

My Early Years

Steve Dunn Hanson

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1940-1952



1

OGDEN 1941-1945

I WAS BORN AUGUST 5, 1940, in the LDS hospital in Idaho Falls, Idaho, the second child, second son of Lynn Raymond and Isabelle Jane Dunn Hanson. On that day they were digging ground for the Idaho Falls Temple, and Mother said she could see them working on it from her hospital room.

I was born blue and had to be whacked several times before I started to breathe. My mother said I cried every minute from that time forth for some months. I had rickets disease as a baby and also scarlet fever. Maybe they were reasons for me to cry.



Grocery store in the service station.

At this time my parents were living in Shelley, Idaho where Dad was working with his father running a service station/Allis Chalmers dealership and

a little grocery store all wrapped up in one. There wasn't enough income to support both families and when I was a year old we moved to Ogden, Utah so Dad could get work and support the family.

My first recollections are of Ogden. I remember events as far back as before I was two years old. I remember falling down a flight of basement stairs in a walker and landing on the cement floor. I was damaged but not broken.

The first house I can recall living in was on Swan Street in Ogden. I remember having an ice box refrigerator and milk delivered in bottles to our door.



Bruce & me 1941



Swan Street Home

We had a dog, a big Dalmatian, that was a little rough on Bruce and me. There was a sandbox in the backyard, and the yard was fenced.

Shortly after I turned two, I remember having my picture taken with my Dunn grandparents, my great grandmother Knecht, and my mother and dad and her siblings. I remember it, because my mother got after me for playing in the curtains. Grandma Knecht had just lost her husband, and Mom was pregnant with my twin sisters, Rita and Ruth.

1942

Top Row: Lucille, Doyle, Mom, Dad, Lila



Bottom Row: Michael, Grandpa Dunn, Grandma Dunn, me, Grandma Knecht, Bruce, Jack

Shortly after this picture was taken, Mom called for me to come up from the basement where I was playing, but I did not come. She came down to get me and tripped and fell down the stairs. She went into labor shortly after that, and the twins were born prematurely. Many times Mom tried to assure me that this was not as a result of her fall, but I felt “guilty” for a long time.

At first everything seemed to be going fine, but then first one and then the other twin passed away. I remember seeing them lying in one casket and the great sadness that I felt.

While in Ogden, Bruce and I had our tonsils out. We went to the hospital and in those days the general anesthetic they used was ether. They put this cloth over my face, and before I could count to ten I was gone. The tonsils were

taken out, and we got ice cream which almost made it worth it.



Rita and Ruth

World War II began in 1941 and just about everything I remember in the Ogden days had something to do with the war. I remember my Dad getting his draft notice and orders to report. He was designated 4-F because of his eye sight, his flat feet, and his two children.

I remember the ration stamps for gas and sugar and other critical supplies and going to the junk yard to find tires for the car because you couldn't buy new ones.

We would look for Dad to drive home from work and catch him a block or so from the house. He would stop the car and let us in, and we would open his lunch pail. He always saved some food for us.

Dad had several jobs when we lived in Ogden, including working for the Army repairing band instruments. His sister, Blanch, worked with him there too. And he played the baritone and trombone in the Utah Depot

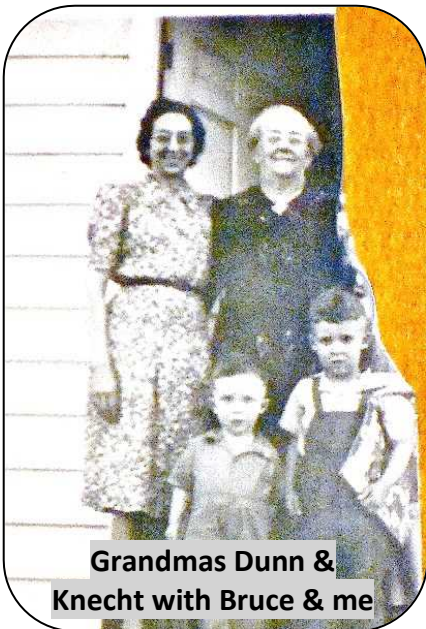


Band, and the trombone in the famous White City Ballroom dance band. White City was the largest ballroom between Chicago and Los Angeles, and the big name bands would play there, much like big-name singers/pop artists, tour the country to perform today. Blanch played in both bands, and their brother, Merrill, was in the White City band too. Three siblings in the same famous mountain west band. Pretty special.



White City Ballroom Dance Band about 1943-4

At the time I was born I had four grandfathers living. My great Grandpa Knecht passed away back east when I was two, and I never saw him. And I had five grandmothers who were alive who I did know.



Grandmas Dunn & Knecht with Bruce & me

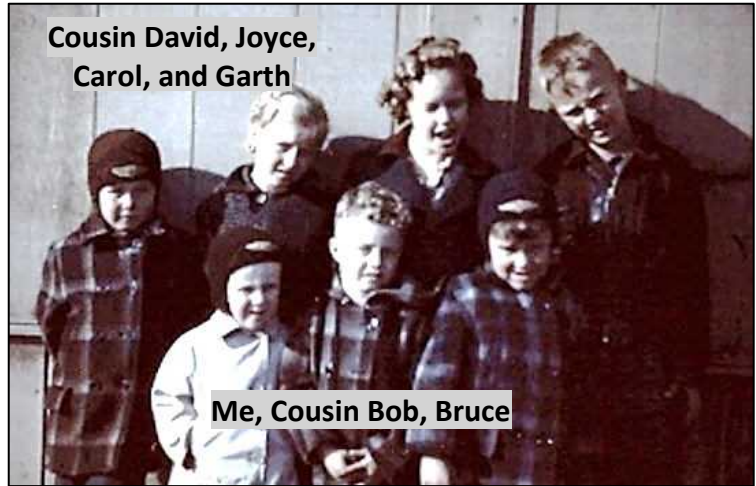
In addition to my Grandfathers Dunn and Hanson, my Great Grandfather Hanson was still living. He was a genuine pioneer and was born in a covered wagon while crossing the plains. Besides my Hanson and Dunn grandmothers, my great grandmothers Knecht, Hanson, and Holland were still living. I remember them all vividly.

At one point, when maybe two or three of my grandmothers were at our place, I was purported to have exclaimed, "How many grandmas do I have?" I was very blessed.

I particularly remember at this time visiting Grandma and Grandpa Hanson in Shelley. They lived in their service station. They had no hot running water, and we would take baths in a wash tub. They would heat water on their wood or coal burning stove and pour that into the wash tub and then add cold water to get it comfortable. All of us kids would use the same water to bathe.

My father's youngest brother, Garth, and sisters, Carol and Joyce, were just a few years older

than me and were more like my brother and sisters. I loved going to Shelley so I could play with them. They were older enough than Bruce and me that they weren't that excited to see us come. It meant that they had



**Cousin David, Joyce,
Carol, and Garth**

Me, Cousin Bob, Bruce

to include us in their fun outdoor games that they would play at night, like "No Bears Out Tonight," and "Run Sheepy Run."



A picture of innocence?

What I remember about church in Ogden was the sloping cement at the back of the chapel that covered the stairway leading to the chapel's basement. It was outside, and the cement was roughly finished. It was great for sliding down though. The only problem was the rough finish wore a hole in the bottom of our pants awfully fast. Bruce and I were told not to do it, but we did anyway. That took care of our only pair of Sunday pants. That also brought a spanking.

The end of World War II is a very vivid memory for me. We stood on our porch as the sirens and firecrackers went off signaling its end, and we

went to a big parade with the soldiers marching down the street. Everything had centered around the war for four years and there was great relief that the Allies were victorious.

And...we got a new brother. Ray was born in 1944.





2

SHELLEY 1945-1951

WHEN THE WAR ENDED, Dad and Mom moved our family back up to Idaho. Grandpa Hanson bought the franchise to sell Nash automobiles and moved his family to Blackfoot, Idaho. Dad bought the service station in Shelley from him, but the problem was there was no suitable house available to purchase in Shelley.



For several months we stayed in one room in the back of great grandpa and grandma Hanson's house in Shelley. That was crowded with the three of us boys. What I remember most about our stay here was Dad cutting the heads off chickens with an axe and them running headless around the yard. Gross, huh. I also remember going to some movies in the old theater there in Shelley with Garth. I remember getting so scared in one movie that Garth

had to take me out, and he missed the rest of the movie. He was not happy.

Finally, Dad found a house we could rent in Idaho Falls, nine miles away. We lived there for six months or so, and that's when Glen was born. He was

lying in his bassinet on top of Mom's cedar chest, and I wanted to get a little better look at him. So, I just tipped the bassinet over, and Glen rolled out and fell to the floor. Mom was really shaken, but he wasn't hurt. I got a good look at him. 😊

It was winter when we lived there and someone dared me to stick my tongue on the iron railing on our outside steps. I did, and it froze to the rail. I panicked and yanked my head back and ripped the tip of my tongue off. I never did that again.

Another time Bruce and I were walking to church. The road was slick and I slid onto the ground just as a car was coming by. My foot nearly went under the wheel of the car. The young couple in the car just laughed and went on.

It was also in Idaho Falls that I remember our first family nights. Mother would read out of the scriptures and tell us stories. It was at this age, and for several years after, that I kept thinking and dreaming about Rita and Ruth, my twin sisters who had passed away. They were always real to me. I don't know why I had such a fixation on them at this time, but I did.



A house became available in Shelley in the spring or summer of 1946, and Mom and Dad bought it. The house didn't have an address. Everybody picked up their mail at the post office in Shelley. The house was

located on the southwest side of town, one block west of the highway. We had over two acres of land, and the road we were on was gravel. To the west of the house was a long chicken coop with an old rickety barn attached. In the pasture on the south of the house was a little building made of logs and may have originally been a home for someone. It was now our playhouse.

There were large trees in the pasture and a willow tree in our front yard. Lilac bushes surrounded the house, and we had "pie" cherry trees, peach and apricot trees, a big patch of raspberries, and a large vegetable garden.

The house had a covered front porch and an enclosed back porch. On the main floor was a small living room/dining room combination, a kitchen with a coal range, a bathroom, and three bedrooms. There was a large attic with windows. It was set up to eventually have a room up there, but Dad never finished it off. We got up there using a ladder through a trap door in the closet in Mom and Dad's bedroom. In the basement, there was an apartment for renters with two or three rooms and a bathroom. During our first year or so there, Mom and Dad rented the basement to a couple.

After a few years, Dad bought an electric range and replaced the old kitchen sink with a modern one. When we first moved in and for the first few years, there was an oil burning heater in the living room. That may have been the only source of heating in the house. After a few years, we added a coal furnace for central heating with its stoker and coal bin.

It was Bruce and my job to put coal in it night and morning and remove the clinkers. The coal bin was right next to the furnace, and we would shovel the coal into the stoker from it. Then we would open the furnace door, and with long tongs we would remove the clinkers, which was the debris left from the coal after it had burned.

For the first few years, Bruce and I slept upstairs in one of the bedrooms. But for the last few years our bedroom was downstairs. There was not a furnace vent for the downstairs, and we about froze to death in the winter. We could always see our breath as we lay under our covers. Thank goodness for warm blankets.

We had a telephone, but it was a party line. There were others on the same line. If someone was on it and you needed it, you would ask them if you could use the phone. Usually they would let you.

Our hot water heater was very small and would barely create enough hot water for us to have a bath. Usually we had one once week. But Dad would have his bath first and then several of us kids would get in his water in the tub to have ours. Sometimes four of us boys would be in there at once. Mother had to supplement the hot water with a pan full of heated water off of the stove.



Shelley itself fronted the highway with stores stretching for a block and a half on the west side of the road. The railroad tracks and a small warehouse were on the east side of the highway. At the end of the first block, there was an intersection with a road running off it perpendicular to the highway. For a short block on this road there were a few stores on both sides of the street. Dad's service station was located there on the north side.

The post office, a pool hall, and a mortuary/furniture store were right across the street from Dad's station. The only commercial places that there were two of in Shelley were pool halls or beer joints. I thought that was unusual for an almost all Latter-day Saint town.

Shelley didn't have a police force per se but was watched over by the county sheriff's department that was located in Blackfoot, 16 miles to the south. Our neighbor was one of the "big wigs" in the sheriff's office. Shelley had one fire engine, one grade school, and one high school. There was a siren on the water tower that would go off at noon.

My family on the Hanson's, Anderson's and Holland's side had much to do with the early days in Shelley, and my uncle, Bert Holland, Grandma Hanson's brother, was the mayor of the town. My aunt, Hortense Hanson, was one of the feature writers for the local weekly newspaper, "The Shelley Pioneer."



And in Shelley, our family grew to its largest size. In 1948, Reed was born. There was a “maternity home” in Shelley, not a hospital, and that was where he was delivered by a midwife, not a doctor. Five boys now.

And in 1950, finally a girl. Lynette.



I will now write my recollections of events, feelings, and observations during the six years we lived in Shelley. These are not necessarily in chronological order.

I SAW THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



As small and as insignificant as Shelley was then, it was there that I saw for the first and only time, a president of the United States. In 1948, President Harry Truman drove through Shelley in a convertible, and I climbed up the telephone pole by my Aunt Edith's house on the main highway to watch him drive by. I have thought it interesting that in later years as I worked closely with some

of the political leaders of the nation, that the only time I actually saw a president of the United States was in Shelley, Idaho.

THE SHELLEY FIRST WARD



Our ward was the Shelley First Ward. It was located right next to the school. I loved the church building. It looked like three steps, each section lower than the following one. There was a small cultural hall and stage on the upper level. There was also a basement that held the rest rooms and the scout room.

Church services began with priesthood meeting probably meeting at 8:00 or so in the morning. Sunday school was generally at 10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. and would last for an hour and a half with an opening exercise of singing, song practice, and "2½ minute talks." Then classes. We would come back at 7:00 p.m. for sacrament meeting. We met that late, I think, so the farmers could do their

evening chores. That meeting would usually last the better part of two hours.

We found ways to entertain ourselves in such a long meeting and sometimes they were not constructive. For example, many of the kids would write notes in the hymn books that would often include little hearts with their initials. The bishop stopped that. When we got new hymn books, he spent time in a sacrament meeting reading out loud over the pulpit the little notes and "valentines" that were written in the old books.

I watched the kids in the congregation turn red and hide their faces as their little creations were made public. And I was worried that he would find what I'd written. He didn't, but I learned my lesson about defacing the Lord's property.

With sacrament meetings going so long, we were anxious to get out. During the summer, particularly, we would turn the front lawn of the church into a place for tag and hide-'n-go-seek.

REGULAR STUFF AT HOME

Bruce and I had our "set" responsibilities. Bruce would work with Dad down at the service station, and I would work with Mom at home. That meant that I watched the kids and cooked the meals. I was cooking the dinner from the time I was eight years old and babysitting from when I was six years old. I didn't particularly like that arrangement then, but those experiences have served me well through the years. And, I was literally a "momma's boy."

One of our favorite things to do in the house, when Mom and Dad weren't there, was to line up all of the chairs in a circle. They would go from the kitchen to the dining room through the hallway and a bedroom and back into the kitchen. We would jump from chair to chair playing tag. Mom and Dad didn't like that.

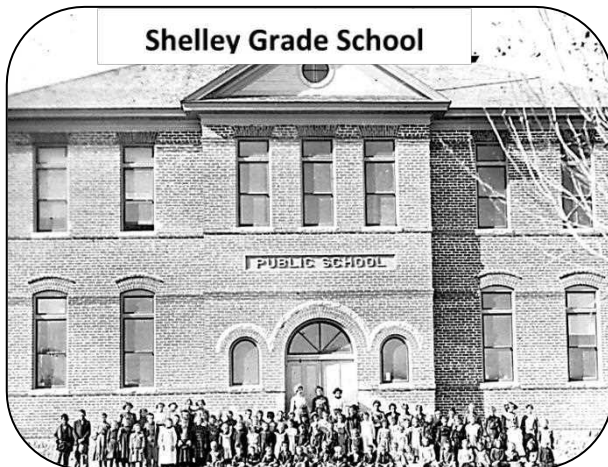
At home, there was a standard treatment for colds. Vicks vapor rub in your nose, in your mouth, and on one of Dad's old socks that was pinned tight around your throat. Mother would generally give us cod liver oil or some other ghastly tasting "vitamin/mineral" supplement as well. There was no such thing as Flintstone fruit flavored chewable vitamins.

SHELLEY GRADE SCHOOL

I started school in the first grade. They did not have kindergarten here. My teacher's name was Mrs. Gray, and I remember that she was a kindly, soft-spoken "older" lady. We had to bring a blanket from home and took naps during the day.



We lived four or five blocks from the school and, of course, walked. We knew it was time for school to start when the bell rang. The bell was, in fact, a



bell. It hung in the bell tower with a long rope dropping to the stair landing between the first and second floors of the school. I don't remember which grade the kids were in who rang the bell, but I had my chance. I remember it lifting me off the ground. I was pretty small.

