like, ‘Oh, I saw a car overnight at your house the other day. Who was visiting?’ [But] that’s calmed down a little bit. (Chesher 2012)

Greer’s comment about people being willing to come to her aid if she needed it, is something I will explore further in chapter six, as I examine how natural disasters can bring people in a community closer together.

In summary, the social events held in Rockville throughout the year, provide opportunities for shared emotional connections and act to strengthen the bonds between the community members who participate (see McMillan and Chavis 1986: 13). Social events also provide opportunities for residents to take part in a shared history. For me, it was a unique and rewarding experience to actually *take part* in the sesquicentennial celebration, not only by volunteering, but by participating and interacting with members

of the community as well. In working side by side with the STPs and other volunteers, I was able to separate myself from my “other” lifestyle—the one where I’m a resident of Salt Lake City and, other than interacting with my neighbors and other people at church, mostly keep to myself. By volunteering during the sesquicentennial, however, I was able to put myself forward as someone who cares about Rockville, and about its preservation.

By volunteering, I was able to work side-by-side with residents and, in the process, get a better idea of what makes them tick, and why they care so much about preserving their town. In the process, I found *myself* caring about Rockville—wanting to know what *I* could do to help it stay small, rural, and quiet. And I found myself beginning to understand why Rockville is called “Utah’s last treasure.” At the end of it all, I felt I had been transformed, in a way, from the beginner folklorist who stood staring at the tiny streetlights that lined Rockville’s Main Street on my first day of field work, trying to understand *why* residents cared so much about keeping commercial businesses out of their town, into someone who finally *got* it. I felt as though I’d transformed into someone who, if I ever chose to, could move to Rockville and make quite a successful life as an active member of the community. And I felt that this was how the STPs had come to see and to accept me—as someone who they would accept into their community with open arms, because they saw me as someone who would work alongside them to try and make the community a better place to live.

In the next chapter, I will talk about the natural disasters that take place in Rockville. I will discuss how they provide an additional opportunity for community members to volunteer, and how they strengthen the bond between community members.

CHAPTER VI

VOLUNTEERISM FOLLOWING NATURAL DISASTERS

Writer Wendell Berry posed the question, “How do we know who we are, until we first know where we are?” (Berry in Bogart 1995: 8) Folklorist Barbara Allen Bogart, who travelled throughout the West over the course of four years in search of oral narratives specifically *about* living in the West, said she believes we answer both questions posed by Berry when we tell stories about the places we live (8).

Folklorist Bert Wilson recorded his mother’s life history over the course of ten years and in the process attempted to reconstruct the history of Riddyville, Idaho, the town where she grew up. He found, however, that this attempt did not yield the desired results, because “while the stories were based on history and occasionally approximated history, they themselves were not history—that is...not verifiable accounts of what really happened” (2006: 268). He determined that his mother’s stories were actually “fictions—stories created from carefully selected events from [her] own life, just as short stories, novels, and epics are created from carefully selected details from the worlds of their authors” (2006: 268). Wilson says that personal experience narratives are fiction not in the sense that they aren’t true, but in the sense that they “actually are, or can be, novels or epics” (2006: 268-269), or works of imaginative narration.

Wilson notes that this distinction is important because of the artistic power contained within personal stories—stories told not for the purpose of reciting past events as they happened in chronological sequence, but so the teller

[can select] details and create a body of stories that place her in the center of and in control of her universe—stories that may not always be historically accurate but that have over time and through repeated tellings become...artistic

representations for what she holds most dear and would most eagerly communicate to others. (Wilson 2008: 277)

Wilson argues that instead of trying to fit personal narratives within a historical framework, it is much more useful to examine how they are “systematically related” or, in other words, how they are “linked together into an artistic whole by clustering around certain themes” (2006: 275). In Rockville, one of the themes found in the personal stories told by residents is natural disasters.

Almost everyone I’ve met in Rockville has asked me whether or not I’m familiar with the story of the boulder crashing into Jack Burns’ house. On October 18, 2001, Jack Burns—who, at the time, lived in a home on the north side of Main Street, one of the homes that Jim and Carol refer to as the “rock catcher houses”—woke up to a two hundred seventy-one ton boulder smashing through his house. The boulder, which broke away from the cliff behind his home, crashed through his bathroom, living room, and bedroom wall, before coming to a stop a mere four feet from his bed.



Figure 3: Rockfall at Jack Burns' house, photo by Jim Harlan, jimharlan.zenfolio.com

When I told Jim and Carol that I planned to do fieldwork for my thesis in Rockville, one of the first things they did was drive me past Jack Burns' former home to tell me about the rock fall, and to show me where it actually happened. The boulder is now a permanent part of the house—the home was rebuilt around the boulder, as the boulder was much too large to remove completely. And as I stared at the boulder for the first time, trying to come to grips with its gigantic size, and trying to imagine what I would do if it had crashed into *my* house, I could only imagine the chaos it created. The horrible thundering sound it made as it careened down the hill. The devastating destruction it caused.

I have heard Rockville residents tell different versions of the story, including the detail that the boulder, massive as it was, bounced on its way towards Jack Burns' home—something that residents, without having prior experience dealing with rock falls, never expected. Megan Orton said, “Rocks bounce. . . . That’s what we found out with Jack Burns’ house. The reason his house survived is because the rock bounced. . . into the bedroom. If it had gone rolling [straight through] the bedroom, it would’ve crushed the whole house. But it didn’t. It bounced into his yard, and into the bedroom” (Orton 2012).

