

**Interview with James (Jim) Petery
Friday, April 22, 2022
The Hill Cumorah Legacy Project**

Recorded over Zoom
Interviewee: James (Jim) Petery
Interviewer: Daniel Gorman Jr.
Duration: 39:44
Transcription App: Otter.ai

Transcript

[00:00]

Jim Petery: Got it.

Dan Gorman: Today is Friday, April 22, 2022. My name is Dan Gorman, and I am interviewing James Petery, also—better known as Jim, for the Hill Cumorah Legacy Project at RIT. Thank you for meeting with me, Jim.

Jim Petery: You're welcome.

Dan Gorman: To begin our conversation, could you tell me how you're connected to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

Jim Petery: Well, I was a convert to the Church back in 1981, join the Church, and... My family, we've been involved with Church since then, here, in [the] Rochester area. I've participated in many different callings or positions within the Church over the years, currently serving as a high councilman for the Rochester, New York, Stake, which is, basically, most of the Rochester area. Like, we travel down from Warsaw down to bath, so it's a large territory. So, I'm one of the high councilmen that supports our Stake President at this time.

Dan Gorman: And here in Rochester, you obviously had access to the Hill Cumorah Pageant for a long time.

Jim Petery: Yes.

Dan Gorman: Do you remember the first time you saw the show?

Jim Petery: Wow. Um, it would have been probably in the mid-'70s. It was back when there were [sic] no major staging as we had when we shut down the Pageant. So, it was little, tiny platforms that were set up on the face of the Hill, little bushes here and there. The seating was cinder blocks [laughs] with wooden planks. So, it was a lot different and changed over the years. But, yeah, no, I remember going to it—so, what's that?—over 50 years ago, so... Been a part of our lives for many years.

Dan Gorman: And you would have had the opportunity to see how the Pageant changed over time as the scripts were updated.

Jim Petery: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And the costumes, everything was—every year, they were changing, and then you'd get a new costume director, and they would take and go a different way with the costumes. And—so, yeah, I saw a lot of changes, a lot of improvements, special effects with—when they had the pyrotechnics, you know, explosions, a volcano was erupting, then they had to eliminate that because of handling—safety reasons. But yeah, it grew and developed into—as—it's known as one of the largest outdoor religious theatrical pageants in the United States, or, actually, North America.

Dan Gorman: The one expression I've heard over the years is comparing the Pageant to Oberammergau, the big Passion Play that's done in Germany every ten years, except that the Hill Cumorah Pageant was, as you said, an annual event. [laughs]

Jim Petery: [laughs] Right, right.

Dan Gorman: So, Jim, how did you first get involved in the Pageant as a participant, not just an audience member? Did you apply, or were you approached to join?

Jim Petery: I—we applied as a family. We knew a number of families that were participants in Pageant, and we just said, “Let’s apply and see if we can get into Pageant.” And we did. We applied and were accepted. And that was back in 1997. And that was the beginning of our long tenure of—at Pageant. And I think that, at that time, I was serving as a bishop in the Church, and it was a great experience for our family, so my son basically grew up at Pageant, and my daughter loves it. She loves being on stage, so... Let’s put it that way, yeah.

Dan Gorman: So, being involved with the Pageant over the course of, I suppose, 22 years, if you were involved in it from [05:00] ’97 up until the ending—

Jim Petery: Yes.

Dan Gorman: Would you say that your responsibilities gradually increased over time, or did it vary by year? Were you assigned many different roles at random?

Jim Petery: Well, when I first started, I was—we were at a—one of our devotional meetings, and they were looking for volunteers to help support doing some electrical wirings and—or lighting (they said lights), and I thought, “Well, my background was—through RIT—was in electrical engineering.” And having wired houses as a college student, I said, “I can help do whatever they need.” Raised my hand, and that started the first five years of my career at Pageant, was helping doing the safety edge lighting on the stages for the performers. I was able to do that while still being *in* Pageant as a participant, so whenever I wasn’t in rehearsals or on stage, I was helping with the lighting.