The bannisters on the stairs were wide and, as I recall,

made of cement or something like it. They were great for sliding down...if you didn't get caught. Corporal punishment was used if you misbehaved. One of the upper grade teachers or Mr. Clark, the school principal, administered the spanking. They used a board with little holes drilled in it. Fortunately I never got the board.

My second grade teacher was Eva Harris, Grandpa Hanson's younger sister. She was extra nice to me, and I played Santa Claus in the Christmas play. You can see how authentic I was...or “cute” like some said. 😊



I had horrible handwriting, and in the fourth grade the teacher said the person who improved the most in handwriting by the end of the year would get a book. I got it. A slam



dunk—because I was the absolute worst in handwriting and just had to improve a bit to beat anybody.

In the fifth grade a friend and I wrote bad notes about a substitute teacher. One of the boys in class saw the note that one of us dropped and took it up to the teacher. She felt really bad. I felt horrible that I had hurt her feelings, and I told my mother what I had done. She had me call the teacher and apologize. I

did and felt much better.

Mr. Clark, the principal, was also our band teacher, and I played the clarinet. Bruce played the tuba. I also took a few months' worth of piano lessons, but didn't stick with it. I played the clarinet in school bands from about the fifth grade on through graduation from high school.

I enjoyed singing as well, and apparently had a reasonably good voice. I sang a solo for Mother's Day in church. It was the then popular song, "Mother"

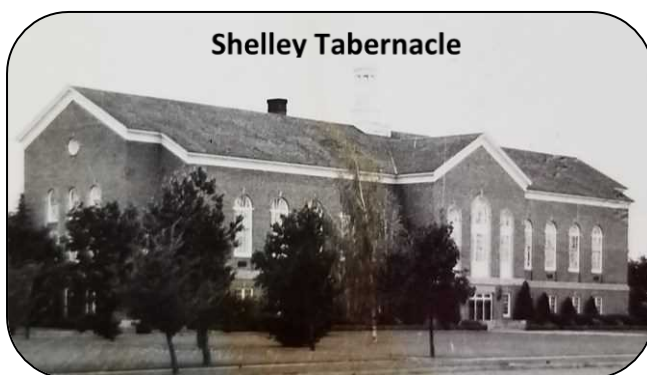
(M is for the million things she gives me...)



The relationship between the church and the school was a little different in Shelley at that time. Almost everyone was a Latter-day Saint. Primary was held on a weekday afternoon, and the school would let out early that day so that we could go to Primary at the church that was right next door. We could do baptisms for the dead at the Idaho Falls Temple when we were only

eight years old, and we were dismissed from school several times so we could go to the temple.

I was baptized in the old Shelley tabernacle. At that time, they had the priests in the stake do the baptizing, and we would all go to the stake center to have that ordinance performed. I don't know if Dad was there for it. Mother was.



Then the following Sunday, Dad confirmed me a member of the church and gave me the gift of the Holy Ghost. That gift is real. The Holy Ghost has been my near constant companion throughout my life.

SICKNESSES

When I was eight, I was initially diagnosed with leukemia. I did not know it, of course, but Mom and Dad were extremely worried, and the bishop had the ward fasting for me. I was taken to the Idaho Falls hospital where more extensive tests were done. I remember Grandma and Grandpa Hanson bringing me ice

cream, and I did wheel chair races with another boy who was in the hospital. I was embarrassed when the nurse gave me a bath, but the biggest thing that disturbed me was that I was in the hospital over Valentine's Day. I missed the party at school and the valentine cookies. The teacher saved some for me and gave them to me when I came back to school. The bad news was she stored them in an old paste jar. They were not only stale but tasted like paste.

As it turned out, I had mononucleosis. How could an eight year old boy in Shelley, Idaho get mono? But it was just another disease in a whole string I had, including measles (all three kinds.), chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, etc. Whenever any of us had those diseases, the doctor would put a big quarantine sign on our front door. The doctor would not allow us to come to his office and would come to our home to check us out. He did that with all of his patients who were too sick to go out.

And then my iritis. When I was eight or nine my eye turned red and was severely irritated. It turned out I had an ulcer or sore in my eye that led to a condition called iritis. It required heavy duty medication and doctor visits over a few months. Iritis would be my physical thorn in the flesh throughout my life. It acted up again just before I received my call to go on a mission and flared up nearly every year or so from that point on throughout most of my life. Ultimately, I had lens implants, an iris implant, and ongoing shots in that eye from wet macular degeneration that had developed in it. All as a likely result of that initial iritis and, at times, me not taking care of it like I should have.

BRUSHES WITH DEATH—EXPERIENCES WITH DUMBNESS

Because there was not a swimming pool in Shelley, I never learned to swim there. But that didn't stop me from going swimming. There were two places I could go. One was the canal near our home, and the other was the "old swimming hole" north of town. I was more foolish than brave and tried to swim in both places and in both places came perilously close to drowning.

The canal was swift moving, and we would let the water carry us until it took us to the bank, and then we would pull ourselves out. It was stupid. If I had been caught in the middle, there would be no way for me to get to the sides, and I wouldn't be writing about it now. At the swimming hole, there were a bunch of boys there and nobody wore swimming suits—just "birthday" suits. I was holding onto a plank and was in water over my head. Somehow I let go of the plank and started to sink. I was taking in water, and with the dirty water and the other boys having fun, I wasn't noticed for a while. Then my brother Bruce saw

me and got me to safety.

And--One day I was picking up bottle caps behind a car parked in front of the post office. The driver didn't see me and got in his car and backed up over me. Fortunately, I was not directly behind one of the wheels. I screamed, and he stopped with the car almost entirely over me.

And—I was up in the top of one of the trees in our pasture. It must have been 30 or 40 feet high. The branches kept getting thinner, but there was a robin's nest that I was after. I kept going and finally stretched my luck too far. The branch that I was standing on snapped, and I fell all the way to the ground, breaking branches as I fell. Perhaps 10 feet off the ground, my hand reached out instinctively for a big branch and grabbed hold. My falling weight broke that branch too and about yanked my arm out of its socket, but that was enough to break my fall so that there was no serious injury. I was scratched up plenty.

And—There was an old, abandoned sugar beet factory across the highway and the tracks just south of town. We would make our way into it through a broken window. That was high adventure. It was a spooky place with it being so dark and all of that old machinery. It had a silo of sorts that was one of the tallest buildings in Shelley. There was nothing in it except a rickety old ladder that led from the floor up to a window-like opening at the top of the silo. It must have been three or four stories high. I seemed to like that kind of height. Bruce and I would make a regular practice of climbing that ladder, with its missing rungs and always wobbly, to the window at the top. We were looking for pigeon eggs. Fortunately, no one was ever hurt, but it was a miracle we weren't with that unstable ladder and nothing but a cement floor to fall on.

And—My father had several rifles around the house and a pistol. He kept the pistol up in the top of his closet. He thought it was hidden, but Bruce and I found it. We also found some bullets. They weren't the right caliber, but we forced the bullet into the chamber. We took the pistol outside and shot it several times into the air. Again we escaped with our lives. The gun could have easily exploded, or we could have accidentally hit one of us or someone else.

And—One thing I did that maybe wasn't so dangerous, but was really stupid, was to ride with my uncle, Earl J., in his bread truck. He delivered bread and baked goods to stores between Idaho Falls and Pocatello and further south. Sometimes he would take me with him. I asked him if I could ride back where the bread was on one of the bread shelves. He let me. I must have ridden there for at least thirty minutes before he let me out. I was having a hard time breathing and was really getting scared. Neither one of us were too smart about letting me

do that.

And—There was a large field of alfalfa or wheat behind our house. The farmer would really get mad at us kids because we would make tunnels and trails through it. He put an electric fence around it, but we learned how to get through it without getting shocked. One time I grabbed hold of it because I thought the electricity was off. It wasn't. I couldn't let go! Finally Bruce pulled me off. He saved my bacon more than once.

And—There was a railroad ramp in Shelley that was high enough to load and unload freight cars. It was also a fun place to ride a bicycle as both ends were sloped. We were warned many times by Mom not to ride our bikes there because it was dangerous with the tracks and the trains. I still did it. One time I was riding on the ramp close to the edge by the railroad tracks. My handlebars must have come loose because I lost control of my steering and over the side I went. I hit my head on the railroad track and split it open right over my left eyebrow. It was a real gash that required several stitches, and I could easily have been permanently blinded. I didn't ride my bike on the ramp anymore.

WHAT WE ATE



**Bruce and me with Butch
and head of a deer Dad shot**

Most of the vegetables and fruit we ate, Mom had bottled from our garden. We had cherries, apricots, peaches, strawberries, rhubarb, and raspberries. We grew carrots, peas, beans, squash, spinach, asparagus, parsnips, and cauliflower. I loved spinach and

didn't like cauliflower, asparagus or parsnips. I loved raisin pies and lemon pies. And especially raisin filled cookies.

Much, if not most, of our meat came from Dad's fishing and hunting. We ate trout, pheasant, sage hen, rabbit, duck, deer, and antelope. While I fished a lot, I never shot a gun until I was in the army and haven't since. I have never owned a gun, and I am adamant against killing for sport. We had a dog, and *her*

name was Butch. She was a Dalmatian, overweight, and sometimes messed with the neighbors chickens and ate the mice in our chicken coop. But in spite of her failings and her horrible breath, we all loved her. She was part of the family.

KID THINGS

Since we never had much money, when I got a nickel or dime or quarter, I would hold onto it forever. When I did spend it I would be very careful what I bought. For a penny I could buy a stick of licorice or a Tootsie Roll or a peppermint stick or a piece of bubble gum or put it in a machine and get a handful of peanuts. For two cents I could buy a tootsie pop. For a nickel I could buy a bottle of pop or a candy bar or an ice cream cone or a Twinkie or a package of gum. For a dime I could buy a comic book. For a quarter I could get a hamburger or milk shake. Sometimes I would save my money up until I had 50 cents or 75 cents or even a dollar and then go on a big spending binge. For the dollar I would go to Young's drug store and get a hamburger and malt, then buy a couple of comic books, some candy bars, a couple of pieces of bubble gum and still have some money left over.

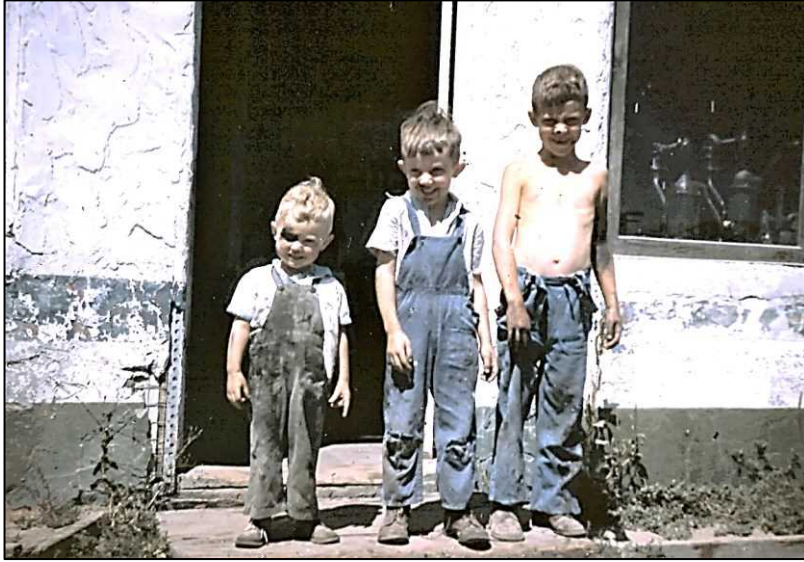
It seemed that Bruce and I were always getting into mischief. The standard punishment was a swat across the legs with a willow from Mom, or for more serious deeds, it was a spanking from Dad with a wide, flat-bottomed hair brush. At times he would use a soft wood yardstick. That made a lot of noise but didn't hurt very much. I would really yell with that one, hoping he would use it more often, rather than the hair brush. The hair brush really stung. I used to think I was always getting a spanking. Maybe I was, but I also know I didn't get anywhere near as many as I deserved as you will discover reading about some of my experiences in Shelley. Here are a few examples of what we did.

We'd hike off into the country without telling Mom and not show up until after dark sometimes.

Some kid told me that warm tar was good to chew. Just like gum. So, I got some warm tar on a stick and put it into my mouth and started to chew. It didn't chew. Instead it stuck all over my teeth and wouldn't come out. I had black bits in my teeth for weeks.

One day Bruce and I found some black enamel paint. For a while we were satisfied painting an old tree stump in our backyard. But that got boring, and we decided we needed a live subject. So we got Ray. We painted him, including giving him an enamel black eye. We got paint all over us too, and Mom didn't think much of what we had done. In fact, she was really mad. This was definitely not

a "willow" event but was something for Dad to handle. She sent us marching off down to the station for Dad to take care of this. She called him and told him what had happened and to expect us. We were plenty scared about this one. But



when Dad saw us, he burst out laughing and instead of spanking us, he got his camera and took this picture. Notice the in-style holes in my pants.

Another time, Bruce and I were playing with

matches in the field in back of the service station. Dad owned that property and had a shed and several pieces of old farm equipment back there. One day, Bruce, a friend, and I were playing the old throw a match into the weeds and stamp the fire out before it spreads game. We were winning for a while. Then someone threw a match, and we couldn't stamp it out. It spread and spread. And we ran and ran. Actually, we told Dad, and he looked out and saw his whole field burning. The fire engine came. The shed and the farm equipment were burned, but no one was hurt. We didn't get a spanking because Dad was too shook up about what might have happened to us.



One time I tried to smoke. We found some cigarette butts and took them to our chicken coop and lit up. I kept blowing on mine and nothing happened. Somebody said you suck in on it. I tried that and about choked. I couldn't figure how anybody would ever do a dumb thing like that. That was my one and only experience with smoking. I didn't get a spanking for that one either.



I never owned a new bike. In fact, the only bike I ever had in my youth was in Shelley. I don't know where Dad got it, but it was rusted, had chipped paint and flat tires. I saved up my money and painted it, bought a new seat for it, and new tires. I was proud of that bike, although with my skill at painting it probably would have looked better had I not painted it. At least I had transportation.

Dad was not a dentist in Shelley, and teeth pulling did not demand the care and attention that it did when he

did that as a profession. At least he allowed Grandpa Dunn to remove our baby teeth in several, unorthodox ways. One time, Grandpa tied a strong thread around my tooth and tied the other end to the ceiling light. He had me stand on a chair underneath the light and then jump off. Another version of that technique was to tie the other end of the thread to the door knob and then swing the door quickly shut. I was the guinea pig for both of those techniques. I do remember Dad pulling out at least one of my teeth with a pair of his work pliers.

Our weekly entertainment was the Virginia Theater in the middle of town. Along with almost every other kid in town, I would go to the matinee every

Saturday afternoon. It cost 14 cents. Popcorn was a nickel. Often there was a double feature. Virtually every time, there was a series of advertisements with "still slides" or moving pictures, a cartoon



and/or an ongoing serial like Superman. All of this before the main feature. Usually, the movie was a cowboy one like Roy Rogers, or Gene Autry, or Hopalong Cassidy, or Lash Larue.

For us, the choicest seats in the house were on the front row. We would have to bend our heads way back to see the screen. But that was where we wanted

to be. Sometimes we would just stay there and see everything through twice. That was about six hours' worth of movies.

Before the theater got renovated when a fire burned down Mallory's department store next door and filled the place with smoke, the screen had a hole in it. At first it was only big enough for me to stick my finger through it. I would go behind the screen and wiggle my finger at my friends sitting on the front row. After a while, it was big enough for me to stick my whole hand through and wave it. That became distracting for some of the people in the theater, and they complained to the owner of the theater who would then come to get us out of there. We would escape through the back door of the theater.

I loved going to my friends' house on their farm on a Sunday afternoon. Since we had a lot of time between Sunday School and Sacrament meeting, that gave us most of the day to play. The Sunday dinners at my friends were almost always the same. Roast beef, mashed potatoes, vegetables, rolls, fresh whole milk, and dessert. The vegetables were always cooked and usually by today's standards overcooked. We would play out in the fields and by the canal, catching frogs and grasshoppers, picking cattails and pussy willows, throwing dirt clods, and generally just being boys on a farm.