Dan McGuire said, “It [was] just a matter of minutes before [Jack] was [supposed to get] up to get in the shower to go to work, and the shower was flattened. I mean, the whole rock was on top of it” (McGuire 2012). Leon Lewis added, “[The boulder] pushed his bed right up near the wall, and the dog was in there, and so he—I don’t know whether they broke a window, or broke out—anyway, he went out through the window. And by

the time I got up there, there was dust about that thick all over everything—everywhere (Lewis 2012).

Like their neighbors, Jim and Carol also went over to survey the damage, and to see if there was anything they could do to help. Jim brought along his camera, and took shots of the rock and the damage it did to the house. And to give some perspective on just how massive the boulder really was, Jim had Carol stand in the hole the rock made in the ground just before it hit the house. As he showed me this particular photograph later, he pointed at the hole and said, “[That hole was] where the boulder hit the road, and Carol’s standing there [in the hole], and it’s a four foot hole!” (Harlan 2012).

I believe it is significant that so many residents tell this story, because not only does it show that it was a significant event in their lives, but it shows that dealing with the environment is a part of everyday life in Rockville, and that this is something that, as a community, they are strong enough to handle. McMillan and Chavis said, “The more important the shared event is to those involved, the greater the community bond. For example, there appears to be a tremendous bonding among people who experience a crisis together” (1986: 14).

Dan McGuire calls the community support that takes place during times of disaster a “way of life” in Rockville. He said,

When the rock fell into Jack’s house, you know, we were some of the first over there. Jack was still in shock. And...Zion National Park—what a great resource they are to us. They were out here with their big equipment. They were right on the job. They were moving boulders, and cracking them with [their equipment], you know. So people did laundry—backpacked all this stuff up in this truck that [was] going up to Springdale [and] were gonna do the laundry, you know, that kind of thing. That kind of stuff was going on. And so, that’s just something that’s a way of life around here, because you never know when you’re gonna be on the receiving end. You just pitch in with what you can. (McGuire 2012)

The attitude of community members pitching in and helping when they can, and of neighbors being able to rely on each other, was evident throughout my interview with Leon Lewis, especially when he mentioned all the flooding the community has experienced, which I will touch on later. Leon and his wife Warda also told me about two other rock falls that had taken place in Rockville and the damage they caused:

Leon: We had [a rock come] off the mountain down by Rockin' River Ranch, and it was wet that year, and when it's wet, why, it loosens, kind of the bottom part. And then [the rock] came off, and then bounded down and made a big old crevice in the north side up on the hill a little ways, and it hit the road, and just took out half the road. Took out our water line, our culinary water line...and just rolled right over our irrigation ditch, and stopped by one little pear tree. And it's still down [that] lot.

And then last spring we had—there were a couple of rocks up here...I heard a noise, and I looked out the window from my kitchen, and that rock—the big rock that was the mate to that one was out close to the edge, and it just rolled off of there and split up in several pieces, and went down and went through the neighbor's house. [The fall] probably wiped it out, because when they fall, it just create[s] dust, and you can't see for a little while...And when we headed over there, through the east side—they've got...kind of a little lean-to on the east side of their house—and it just went right through the door there and just took the door off its hinges, and went through the other side and hit [their Cadillac] Escalade—

Warda: Mm-hmm. They'd just bought it a week before.

Leon: An Escalade they'd just had...it just wiped out their one side a bit, and took the axel back, and bent the tire off.

Tori: Wow!

Leon: And there's [a rock] on top of the building over there—one rock ended up on the building, and another one hit one of the gal's cars—it landed on top of its roof, and just mashed in the roof part, and broke out the window. And it was a new one too—a new truck.

Warda: You could live here for a hundred years, and not know when a rock's gonna come [down]. (Lewis 2012)

I believe Warda's last statement is a sentiment many residents in Rockville share—that rockfalls, floods, and other disasters are just something that happens there, and that part of living in Rockville is dealing with it. Residents *choose* to live in Rockville despite this, and perhaps view themselves as hardy and independent because of their ability to handle these things. This is a view that suggests that not just *anyone* can live in Rockville. Rockville citizens believe it takes a strong, special kind of person—one who can handle the rigors of living in an unpredictable natural environment.

Barbara Allen Bogart said that people who live in the West must learn to live with the landscape. People who live in the West have their very characters shaped as a result of the intimate relationship they form with the land, and as a result, they

know how to distinguish themselves from easterners, newcomers, dudes, and other species of outsiders. In these stories that proclaim western identity, outsiders most often reveal their status by their ignorance or misunderstanding of some feature of the natural environment. And this is perhaps the most appropriate way in which the distinction between insiders and outsiders should be made, for it is the natural environment of the West that has been the most powerful force in shaping those who live there. (1995: 106)

In telling the following story of a rockfall that happened in Zion National Park, Leon points out that just because car accidents happen every day on the freeway, doesn't mean people stop driving; likewise, the fear of rockfalls shouldn't keep people out of Zion:

We had a place up in the park—I was a naturalist up there for fourteen years—[where] we'd take guided walks....They call it the River Walk today. . . . We had a rock slide in 1969....There's a sign about it going up the River Walk [now]. They figured a hundred-fifty-thousand ton rock came off of there. Anyway, there

was a couple up there with their grandkids, and then another couple were out towards the end of the trail, over by the river. And the couple started back and their grandkids hadn't joined them. So they went back to get them, and just as they went back, Pppgggg! [Like an explosion] [The rocks came] down right where they'd been. So they [were] glad that time their grandkids didn't listen. [Chuckles]

And...I was scheduled [to do] a guided hike the day that fall came down—I was [scheduled] for a one o'clock Gateway to the Narrows Trail hike. Anyway, they cancelled it out, and we didn't know too much about what had taken place, but we started [hikes again] the next week, and they just fixed a path up over [the fall], and we headed up there, ready to go. And one lady [on a hike] turned to me, and she says, 'Ranger, did all of this [rock] come from up there [on the cliff]?' I said, 'Yeah. It happened last week.' I said, 'Gravity pulls them down, don't pull them up.' She said, 'This is enough for me. I've had it! I'm getting out of here!' And so she left. She said, 'I'm not staying around here!' But I told them, 'If you check the newspaper, on the highways every day, there's a traffic accident. But people don't stop driving.' (McGuire 2012)

I find his last statement striking. His daughter VeNeta shares this sentiment. She said, "Where else can you live in such a beautiful place? You could go to Hawaii, but, get a tsunami, you're done. That's what I always think" (Shannon 2012).