Did the lighting with a friend for a few years, and I said, based on my electrical engineering at Xerox, I said, “There’s better ways to do these lightings than what they were doing,” so I introduced them to different tools and things. We then converted all the edge lighting to a—the LED rope that you see, like on the floors of an airplane, basically, making it

where you could roll the lights out and reel them back in at the end of the year. It would take more than a week to get the old lighting system set up, and then you had to start tearing it back down, so it was a major change. They had to do mechanical changing to the frame structure of the stages to be able to make the stage safer for the cast members, which—often, we’d have people that would go off the edges accidentally. We were able to put red lighting along the edges for “stay back, danger, don’t go any further,” and then green lights where they could go for steps and things like that.

So, the first couple of years, I was involved in doing the safety lighting, and while I was doing that, I was then asked to also, in addition to doing the lighting, if I would take on the role of transportation coordinator. So, that was involved in getting the busing of all of the cast members to and from the airport, to and from their lodging—we used to use Hobart [and William Smith Colleges],¹ then we used the Finger Lakes Community College²—transporting them to and from service projects that they scheduled during the second week, and then, also, busing for tours, for those that came into Rochester from out of state, that they would be given the opportunity to go on a tour. So, I’ve handled all of [it?], school busing, transporting, and scheduling to get the people to and from where they needed to be.

Did that for a couple years, and then—I was then approached to be—called to serve in the Pageant Presidency, and at that time, I was called as the first counselor in the presidency under Ray Crystal was the President that time. And that was a different involvement. At that point, I was no longer participating in Pageant with a role. I didn’t have the time to do that. And I had various areas of responsibility. I was over the cast—basically, all the cast leaders and cast teams—responsible for medical and for food service, the transportation coordination, so I had a

¹ Located in Geneva, New York, approximately 22 miles south and east of the Hill Cumorah.

² Located in Canandaigua, New York, approximately 11 miles due south from the Hill Cumorah.

number of different hats that I would wear, and planning and doing all of the devotionals, the music, the selections, placing callings out for different positions, whether it was Primary children leaders... I was involved in making many different callings throughout each Pageant.

Dan Gorman: You mentioned that your initial work with safety lighting drew on your training at RIT—

Jim Petery: Mhmm.

Dan Gorman: If I did that correctly.

Jim Petery: That's correct.

Dan Gorman: Were you a member of the Church when you were in college, or did that come later?

Jim Petery: That came later. I was introduced to the Church while I was still *in* college. As a matter of fact, I was—my wife and I—I was married when I transferred up to RIT. We went home to the Hudson Valley, and my wife wanted to go and [10:00] see one of her friends, and she had a friend who was a member of the Church, from high school. And they said, “Sure, why don't you come see us? We have time on Sunday.” So, we went to visit them and ended up going to their church down in Poughkeepsie, New York. And at that time, the missionaries that were there came up and said, “Ooh! Who are you?” And we told them, and then, “Where are you living?” And [we] said, “Oh, in Rochester.”

Well, we—no sooner [than] a week after we got back to Rochester, I had missionaries knocking [laughs] on my door. So, that's what started our investigation of the Church. And one of—I had a *professor* at my—at the two-year college that I transferred out of, who was a member of the Church. And I remember sitting around and talking *with* him about the Church, and wanting to meet *him* at the Church. It happened to be, he attended the same church as my wife's

friend did. So, we had connections with friends that led us to the missionaries investigating here in Rochester.

But I did not join. My wife joined before me. I kind of hung out a little longer. And once I was finished with my schooling, then I got more serious in investigating to join the church.

Dan Gorman: The reason I had asked about that was, I was curious about whether local college students who are members of the Church would frequently get involved in the Pageant. I was wondering if you—you know—had you been one of them at one point.