During the week our daily entertainment was the radio. Whenever we were sick and stayed home from school, we would listen to the daytime shows like "Stump the Organist" and the 15 minute soap operas. Those were usually moral, but pretty dumb. In the late afternoon and evening, the fare would get a little better. We

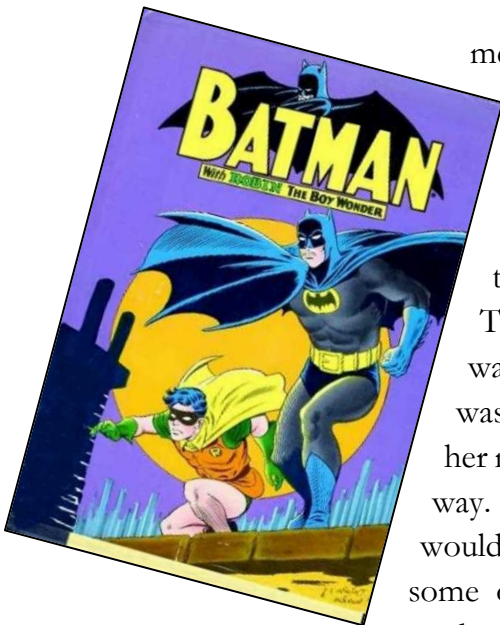
would listen to Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders, Sky King, Captain Midnight, and Tom Mix.

These shows were always advertised by breakfast cereals and drinks like Ovaltine. They offered special prizes related to their programs that you could send for with 10 or 25 cents and a box top. "Battle Creek, Michigan" was where you usually sent your money. That was way back in the East somewhere. I couldn't even imagine what it would be like back there. It all sounded so big and mysterious.

One time I ordered a secret bullet that turned into a telescope, a magnifying glass, and a special place to carry messages. No one would ever guess that it would do all of those things because it looked like a bullet. Right. The only problem was the bullet was cheap plastic and was three inches long and an inch wide.

In the evening and on Sunday we would listen to the weekly shows that we just couldn't miss. I Love a Mystery. Inner Sanctum. One man's Family. Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. The Shadow. Jack Benny. The Green Hornet. Nick Carter. Baby Snooks.

One show that came on Sunday was particularly exciting to me. It was called "Stop the Music." Contestants won prizes by guessing the tune being played. Then each week they made a random phone call to "some-where in America," and if that person could name the "mystery tune," they won this fantastic jackpot of prizes. Often we would be listening to this program in the car as we were driving from Grandma Hanson's in Blackfoot to our home in Shelley. I would urge Dad to drive faster so we could be home by the time they made the phone call. I didn't want to miss out on that jack pot. I was really disappointed when I found out that they only used the phone books from the big cities to make their calls to.



Comic books were another big deal for me. Comic books cost 10 cents, and the boys my age would trade them. When we bought a new one, we would read it until we were tired of it, then put it in our stack of "tradables" and go out to our friends and trade for comic books we hadn't read yet. There was an older single lady whose name was Stella that we would also trade with. She was probably at least in her 40's and lived with her mother in a tiny little house out on the highway. Sometimes she would baby sit us. But she would trade comic books with us as well. Today, some of those comic books we had would be worth a fortune.

A neat thing we did as a family was to go on Sunday drives during the summer and spring and fall. Sometimes we would drive to Idaho Falls, the big city, and we kids would start up the chant, "We want a frosty. We want a frosty." Usually Dad would succumb, and we would get a frosty ice cream cone.

Once or twice Mom and Dad took us to Salt Lake City. That was really a big city. I was fascinated with the escalators and saw my first TV in a department store there. I could hardly comprehend living in such a big city. The temple was by far the largest building in the city then, and I was fascinated with it and the tabernacle.



SPUD DAY

School was out for two weeks in the fall so kids could help pick potatoes. It was called Spud vacation and culminated with Spud Day. That was a big carnival for the people throughout southeastern Idaho. There was usually a Ferris wheel and other portable rides that the carnival people would bring in along with games of chance, metal milk bottles to knock over, balloon and dart toss, weight guessing, etc. They would always set it up in the street in front of Dad's service station.

I was fascinated with the people that were with the carnival. They looked hard and dark to me. They frightened me sometimes, in fact. They reminded me of the gypsies that I saw from time to time

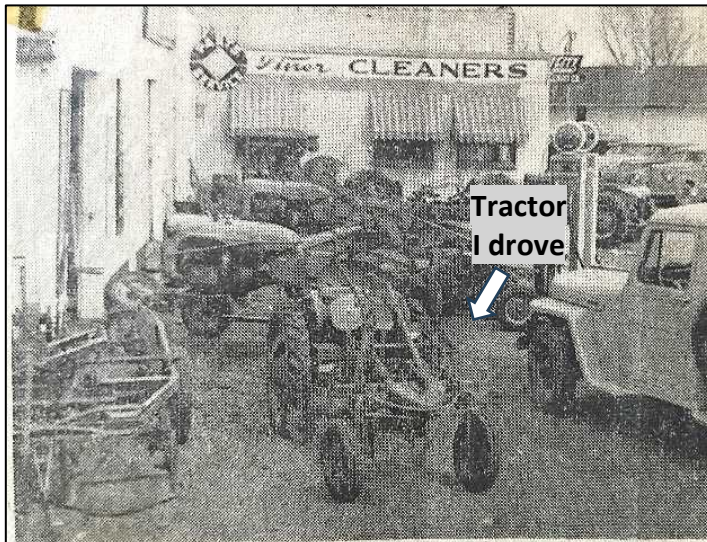


who came through town in their wagons, so I stayed away from them.

One of the things I really looked forward to at Spud Day was the big baked Russet potatoes they served at the railroad depot with butter and salt and

pepper. There was also a Spud Day parade. Most every year Dad had something in the parade. Usually just driving a new tractor, but sometimes pulling a trailer that was sort of a float.

One year, he decided to have a father and sons deal. He would drive his



Sure Sign Spring Is in Full Swing

This group of tractors in a Shelley farm equipment agency run by Lynn Hanson illustrates the spring optimism of Upper Snake River valley farmers, who forecast repair and general condition, a sure sign of spring.

biggest tractor. Bruce would drive a medium sized tractor. I would drive a brand new small tractor that he just got in and nobody had seen. And Ray would ride his red tricycle. That is what happened, and we won a prize. The only problem was with me and the small tractor.

When it came in I asked Dad if I could drive it, ostensibly to "practice". He said okay, but only in the field and alleyway behind the service station. Under no circumstances was I to take it out on the main street in front of the stores where the traffic was, and where everyone could see it before the parade. I was nine or ten at the time. Well, I disobeyed. I thought it would be great fun to ride it down the main street where everyone would be looking at me. That's what I did. And I had plenty of attention.

But as I turned down the street to Dad's station, I got more attention than I wanted. There was Dad, and he was plenty mad. He yanked me off the tractor right in front of everybody and drove it back to the station. That was a hair brush event.

HOLIDAYS

Halloween was always a big day for me. We would try to go to most of the houses in Shelley with a pillow case as our treats bag. I don't remember the costume we would wear, if any, but whatever it was, it was homemade. Our standard haul included apples, candied popcorn, home baked cookies, loose, unwrapped candy, or sticks of gum.

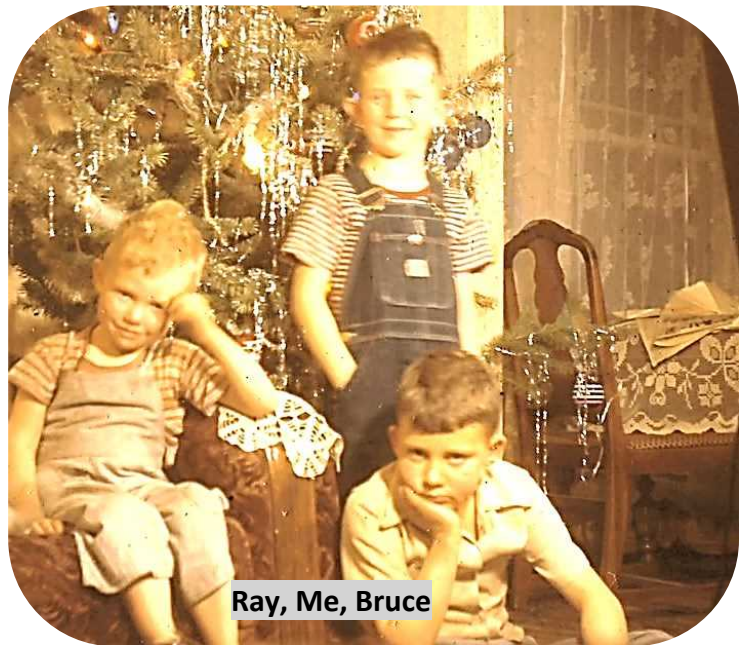
We were not destructive in our pranks but had several things we did to

irritate people. We put small pebbles in the hub caps of cars which made a neat noise as the car drove away. Another prank we pulled can't be done anymore either. Back then, the window sashes were wooden, and the window pane was held in place by putty. We would take a pin and stick it into the putty, tie a thread to the pin and go behind a bush. We would stretch the thread taught and then rub it with a piece of rosin. That would create a high shrill sound, and the window would act as a sounding board and broadcast and amplify the noise throughout the house. The people would open their door to see where the noise was coming from, but we would be comfortably hidden from their sight behind a bush, and they couldn't see the small pin and black thread in the dark.

Thanksgiving and the 4th and 24th of July were exciting times. Usually, we would either be at my Hanson grandparents in Blackfoot, or Dunn grandparents in Logan for these holidays.

But Christmas was *the* event of the year. The first Christmas I remember I was probably five or six years old. We were at my Grandma and Grandpa Dunn's apartment in Logan. Some of my Grandpa's siblings were there, and Grandma got some of Grandpa's work socks and hung them in the living room for us kids. Then we all hid behind chairs and the sofa to wait for Santa Claus to come. He came. I was

so excited I could hardly breathe. He looked around to see if anyone was there and then went to the stockings and filled them. He put some presents under the tree and then off he went. I was a firm believer in Santa Claus all the way until I was maybe nine or ten because of that. I hadn't even noticed that



Ray, Me, Bruce

Grandpa Dunn wasn't in the room when Santa came. 😊

The anticipation prior to Christmas was always the best part for me as the presents usually were not much to get that excited about. Sometimes they were

though. We always got the same kind of thin-branched Christmas tree that would fall over a few times before the season was over. It was exciting to have Dad buy it in the lot across the street from his station for a quarter or a half dollar. He would bring it home in his pickup truck, and we would decorate it with our old ornaments, tinsel, and lights. I loved the smell of it.

One Christmas for me stood out above all of them. Mom would take me to the store to buy presents for my siblings and for Dad. Then Dad would take me to the store to buy a present for Mom. Usually I had 10 or 15 cents to spend on my siblings and maybe a quarter to spend on each of my parents.

Dad took me over to a beautiful set of dishes that probably cost five dollars or more. He asked me if I wanted to go in with him on them for Mom. I was thrilled and excited to give these to Mom. I wrote "From STEVE" in big letters on the tag that was on the present, and in small letters, "and Dad." I put the present way in the back of the tree and could hardly wait to see her open my present for her that Christmas day. I almost forgot about my own presents I was so excited about what her reaction would be. And she didn't disappoint me.

MY JOB

For money, I worked in the spud fields. As I said before, school would let out for two weeks each October for "Spud Vacation." That allowed the farmers to get the potatoes picked by us kids. I worked picking spuds from the time I was about nine years old. The farmer would pick us up just before it was light in the morning, and we would stay out there picking until it got dark. That was 10 to 12 hours a day.

We were paid by the sack of potatoes picked. Each one of us had a wire basket, and we would work in teams of two. It would take two baskets to fill a sack, and the farmer would pay us seven cents a sack, as I remember.

We did our share of playing around in the field, throwing rotten potatoes at each other, throwing potatoes that had holes in them to make them whistle, etc. But we worked hard too. We picked six days a week for the two weeks, and I would usually make somewhere between \$30 and \$40 for my 120 hours of work. That was a lot of money then and would be used primarily to buy clothes.

The down side, every spud season I would end up with horribly chapped lips from the wind and dirt and me licking my lips. The sore would completely encircle my lips like clown lipstick and would take quite a while to heal.

WINTER

The winters in Shelley were generally very severe. I remember vividly 20 and 25 degrees below zero weather and maybe colder. Sometimes it was so cold your spit would freeze before it hit the ground. At least Dad's would. His mouth



Chicken coop in the winter

was a lot further from the ground than mine.

You always breathed in through your nose though, because if you took a breath in through your mouth it could really hurt your lungs. The wind was always blowing as well. The snow would drift high

and often would be so deep in our back yard we could walk up the drifts right onto the chicken coop roof. We would get on top of the old rickety barn and jump down into the snow.

We wouldn't build snow forts, we would dig them out of the drifts. One winter it was especially bad and on a Sunday evening Dad got a call from someone saying that a family from Canada who was traveling through was stuck in Shelley because the roads were impassable. Since there were no motels or hotels in Shelley, we were asked if they could stay with us until the storm let up. They stayed with us the better part of a week.

There were fun things to do in the snow, of course. Sledding was one of our favorite things. Some winters the folks took us up to Ashton, Idaho where we watched the dog sled races and the "snow planes" which were driven by propellers like planes but on skis without wings or wheels. Often the kids who came to school on the buses from their farms in the country were snowed in and couldn't get to school. Sometimes they would be out for days at a time. I wished I lived in the country rather than in town so I could miss school.

And one winter our cow froze to death and was buried in the snow. We had to wait until spring to get her out. She stunk.

REUNIONS-EXTENDED FAMILY

Family and extended family were very important to me. Almost everything that we did was involved with them. Reunions were a huge part of my summer. The Anderson Reunion was held at the Shelley First Ward chapel for the descendants of Hakan Anderson, who was Grandpa Hanson's grandfather on his mother's side. It was held in the summer, and we always got new clothes (often handmade) for that occasion. Playing with my cousins and listening to Grandpa Hanson's band were real highlights.



We went to the Dunn reunion in Logan every summer too. It was for descendants of Grandpa Dunn's father, Charles Oscar Dunn, who was polygamous with two wives. My great grandmother was the second wife. I felt the love of all of Grandpa's siblings, no matter which wife they came from.

YELLOWSTONE PARK AND CAMPING

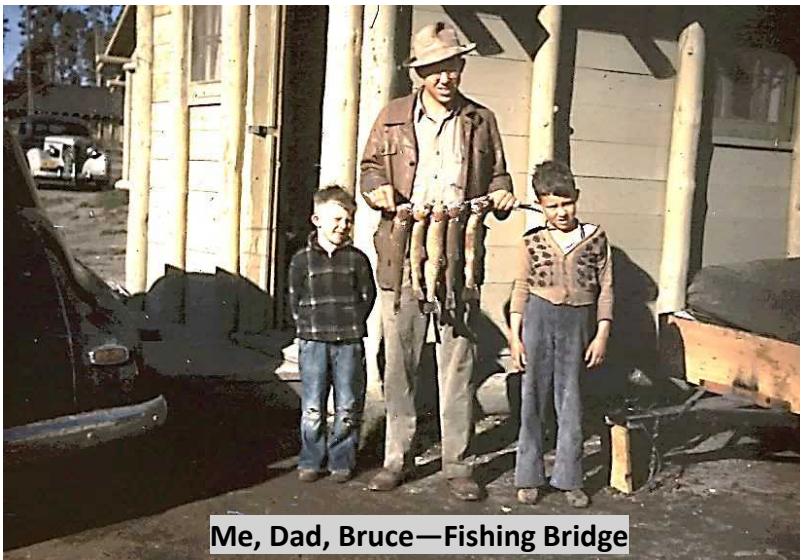
We would go on camping trips to Yellowstone Park, Island Park, and Cave Falls. We did a lot with OV and Bernice Handley and their children. Bernice was Grandpa Hanson's youngest sibling and was about Dad's age. Their son, Bob, was Bruce's best friend, and their daughter, Janet, was my best friend. We would go to Yellowstone usually three or four times a year. ALWAYS we would have to stop at Dad's service station before we would leave town to see if there was anything he needed to take care of before we left. There was always something he had to do. We would sit in the car waiting for what seemed like all day

before we could get on our way.

Dad had fixed up a makeshift trailer that we would carry our camping gear in, and Bruce and I ended up sleeping in the trailer sometimes. The trip up to the Park was exciting in and of itself. We would look for the Burma Shave Signs and for the weird little tourist attractions on the side of the road. You would see



these huge hand painted signs for a couple of miles leading up to the attraction. "TWO HEADED SNAKE." "LIVE BEAR" "*IT*...NO ONE KNOWS WHAT *IT* IS." Then when you got to the attraction it was a bunch of crude walls thrown up and arrows pointing into it. I always wanted to go in and see the weird things, but Dad never stopped.



We also played the alphabet game and tried to find as many out of state license plates as we could to pass the time. When we got to Yellowstone, we would usually get one of the one room

cabins. There were a couple of beds in there and a pot belly stove that burned wood. Most of the family would stay in there, while Bruce and I would sleep in the car or the trailer. Except when it was really cold.

In those days, going to Yellowstone was a real adventure. We would usually stay at Old Faithful or at Fishing Bridge. Usually Fishing Bridge. It would be a good hour to hour and a half drive or more from West Yellowstone where we



entered the Park because of the narrow roads and because of the animals all along the way.