Not only do Rockville residents tell stories about rockfalls, but they tell stories about other natural disasters as well, such as flooding. Leon told me about the many different hundred-year floods that he has experienced since moving to Rockville in the sixties. The term "one hundred year flood" refers not to a large flood that happens once every hundred years, but to there being a "one in one-hundred chance of such a flood happening in a given year" (Rosenberg 2013).

Leon experienced such a flood during the eighties, when he was a teacher at Springdale Elementary. He told me about how water from the flood was able to move large objects, such as cars, as if they weighed nothing. He also spoke of how the flood

affected the Zion Park Motel—located in Springdale—and how people showed up to help with clean-up:

The next [flood] came in—what—the eighties, or something. They [came to my house] at two o'clock in the morning and said, 'Your school's flooded, and you better come up and check it out.' And so I went up, and on the way—there's a wash up there by Chamberlin's that had overflowed the banks, and there was a sandbar up there in the road. I went through that, and then we got up to the school house—just east of the school house...and there was concrete—it was kind of an open wash. And there was a big old boulder about the size of your vehicle resting up on top of the bridge railing. And there [were] people that lived in the bottom of the old church. And it picked their car up and put it about, oh, that high [indicates with hand] off the ground with the rocks all underneath it. And over at the motel—Zion Park Motel—they had just...refurbished two new apartments down underground by the swimming pool, just south of the swimming pool. No one was staying there that night. When we went there the next morning, the lamps and everything were floating. There was about that much water [indicates with hands]—or, space between the water and the ceiling. And it took all the cars they had [parked] there...and just put them all down at the bottom—just stacked them side by side down at the bottom. And there was eighteen inches of mud and debris and silt up against the motel.

Anyway, we checked out the school and...there was about that much [indicates with his hands]—about that high and about that much silt and debris [all over]. And the tennis court that's back behind was covered with about that much silt, and all the way down to the building. And the bishop's father and the bishop went over with their backhoes and equipment and cleaned that all off—just cleaned it all off, and they even cleaned off the tennis court...just perfect, like it was before the flood. No charge. That's the kind of bishop we [had]. Anyway, we went up east of there, and trailer court was all stymied up with rocks and debris, and rocks were all through the town. And we had crews come in and help them with the trailer court. We had church groups from down below [in La Verkin come and help]. And I was the stake president. So we all congregated there and went over what we needed to do and what was to transpire to get things rectified. We got those all squared away. (Lewis 2012)

Leon went on to tell me about five other hundred-year floods he has experienced, joking that "I'm six hundred years old!" (Lewis 2012). The most recent flood he spoke of took place in December 2010, a flood that "laid havoc with the whole city" (Lewis 2012). Because of heavy rain, there was fear that South Creek Dam, located southeast of

Rockville, would overrun its banks. As a result, Rockville residents were asked to evacuate. Greer Chesher told me about an incident in which flood waters threatened the home of one of her friends in Rockville, and how residents came together to help:

There was one family's house who was actually threatened. And I happened to be—I was like, 'I think I'll go up into Springdale for a cup of coffee.' Well, I couldn't get [to Springdale], because they had blocked off the road. And so while I was sitting at the roadblock, I looked over, and my friend's house—one of my best friends in town—the water was right up to her back door, right on the corner, as you come into Springdale. So I just pulled in, and opened the back of my car, everybody was just throwing stuff in the back of the car. There was, like, three or four people who had just stopped, and we evacuated whatever was important—you know, the family pictures, the art work, her antiques, you know. And I had this little apartment, [off the side of my house] and there was no one living in it. So we just threw it all in there, and I said, 'Well, I don't know if you should put the stuff you really want in here, because if my house *does* go [because of the flood], it's gonna go too. You're not in any better shape.' But—so they took a whole bunch of stuff up to a friend's house, which was higher. (Chesher 2012)

Carol has told me many times how fortunate she feels to have the Virgin River in the back yard of her home; however, when there is excessive rain, the river can pose a threat to all houses and properties along its banks. One day, while showing me how the most recent flood had altered the riverbanks behind her home, she shared how terrifying it was to watch the river rise during the flood, and the great length her neighbor was willing to go to when she asked for help:

Carol: There was a right angle turn that the river was being made to take [during the storm], and it would've just come right through our property. It would've taken [our neighbor] John's back yard, it would've taken our garage, it would've taken part of our house out....And so, here comes the river boiling at all of us, right. And it gets to this point, and it was just like—I'm not kidding you, I say the hand of God went out—and it turned right at the...tree [in the yard], and went back into the normal channel. It was like a miracle! We could hardly believe our eyes, honestly. But we were very fortunate.

Tori: And were you watching it the whole time?