Jim Petery: Mmm, not really, no. Just attending it as a regular—you know, my going out to see it and being a normal tourist, shall we say, to go and visit, but not involved because of anyone else in my—at school.

Dan Gorman: Now, during the years that you were participating in the Pageant as a family, let's talk about a typical day at the Hill Cumorah. I know they would be pretty long days. You would arrive early in the morning, and obviously you'd be doing your tasks, and the rest of your family would be off doing other things. But what would it be like when [sic] those moments when you would come together for lunch or dinner, and you'd hear about each other's stories from the day? What would that [be like]? 'Cause they could be very different experiences.

Jim Petery: Yes, I—obviously, depending upon the role that I was playing, and when we first got started, the family members are all taken care of through their own leaders. Like, my son and daughter had a cast team of their own age bracket. They would go to their tents and participate in the activities pretty much throughout the whole day. And then, like I said, when I wasn't on rehearsal schedules, I was wiring safety lights, so I didn't get to spend a lot, a lot of time with other cast team members. But it was fun. You know, you'd hear—usually after the day was over, you'd get into listening to my son or my daughter and what they had done that day that was

exciting for them. So, yeah, Pageant sound[s]—it's a family-oriented thing. However, you don't spend a lot of time actually—when you're actually at the Hill—with your family members, because they're all going in different directions. So...

One of the things I didn't mention before was, after I was in the Presidency for five years, there was a couple years where I was not involved in *staff*, and then I was asked to go back to Pageant a couple years later. President [Neil] Pitts, at the time, asked if I would mind coming back because I had such knowledge of the Hill and—from my being *in* the Presidency, he asked me to come back into the security group. And I shadowed him for one year, and then I took over as director of security and did that for—lost time, but about five years as the security director, overseeing the Hill and the security of the cast while I was there. *That* was a lot different 'cause I was the first one on the Hill to release the overnight security person, and I was the last one off the Hill, so I would be over at the office at 7:30 in the morning and wouldn't get back to my sleeping quarters until after midnight. So, every day was that way.

Dan Gorman: When you say sleeping quarters, were you one of the people actually bunking on the Hill?

Jim Petery: Yes. During that time of security, I was on the Hill in Zion's Camp, the campground. We also were [15:00] able to get into the campground during, I'd say—maybe the second or third year that we were there in the cast, we were able to get into the campground. When I was involved—

Dan Gorman: We were disconnected for a moment. Jim, you were just saying that your family, at first, was commuting to the Hill, but then, one year, you were able to get into Zion's Camp, and your family was able to actually camp at the Hill Cumorah.

Jim Petery: Correct. And then, when I was called into the Presidency, it was—they wanted to have a member of the Presidency actually *on* the Hill at all times, so I was the one who did that and enjoyed... We loved being in Zion's Camp. The kids loved it. It was a great experience in the campground. It also enabled me to be able to go right—walk from the campground over to the Pageant offices, the office, and I was able to be there early, and I could stay as late as I needed to without impacting the family for transporting back and forth to Webster.³

Dan Gorman: You've mentioned a couple of things at the site. But I'm wondering, for listeners in the future, it might help if we clarify the actual geographical footprint. You've mentioned the Pageant stage, the—sort of the visitors' center for the Hill Cumorah, but then Zion's Camp, and I know there were also a number of—sort of dormitory buildings and behind-the-scenes shops. Can you talk a little bit about the geographical footprint of all these buildings at the Hill?

Jim Petery: Sure, the Zion's—they called it Zion's Campground—is a—it literally looks like a campground that holds—*wow*, I'm going to say, maybe, 40 campsites, and some people come in with their own trailers. There's also a section that's for tenting, for those that have tents. And there's showers and restrooms and refrigerators and things that are provided for people to store things beyond their own trailers. And that's right next to the Hill. On the north side of the Hill Cumorah is the campground.