Especially bears. We would see dozens of them

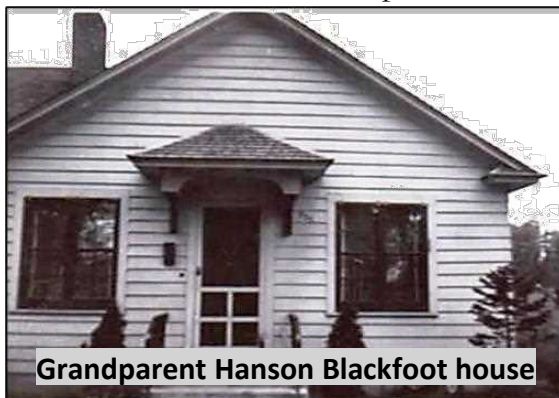
each time we went to the park, and people would feed them out of their car windows. They would be in our camp garbage cans and along the road. We would tease them, which was really stupid considering how dangerous they were.

Dad had an orange World War II surplus rubber raft that we would take up in the trailer to go fishing in. We would blow it up and then troll Yellowstone Lake in it. I loved catching trout and being with our relatives.



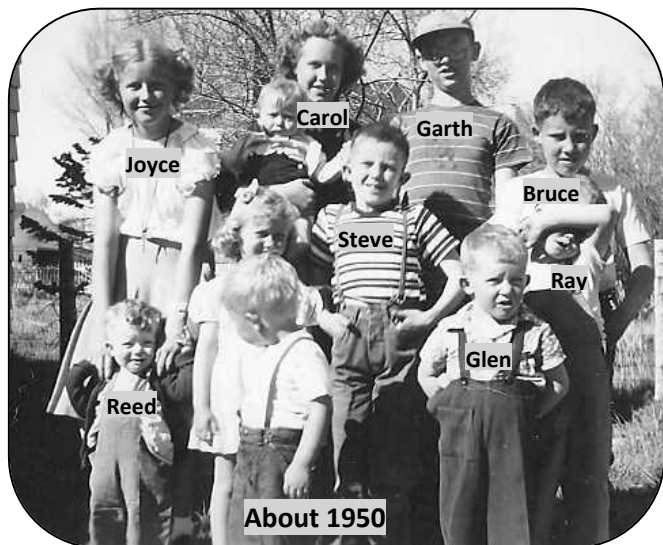
GRANDPARENTS

Grandma and Grandpa Hanson lived in Blackfoot, 16 miles south of



Shelley. We went to see them many Sunday afternoons, and Bruce and I would play with Garth, Joyce, and Carol. They were not too glad to see us because they had to baby sit us. We were with them so much it was like they were our older siblings, and their home in Blackfoot was like our second home.

Their bedrooms were in the basement, and that's where we would usually play board games and whatever they wanted to play. And they were often with us when we went camping, at our house in Shelley, and in Hanson family gatherings in Shelley with Grandpa Hanson's siblings and their families.



Grandma and Grandpa Dunn lived in Logan and most of Grandpa Dunn's brothers and sisters lived in the immediate vicinity. We drove there a few times a year. There were no freeways then and our route was through all of the small towns between Shelley and Logan. It was a three to four hour drive back in those days. I loved the Dunns, and I

knew they loved me.

Grandpa Dunn would take me fishing in the little streams in Cache Valley. He made me willow whistles, told me stories, tickled me, bought me licorice and root beer, and was the perfect grandfather. Grandma Dunn played games, especially caroms. I loved that game. As I mentioned before, Grandpa Dunn's family were from two wives of a polygamous marriage and were close and loving to one another. I knew them all and am a living witness of the righteous fruits of polygamy when authorized by God.

I was particular close to Grandpa's siblings. We would ride horses at the Nibley farm of his sister, Aunt "Tebe" Eva Dunn Snow, and her husband "By". Aunt "Jennie" Dunn Israelson, his older sister, and her husband, John, lived in Hyrum. He was the postmaster in Hyrum when the Republican President was in office. There would be a 24th of July celebration in the park across from their home, and we would be at their home for the celebration.

Their telephone was on the wall and you had to crank a handle on it to get the local operator to make a call for you. Grandpa's brother, Sim, and his wife Wanda also lived in Hyrum. They had a granddaughter, Barbara Huish, who I really liked. Uncle Sim was the principal of the high school there. Grandpa Dunn's oldest brother, Charles Dunn, lived in Logan. For some reason he took a liking to me and I to him. He was a lawyer in Logan, was in the state legislature,

and ran for U.S. Congress. He was also an excellent writer. He died when I was nine or ten. That had a traumatic effect on me, and I remember crying and crying.



Dunn home-Logan

Many of Grandpa's siblings had a great influence on my life.

My earliest recollections of Grandma and Grandpa Dunn in Logan was when they lived in an apartment. They moved into a white home northeast of

town. They had a clothes chute we would slide down, and it was fun sailing our little leaf boats in the ditch in front of their house.

It was while they lived here that Grandpa got me interested in wrestling matches. They were held at the armory in downtown Logan. I remember the villain. Buzz Jones. He was really mean looking and wore long tights while all the other guys wore shorts. He wasn't that big, but was mean, and I would boo him and get mad when he would do his dirty tricks, and the referee wouldn't see him.

One time there was a hypnotist at the wrestling matches. He had the audience hold out their arms, and he talked about how stiff our arms were and then told us to bend our arms. Almost everybody did, but I couldn't. There were several others who couldn't as well, and he took some of them up onto the canvas to use them for the rest of his act. He rubbed my arm so that it would bend. It was a weird sensation. My Uncle Jack Dunn was with us, and when we got home, he kept trying to hypnotize me. He couldn't.

Usually, my bed at that home was a cot in the kitchen. The bed was okay, but Grandma Dunn had a potholder hanging on the wall that was in the shape of a cat. Its eyes glowed in the dark with a luminous green stare. Those eyes scared me.

My hair in those days stuck up all over the place, and particularly the cow lick in the back. Grandma Dunn would take her hair goo and put it all over my head and then brush my hair down. The goo would harden, and my hair felt like a bunch of wood splinters on top of my head. I would play with it, bending bunches of hair until they cracked and making more of a mess of it than it would

have been had she not tried to fix it in the first place.

I could multiply two and even three digit numbers in my head when I was in the third grade. My Dunn uncles would sit in the living room having me do this by the hour. I wanted to be out playing with my cousins, but I would do this for them.

Grandma and Grandpa Dunn moved to their small house on the central west side of town just shortly before we moved from Shelley. Grandma Knecht, who had lived in an apartment down by the river in Logan for most of the years since her husband died when she lived in New York, moved to an apartment a few doors down from their new home. I visited her many times with Grandma Dunn. When we would be there for lunch, she would bring out her blue-glass dishes, and everything was immaculate. Her apartment had an exotic smell "like the east." It wasn't the same as the Dunn's or anyone else's house I had ever been in. I liked to go there.



**Grandma & Grandpa Dunn
& their smaller house**

There was always something mysterious and exciting about the Knecht's. Probably because they had come from a place that I had never been and thought at that time I would never go to. I felt very close to Grandma Knecht. Probably more so than any of her own grandchildren who all lived back east, or perhaps any other great grandchild. At least I felt that way.

There was always something mysterious and exciting about the Knecht's. Probably because they had come from a place that I had never been and thought at that time I would never go to. I felt very close to Grandma Knecht. Probably more so than any of her own grandchildren who all lived back east, or perhaps any other great grandchild. At least I felt that way.

PERSONAL CHALLENGES

I was a kid and all that goes with that. I could be pugnacious and independent. Maybe because I was short for my age with stick-out ears and didn't like to back down for anything. And me getting into mischief and not doing some things that I should have done and doing things I shouldn't have done happened. I was nine years old and lying in my bed one night, when I felt the horrible weight of what I considered to be my sins. They seemed to get heavier and heavier, and they wouldn't go away. Finally, I got up and went into our living room where my mother was. With many tears, I told her everything that I had ever done that I

thought was wrong. While they were things that most boys probably did, to me they were huge, overwhelming, unforgivable transgressions.

Mother consoled me and loved me and told me Jesus would forgive me. This was a life changing experience for me. My prayers took on a different intensity and for a number of days, I had a hard time going to sleep. The memory of that experience helped me to keep away from much more serious situations as I got older. It was a manifestation of what my true desire really was. I wanted to do what my Heavenly Father wanted me to do.

LEAVING SHELLEY

Although Mom and Dad never talked about it in front of us kids, I could sense that something was not going well financially. As I later found out, Dad would walk the streets at night worrying about his business and providing for his family. The Allis Chalmer company, who he had a dealership with, wanted him to build a new building if he was to keep the franchise in Shelley.

In the late summer of 1951, Mom and Dad hit us kids with a real bomb. They were selling the business and the house, and we as a family were going back to dental school. Dad was 35, and there were now six of us kids. As I remember, it was put to us as a challenge, and they asked us for our support. I could hardly imagine what it would be like to leave Shelley and all of my friends. In a way, I was devastated, but in a way I was also excited about the adventure.

Mom and Dad were going to make a trip to California to check out the schools there, particularly in the San Francisco and in Los Angeles areas. They said Bruce and I were to go with them. I could hardly contain myself. The furthest I had ever been from Shelley was Salt Lake City, and now I was actually going to a place where I would see palm trees and the ocean. We got to eat hamburgers at drive-ins and smell the yucky air in Los Angeles and hear sirens all of the time. In Shelley, the only time you heard a siren was at noon to announce the hour. Our trip to California was wonderful, and I had something exciting to talk about with all my friends.

We didn't move to California. At least not then. We moved to Provo, Utah. Dad had only two years of college before he got married, and that had been 15 years ago. So, he had to go back to college to take classes that he would need before he could go to dental school, and he would do that at BYU in Provo.

We sold our home in Shelley, and Dad sold his business. The man who bought his business was to pay him off over a period of a few years, but... I'll get to that later. And we bought a home in Provo.



3

PROVO 1951-1952

VIRTUALLY ALL OF DAD'S peers at school were single and some literally only half his age. That was interesting. Our "new" home was at 759 North 1st East. It was just below campus and right between the only two dorms at BYU, and they were both girls dorms. It was a very small house. Besides a living room and a kitchen, it had one "real" bedroom where Mom and Dad and Lynette, who was a baby, slept. And sort of another bedroom where Ray, Glen, and Reed slept in two bunk beds. Yes, two bunk beds. Glen and Reed slept at each end of one of them, and Ray in the other.



Our Provo home

That left no bedroom for Bruce and me. We had two old couches in the living room. Bruce slept on one, and I slept on the other. The living room was our bedroom for the year we lived in Provo. A little inconvenient when Mom and Dad were entertaining guests past our bedtime, but all in all not that bad.

I went to Joaquin grade school and was in the sixth grade. It was a modern two story school, with ramps rather than stairs. I was on the Joaquin Grade School Safety Patrol. I wore the official Safety Patrol white strap that went diagonally from my right shoulder down to my left hip, both front and back, and



then circled my waist. And I had a Safety Patrol silver badge on the strap. I was official. But what really gave me power was the long white Safety Patrol pole I carried that had a fluorescent pink flag on the end of it. With that, I kept kids

from crossing the street when I considered it unsafe.

Not only did I keep kids from crossing the street by sticking that white pole with a pink flag in front of them as they came to the street corner, but I tried to stop anyone and everyone who came to my corner if I didn't think it was safe to cross the street. I was the law. Or so I thought. Most adults and older kids didn't think so, though. They just walked past my pole like it didn't exist.

We attended what was called the University Ward, I think because it was so close to the BYU campus. It was an old chapel, and even had a room in it with an alter for the bishop to pray at. There was a neat feeling being in that room. My primary teacher was a sister in her mid-70's, and I really liked her. She made certain we memorized the Articles of Faith as preparation for graduating from Primary and being ordained a deacon.

I was also in the scouts at age 11 and had an excellent scout master. We had outings to Rock Canyon in the snow and were taught many things. I learned to swim here in the scouting program and achieved my first class scout award. That was as far as I went in the scouting program, because I didn't have any scout leaders from that point on.

We were close to what was then called the BY High school. It was the old campus of BYU and was still used by BYU as well as being a high school. It had a neat fire escape slide that we loved going down.

There was a little ice cream place at the end of our street that was called "King Kold". That was a hangout for BYU students as it was likely the only snack food place close to the campus. Most married students had housing in old former

army barracks up on the east side of campus. Who, besides someone who was way older than them, like Dad, could afford to buy a house while going to school?

We didn't have any money, and if I was going to have anything to spend I had to earn it. So, I decided to sell greeting cards. I ordered a couple of boxes of cards to use as samples and then went door to door. I found out I was a pretty good salesman. Or maybe it was just that people felt sorry for this little boy, I don't know. In any case they bought, and I had plenty of spending money.

I wanted to play baseball but wasn't good enough to play Little League, so I played on a sub-Little League team. What was the difference? If you made Little League, you got uniforms. If you didn't, you just played in your own clothes. I really wanted to wear a uniform, but...

There were only nine on our team. If someone was missing, we just went without a player at some position or maybe just forfeited. When I was up to bat, one of two things was going to happen, depending on how good the opposing pitcher was. I would walk, or I would strike out. Usually I would walk because I was less than five feet tall, and the pitcher had a problem pitching strikes to someone that small. The rest of the time I would strike out.

But something happened one day that was the highlight of my Provo baseball career. The pitcher threw the ball right down the middle of the plate, and I closed my eyes. I always did that when I swung. Hmm. Is that the reason I struck out so much? Anyway, I swung, and I could feel my muscles rippling, and I felt like I was Duke Snider of the Dodgers because my bat actually hit the ball.

Shock. Everyone was in shock. My teammates were in shock. I was in shock. And the left fielder of the opposing team was in shock. He was playing his customary position when I was up to the plate—just even with shortstop—when all of us watched the ball I hit sail over his head. I was so excited I almost forgot to run the bases. But run I did. Little Stevie Hanson became Roy Campanella, Duke Snider, and Jackie Robinson all rolled into one that day. I hit a home run.

It was my only hit that summer.

But baseball wasn't really my sport. My size, of course, made me particularly qualified to play basketball. Joke. BYU had just built the Smith Field House. I think it held 8,000 people, and we lived not more than a block or two away from it. Bruce and I went over there all the time. We walked and ran around the indoor track. We went into the gymnastic rooms and played on the equipment. We went into the wrestling room and the boxing room. We played basketball in

the practice gym, and sometimes we played on the main basketball floor of the field house just before the college players started their practice. Those guys were giants. But they were nice to us and often let us play for a few minutes with them.

Basketball was now in my blood. Mom and Dad would go to many of the local games, and Bruce and I would stay home with the kids. But we listened to every play on the radio. We never missed a game there in our living room. There in our bedroom. I would take jump shots, throw unbelievable passes, and grab the rebound out of the hands of the huge unsuspecting opposing centers. I would steal the ball and with dribbles behind my back run the length of the court and score a fantastic layup. I did it all as I listened to the play by play.

My heart sunk when we would get behind. And it would pump like it would break when the BYU Cougars were doing everything right. It was an emotional seesaw. It drained me. And if they lost, goodbye sleep that night.

Provo was a really big city to me, and I had friends who actually had TVs. We didn't. We couldn't afford it. But the reception wasn't that great there either. Of course all of the TV's were just black and white, and the screen was filled with "snow" or static, but what difference did that make? You could actually see people moving and hear them talking right before your eyes. The show I most remember then was "I Love Lucy."

In the spring of 1952, Mom and Dad took another trip to California to see if they could get into dental school somewhere there. They took the three youngest ones with them, but left Bruce, Ray, and me by ourselves for approximately a week. I had been cooking meals since I was eight, and Bruce and I had been babysitting the kids for several years, so Mom and Dad felt okay about leaving us. They asked the neighbors to keep their eye on us. But we didn't need that. We just took care of ourselves.

I was 11, Bruce was 12, and Ray was 8. I did all the cooking and basically ran the house. We had neighbors that looked in on us periodically and asked us if they could help and would offer to bring us over dinner, but we refused. We were perfectly capable of taking care of ourselves.

Dad didn't find a school in California that would take him, but he was accepted at the Washington University School of dentistry in St. Louis, Missouri. So, that is where we went. I didn't mind leaving Provo so much. I always knew that we wouldn't be there very long. Besides, going all the way back to a foreign country like St. Louis was going to be an exciting adventure.