C: Yeah. Well, that's why John Arnold broke his leg, because the trees had come down on his property....I called him, because I [saw] the trees were laying like this [indicates with hand] from the bank. And I got worried. And John says, 'Oh, don't worry. You know, they're okay.' And I said, 'But John, it looks like they're laying, angled right into the bank.' And so, he goes over to our property [to check on things], which is nothing but a sea of mud. And he comes down that hill, and...I think he stepped out with his right leg, and his left leg stayed [in the mud]. ...And it snapped. I couldn't believe it! Just because I was worried about [our] bank [getting] chewed out here, because if *his* bank gets chewed out, then we're next, you know. You always...take care of the person upstream from you. (Harlan 2012)

The concept of “taking care of the person upstream from you” is something I've often heard from the residents in Rockville, because, as Dan McGuire mentioned, you never know when you'll be on the receiving end—when you will be the one in need of help. This is especially true in Rockville, where residents live in an unpredictable natural environment. Not only has Rockville experienced rockfalls and flooding, but fires as well. Leon's barn once caught on fire when it was struck by lightning. Although Leon is often the one offering a helping hand to others in need, this particular experience was one where *he* was on the receiving end of help from other people in the community:

Leon: In 2006, on the second of January, we were awakened one morning early—they thought our house was on fire. But it was our barn. We'd been hit by lightning, and it just consumed it. And [the barn] burned down. So fires and floods and falling rocks—we've gone through most of it.

Mike Shannon: But you've got a better barn now.

Leon: Yeah, thanks to Bishop Johnson and Mike, why, we've got a better barn now than we had before....They were a big help to me. And Bishop also helped me—let us use his big trailer.

Mike: I was just going to borrow the trailer, and he was like, 'Oh, just take my whole rig.'

Leon: Yeah. He said, 'Take the truck and the trailer, and all of it.' He said, 'Go down and use it how you want it.' (Lewis 2012)

Dan McGuire had this to say about the incident: “Leon had a barn burn down, and there was a lot of people that showed up in one form or another, offered assistance if they could....That’s the volunteer spirit....You feel like your neighbors are looking out for you, and they are” (McGuire 2012). When Leon built his new barn, he kept the burnt post from the old barn to remind him of the incident.

Because of the unpredictable environment in which they live, and the very limited services in their town, Rockville residents I’ve spoken with say they feel the responsibility of looking out for and helping their neighbors, and have the hope that their neighbors will do the same for them. Aleen McGuire said, “I think you find [this] more in small towns, because there’s a lack of services. Sometimes you have to rely on people, and then they can rely on you” (McGuire 2012). McMillan and Chavis mentioned that a strong community is one where members have a reciprocal relationship—where members not only have their own needs met, but also, through their own actions, are able to meet the needs of other members as well (see 1986: 13).

What is interesting in Rockville, however, is that the ability to rely on one’s neighbor seems to go hand in hand with the ability to be independent and self-sufficient. Dan McGuire talked to me about the risks of living in a rural community, one of the biggest being fire. The fire department in Rockville is all-volunteer, and water storage needed to fight a fire can be an issue, especially when Rockville experiences drought. If water levels are low, then fighting a fire can be a challenge. Dan told me that although he and Aleen have a fire hydrant on their property, “there’s not always a lot of pressure in it” (2012: 14).

Dan also talked about the scare that Rockville went through in 2006 when there were forest fires in the area:

We got a good scare a few years ago when we had all those forest fires, and smoke was coming over the hill, and ashes were coming over the hill, and the fire guys were here. And they pointed out a lot of things that we needed to change, you know, cutting your trees up off the ground—the pine trees, and keeping, you know, a defensible area around your home—stuff like that. Common sense things, but—and fuel. People store—we do too—store wood, and everything, too close to your home. And so we moved some things, and we isolated some stuff, like the gas cans and things. So, it's a risk living in a remote—in a rural community. But we have a great fire department, you know. They really are good—good response time, and dedicated teams. And they have some pretty good equipment. But you have to take care of yourself. You know, you can't neglect the hazards in your life, where you live. (2012: 14)

Greer said this about the fire situation:

There was an evacuation a couple years ago because there was a fire burning on the Kolob Road. The fire was coming down the road, and it was supposed to come back and up around here. And . . . if there's older folks who can't help themselves, people are going to help them. But mostly, it's sort of every man for himself, you know. But . . . people do make offers, you know. They do say, 'Oh, come and stay with me,' or, 'Oh, move your stuff over here.' So yeah, [it's] that kind of community. (Chesher 2012)

In addition to having a volunteer fire department and police department, there is also a clinic in Springdale, but services there are limited. If someone has a medical emergency, they must be transported by ambulance down the hill to Hurricane or even as far away as St. George. Residents of Rockville also have to be willing to drive further distances to get the things they need. Dan said he and Aleen didn't fully anticipate how much their gasoline and automobile expenses would go up when they moved to Rockville. Until recently residents had to drive down the hill to La Verkin or even as far as Hurricane or St. George to do grocery shopping. However, a local couple recently

opened Sol Foods Market in Springdale, which sells groceries, and other items. This has helped local residents tremendously.

Rockville residents also have to go without things such as health insurance and 401K benefits, when they are employed locally. Megan Orton said,

Most people are not willing to give up their secure jobs, their health insurance and their 401Ks, to come here. And we don't have that, pretty much. The jobs up here don't have retirement, they don't have health care, for the most part, and so you have to be willing to go without that in order to live here. So that means that you have to be retired, or you just have to be willing to go without it. And so a lot of people aren't willing to take that risk, which is probably why we don't have more people living here than we do. (Orton 2012)

Dan also said that many people “would give their right arm to live in Rockville....Everybody says, ‘Oh, I’d love to live in Rockville! Oh, don’t ever change anything in Rockville!’ You know, it’s easy to say, but we don’t have an awful lot of services” (2012: 14).

Though services in Rockville are limited, most residents who responded to the 2008 town survey said they preferred keeping services limited to the town allowing commercial businesses in. In chapter seven I will look at the pressure Rockville faces to change, in terms of allowing residential and commercial development. I will also look at the fears the STPs have for their town’s future, and I will discuss what the town’s symbol—the 100-watt light bulb—has to do with it all.