In the back of it—I don't know how much—if you're familiar—the—behind the Hill is where the—what was called the Facilities Management (the FM) group, they had their buildings, where—the group that goes out and mows the lawn and maintains the buildings on the actual property. The dressing rooms were just to the south of the visitor center that's there. The shop where they would make some of the spears and—losing the words here— but basically all of the

³ Webster, New York, located approximately 25 miles northwest from the Hill Cumorah.

materials needed for the actors to go on stage with, were made there, the prop shop, all their props.

And then, on the south side of the Hill, there was also other dressing rooms, and the wig and beard shop was on the north side, but they also had one for women on the south side. The food service area was right where the large pavilion was that everyone would meet for the meetings, and that's where they also came for their meals, if they had the meal plan. And then, there was the Pageant office building. So, it's spread out quite a ways. And then, the Cast team areas was south of the buildings, where all the tents—if you ever were out there—when you saw the tents that were set up. So, it covered quite a quite a distance from there. And then, the parking lots on both sides of the road.

We used Hobart College campus dormitories to house a number of the—I'd say almost up to 200 [of] the cast members were at Hobart, and we'd have buses going to and from Hobart every day. And then, other people would stay in local campgrounds, motels, whatever. And then, they switch[ed] from Hobart to Finger Lakes Community College and used their dormitories as—for a place to house our cast members, and staff.

Dan Gorman: Having talked to a number of individuals in this project and [20:00] listened to my students' interviews, the whole scene has something of a YMCA or Boy Scout campground. There does seem to be a certain aspect of a summer camp to the culture onsite, although I suppose the difference from a traditional youth summer camp is that this was for all ages.

Jim Petery: Yeah, the campgrounds were there. At Zion's Camp, it was—everyone enjoyed it. The kids, that was the time it was their downtime, after they came off the stage. They were out of costume; they all could get together. They used to have these “Munch and Mingle,” they called it. Every night, underneath the pavilion, people would gather, and they would share munchies.

And families were given an opportunity to come and bring something to share with all the rest of the camp—campers. They had a—they'd have a campfire going, and it was a fun time for the kids. They set up volleyball nets; they had basketball; so it was kind of like a fun time for the family members to be able to use it.

Dan Gorman: I'm trying to think if I have any other questions about the day-to-day logistics of the Pageant, especially since you were involved for so many years.

Jim Petery: Yeah.

Dan Gorman: You mentioned a dining plan. What was the food like?

Jim Petery: Food was pretty good. We first—I think, for a number of years, they used the food service people from Hobart College, that they would bring vans or a truck with these heaters and racks of food, and they would bring 'em in and have it set up so they could feed *hundreds* of the cast and staff. I mean, as it got towards the end, the staff—or the *cast* size was up over 750 people. And you can't have them all run out to restaurants locally, [laughs] because they wouldn't make it back in time for their next practice or meetings on the Hill. So, the food was good.

Year after year, though, I—you kind of noticed the menu has stayed pretty [laughing] much the same. For those of us that had been there, "Oh, Tuesday, it's chicken again; it's—this is..." But they did a good job in bringing in different meals and providing a variety for everyone. They'd have a barbecue night, so they'd do things on the grill for everyone. Very well-managed. And, of course, it had to meet—the food service director had to ensure the food was kept at the heat—we'd get inspected by the Health Department. So, it became a nice... Down the line they'd go. People from the cast were given assignments to come and help serve the food, so you'd have someone putting, you know, the corn and a potato and piece of chicken, and you go

down, get a piece—a cookie and then your drink, so—very well-organized. And we—because of my calling, I—we shared dinners because I could never take enough time to go up and eat with my family, so... But it was pretty good!

They switched the food provider—I think they went from Hobart to a different food service near the end. But we used to have Byrne Dairy for a while,⁴ and they would bring their milk truck and leave it right on the site, and we'd have to ensure that it was stayed—stayed fuel—fueled up so that it would keep everything cold. But, yeah, it was a great opportunity for people to have their meals right there on the Hill.