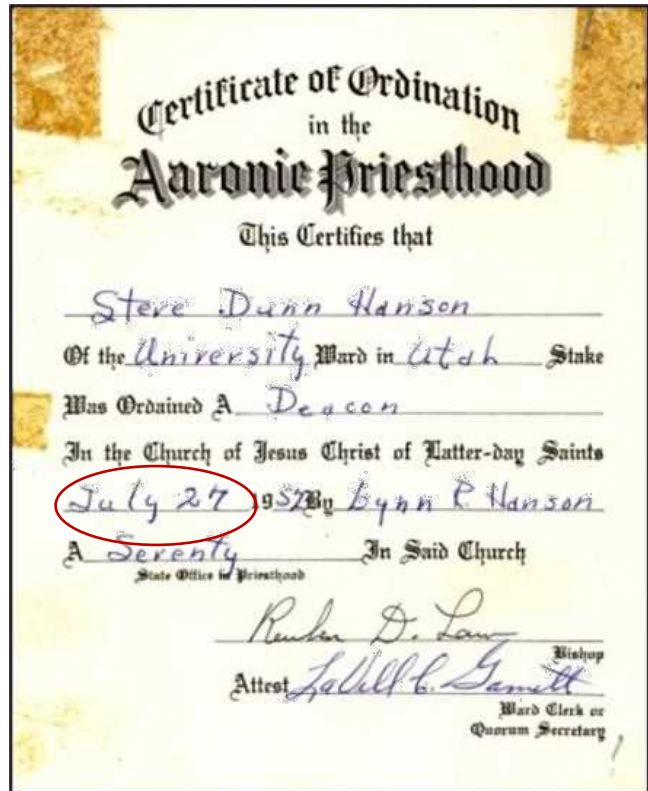
Since we were leaving for St. Louis before my 12th birthday, the bishop said he would have Dad ordain me a deacon and confer the Aaronic priesthood on me the week before I turned 12. So, if you look at my Church records, you will see that I might have been the only one in the 20th century who was given the Aaronic priesthood before he was 12 years old. Does the Church have a Book of Guinness world records? If they did, I bet I would be in it. 😊

We sold our Provo house, loaded our furnishings on a trailer behind our car, and off we went to St. Louis. That was a long way. About 1200 miles or so. There were no such things as freeways back then. Most of the way it was a two lane road with one lane going each way. So, when you got behind a truck or a slow moving vehicle, you had to wait until it was safe to pass them. Boring.

But what made this trip even worse—how could it be worse you ask with eight people in the car sitting on two bench seats and no air conditioning in the hottest part of the summer? Well, I'll tell you what was worse. Something went wrong with the trailer, and Dad wouldn't go faster than 40 miles per hour. And when he got tired and Mom drove, she wouldn't go more than 25 miles per hour. Now that was worse.

It was horrible, in fact.

Dad had to be to St. Louis for school in the next day or two so that meant we couldn't stop anywhere at night. We couldn't afford it anyway. We just slept the best way we could, laying anywhere we could find room. On the floor. In the back window. On each other. We ended up being some 30 hours or so on the road. Try doing that in the summer in an old car without air conditioning and eight smelly people in the car. But we made it to St. Louis.





1952-1960



4

A TEENAGER

YEP, IT'S TRUE. I was once a teenager. Hard to believe? Well I was. I was a teenager for seven years. And guess what? Before you know it you're going to be a great grandparent just like me. Now that's scary. But it'll happen. I know you're aching to be my age, but you shouldn't rush it. 😊

Being a teenager isn't so bad. Although I'm sure glad I didn't get stuck there. So what was it like when I was a teenager?

Well, I was cool. Did you know that every year I spent as a teenager was in the 1950's? I turned 13 in 1953 and 19 in 1959, so I was 100% 1950's. And everybody knows that teenagers in the 1950's were cool.

Was I ultra smart? Yep. Not much I didn't know. I seem to have forgotten it all as the years have gone by though.

Was my hair combed back in a ducktail? Of course. But I never could cut my hair into a flattop. My hair wouldn't stand up. How do you think I would look if I combed my hair in a ducktail now? I mean if I had hair.

Did I wear white tee shirts and Levi's to school? Yep. Well, not exactly Levi's. I couldn't afford those, so I wore Wrangler jeans from Penney's. A little embarrassing.

Did I have zits? Yep. But not too bad. Just enough to prove I was a teenager.

Did I have white buck shoes? Yep. Dumb move though. They sure got dirty fast.

Did I dance the jitterbug? Yep. Well, sort of. Actually dancing was... Well, it wasn't really my "thing."

Was I handsome and clever and athletic and funny and did all the girls with their ponytails and poodle skirts chase after me? Yep. Well, maybe not exactly chase after me, but... Well, some of them were nice to me. Sometimes.

Okay, maybe I wasn't exactly cool. But I made it through being a teenager, and I must have turned out okay. Look who married me. 😊

So, what was it like for me when I was a teenager? I'm going to tell you, but before I do, let me tell you all the places where I lived as a kid before I went on my mission. Shelley, Ogden, Shelley, Idaho Falls, Shelley, Provo, St. Louis, Idaho Falls, Fort Ord, Seaside, Fresno, Fort Ord, Fresno and Pacific Grove. Whew!

Obviously moving around made my young years kinda untypical. And, as you will see, moving from Shelley to Provo to St. Louis to California made it really untypical.

Okay, here we go.



5

ST. LOUIS—TEENAGE BEGINS

WE MIGHT AS WELL have loaded our stuff on a ship and gone to Turkey as far as I was concerned. Everything was so strange in St. Louis. For one thing, in Shelley and Provo, just about everyone was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Here, other than Carol Ohsiek, the only members of the Church in our grade school were Bruce, Glen, Ray, and me. None of our neighbors were. Well, Don and Elaine Reber and their small family were. He was also a dental student from Utah, and they lived next door to us for a year or so. But hardly anyone in St. Louis was a member.

We were 15 or 20 minutes away from the Church—which seemed like forever away because in Shelley and Provo we could just walk to Church. But, we were closer to it than most other members.

In Shelley and Provo, most of us were descendants from Latter-day Saint pioneers with names from Scandinavia and the British Isles like Hanson, Anderson, Nelson, Holland, Huntsman, Smith, Snow, and Dunn. And now I was surrounded by Jews and Catholics and Protestants with names like Pogorelski, Silbertasch, Abramovich, Ocello, Murphy, Sennert, Hasek, Froelich, Costas, Koenig, and Lampros. Strange. But pretty neat too.

And there were Blacks all over the place, but not in my neighborhood and not in my school. I could count on one hand the number of Blacks I had ever seen in my life before moving to St. Louis. But here I didn't have much of a chance to talk to anyone who was black. It was like a line was drawn down the middle of streets and on one side of the line only Blacks lived, and on the other

side of the line only those who were not black lived.

Blacks couldn't attend the schools I attended, and no one who was not black attended the schools the Blacks went to. I didn't understand it. And I despise segregation. I'll talk about that later.

St. Louis was really big. Idaho Falls and Provo were big cities to me before. And Salt Lake was humungous, but compared to St. Louis, it was a country town. Now I was surrounded by over a million people with buses and street cars and tall buildings and pushed together yards and brick streets and slums and two big league baseball teams and a professional basketball team and the huge Mississippi river and even a monster park with a zoo.

And if I were to believe my Grandma Dunn—which I did at least for a while—there was bad and dangerous stuff all over the place in St. Louis with drug dealers and murderers and thieves and gangsters.

And where were the mountains?

The sun always came up over the mountains. Every place I had ever been, even California, had mountains on the east. Really big mountains. But when we got to the eastern part of Colorado on our way to St. Louis, it was different. We rode over and through the mountains that had been on the east all of my life, and as far as I could see ahead, there were no mountains. The land was flat. The only mountains were on the west where we just left them, and they kept shrinking the more we drove until they were no more.

As we came through Kansas and into Missouri the land started to get big bumps and the flatness turned into rolling hills. Hills everywhere. And they were green, with grass growing right up to the edge of the road. That didn't happen in Idaho or Utah. The only places that were green there were those that were watered by irrigation ditches and canals or by lawn sprinklers.

Well, actually the sagebrush that was everywhere was kinda blue green, but that didn't count. But here, everything was green, and I wondered why.

I found out.

As we drove through Kansas and into Missouri, it was like it was raining inside the car. There wasn't water coming down from the sky and into our open windows, but it might as well have been. It was like we were in a sauna. The air was suffocating-hot and was thick with water that just hung there. When the air couldn't hold any more water it dropped the extra on the ground. That was rain. And it did that all the time.

But even after the rain stopped, the air never stopped being full of water. It was like you were breathing warm mist. And you couldn't get cool in the shade.

The heat just carried through the air to wherever you were. In your car, in your house, or under a tree. It was all the same.

That was *why* everything was green. The whole place was a giant greenhouse. It was a paradise for deodorant companies.

What cinched the foreignness of this place for me was the way the people talked. I thought the South was Georgia and Alabama and Mississippi and Louisiana, with Texas, Arkansas, and a couple of other states coming close. My Grandmother Dunn's sister, Lucille, lived in Atlanta, Georgia, and they talked southern. I thought it was fun to listen to them.

Well, in St. Louis, they didn't exactly talk with a southern accent but rather like they were trying to make their Yankee tongues talk Confederate. Was that a carryover of their in-between Civil war experience? I don't know, but it was a slurry mix that sounded like a 45 record being run at 78 speed. It wasn't "The Chipmunks" sound, but I didn't know that anyone could talk that fast. And they hardly opened their mouths when they spoke. They mumbled at high speed. I couldn't understand them, and I wasn't even deaf then. So my usual response was right out of the Idaho farm boy dictionary: "Huh?" or "What'd you say?"

I learned how to respond the "correct" way in St. Louis, and here's how it went.

When I first got there, and an adult spoke to me, and I didn't understand what they said, I would grunt, "Huh?" There was shock on the face of the adult, and something between mortification and grins on the faces of my friends. I was quickly taught "manners." There was a polite way to talk to adults. And it was mandatory. Within a few weeks I was *always* using "manner-talk." Well, maybe with a slip up or two to begin with.

Here it is: "Yes, ma'am." "No, ma'am." "Thank you, ma'am." "Ma'am?" "I beg your pardon?"

Yeah. It was a different world.



6

ST. LOUIS HOME

WE LIVED AT 6900 West Park Avenue in St. Louis. And I even remember our telephone number: Sterling 1-6250. You would dial “S & T” on your circular dial and then the numbers. I don’t think there were area codes. At least I don’t remember them. Back in those days, a long distance call was always made through an operator. So, you would dial “0” to get to her and just tell her the state and city and phone number you were calling, and she would make the call for you. The operator was always a “she.”

We lived in what was considered a low income area of the city, just a few blocks southwest of the huge Forest Park that St. Louis surrounds. The houses were in reasonably good shape, but generally at least 50 years old, meaning they were built probably before or around the beginning of the 20th century. Many of the streets were cobblestone or brick, including the street in front of our house.

Small hills and valleys dotted Missouri and St. Louis, and we lived on the slope of a hill. The streets were narrow and usually one-way. You could park on the street, which most residents did because only a few had garages. That left barely enough room for one car to get by.

Right across the street from us and at the bottom of a house that was built on a fairly steep rise, was a little neighborhood store. It belonged to those who owned the house above it. We would never do any serious shopping there. Maybe because it wasn’t unusual to find bugs in some of the boxed food because of how long they had been sitting on the shelf.

Our house was on the corner. When I first saw it, I thought it was a pretty good sized home, probably because it was two stories. But it was actually smaller than our house in Shelley.

The outside was covered with brown-maroon slate. There was a covered front porch that was large enough to put one or two chairs, but the front yard was almost non-existent. Since our house was built on a gradually sloping hill, our backyard was “lower” than



the front yard, and our basement door opened out to the backyard. The back porch was more like a landing, and you had to walk down maybe seven or eight steps to get to the ground.

The backyard was very narrow. Basically the same width as our narrow house. It had two prominent



Mom & children back yard -- 1953

features. A fish pond that was six to eight feet in diameter, and a detached garage that was at the back of the property with its door facing the street. For the first few years we lived there, we had very large goldfish in the pond—six inches to a foot long. And we had a little wire fence around it to keep

both cats and the little kids out of it.

We never used the garage because it was too far away from the house to be convenient, and because it was filled with our stuff. But that changed when

my Grandpa Hanson had Dad recover an old car for him that he was repossessing and that somehow found its way back to Missouri from Blackfoot, Idaho. Dad put the car into the garage. There it stayed for I don't remember how long. Maybe a year. Until *the event*. The event where we lost the car. And the garage. I'll talk about that later.

Now for the house. It was two stories with an unfinished basement. The basement was home to our Thor semi-automatic washing machine, our furnace, our turtles, and cockroaches. The first floor had a kitchen and eating area, a bathroom that was right off a small "dining room" that held our piano. This was the only bathroom in the house. And it was connected to the dining room? Hmm. We also had a "front" room or living room. It actually had a nice fireplace, and in that room we had our couch and a chair or two along with OUR NEW TV. I'll talk about that later too.

The stairs to the second floor were on the southeast corner of the house. They were steep, like a near 45 degree angle, with a wall on each side. There was a small landing a few steps up from where the stairs started in the kitchen, and at the top of the stairs there was a wide hallway where Reed and Lynette's beds were. Mom and Dad's bedroom was on the left, and straight ahead was another small bedroom where Glen and Ray slept in a double bed.

You had to go through their bedroom to get to Bruce's and my bedroom which was very tiny and was in the gable of the house. There was just enough room to put two narrow beds on each side under the eaves with about two feet between them to walk. There might have been a dresser for us there too. Or maybe our dresser was in Ray's and Glens' room. But, Bruce and I felt like we were "uptown." We had our own bedroom. It beat sleeping on couches in the living room in Provo, that's for sure.

There wasn't any air conditioning in our home either. Are you kidding? Who could afford air conditioning? Well, maybe some of the rich people could. I think the Oscarson's in the Church branch had it. But all we could afford was one exhaust fan. And whatever circulation that generated had to ripple through a hallway and Ray's and Glen's room to have any effect on us. Bottom line, it had hardly any effect on us. Not good.

Why not good? Because in the summertime in St. Louis the temperature was always in the 80's and 90's. And so was the humidity. There was no such thing as cooling off by getting in the shade. The temperature was the same everywhere because of the high humidity, and your sweat wouldn't evaporate to cool you off. If you stood directly in front of a fan, that could help, but who could do

that for very long? And with the exhaust fan two rooms away, we didn't feel it much. The only way we knew it was on was because we could hear it. It was loud.

But what about night? Couldn't we just open the window and get some cool air? We opened the window alright, but there was no cool air. Usually not even a breeze. The only thing that was different about the night was it was dark. The temperature and the humidity were about the same. And we would lay on top of our beds in our underclothes and sweat all night long.

Ahh, but then the cold shower in the morning. Two problems with that. The water wasn't cold either. It was warm. And we didn't have a shower. Just an old bathtub. One bathtub for eight of us. Of course, that was no different than any other place I had lived, but you didn't take a bath to cool off. Besides, you just didn't take baths more than once a week. Or twice if you were dirty or stunk.

A couple of other things about living in St. Louis that was different. There were lots of fireflies in the summer. They were neat. These little bugs had lanterns built in their tails, and when they lit them up they glowed



like a little candle. They were all over the place, and sometimes we would catch them and break off their lights when they were aglow and keep them in a bottle. The light stayed lit for a long time.

Another insect that was all over the place in the summer was the chigger. These tiny little mites were everywhere in the grass and would climb up onto your leg and bite. If you ever ran around in the grass in your bare feet, you paid for it. Little red bites all over your feet and ankles and legs. Not good.

And then there were the katydids. They're like a green cricket, and they live in the trees. You couldn't usually see them but you could sure hear them. Every night in the summer they would scrape their wings together to make a scratchy sound that was like scraping your fingernail on the blackboard. And it was loud. One katydid could make a real racket and when a number of them formed their own orchestra, it was really loud. They would start and stop on cue like they were being led by a director.

My favorite St. Louis animals though, were the turtles. When we drove out in the country away from St. Louis we would sometimes see box turtles moving off of the highway. We



picked up a couple of them and kept them as pets in our basement. They ate the cockroaches and other bugs, and we would sometimes have turtle races with them. To see which one would go the slowest? I'm kidding.



7

DEWEY GRADE SCHOOL

IF WE HAD STAYED in Provo, I would have attended a “junior high school” for my seventh grade, but in St. Louis there were only grade schools and high schools, so I went to grade school for my seventh and eighth grades. Dewey Grade school.

The grade school was named after Admiral George Dewey, a hero of the Spanish American War. It was just a few blocks from our home and close to Forest Park. It was an old building when I went there, and it is still there. A really old building now but with a face lift.

I had one teacher for the seventh grade, and I don’t remember her name,



but I had two teachers for the eighth grade. Miss Gambles and Miss Meyers. They were probably mid to late 50's in age, and I don't believe they had ever married. They were strict. At least I thought so. But I knew they cared about me, and they made all of us work hard.

Miss Gambles not only had us read poetry, she had us memorize a couple of poems from a list she gave us. I chose a really easy one, like Carl Sandburg's "Fog," that was short. But I also chose some longer ones like Longfellow's "Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree." My favorite poem of all was "Opportunity" by Edward Rowland Sill. I can still recite it word for word after all these years. I've used it in talks and lessons. I'm grateful Miss Gambles had us memorize those poems, but at the time, it wasn't my favorite thing to do.