CHAPTER VII

LIGHT BULBS, STARS, BUSINESS AND FEAR: THE FUTURE OF ROCKVILLE

When I drive from Salt Lake to Rockville, it always takes a day or two for me to adjust to how dark Rockville is at night. Though I've stayed in Rockville many times to conduct fieldwork over the course of two-and-a-half years, I'm still very much accustomed to the overabundance of light that exists in my Salt Lake City neighborhood. I never realize just *how* accustomed to light I have become until I drive through Rockville at night, because Rockville is just so *dark*. And it's a darkness that is difficult to describe. It's something you sense with your whole body. You feel absolutely naked in its presence. The darkness is penetrating, pervasive—soul-revealing. Every sound in your body—your heartbeat, your breath coming in and going out—even the thoughts in your head—seem magnified. Perhaps this is because in the city, you're not *aware* of them; there is too much background noise. But in Rockville's darkness, there is nothing to hide them—nothing to distract you from them.

Rockville's "street lights" are 100-watt light bulbs that hang from wires above the entire length of Main Street. For most residents, the small amount of light the bulbs emit is sufficient; but to city folk like myself, it seems as if there is no light at all—like driving through a ghost town where everyone has either packed up and moved out all at the same time, or jointly decided to go on vacation for the weekend.

I'll admit, one time while staying in Rockville, I was so unnerved by the darkness that I decided to walk down Main Street to see for myself if there really *was* anyone home, because trying to pick out light from individual houses while driving down Main Street was too difficult. As I walked down the sidewalk, it was eerily quiet, aside from

one or two dogs barking across the street. Like the darkness, Rockville's nighttime quiet also takes some getting used to. I walked slowly, peering carefully at the houses I passed. I was almost surprised to find actual lights on inside most of the houses, along with the bluish glow from television sets. So people actually *were* home—the town hadn't been abandoned after all.

Having solved the question of whether or not anyone was home, I walked back to Jim and Carol's house—my home-base while in Rockville. But I found myself not wanting to go inside just yet. I walked past the house and into the back yard, stopping near the river. Now that I felt a little more centered—a little more settled and adjusted to the darkness and quiet, I began to listen—really listen—and pay attention to what was going on around me. I listened to the river gliding along its age-old path, so unassuming, and yet, so powerful in its ability to carve, shape, and sculpt Zion Canyon. And I listened to the crickets chirruping to one another, to myself—to anyone else up late.

In the distance, I could just make out the shadow-outline of trees, mesas, and Eagle Crags, all tinged with moonlight. And then, when I gazed up at the sky, I finally began to comprehend the reasoning behind the 100-watt light bulbs, and the darkness—so that one can properly see the sky, with its yawning expanse of stars, overpowering in their depth, scope, and magnitude. There were so many stars—vibrant, immense, majestic, demanding nothing, yet commanding attention, humility, and stillness.

Rooted to the earth, shaken to the core by the scene spread out above me, some part of me said this was the kind of romanticized sky that lovers write sonnets about; but there seemed nothing romantic about it—so raw and real and palpable was this dark, glittering world I'd been drawn into. Gone were the bright lights which so often glare

away imperfections, and glisten over ragged edges and rugged corners. Gone were the lights which so often hide what is really there.

It is this sort of introspection that the night skies over Rockville regularly invite, and because most residents want to preserve their night skies, most are in favor of keeping their town dark at night. (According to the 2008 Rockville Survey, the majority of residents said they were against upgrading the street lights.) Greer Chesher told me the following story about a particular town meeting in which town lighting was discussed, and what a long-time Rockville resident had to say about it:

I remember Louise Thompson, who has since passed away, [she] lived in a little house down the street, and she was in her eighties, or so. [Someone in Rockville] wanted to put in real street lights. You know, ‘We should have real street lights here.’ And...they had a town meeting, and the streetlights were discussed, and Louise, who was about this tall, [indicates small height with hand] got up and—they were all just arguing, and going back and forth. And Louise got up and said, ‘You *knew* when you moved here that we had [100-watt] light bulbs for street lights! And you’re just gonna have to get over [wanting to change] that!’ And she sat back down, and everybody was like, ‘Okay. I guess we’re over it,’ you know. I mean, what are you gonna do? And we still have light bulbs for our street lights....And now they’re the town symbol. (Chesher 2012)

The 100-watt light bulb has indeed become the symbol of Rockville. An illustration of the light bulb can be found on street signs throughout Rockville, as well as the placard on the community center already mentioned. I once asked Jim about the significance of the light bulb. He said,

The lights over Rockville are kind of this old tradition—I don’t know when it started—but, you know, most cities have street lamps. Well...I don’t know when they started doing it, [but] they just ran lines across the road, and put a light bulb on it, and that was it! And so that’s our logo....Now, they’ve since upgraded them to compact fluorescents, but, you know, that’s...just a simple pioneer contingency—‘Let’s get some lighting up.’ It’s great! It’s an anchor in history. And [they] always [say], ‘If you want to get a lot of people at the council meetings,’—which nobody goes to, except the council members—‘you put on the agenda that we’re going to change the lighting.’ And everybody will come, and

everybody's ready to fight to the death to keep these lines that we've had forever, hanging above the street. And it's against the code for the highway department [to change them], and everything else. You know, nobody's going to take our lights down. It's just, you know, it's this anchor. And that's what our logo is. (Harlan 2012)

And Carol, Jim's wife, once told me, "The saying goes in Rockville, you're better off messing with a man's wife than his water or his lighting." To many in Rockville, the light bulb symbolizes a simpler time when everyone knew everyone in town, and when everyone volunteered to help out without thought of reward—when helping out was just "what you did." The light bulb is a symbol that represents the timeless character of Rockville to the people who live there. It represents a haven away from the traffic, noise, and pollution found in the rest of the world. It also represents a way of life that Rockville residents will go to great lengths to preserve—a way of life they fear will disappear if commercial businesses are allowed within Rockville's borders.