Dan Gorman: I was just flashing back to when I did the YMCA Model Congress program in high school,⁵ and I had the opportunity to go to the national conference in North Carolina⁶—very much a camp atmosphere—and I was thinking how there would be, sort of, these homemade ice cream treats. The recipes were passed down year to year. I was curious if there was any kind of a, you know, private, massively unhealthy, but delicious snack recipe known at the Hill Cumorah.

Jim Petery: *Oh*, they—a lot of the cast teams—I don't know if someone shared with you—the cast is broken up into different cast teams based upon their ages. So, you'll have all the, you know, nine- or 10-year-old boys and girls, and then the 11-, 12-, 13-year-olds, the teenagers, the young single adults that were between 20 and 30, and they had leaders, and they were always doing snow cones. [laughs] They will be doing ice cream—you know, you put it in the ball and roll it around and make ice cream [25:00] treats. And they used to—from the cast team leaders, they would actually go and have one of the golf carts go around, and they would advertise like

⁴ Byrne Dairy is a regional chain of dairy and deli stores in Upstate New York.

⁵ Depending on the state, this YMCA program is called Youth and Government or Youth in Government.

⁶ The 2009 YMCA Conference on National Affairs (CONA) at the Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC.

they were the ice cream man ringing a bell, and they'd drive through the cast teams, and kids would all run up, and they'd get free popsicles or whatever, so... But, yeah, meals, sometimes they would do specialties and cooking, and—yeah. It's—it was entertaining as well as enjoyable to see the cast teams that can participate in doing different activities together or as their own group. So...

Dan Gorman: I think this might be a good transition point, then, to talk more about the purpose of the Pageant, the religious messages involved. Can you speak about how it affected your religious views—or, I suppose the term you—Mormons use is *testimony*?

Jim Petery: Yeah.

Dan Gorman: Can you talk about the spiritual aspects of the show?

Jim Petery: Absolutely. The Pageant was a great spiritual boost for families to come, especially for their children, and themselves as well. One, it increased in your testimony and growth of the knowledge of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was the Prophet who restored the Church in the Latter Days. And right there, around the corner, you've got the Sacred Grove, the Grandin building where the Book of Mormon was printed, so a lot of very key Church sites, and it made the—the Book of Mormon, it kind of makes the—or the Pageant, which is about the Book of Mormon, actually made it come to life more, so you [could?] understand better what was being portrayed onstage and the words of the actors. So, definitely a testimony builder.

I [was] involved with—a lot of times, with not only the selecting of the families to come to Pageant, and we used to look for families that had teenagers that were getting up close to missionary age, so the ones that had a 16-, 17-, 18-year-old youth in their family usually could get selected easier because they're getting ready to go out and serve a mission for the Church. And I saw many people's lives changed as a result of being *in* Pageant. Sometimes, the mom and

dad would drag 'em kicking to come *to* Pageant, and then after they were there, they didn't want to go home. They had grown in their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel, and it helped them to be able to go on to serve a mission for the Church. So, it's a great testimony builder, as you said.

Dan Gorman: I have a two-part question to follow that. Were there scenes in the Pageant—and when I say the Pageant, I'm referring, let's say, to the most recent version of the script—

Jim Petery: Mhmm [best guess].

Dan Gorman: For the last 30 years—were there particular scenes in the Pageant that resonated with you the most? And the follow up is, were there any scenes from the Book of Mormon that *weren't* included that you wish *had* been?

Jim Petery: Hmm. Wow. Well, I think—when I was only, actually, in as a participant on stage, I had the opportunity to serve—or, to be cast—as a New World disciple. And as that—that position, obviously, is when Christ was coming and was on the American continent—I was able to be up at—near the top, when we used to have—the Savior would come down. And to be able to be standing there and listening to the words that they're saying in that scene was very—to me, it was a great opportunity to be able to hear the Savior and to be up at the top where he comes descending down on his—on the cables. I don't know if you ever saw the Pageant yourself, but they changed that over the years. He used to descend down, and then they stopped for safety [laughs] reasons and moved him over to something where they lifted him up before, in the dark, and then they would just lower him on a hydraulic platform. So, that was—to me was—[sighs] and I did that for more than one year, but that was a great experience and a great opportunity for me.