Opportunity

by Edward Rowland Sill

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by
foes.

A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing." — he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.

Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Why did I have two teachers in eighth grade? In St. Louis at the time, depending on when your birthday was, you could start school in either January or in September. Miss Gambles took the youngest eighth graders and Miss Meyers took the older ones. They would get a brand new class twice a year. That was kind of cool for a student, especially if you had a birthday really late or really early

in the year. You didn't have to wait for a whole year to start school when you turned five or get into high school when you turned fourteen.

What I also liked was the different kinds of kids in my class. We had Filipinos, Greeks, Irish, Jews, and about every European culture you can imagine. But we didn't have Blacks because our schools were segregated, and that wasn't good.

There was a Jewish orphanage just a block or two down the street, and those kids came to this school. I think some of them had been orphaned as a result of Hitler's holocaust. One of my good friends was from this orphanage. Esther Silbertasch. I never asked her about the holocaust though.



We had something else that was different in our school. In St. Louis it was the law that a kid had to go to school until he or she was 18 or had graduated from grade school. Guess what? Some of the



kids in my school were 16 and 17 years of age. Most of the older ones had been

expelled from other grade schools and put into our school. Actually, they weren't rough on us at all. But you didn't mess around with them. Denny Ocello was 17, I think, and was in my eighth grade class. He shaved, and he smoked cigarettes. He would stand outside of the fenced in school playground and light up.

The school playground was asphalt. No grass. But it didn't matter. We still played softball and kickball and soccer and basketball. My knees, hands, arms and elbows often had scrapes and cuts as a result. Nobody thought about suing the school or anyone else in those days.

And, like in Provo, I was a member of the School Safety Patrol. At the intersection by the school I stopped cars and kids and tried to stop adults with the same non-success I had in Provo. I'm glad they hire adults to do that now.



And, like in Provo, I was one of the shortest kid in my class. And, as I mentioned before, I didn't like to back down from an argument. Some kids would naturally think that short kids could be pushed around a bit, but I wouldn't back down. That was wrong, of course, and even stupid. I had my share of "disagreements," and they were usually with kids that were always bigger than me. Bruce broke up a couple of these. He had reached his full height of nearly six feet when he was 13, while I finally hit five feet when I turned 12 and stayed at that height for another year or so. He looked like he was a half dozen years older than me, when only a year separated us. He was big enough to try to get me out of my scrapes.

Carol Ohsiek, the only other LDS kid in our grade school besides my siblings and me, was a year younger than I was. I liked her as a friend, and maybe sometimes a little more. She and I were buddies for the four years we lived in St. Louis. She was my first ever date. Sort of. I was 13, and back then we didn't have the rule in the Church that you couldn't go on a date until you were 16. I asked Carol if she would go with me to our Church branch's Gold and Green Ball. That was a dance where you wore a tie and coat and everybody, including your parents, went.

Mom and Dad drove me over to pick her up and take her to the dance, and then her Dad came and picked her up about 10:00pm or so. I think that was

past her bedtime. That was my first date. It was a start. Her dad liked me. When we left St. Louis a couple of years later, he said, “You can come back and marry Carol anytime.” I was 15 at the time and getting married wasn’t on my agenda. 😊



8

SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL

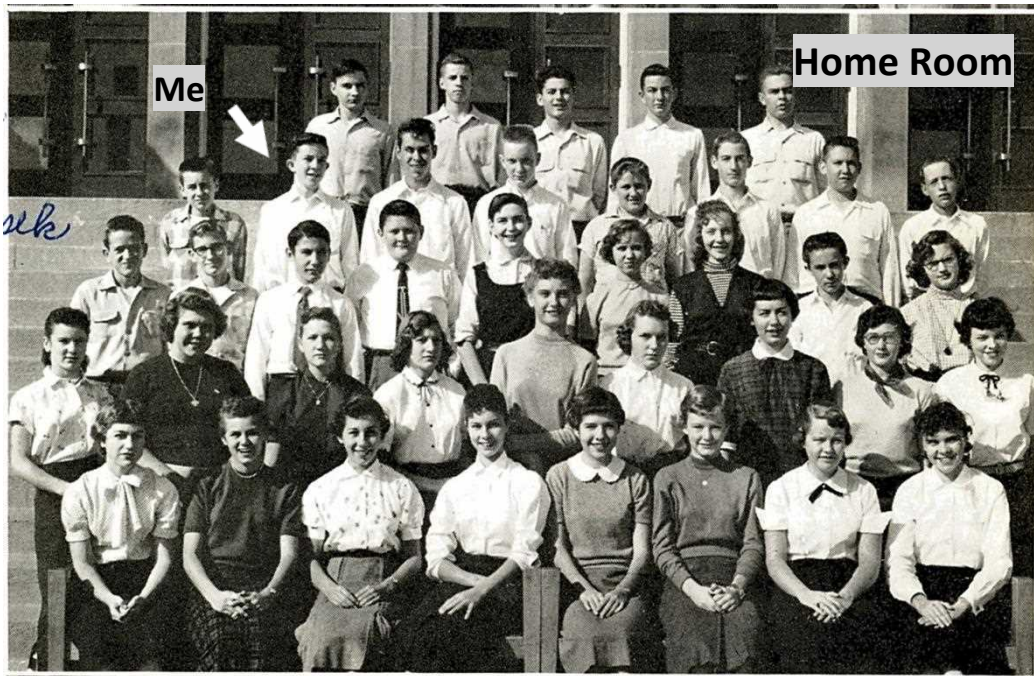
I WENT TO SOUTHWEST high school in St. Louis for two years. It was a 30 to 45 minute bus ride from our house. There wasn't a school bus, and I caught the regular mass transit bus that everyone used. If I missed it, I would have to wait for the next bus, and I would be late for school. The bus stop was a couple of blocks from our house, and since that bus didn't go directly to my school, I had to transfer to another bus that did. We would buy special school passes that let us ride these buses anywhere and as much as we would like.

We didn't have backpacks like kids do today. We would carry our books under our arms. Not a good way to do it as that wore out the books fast and often made for crumpled up homework.



Southwest, like Dewey, was an old school when I went there. It was three stories high and all of the classrooms were within that building. We would start the day out in our "home" room. That's where they took attendance and our home room advisor, who was a teacher, would be our personal mentor through our four years of school because we stayed in the same home room for that entire

time. You would get to know the kids and your advisor in your home room really well.



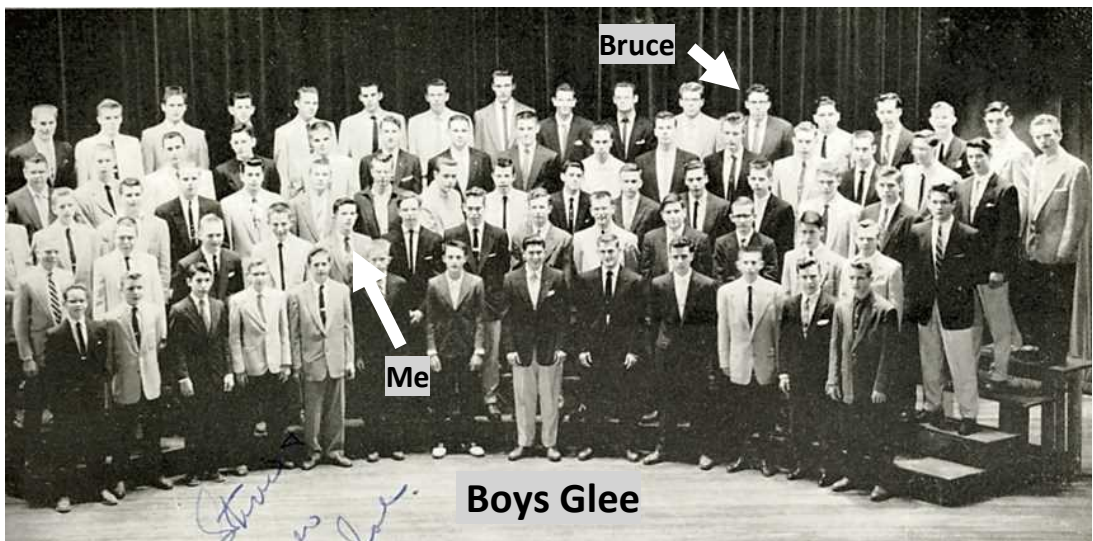
My advisor was Mr. Ashley. He was the varsity basketball coach. I liked him, although I didn't make the JV basketball team when I tried out. Or rather, I apparently made it, but when the JV coach came into the locker room and pointed in my direction and said, "You're cut," I thought he was talking to me. So, I didn't show up to practice anymore. I found out later that he was talking to a kid who was standing by me, but our skill levels were about the same so when that kid showed up for the next practice, he kept him on the team.

As I remember, we had eight class periods during the day and just about four or five minutes between each class. So, when the buzzer rang to end a class, I really had to take off to be at my next class on time. Especially if it was on the other side of the building. One of my classes was a study period, and I could get most of my homework done during that time and usually didn't have to bring much homework home.

Everyone had to take two English classes each day—grammar and literature. There were other mandatory classes too, like math and history. In your freshman year, you had to take at least one music class as well. As I remember, everybody was required to have at least two years of music sometime in their four years of high school. If you weren't that great at singing, you were in Chorus. If you could sing reasonably well you were in *Advanced* Chorus. If you were very

good at singing, you were put into the Boys' Glee or Girls' Glee. And if you were a senior and were super good, you could try out for the Acapella Choir where you sang without any accompaniment. If you could play a musical instrument, you could be in the school band or in the school orchestra instead of singing.

The school had a huge auditorium with a large stage that probably could sit 1,000 people. A focus of the school was to help students become "cultured," and that was good. During my two years there, I attended two music classes a day. I sang and played the clarinet in band. While I was "okay" at the clarinet, I was a reasonably good singer. My last year there I was in the Boy's Glee club, and Ms. Meyer's, who was our Boy's Glee director, had me sing a short solo in a school program for students and parents.



I was also involved in student affairs and served on the student council my last semester there. My last day in school before we moved, Mr. Ashley, my advisor, said some very nice things about me and seemed to be quite emotional about it. He said that if I would have stayed at Southwest I would likely have been the senior class president or the student body president. I had no idea that he thought that way about me. I didn't think anyone thought that way about me. And his saying that helped me feel okay about myself.



For the first year of school, I couldn't afford to buy a meal at the cafeteria and brought my lunch in a sack. The second year, I worked at the cafeteria for my lunch. It was a real cafeteria with several food choices. I'd never been in a school like that before, and I ate really good.

Carol Ohsiek was the only other member of the Church at Southwest besides Bruce and me. But in my second year, a girl, Dixie Bruno, joined the Church, along with her mother, and she went to Southwest. She was pretty and outgoing, but I was bashful and self-conscious and didn't get to know her very well. She stopped coming to Church after a little while. Maybe she would have kept coming if I had been a better friend to her.

| Name: <u>Lanson, Steve</u> | | PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Adviser: <u>Edw. Ashley</u> | | SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI | | | |
| School year 19 <u>52</u> -19 <u>53</u> | | PUPIL'S REPORT CARD | | | |
| SUBJECTS | PERIOD | EXPLANATION OF MARKS | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <u>Comp</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>Al. Lit.</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>Eng.</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>A</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>Span.</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>A</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>B</u> |
| <u>Bus. Mth.</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>Bo. L.</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>Health</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>P.E.</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |
| <u>Music</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>A</u> |

ACHIEVEMENT:
A circled mark indicates that the pupil has the ability to do better work with reasonable effort.

Key to Grading System:
A—Excellent 90% to 100%
B—Good 80% to 89%
C—Medium 70% to 79%
D—Fair 65% to 69% (barely passing)
F—Not passing Below 65%

CITIZENSHIP:
Citizenship includes industry, responsibility and cooperative.
1—Above average
2—Average
3—Below average

How did I do in school? Not too bad. Actually, I had A's whenever I wanted to put forth any effort, and a lot of the time when I didn't. I really liked Algebra and Geometry. Spanish was boring and that showed in my "B" grades. And English... Well that was interesting.

My grammar class was okay, but my literature class I really liked. My problem was I liked to talk. And sometimes I would get the highest academic grade and the lowest "citizenship" mark at the

same time. Our teacher assigned us to write a poem. I did, and when she read it she said, "You didn't write this. Where did you get it?" I was offended and told her I didn't get it from anybody. It was my poem. Eventually, maybe because of how well I was doing otherwise, she believed me. That was my first ever poem, and I wish I had kept a copy of it.



9

ENTERTAINMENT

SO, WHAT DID I do in St. Louis to have fun? Well, sometimes we went to the movies at the Hi-Pointe Theater that was just a few blocks from our home near the southwest corner of Forest Park. It was there I got ring worm. Yuck. I probably caught it by laying my head back against the seat. They didn't keep the old theaters all that clean, and the Hi-Pointe Theater had been around since the early 1920's. Anyway, here's what happened with my ringworm.

When they saw this messy rash growing on my head, Mom and Dad took me to the doctor at Washington University where Dad went to school. The doctor said it was ringworm, and he wanted to try an "advanced" treatment on me. Usually they cured ringworm by cutting the



hair where the ringworm was and putting medicine on it to kill it. But this doctor x-rayed my head instead.

He told Mom to wait for a couple of days and then put adhesive tape on my head and pull it off. He said the hair would just come off with the tape. That's what Mom did. She covered my head with two inch wide strips of adhesive tape before she tried any to see if my hair was ready to come off. As she lifted each

strip, most of my hair came out but the hair on the sides of my head did not. If you have ever yanked the hair on the side of your head you have a little idea how this felt for me. Mom kept telling me how sorry she was as she pulled the tape off. I was nearly crying with the pain.

But that was nothing.

I was thirteen years old, was almost the shortest kid in my class, my weird ears stuck out, and I was now bald. That didn't do a lot for my self-confidence. I always wore a stocking cap everywhere, including Church, to hide the ringworm and my bald head. A lady at Church came up to me there and started to chew me out for wearing a hat in Church. I took my hat off. She kind of gasped, and with a little mouse voice said, "Oh." It was actually kind of fun to see that look on her face.

Well, back to the movies. Most of the movies were just regular. But while I was in St. Louis, they came out with Cinemascope and stereophonic sound and 3-D movies. So that was exciting. When a 3-D movie came out, we would sit there with these funny glasses on and duck when things were thrown out at us, like spears and knives and things. It really seemed like they were coming at us.

Sometimes, not very often because it was downtown

and it cost a lot to go there, we went to the Fox Theater. I don't think I have ever been in another theater like the Fox Theater. We saw the most popular movies there, and we saw some famous entertainers with an orchestra that was on a platform that lifted up from a pit below the front of the stage. It was the most beautiful building I had ever been in.



When we first moved to St. Louis, Mom and Dad decided to buy a TV. Our first TV. They said they did that so we wouldn't have to pay the cost of



going to the movies. We did both, but we sure watched a lot of TV. Back then there were only three channels. ABC, CBS, and NBC. And we knew every program on TV. Sometimes they would play an old movie, but most of the time the programs were "live." They really didn't have an economical way to record the programs for later replay, so they had to be live. We saw sets fall down, actors miss their cues and forget their

lines, and sometimes even get the giggles when they messed up.

Here are some of the TV programs we watched. Beginning at the top from left to right: Howdy Doody and Buffalo Bob in the Howdy Doody Show; Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca in The Show of Shows; Jack Benny in the Jack Benny Show; Ted Mack in the Original Amateur Hour; Art Linkletter in House Party; George Gobel in the George Gobel Show; Gunsmoke; Arthur Godfrey in the Arthur Godfrey Show; and, The Ed Sullivan Show.



From April until October there was something that Bruce and I would never miss doing...listening to the Cardinal's baseball games. We would lie on our beds in our tiny, very hot and very humid bedroom, and listen to every inning and every at bat. We knew all of the players and their batting averages. We were happy when they won and not so happy when they lost. And we loved the announcer, Harry Caray. **"Holy Cow."** he would shout when a great play was made, and when a ball was about to leave the park for a home run, he would yell, **"It might be! It could be! It is! A home run!"**



Sometimes we would go to the baseball games. We even went to a St. Louis Browns game and watched Satchel Paige pitch. Some people think that



**Satchel
Paige**

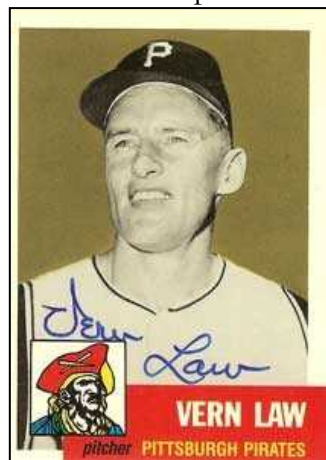
Satchel Paige was one of the best pitchers to ever play baseball. But he had one thing going against him throughout his career. He was black. And up until the late 1940's no blacks were allowed to play in the major leagues. Can you believe that? Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers was the first one they allowed to play there. Then there was sort of a trickle in, and finally the barrier was broken.