However, if anything is constant, it's change. Rockville residents have acknowledged this to me on more than one occasion. They know change happens even though they wish this wasn't the case. Anyone who has lived in Rockville for any significant amount of time has witnessed many changes take place in their little town, including Rockville being incorporated as a town in 1987. The biggest fear I've heard expressed by many is that change will come not gradually—not in small increments—but all at once, in a huge and unwelcome way, in the form of commercial development. Many fear commercial development would forever alter Rockville's water, landscape, traffic, and lighting, and thus drastically change the town's rural, quiet atmosphere.

When I asked Greer what newcomers could do to be accepted into the community, she said, "There's not much real animosity towards newcomers if they want

to fit in. [But] if they want to change things—hugely—it’s going to be a problem...If they want to change it for the better, it’s still okay as long as it doesn’t step on other people’s feet” (Chesher 2012). McMillan and Chavis said something similar: “When one resists the community’s influence or tries to dominate the community, one is less influential” (1986: 15).

When asked what they liked most about Rockville, two of the most common words that respondents used on the 2008 Rockville Survey were “small” and “quiet.” One person said that Rockville is “representative of a simpler way of life” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 25). Another said, “Keeping our tree-lined streets as-is and us adapting to them—not the other way around” (2008: 25). This is a sentiment I’ve heard often in Rockville—that newcomers should adapt to the town, as opposed to the town adapting to accommodate those who move in.

When asked if Rockville should “continue to be governed as a rural, agricultural and residential town with limited home-based businesses,” thus keeping out commercial business, survey respondents said things such as, “Yes. Rockville is a very special place...I do not wish to see us become like ‘everyone else’ and ruin what we have,” “Yes. Because there [are] less and less rural, agricultural and residential towns left. It’s all becoming vanilla, look-alike towns and cities,” “Yes. Its uniqueness depends on it,” and “Yes. If I want to live in the city I’d move there” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 27-28).

One respondent said, “I have seen so many places destroyed by growth, developers and change. This [is a] place you can truly go back in time a little bit!” Another person said, “Don’t let Big City people change it to their way. If the original

people like it the way it is, keep it that way.” And one resident warned, “Once Pandora’s Box is opened—even slightly—there is NO RETURN. The spirit is dead” (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 28).

According to the survey, most residents like Rockville’s status as a breakfast community—a residential town as opposed to a town where businesses exist. However, the fear of “Pandora’s Box” getting opened, once even one commercial business is allowed in to “set up shop,” weighs heavy on the minds of many residents. This fear comes, in part, from the pressure of sitting on the doorstep of a national park. Greer said,

Winter is our respite here. You know, a lot of people look forward to summer, because they work in businesses that are only open during summer....But I really think we all look forward to winter, when it slows down, and quiets down. In the spring, I can always tell—you know, you don’t get buses in winter. And I’ll be working out in the yard [in the spring], and a bus will go by, and I’ll [say], ‘Oh! It’s started!’ (Chesher 2012)

Neighboring Springdale has a population of five hundred twenty-nine people; however, with the 2.5 million tourists who visit Zion National Park annually, “tourists staying overnight can outnumber residents by a 5-to-1 ratio” (Ludwig 1997: 4). Tourism is good for Springdale, as it provides a livelihood for residents, and drives the economy of the town. As one person said, “There’s nothing in town that’s not connected to the tourists” (4). But residents feelings towards tourism are ambiguous—although tourism fuels the economy, it tourism fuels pressure for increased development, both commercial and residential.

Rockville resident Al Cooper said,

[Springdale] is a seasonal town. And many are willing to put up with the tourist season because they know at the end of that tourist season, they’re going to get to sit back and kind of enjoy the place, and not have to work so hard. Not have to put

up with those visitors....I'll tell you [a] little story that kind of goes along with this....The story is told of this old timer who ran a gas station in one of the better known commercial towns in Maine. And so he was working the pumps one day and this guy in a big old Cadillac with New York license plates comes driving up...and rolls down his window and says, 'Fill 'er up old timer.' And, then he—while the white haired guy's doing it—he says, 'Ya know, you got a lot of rude people here in Maine.' The old timer looked at him and says, 'Yup. *But* they're mostly all gone by Labor Day.' And...I'm reminded of the story because even here, that attitude exists. 'I love you while you're here, because I really need your money. But I can't wait for you to go.' (Cooper 2011)

Springdale resident Karla Player said, "I don't think anybody saw the freight train of development coming into town. It just hit. It just happened. You get these developers in here and it's like a cancer, one [development] after another" (Ludwig 1997: 1). At one time, Springdale was a town made up of locally-owned hotels, restaurants, and businesses—a quaint, mom-and-pop sort of place. Now, however, one can find chain businesses set up right alongside local businesses: Quality Inn, Zion Park Inn (run by Best Western), a La Quinta Inn, and now a Hampton Inn and Suites, set to open in 2013. Driving through and seeing all the chain hotels, one wonders if chain restaurants will be next.