The other scenes that—I'm trying to think—it *did* change over the years that I was there. They used to have a scene with King Benjamin, but then they [30:00] dropped that out. (I used to like that one.) But, yeah, it was—it's—pretty much, once it was Pageant time and you start hearing the Pageant music, all the scenes and the words start coming out because you hear it *every* night. You know, for two weeks, you're ingrained in the actual Pageant, and so—[it] kind of helps.

Dan Gorman: You've asked a couple times if I had the opportunity to see the Pageant. I did. I did see it—actually, three times—in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Jim Petery: Okay.

Dan Gorman: So, by 2019, the Church had announced under the new President [Russell M. Nelson] that the pageants were going to be ending, and I say pageants because several others around the country were ending as well.

Jim Petery: That's correct.

Dan Gorman: What was your reaction to finding out that the Pageant was going to be wound down, that your Presidency would be dissolved eventually?

Jim Petery: I was disappointed. I felt that it was a great asset for us to have here in the Rochester area. The Pageant touched the lives of so many people. Now, that—there's a lot of pros and cons that... Was it really helping for a lot of the non-members within the area as much as it was the members? I—it helped both. I mean, it shared—and I—there's a lot of people that had *gained* their testimony by going to Pageant and join[ing] the church. And then, there's a lot of people that were members, and they had their children's testimonies be built and strengthened by the Pageant. So, I felt it was a good thing.

Now, having been involved in the security aspect for the last five or six years, I can understand that we were a soft target, where we could only keep out—besides the protesters that came every night, you never know what's gonna happen—and they didn't want to put a lot of money into increasing the security to the extent that we'd feel that we were a secure spot. So, I understand. And the Pageant *is* a big cost for the Church. But I was disappointed, I guess to say. I think—I thought it should just continue on. [laughs]

Dan Gorman: With the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, the final performance was scheduled for 2020, and then it was postponed to '21 and finally cancelled altogether.

Jim Petery: Right.

Dan Gorman: Can you talk a little bit about the ramifications of COVID and how that affect[ed] the dispersal of all the Pageant equipment?

Jim Petery: Well, the dispersal of all the equipment and all the items, we had to inventory everything that we had, and then finding different organizations, different places, and to be able to basically give away or to provide for other people. So, the Pageant materials was [sic] dispersed. President Pitts did a great job in figuring out where and how they could help find people that could use some of that equipment, and... I mean, even like the light towers, the big green towers that held the lights, last I had heard that the Ontario County Sheriff's Department had taken one or two of the towers to be used for repelling, learning how the officers could repel off, so... The costumes were shared with other theatrical groups that were interested in them. Wow, there's *so* much other... The security fencing that we had, was given to other sites where they could use it. I think some of it might have even gone in [sic] Salt Lake. So, it was dispersed very well through—where—*all* different groups and organizations that needed it.

Dan Gorman: As we come to the end of our story—I guess we basically come up to the present day now—are there any memories that really stand out to you, a particularly notable experience from the Pageant, whether positive or negative?