It is hard to even imagine today that such prejudice existed, but it did. When I saw Satchel Paige pitch, there were only a few blacks in all of major league baseball, but there he was. He had pitched in the Negro leagues for most of his career and finally came into the major leagues sometime in the late 1940's when he was an "old" man by baseball standards. He was probably close to 50 years old when I saw him pitch. I've wondered what the record books would look like if Satchel and all of the other great black players had been allowed to play in the major leagues. A lot different than it is now, for sure.

The Browns moved from St. Louis to Baltimore and became the Orioles, but the St. Louis Cardinals were always my team. If my dad were buying the seats to the game, we would sit in the bleachers. I think those seats cost 50 cents or less. But if Roy Oscarson, who was in our Church branch and who was an important officer for a large shoe manufacturing company, gave us his tickets, we sat right up by home plate in the best seats in the stadium. And we did that several times. He was always very, very nice to us.

Stan Musial was my hero. He was called “Stan the Man,” and I thought he was what the Cardinals were all about. Then Stan the Man was replaced as my number one baseball hero the last couple of years we lived in St. Louis by Vernon Law, a pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Why? Because Vernon Law was a Latter-day Saint. And Vernon Law would always come to our Church branch if Pittsburgh was playing the Cardinals over the weekend in St. Louis.

He would first arrive at priesthood meeting, held at 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning, and then come to sacrament meeting, held at 6:00-7:00 in the evening. He would talk to us boys like we were real people. I felt like he was my friend and never thought to get his autograph because he was just like the rest of us. Sort of.



He was a hero of mine because of the way he treated us, and because he was a big league baseball player who was a faithful member of the Church. As a kid, I don't think I realized how really famous he was. He went on to become a Cy Young Award pitcher, the official best pitcher in the National League.

It was about this time that Topps began to produce baseball cards featuring major league players. You got the card by buying Topps bubblegum. It was their way to sell bubblegum. You had to buy their gum to get the card. I never liked the gum that much, but I wanted to collect the cards. You never knew what player's card was going to be in the pack of gum you bought so you ended up with duplicate cards. We would trade them with other kids for a player we didn't have.

There was another thing we did with those cards. We would flip them to try to get more cards for free. Any number of boys could play. You would take the card by one of its long edges, hold it parallel to the ground at about the height of your waist and then quickly push your hand down and release the card, causing it to flip over and over until it hit the ground. You would try to get it to land on a card that was already on the ground. If you did, you got to pick up both cards for keeps.

So, if you were good, you could add to your baseball card collection. If you weren't so good... Well, you hoped you had enough money to keep buying Topps bubblegum to get more cards. Actually, I was pretty good and had a decent baseball card collection. Ultimately, I lost interest in them and gave them away or threw them away. Too bad. Some of them are extremely valuable today.

A 1952 mint condition Mickey Mantle card, which I might have had, is now worth millions of dollars.

We loved to play baseball, but most of the time we didn't have enough kids to field a team or even play "workups." Work-ups usually required three batters and enough kids to provide fielders and a pitcher. You would work up to being a hitter by catching a fly ball, or by moving "up" every time someone got out. You would move from right field to center field to left field to third base, then through the rest of the positions in the order that they circle the infield.

You finally became a batter yourself.



**Cork
ball**

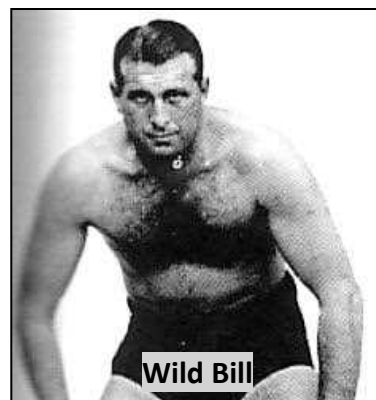
But, usually there were only two or three of us. So, we would play cork ball. Cork ball was a St. Louis game. The bat was about as long as a regular bat but less than half as thick. Not much wider than a broom handle. And the cork ball looked like a miniature baseball but only about a

third its size. The pitcher would pitch it overhand just like a baseball and just as fast. But the size and light weight of the ball made it dip and turn and curve and act weird. And you had to try to hit that ball with a skinny stick.

You only needed a pitcher, a batter, and either a backstop or a catcher to play. If you had more guys you put them out in the field. The batter got three outs. If you swung and missed, you were out. If you foul tipped the ball, and it was caught by the catcher, you were out. If you tipped the ball or hit it foul twice, you were out. If you hit a fly ball, and it was caught, you were out. Otherwise, if you hit the ball, and it went at least 15 feet or so, it was a single. You had to put together four singles in a turn at bat in order to score a run. We would play this game by the hour.

There was another famous person I got to know in St. Louis. I had become a fan of professional wrestling because of my Grandpa Dunn. I knew it was fake, but it was kind of fun to watch. And I knew one of the most famous wrestlers in the world. Wild Bill Longson. He was a Latter-day Saint too, but the only times I remember him coming to Church were Christmas and Easter.

His daughter came all the time though and was my Sunday School teacher when I was 12 and 13. In fact, she asked me to leave her class



more than once because my mouth wouldn't stop letting words out. She was

really nice though and would have Sunday School parties over at her home where Wild Bill lived. They had a huge basement that had a bar at one end, complete with all kinds of booze.

I became a Wild Bill Longson fan even though he was a “dirty” wrestler. He was the bad guy, and he was mean. He was always battling Lou Thesz for the world championship. He “invented” the “pile driver” wrestling move. He would turn his opponent upside down, put the guy’s shoulders on his calves with his head between his knees, then drop to the canvas with the opponent hitting the canvas head first. I don’t know whether it ever really hurt the guy, but it looked like it did, and that was what counted. The opponent would then act stunned, or usually like he was unconscious, and Wild Bill would pin him. I asked Wild Bill one time if wrestling was fake. He smiled and said, “Well, I’ve sure broken a lot of bones doing it.”

Sometimes I was assigned to collect fast offerings from the Longson home. We would go after priesthood meeting on a fast day morning. I would knock on the door and after a while, Wild Bill would open it. I usually woke him up. He didn’t look too dangerous in his pajamas. He would give me \$2 for fast offerings. That was a lot of money then. Most everyone else would give 25 cents or 50 cents if they were extra generous. But Wild Bill always gave \$2. So I thought, well, maybe he was a pretty good Latter-day Saint after all.



10

GIRLS AND STUFF

Did I like girls? Yes. But... Up until I was 14 or so, I was shorter than most of the girls, I wasn't that great looking, my ears stuck out, and for a while I was bald. Other than these minor things, I was on the verge of being a real lady's man. 😊

A little aside here. I've already mentioned my tendency to not back down because of my size. But maybe the way my sinews and tendons were attached to my bones and muscles gave me more strength than met the eye. For example, one of the guys in our Church branch was tall, blond, handsome, and muscular. Using the girl's vernacular at the time, he was a hunk. He was a couple of years older than I was and could be a bit of a showoff.

When some of us, including a lot of the girls in the branch, were standing around during practice for one of the plays we were putting on, he said to me: "Hey, Steve. Hit me as hard as you can in my stomach."

I looked at him. Well, looked *up* at him because he was more than a foot taller than me and was probably twice my size. "I don't want to do that." I said.

"No. come on. I guarantee you won't hurt me."

"I can't do that, Myrne." Myrne Williams was his name.

Of course, he wanted to get the attention of the girls and he kept insisting that this little kid with ringworm and stick-out ears hit him, a big blond hunk, in the stomach so everyone could see that he really was an unbelievably strong hunk. I noticed right off that he didn't ask my brother, Bruce, to do it. Bruce was nearly six foot tall himself and probably weighed 180 pounds. And he didn't ask his own brother, who was nearly his size, to do it. He didn't even ask a girl to do

it, maybe figuring that they would be stronger than I was. Who knows.

Anyway, I said, "Okay." And I slugged him in the stomach.

It took maybe two seconds for him to fall to the ground holding his stomach and moaning like a baby. I felt bad. Sort of. But I thought I had really hurt him. Apparently, I did. After maybe five minutes or so, he finally stood up and mumbled something about me hitting him in the wrong place in his stomach.

Dumb me. I didn't know there was a right place to hit somebody in the stomach. He never asked me again to hit him. Nobody did for that matter.

There was another thing about my relationship with girls when I was 12- and 13 years old. I was obnoxious. I liked to think I was really funny, and sometimes maybe I was. But I was usually much closer to being obnoxious. At least that's what Linda Lochhead and Bonnie Oscarson, who were one year older than me and were in our branch, thought. But Carol Ohsiek apparently didn't. Or at least she didn't act like it, and she was my very first date as I explained before. She and I remained good friends for the entire time I was in St. Louis, but I never asked her on a date again.

Like the Ugly Duckling, though, I changed. I grew nine inches, my hair came back in wavy and dark, and my obnoxiousness began to turn into a reasonably well developed sense of humor. I still had stick-out ears though, but my head was fuller so maybe they weren't as noticeable. In any case, I was not a hunk by any stretch of the imagination. Not like Myrne Williams. Of course, I was a lot smarter than him though...and stronger. 😊

I knew things had changed when I was at Church and Bonnie and Linda looked my way, smiled broadly, and said, "Hi." I glanced behind me to see who they were talking to because they wouldn't be caught dead saying "Hi" to and smiling at an obnoxious super-short kid who had stick-out ears. But there was nobody behind me. I looked back at them and Linda said, "We're talking to you, silly."

And silly me didn't know what to say.

I added two of the most sophisticated, pretty, and I might add richest, girls in the branch to my list of friends. And that brought me agony.

I decided I was going to ask Linda out to the New Years Eve dance that was being held in the East St. Louis branch of the Church across the Mississippi River from St. Louis. I was going to ask her over the phone, because there was no way I had the guts to ask her face to face.

That episode went something like this.

I pace back and forth by the telephone in the kitchen letting all kinds of

possible responses slide through my mind. Maybe she'll laugh hysterically. Maybe she'll just say, "Are you kidding? This is a joke isn't it?" Maybe she'll just say "No." Or maybe she'll try to be really nice about it and make some excuse that she can't do it—like she's going to put her hair up that night, or there's a TV program she wants to watch—and thank me for asking her. Then again maybe she won't be home which means my agony will be prolonged, and I'll have to work up my courage to call her again. That better not happen!

I practice what I'll say. "Hi Linda. How's it going? How was school today? Hey, I was wondering if you would like to go with me to the New Year's Eve Dance in East St. Louis. There's going to be Myrne and Bruce and their dates with us."

It sounds dumb, but I don't know what else to say. I have to go with Myrne because he's the only one who has access to a car, and I'm too young to drive anyway. Hope he's forgotten about me punching him in the stomach.

I look around the kitchen where our phone is to make sure none of my family is around. My stomach is spinning like a top. I finally get up the nerve and dial Linda's phone number. My hand is shaking and... And the line is busy. Rats. I'll call back in 10 minutes, I tell myself.

I pace around thinking about how I'm going to ask her to go out with me so it doesn't sound really dumb...and all of the ways she's going to say, "No."

What if she does say no?

I'll be crushed.

I'll never ask another girl for a date for the rest of my life. And that means I'll never get married. It's probably best that way, I figure. Maybe I shouldn't open myself to that kind of pain and just not ask her at all. That'd be best. I just won't ask her. But that would mean I was a coward, and I'm not a coward. I'll ask her even if it means it'll kill my self-confidence and keep me from ever getting married.

Ten minutes creep by. I dial the number again and my stomach is churning and my hand is shaking and my palms are wet. It's ringing. One ring. Two rings. Three rings. Four rings. Maybe no one is home. Someone finally picks up the phone. It's her mother! I never planned on what to say if her mother picked up the phone. I hang up without saying anything.

Okay, I need to plan out what I'm going to say if her mother picks up the phone again. I settle on, "Hi. Is Linda there?" It sounds dumb to me, but I don't know what else to say. What if she says, "Who is this?" Or, "May I say who's calling?" Do I dare give her my name? What if she wants to talk to me for a

minute? What am I going to say? I'm a "Duh" speaking to adults. Actually, I'm a "Duh" speaking to girls.

But I dial the number again. It rings, and Linda answers the phone. She says "Hello" twice before I speak. I'm sweating and my stomach is trying to come out through my throat.

"Uh, hi Linda. This is Steve Hanson. How's it going?"

"Fine."

"Ah, how was school today?"

"Fine."

Yes! It's going just like I practiced!

"That's good." I pause, pushing myself to say what comes next, and finally I do.

"Hey, I was wondering if you would like to go with me to the New Year's Eve Dance in East St. Louis. There's going to be Myrne and Bruce and their dates with us."

I gritted my teeth and steeled myself for the pause I knew was coming as she tried to think how to tell me, "No, thanks."

But there was no pause.

"I'd love to go."

Now what! I hadn't figured she'd actually say "Yes," so I hadn't practiced anything to say.

"Ahhh. That's great. Ahhh, Maybe I can call you back and let you know the time and everything. Ahhh. Thanks a lot. Ahhh. We'll talk later, okay?"

"It'll be fun, Steve."

I'm in shock. She said, "Yes." I'm going on a real date with Linda Lochhead.

We went to the dance, and I held her hand and danced with her, and she was nice to me, and I decided I was in love with Linda Lochhead. And that was the way it was. For a couple of weeks anyway. She started dating her old boyfriend again, but she was now my good friend, and I thought maybe, just maybe, I'll have the nerve to ask someone else out and maybe that means that someday I'll get married. Whew.

That was about it for my dating experience in St. Louis. I did take Bonnie Oscarson out to an amusement park called the Forest Park Highlands. You know now the routine that I went through when I asked a girl out. And there were firesides and things that Bonnie and I sort of paired off at. But dating was something to talk about more than to do. Actually, I *was* a coward. Getting up the

nerve to ask a girl out was just too painful, and my solution was simple. I wouldn't.

And I didn't.



11 TALENTS

HEADING THIS SECTION WITH the word “Talents” implies I had some. Maybe I did, I don’t know, but I didn’t really think I did. I tried to do a couple of things though. One was record pantomimes. Today, they call it lip syncs. The



first one I ever did was at Dewey Grade School for the school talent show at the end of my grade school experience. For some reason, I wanted to be in the talent show and couldn’t figure out anything else to do, so decided to do a record pantomime.

All I had to do was learn how to move my mouth in sync with the song, and the record I chose was a song by Johnnie Ray. It was on a 78 rpm record, which, if you had one now, would be considered an antique. The song was called, “Cry.” The record was #1 on all of the charts. This was a few years before Elvis came on the scene, and any kind of body movements by a singer was considered radical. Johnnie Ray sang this song with great intensity, and he had some body movements. Nothing like Elvis, but pretty wild for his time.

I practiced and practiced and practiced, and I had the lip sync down to perfection. Then it came time for the talent show. It was held in a multi-purpose room at Dewey that had a stage and probably room for 300-400 people to sit.

The talent show was open to everyone in the school as I recall. The performers would come on stage according to their grade level, with the eighth graders last. So, for what seemed like hours to me, and from the looks of the fidgeting in the crowd, to everyone else too, I waited for my turn.

I was second to the last act and was getting cold feet by the time my turn came. I was sure everyone was sick of the talent show by now, and my part would be a flop. I was scared it was going to be a flop anyway, but with the audience stupefied by the length and lack of quality of the talent show, I thought they were in the mood to be downright vicious. But I am, if anything, tenacious. Or, maybe just dumb and bullheaded. So up on to the stage I went.

The audience did not immediately become quiet, but as soon as the record started, they did. And I was transformed. Steve Hanson, the little kid with stick out ears, was gone. And on that stage, for everyone to see, was Johnnie Ray himself. The pain and the ecstasy and every other emotion suggested by that song came shooting out to the audience, wrapping them up and making them one with the performer on stage. Me.

It was an electric moment. When the number concluded, there was bedlam in the audience. They were standing and screaming and yelling and clapping. It was like me getting the golden buzzer on America's Got Talent today. I bowed and walked off stage and was shaking. I had never had such a moment before in my life. And I thought, "Hey, this isn't too bad."

But, it didn't take long for my lack of confidence to come creeping back. I was asked a number of times to perform my pantomimes (my repertoire grew), and I always said yes. But, it always scared me too. And almost always they were a big success. Hey, maybe I wasn't so bad after all. Looking back at it, maybe my pantomimes were significant in building my self-confidence.

One of the last ones I remember doing was at Southwest High School. It was during my sophomore year, which was my last year there because we would be moving. The event was called "Hello Day" and was the talent show of the year. Try outs were required and most who tried out did not make it.