In 2006, Springdale officials drafted an ordinance that banned chain restaurants from being established within town limits, hoping such an ordinance would protect Springdale's small-town charm. However, a group of eight investors, who want to open a Subway Restaurant, recently sued the town of Springdale, claiming the ordinance is unconstitutional, and that it is "their constitutional right to open a Subway restaurant franchise" (Passey 2010: 1). The suit was brought forth in 2010, and the case is still in the legal process. Springdale residents fear that if the case spends a lot of time in the long,

drawn-out legal process, it will cost money the town of Springdale doesn't have, and the investors will win. And if the Subway is allowed to open, then that will leave the door open for any chain restaurant to come in, causing Springdale to become a mini-Moab, or mini-Jackson Hole.

As Rockville residents keep a wary eye on what is taking place in Springdale, they fear that two main things will take place in their town: 1) a developer or investor with a lot of money, wanting to bring commercial or residential development to Rockville, will sue the town, and will have the ability to fight a lengthy, expensive battle in court; and 2) once commercial development happens, Rockville will become just like Springdale, and lose the small-town charm that brought so many residents to the area in the first place.

On the 2008 Rockville Survey, one person said they didn't want commercial business allowed within town limits because they don't want Rockville to become Springdale. This is a sentiment I've heard many Rockville residents express—that Springdale is too big, too busy, and too "citized" for them. They don't mind going there (or to Zion National Park) for their jobs, and they don't mind going to Springdale to buy groceries, get a bite to eat with friends, or simply grab a cup of coffee. But afterwards, they like leaving behind what they consider to be the hustle and bright lights of Springdale, and return to their quiet little sanctuary of Rockville.

Rockville residents know, however, that money talks, and when someone has a lot of it, they're more likely to get their way. (Some cite the construction of Trees Ranch Dam as an example.) The hope is that the town's limited water supply, as well as the city ordinances—which were designed with the intent to keep growth to a minimum and to

keep commercial development out—will be enough to keep Rockville from becoming another Springdale. Dan McGuire pointed out that it would be difficult for commercial businesses to make it work in Rockville, because there simply isn't enough water. He shared the following story:

A developer once tried to scare us by saying, 'I'd get the water up here. Wouldn't matter if it'd cost a million bucks.' And he wanted to build a big place over by the gravel pits. And he called several times, but he just kind of faded away.... There's always a little specter out there, 'Oh, you know, people with money who want to come in here, and they'll bring all the water you want.' Well, we've had a couple of those people come to [town] meetings, or I've had people come to us when I was the mayor and say, 'Is it worth trying to... build a resort here?' And I said, 'Well, we don't allow commercial. We haven't got the water. And if you don't have a water share, you can't build.' We do have an ordinance that says, 'If you want to build here, you have to have water. That's reasonable. (McGuire 2012)

When I asked Jim about how he felt about the pressure of commercial businesses coming into Rockville, he said,

The problem is a corporation could come in [and] buy up—you know... Best Western [could] come in and say, 'We want to put a big hotel... there.' And they could fight us with lawyers, because, you know, whoever has the most money for a lawyer always wins. And, well, we could say, 'We don't have enough water.' And they could say, 'That's okay. We'll just tap into the river, and we'll make our *own* water.' And they would! And we'd have a hotel across the road.... Well how would that do for Rockville? It would ruin it. It would start to go downhill. So everybody fights it. [And] the fear is that one day, we're going to lose. You know, some big corporation—a McDonalds, or a gas station, or somebody's going to come in and have their way with us. (Harlan 2012)

When I asked VeNeta Shannon how Rockville would change if commercial businesses were allowed in, she said, "Oh, I think it'd be a mess. I think it'd just, you know—it wouldn't be the little town anymore" (Shannon 2012).

It is clear from the most recent town survey that most Rockville residents *don't* want commercial business within town limits; however, some feel that "allowing businesses which don't conflict with [the] quiet, family-oriented community should be

welcomed, thus increasing [the town's] tax base", while others feel that they Rockville "must move forward with sustainable agriculture....Small farms, nurseries, [and] organic farming types of businesses need to be allowed" (Rockville Town Survey 2008: 27-28).

One resident pointed out that "some commercial is good for the tax base and can be done in a classy way—it could add charm to the town," while another resident added, "Quaint retail along Highway 9 would provide funds to help with town maintenance" (28). This is one of the biggest challenges currently facing Rockville—maintenance of the infrastructure, one of the biggest projects being the Rockville Bridge.

Built in 1924, the steel truss, single-lane bridge, which spans the Virgin River, is no longer adequate to handle the amount of traffic that crosses over the river from Rockville onto Grafton Road. Former mayor Allen Brown explained that it is difficult for garbage trucks and construction trucks to get over the bridge because of the limited weight the bridge can hold (Brown 2012). However, bringing the bridge up to current safety standards so it can hold more weight—or building a new bridge all together—will be a project that could cost around four million dollars according to Jeff Ballard.

One of the defining aspects of Allen Brown's tenure as mayor was to secure grants for various town projects. However, as he pointed out to me, it would be impossible for the town to secure a grant for the full amount needed to repair the bridge. He said that the organizations who awarded grants in the past now ask what Rockville is willing to bring to the table in terms of matching contributions; with its current limited budget, Rockville can't bring much. For this reason, and the fact that Rockville's aging infrastructure will require costly repairs in the very-near future, serious questions have been raised about the town's financial future and its ability to pay for future maintenance.

One question is whether or not it's possible to allow some type of sustainable, agricultural business that will not only create revenue, but will also fit in with current town ordinances. One difficulty with this scenario is that the ordinances were written very tightly in order to keep businesses out—with the exception of home-based businesses and the few existing bed and breakfasts. Finding a sustainable, agricultural business that would fit within the parameters set forth by current ordinances is difficult, as the money-generating business that the ordinances have been designed to keep *out* may be the very money-generating business that the town needs to generate a secure financial future.