Jim Petery: Wow. There's [sic] a couple different ones. I—be—one of the ones when I was in the Presidency, obviously I was responsible for calling across the country to find different individuals to serve in different [35:00] capacities. And I remember this one story: There was a young lady. We get—they fill in on their applications, they also give us kind of—us—a little bio about their skills and experiences, and I was in the process of looking for a *chorister*, someone that could have music background and could lead and conduct the music for the devotionals, and when I was in the Presidency, we used to have three devotionals a day, and that included music, song, talks, etc. And this young lady was one of about five candidates that I kind of filtered through the papers, narrowed it down to these five individuals, and I kept getting this prompting that I should select this young lady. And I said, "But these other ones look better qualified." They—you know, they're music teachers, or they were this. And I went with the prompting, and I said, "I'm going to select *her*," and I *did*. And when she came, she was *so* excited and glad that she was able to come to Pageant, be selected, and then to help participate in the music. She shared with us that she was very close to taking her own life, and that she needed something that would help her to feel needed and—our giving her that, she felt, was a blessing in her life. That allowed her to move on and to get on with life. And it gave her [a] blessing. And it was a great experience, one I'll never forget, because we had no idea what she was going through in her life.

In terms of other—other—they call it "miracles of Pageant." *Have there been?* Yes, there were, including from someone to work—one of the work crew had fallen out of his bunk bed on the upper bunk and landed on the concrete floor, and [it] ended out he was fine, but it's just...

Little miracles of people's lives. One of the directors' wives had fallen off the front stage, landed on—face first—and basically split her lip, and teeth went through. They thought she'd broke [sic] her neck. And we had her airlifted out. And she turned out to be fine; [we'd?] given her a blessing. So, the Lord was watching over and blessing people's lives and protecting them while they were doing the service that they were called to do. And I—I know it and saw it. [You can?] imagine: During the—one of the productions, you know, the giant sailboat, the sail that goes up, and then it's got Velcro, so during the storm, they pull it—it just Velcro-tears away, and it comes down—well, one of the practice—no, one of the performance nights, they pulled on it, but the Velcro didn't let go. The [sheet?]-the actual material tore. So, now, here is this big, giant sail that had been destroyed [laughing]. And they went off in the sewing department, and they were able to find the exact number of bolts and material to rebuild a new sail, and had it ready by the next night. So, lots of little things that happened. People's lives got touched. People were protected. And, yeah, I am sure that someone should probably write a book on the miracles of Pageant.

Dan Gorman: Well, at least, with this project, with interviewing at least twenty people, we can capture some of those perspectives, and who knows? Maybe these interviews will be used to [sic] somebody writing a more systematic history of the Pageant in the future.

Jim Petery: Yeah, yeah, no, that's great. I think it was a great experience to be in Pageant. It touched our lives, and I know that I enjoyed—it was a *lot* of *work*; I'm not saying it wasn't. It was—I had *long days* at the Hill in prepping—whether it was helping lay out parking lots, I did a lot of different things, so I knew a lot about different aspects of Pageant, so... But it was fun.

Dan Gorman: Well, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

Jim Petery: Well, I'm glad to have the opportunity. My memory is not as good as it used to be, so... [laughs] But, no, it's a good experience.

Dublin Core Metadata for the interview

Title: Interview with James (Jim) Petery, Friday, April 22, 2022

Subject: Hill Cumorah Pageant,

Description: Jim Petery is an RIT alumnus who first saw the Hill Cumorah Pageant in the mid-1970s. In this interview, Jim discusses his family's involvement in the Pageant, including his eventual service in the Pageant Presidency. Much of the interview concerns the Pageant's logistics and physical plant. Topics include stage lights, cast housing, Zion's Camp, the food services, youth activities, and various snacks that participants enjoyed. This interview will be of particular interest to listeners who are interested in the Pageant as a summer camp. Finally, Jim reflects on the Pageant's spiritual messages and the miracles that he witnessed onsite.

Creator: James (Jim) Petery and Daniel Gorman Jr.

Source: The Hill Cumorah Legacy Project

Date: Friday, April 22, 2022

Contributor: Daniel Gorman Jr.

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Format: M4A (audio), PDF (transcript)

Language: English

Identifier:

- Gorman_JamesPeteryInterview_04-22-2022_audio_1386783943.m4a
- Gorman_JimPeteryTranscript_04-22-2022_Edited.pdf