Another fear many Rockville residents have is that if the ordinances are changed in any way to accommodate just one business—even a sustainable, agricultural business that might somehow help the financial future of the town—then it is possible for ordinances to be changed at any time to accommodate *any* type of business, commercial included. This raises the question of just how tight city ordinances should be—or, in other words, how tight is too tight? I've already discussed the fear many residents have that allowing commercial business into town will forever change the character of the town, and that most prefer that Rockville remain a location for its residents, as opposed to a destination for the throngs of tourists who drive through every year.

Managing its aging infrastructure with a very limited budget, while still accommodating the wishes of its citizens, is one of the greatest challenges Rockville faces. The decisions that will have to be made will be difficult, and it remains to be seen how these issues will be dealt with—if Rockville's citizens will be able to come together

in some kind of agreement, or if the difficult decisions the town faces will be more divisive in the end.

And, as already mentioned, another concern facing Rockville residents is what will happen once the STPs become too old to volunteer and whether or not anyone will feel the motivation to take their place. Jeff and Shirley Ballard talked to me about the difficulty of motivating people to get out and get involved in the community—to help out and volunteer, or simply to participate in social gatherings (Ballard 2013). They, like other residents I have spoken with, have also expressed the difficulty that arises when the responsibility of preserving the town rests on the shoulders of just a few—usually the STPs.

The STPs are proud of the contributions they have made to their community—that they will leave the community a better place to live. It is this contribution that they see as the legacy they will leave for future generations. But whether or not anyone will fill their shoes once they are gone—whether or not anyone will take up the same responsibility and passion for volunteering—remains to be seen. Undoubtedly, outsiders will continue to see Rockville as a desirable place to live, and as long as there are vacant homes available, and finances allow, people will continue to move to Rockville from places outside of Utah. But whether or not they decide to take up the volunteering mantle championed by the STPs remains to be seen.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

By looking at the volunteerism that takes place in Rockville, we can see that it indeed plays a central role in the sense of community that exists for many residents. If we look at sense of community as “the feeling that members have of belonging,”—the feeling that “members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment” (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 9), then we can see the central role volunteerism can play in this process as it strengthens feelings of membership and belonging. We can also see the central role it plays in strengthening cohesiveness within a group, as it provides the opportunity for members to participate not only in shared events that over time become a shared history. And as members participate in a shared history, they gain the feeling of satisfaction that comes from the ownership they feel in their relational community.

We can also see the potential role volunteerism can play as a rite of passage, as it provides a way for a newcomer to become a member of a relational community. Through the act of volunteering, a newcomer shows their intent to become an active participant of a community, and through the act of volunteering a newcomer is able to gain the folk knowledge necessary to be a successful member of a community. In the case of Rockville, this knowledge could include the rules regarding water, land, lighting and noise, as well as the fact that, if you want to make major changes, “stepping on locals’ toes” in the process, you’re bound to make enemies. As a newcomer gets to know community members and is seen by those members as someone who wants to participate

and “be visible” instead of being a “consumer,” the newcomer is incorporated as a member of the community.

As previously mentioned, volunteering is not the only way for someone to gain this knowledge; other ways might include getting well-acquainted with neighbors, attending church, or simply living in a community for a significant amount of time. However, volunteering can not only speed up this process, but it can improve one’s chances of being seen by others within the community as someone who cares about “giving back” and making the town a better place in which to live. More research in the topic of volunteerism as a potential rite of passage within a small community—or any community, for that matter—shows promise.

Although not officially a “gateway community” that borders a national park, Rockville is still affected in similar ways to other gateway communities (such as Springdale), since it is situated so close to Zion National Park. As with other towns in picturesque settings, Rockville has been affected—especially within the last twenty to thirty years—by an influx of move-ins who have had varying ideas of how to build a community, and how to act for the good of the community.

The sense of community within Rockville has been redefined in recent years, not only in the process of newcomers becoming middle-timers, but also Rockville being officially incorporated as a city. Because of the lack of commercial business in Rockville, as well as the limited town budget and services available to residents, volunteerism plays a major role—and will mostly likely continue to play a major role—in newcomers being accepted into the community. When attempting to understand the sense of community that exists in Rockville, volunteerism is a key component of discussion.

According to old-timers I've interviewed, volunteerism is a way of life—something that, living in a small community where neighbors have to rely on each other, you just *do*. You pitch in and help where you can, knowing you may one day be in a place of needing help yourself. This is a view that the STPs also share.

Over the years, Rockville has changed little in terms of population size; however, with the influx of people moving in from out-of-state, the concern is that the volunteerism-mindset is changing, and will one day disappear all together. This concern is coupled with the fear that new residents will increasingly see themselves as individualists first, and members of their community second. And as old-timers pass away, and the STPs become old-timers themselves, there is a fear that people's sense of community will decline, when volunteerism is no longer seen as important.

The STPs are trying to ensure that this doesn't happen—at least while they are still able to work themselves. They do not know who will take their place when they are no longer able to volunteer; but instead of spending their time worrying about things in the future they have no control over, in true STP fashion, they continue to do what they can for their community *while* they can.

Though the STPs are a cohesive group, members of the group volunteer for different reasons. Some volunteer because they view it as a legacy the community will remember them for when they are gone. Others volunteer because they view it as good *for* the community. And still others volunteer because of a perceived lack—the idea that if *they* don't volunteer, no one else will. And in a town so dependent upon volunteers, this fear is well-founded.

Whatever the reasons behind the STPs working to better their town, volunteering is central to their sense of community. Likewise, being “visible” and showing support by participating in town social events, is also central to their sense of community. And it is their hope that, in the future, as other newcomers move in from out of state, they will somehow be motivated to catch the same vision of volunteering, and realize the central role it plays in preserving Rockville as a small, rural, quiet town—“Utah’s last treasure.”

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