In fact, I had tried out the semester before with a pantomime and was turned down. I found out later that the reason I was turned down was because I was pantomiming a record by Sammy Davis Jr., and he was black. They thought that would be controversial. Can you believe that? That's the depth of prejudice back then, and it made me sick and mad.

But I tried out again. This time, I pantomimed “The Yellow Rose of Texas” sung by Stan Freiberg who was acceptably white. It was a parody, i.e. a funny take, on that popular song. And I did it in the Southwest High School auditorium that was a genuine theater with theater seats and a huge stage.

There were probably a thousand in the audience, and I was scared. As usual. But as usual, as soon as I got on stage, everything changed. Steve Hanson was gone, and I became who I was pretending to be. And when I finished, the roar of approval was deafening. It was America’s Got Talent again. I even got my picture in a national teen magazine that was covering the show.



“The Yellow Rose of Texas was never like this! Steve Hanson does pantomime to record.”

But, as usual, as soon as I got off stage, I was Steve Hanson. Nothing special. I could hardly imagine it had been me up there, and it was as though the compliments I was hearing were meant for someone else.



I did some other things too that I suppose could be considered using talents. As I have already said, I sang a solo in a major performance as a member of the Boys Glee Club at Southwest High School. And, I was in several Church

plays. In the picture above, I'm the one on the left in the 2nd row with the stocking cap on. I had ringworm at the time, so I had to wear the cap in the play.

All in all, though, I decided that show business was not for me. And to be honest about it, I didn't have Hollywood knocking on my door either.



12 SEGREGATION

I THINK I WOULD like to say something about segregation—more than I have already.

When we moved to St. Louis, all the schools were segregated. All Blacks were required to go to Black-only schools. It is hard today to imagine how this could be, but that's the way it was. Like I said before, it was almost as though there was a line drawn around the inner city where the Blacks could live. And they just couldn't live on the other side of that line. There were no Blacks in my grade school. There were no Blacks in my high school, and there were no Blacks in my neighborhood. I had no chance at all to come to know and become friends with anyone who was black.

I would like to say that that offended me, but I can't. I think I just didn't know any better. That's the way it was, and I wasn't old enough to see the great sin and injustice in this. I do now.

In 1954 everything began to change. The important Supreme Court decision was known as *Brown vs.*



Board of Education, and the decision was it was unconstitutional to separate citizens of the United States on the basis of skin color. And that was that. From that moment on, to one degree or another and with varying speeds, the United States began to desegregate.

In the west there was little problem, because that's the way it was anyway. In Missouri, it was a big problem. And in the south, it was a really big problem. Resistance, violent resistance, came heavy and lasted decades.

That was the environment I was in as I began high school. While school districts around me were anxious to abide by the law, there were no quick fixes, and during my sophomore year, the year after *Brown vs. Board of Education*, we were still segregated. No Blacks attended Southwest High School. But for the first time in history, our school played an all-black school in football. A bold beginning.

I was glad about that. I have often thought that if I had seen back then with the eyes I have now and had the heart back then that I do now, I would have been very pro-active in the desegregation movement. I would have been out there marching.



13 WORK

IF I WANTED ANY pocket money, I had to work. Mom and Dad didn't have enough money to get us through dental school comfortably, let alone give us any kind of meaningful allowance. So, I worked. Not all of the time, but enough so that I usually had money in my pocket. Sometimes, like when I was younger, I carried the same 50 cents or a dollar around for months.

We always worked around the house, each of us having specific chores to do. One of Bruce's and my main jobs was to wring out the clothes that had been washed. Our Thor "semi-automatic" washing machine stopped being semi-automatic. It was supposed to spin the water out of the clothes like a wringer after it washed them so we could hang them up on the clothesline. But it broke shortly after we got to St. Louis and would only wash and rinse the clothes. We couldn't afford to get another machine or have this one fixed, so... Bruce and I wrung everything out by hand. The clothes, the towels, the sheets, and the blankets. And we did that for most of the time we lived in St. Louis.

Was that why I could knock Myrne Williams to the floor? 😊

In any case, I developed a pretty strong grip. Certainly far stronger than my size indicated. I may have gotten a small "allowance" of sorts for doing this from time to time, but it certainly wasn't enough to even be called spending money. So I got jobs.

My first job was selling newspapers on a street corner at the entrance of Forest Park. I probably started the job when I was 13, but maybe 12. I was given 100 papers to sell, and if I sold them all, I earned a dollar. A cent for each paper

I sold. I picked up my bundle of papers at the Hi Pointe corner, right by the drug store, then walked a half block to the main road going into Forest Park. There was a stoplight there, and I worked the side of the street where the cars were coming out of the park. I began selling around 5:00pm, so I would hit rush hour traffic.

“ST. LOUIS POST DISPAAAATCH...PAPAAAA.” I would call at the top of my lungs. I was so small, and with the clothing I wore looked so poor, I think the drivers felt sorry for me and most of the time I sold out. I was usually there for about an hour and a half.

During the summer, I hated being on that corner because I wanted to play with my friends as it stayed light a lot longer. And in the winter or when it was raining, it was horrible. I really didn't have a decent coat, so I was always cold then. And the only gloves I had were some cotton/silk dress gloves that Mom had worn but now were not so dressy anymore. They didn't do much to protect me from the cold.

Many times I'd go into the drugstore on the corner to thaw out and wait for my “boss” to come by and collect my money. My fingers and my feet would be completely numb and would ache really bad as they warmed and the blood came back into them. I likely came close to getting frostbite a number of times, or actually had it.

Bruce would spell me off sometimes and, after a year or so, Ray started doing it. That's when I lost the corner. I think Ray just didn't show up one night, and that was it. I didn't mind that though. My newspaper career was over anyway.

I also did babysitting for extra money, and when I was a little older, I worked for a family in the ward cleaning their house. I washed and waxed their floors and did other “heavy duty” cleaning.

Bruce was hired as the custodian for our Branch chapel, and I would go down with him and help him too. I think he shared some of his wages with me when I did that. That was fun. We would explore every part of the building, play tag, but never in the chapel, and play with the machine that buffed the waxed cultural hall floor.



14

GETTING BY

HOW DID MY DAD and Mom make it through dental school with six kids to feed? Lots of people asked that question. Well, the answer was, “Not easy.” It was true that Dad had sold his business in Shelley, and there was probably enough money that was supposed to come from that, along with money farmers owed him, to help us scrape through dental school. The problem was that money never came when it was due and, in a lot of instances, it never came at all.

I remember a letter my Grandpa Dunn typed and mailed to some of the farmers that still owed Dad money a long time after they were supposed to pay their debt. Grandpa wasn’t that great with words, and he was lousy at typing, but no one could mistake what he was telling them. They had to feel pretty small. Some of them paid, but some never did.

In the meantime, Dad would play piano and organ at night clubs on Friday and Saturday nights, and Mom would baby sit the children of other dental students. Sometimes we had upwards of 20 kids in our home, counting our six. But that petered out after a year or so. The result was that we usually had enough to eat, but I got very tired of eggplant and “older bread” which we could buy for a nickel or a dime depending on how old it was. It also meant that most of my clothes were hand-me-downs. The newer clothes went to Bruce who was the biggest, and I got his clothes when he out grew them. And it meant that birthdays and Christmases were sparse for presents, but always, always, happy occasions.

One year Mom took me out to the after Christmas sales to buy some new shoes. They were \$10 shoes on sale for \$3 or \$4 dollars, and I felt like a rich kid.

That was my Christmas present. For the first and probably last time, I was “proud” of my shoes.

We struggled all through dental school financially. Yet, Grandpa Mints and Dad’s brother Merrill asked Dad to loan them money when the money Dad had in the bank was going to be used to feed us in a few months. He loaned the money. He never got the money back from Merrill, and it was years before he got it back from Grandpa. But that was the way Dad and Mom were.

Finally, everything caught up with us. The man who had bought Dad’s business still owed us a lot of money and was years behind his promised payoff schedule. It was a week or so before Christmas, and, as I recall, between Mom, Dad, Bruce, and me, we had about \$25 or so. Mom and Dad told Bruce, me, and Ray what the situation was. They had enough money, they figured, to get a cheap Christmas tree (that’s all we ever bought anyway) and buy some small presents for the three youngest children who still believed in Santa Claus. They asked us older boys if we would be okay going without presents. I felt honored to be asked to do that.

And then things started to happen. Just like in the movies.

Several days before Christmas, my mother received \$200 that was wired by her sister, Lucille. She said in her note, “I just felt impressed by the Spirit that you needed this.” And we all wept.

And then the day before Christmas, there was a check in the mail from the man who had bought Dad’s business. It paid Dad off in full. We still had a modest Christmas, but what a Christmas.

That isn’t the end of the story.

A month or two before Dad was going to graduate, we ran completely out of money. And no one owed us any money that we could count on getting. We were flat broke. We owned our small home and a car, and Dad would soon be making money, but we didn’t have the money to pay our bills.

Dad was serving in the Church branch presidency with Hank Beal, who was the branch president. When he learned of our plight, he gathered in five or six brethren, told them what was happening, and each one of them wrote out a check for \$100 to Dad and said there was more if he needed it. They said to pay them back when and if he could.

That was a lot of money. \$100 back then would be worth more than \$1,100 today. We were overwhelmed with their generosity and love. And as soon as we sold our house, Dad paid them all back. We left dental school without owing anyone so much as a dime.

The St. Louis experience was a real experience in getting by. I found out you didn't need to have very much money to be happy. In fact, that we didn't have it was probably a big reason we were so happy.



15

ADVENTURES

WELL, I HAD SOME. Just living where I lived, in a “poorer” part of town with some pretty strange people around us was adventure enough. You never knew what would happen.

One winter day, likely a Saturday, Bruce and I were walking with some friends on a street by Dewey grade school. We were at the corner, and a car pulled up to the stop sign by us. Some boys who we knew but who were not with us began pelting the car with snowballs. The driver, a middle aged man, was really mad. “I’m going to kill you (some really bad words),” he yelled. He spun off, circled the block, and pulled up to his house which was directly across from the school yard. By the time he did this the boys who had thrown the snowballs were long gone, and we were walking across the Dewey school playground.

Suddenly, he ran out of his house toward us with a rifle or a shot gun yelling he was going to kill every one of us. Everybody around me ran off in all directions. I stayed where I was. Bruce kept yelling for me to come, but I didn’t. The man came onto the playground and leveled his rifle or shotgun at me and kept telling me he was going to kill me. He was only about 100 or so feet away. Actually, I was pretty calm, and I said, “It wasn’t us who threw snowballs at you, and you’d better put your gun away or you’re going to be in big trouble.”

Remember, I was really dumb.

The man stood there with his rifle pointed at me for what seemed like a long time. And I stood there looking at him and telling him he’d better put his rifle down. Finally, he did and went back into his house. Apparently a neighbor

saw the whole thing because there were police cars lined up in front of this man's house a little later. We never found out what happened to him. But I started to think about what could have happened to me.

My brother Reed had an adventure that ultimately involved all of us. As I mentioned, our garage was in back of our yard. It was small and could only hold one car. And as I said before, the car that it held belonged to Grandpa Hanson. Someone had bought it from him in Idaho, drove it to the St. Louis area but never paid for it. So Grandpa repossessed it, and Dad put it in our garage until Grandpa could arrange for someone to drive it out to Idaho.

But that never happened.

Behind the garage was a pile of wood and weeds. Reed, who was maybe six or seven, decided it would be fun to light a little fire there. And he did. And it got bigger than he could handle. So, he walked across the yard and up the steps to the kitchen to get a glass of water to throw on the fire. But when he got into the kitchen, some of us were there, including Mom.

And his reasoning went like this: "If I take this glass of water out of the house, Mom will ask what I'm doing with it, and she will discover that I have been playing with matches, and I'll get into trouble." So, he drank the water and went up onto his bed and went to sleep. In the meantime, the garage burned down and the car with it.

It was exciting watching the fire trucks come and everyone so anxious. Of course, it was really very dangerous as the fire could have easily spread to adjoining houses and buildings. But it didn't. And no one was hurt. The car was a total wreck, and the garage was burned half way to the ground.

But... There was more than a silver lining. The insurance paid for the car and to get the garage restored to new condition. And Dad, using a lot of the burned wood that was still good, rebuilt the garage for a fraction of what the insurance settled for. And that extra money came to us just in time to allow us to pay our bills for a couple of months.

I wasn't involved very much in scouts in St. Louis, mainly because we really never had a scoutmaster as such in the Church branch. But we did go on campouts. And the campouts were usually to Babler State Park; a rugged, hilly reserve overgrown with oak and all kinds of other trees that I never knew the names of. When we went there in the winter, I froze to death because the cheap sleeping bag I had wouldn't keep me warm. I was lucky I didn't get my whole body frost-bit.

In summer, the park was beautiful, and there were all kinds of things to do, like hiking through the forests and exploring caves that had been hollowed out by centuries of flowing water. And one summer, we had an extra adventure.

It was late at night, and we were all asleep in camp when suddenly we heard gunshots. Right by us.

Men dressed up in revolutionary war clothing were shooting the muskets they were carrying right by where we were camped. You could see the balls bounce off of the paved street. And one of my friends woke up to see one of those muskets pointed right at his face and a voice said, "You make a sound, and I'll blow yer head off."

Well, we didn't like that.

So, that morning a couple of us set off to find these guys. I was going to get back at them...with my slingshot. Remember, I was dumb.

We saw a wisp of smoke up on top of a distant hill, and we set off for it. As we got close, we moved from tree to tree as quietly as we could. It was them. Maybe five or six of them dressed like they just came out of an early American history book. I was ready to give them a fight, and my slingshot was at the ready. When they saw that we were there, though, they packed up their stuff and headed out.

We found out later that they belonged to an organization that did this each year and likely were participating in an initiation exercise. Still, they were clearly in the wrong, and we reported them. I wished I could have gotten a clean shot at them though. Given my dumbness, I was lucky *I* didn't get shot.

Well, Babler Park was the scene of another experience that wasn't so much an adventure as it was memorable. I was maybe 13 or 14 at the time and one of our friends from the Church branch began to show Bruce and me some pornographic pictures. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to be a prude, and I didn't want to embarrass him because he was my friend. But, I didn't want to have anything to do with what he was showing us either, so I just stepped back and turned my head away from it.

Over the years, I really never thought about it. But then sometime in the



mid 1980's I received this call from a man with a really deep voice. He said, "This is a voice from your past." It was this boy who was our friend, and who I hadn't seen or heard from for 30 years. He said that for the last number of years he was trying to find Bruce and me. And finally, he saw an article in the *Ensign* magazine written by my mother and tracked her down and got my phone number from her.

He was doing all the talking, and I was doing all the listening. He said that after we left St. Louis, things really went downhill for him spiritually. He had nothing to do with the Church, married, and then divorced. After some years, he said, he began to think of our family and about Bruce and me and decided that he wanted to live his life like that. So he changed. He remarried, he and his wife were sealed in the temple, and he was serving as an elders' quorum president in Arizona.

That made me feel really good.

And then he said, "The reason I have been trying to find you and Bruce all of these years is to apologize to you." He asked me if I remembered going to Babler State Park and him showing us the pornographic stuff. I told him I did.

And then he said, "I know you and Bruce would never have seen that kind of garbage if I hadn't put it in front of you. Will you forgive me?" I was tearing up now. Of course I forgave him, and I thought what a wonderful man he was to seek me out to ask for my forgiveness after all these years



16 CHURCH

ALONG WITH MY FAMILY, the center of my life in St. Louis was the Church. Just about everything I did had something to do with Church. My friends, my social life, and recreation and spiritual experiences all involved the Church. We lived about a 15-20 minute drive away, but I could walk the distance in maybe an hour, which I did with Carol Ohsiek after mutual one night.

She lived several blocks from where we lived, and we dared each other to take

the walk. So we did. Dad wasn't

too happy about it though. We walked

through some tough neighborhoods that night, and he was very concerned about what might have happened. I didn't think about that and was grateful nothing bad occurred. I sure had fun being with Carol though.

We didn't have enough members to have a ward, just a branch. There were probably less than a hundred members who attended regularly, and the branch included all of the members of the Church living in St. Louis and St.



The family at church - 1953

Louis County. In those days, St. Louis had a lot bigger population than it does now. There were at least 800,000 people in the city with probably something like that in the county as well. So the Church membership was just a tiny fraction of that.

We had a beautiful building to meet in. It was colonial style and built with red brick. It was smaller than our current day chapels, and I loved it. I got to know every corner and crevice of that building, especially when I helped Bruce do his custodial work. That always turned into exploring time—particularly climbing up into the steeple. One thing that wasn't so good. No air conditioning. Of course hardly any buildings back then were air conditioned, but to not have air conditioning in St. Louis in the summer was...not pleasant. But that's the way it was, and we didn't expect it any other way. We just did the best we could. We sweated it out using hand fans the local mortuary provided that advertised their services.

All of my best friends were Church members, and they were scattered all over the city and county. My poorer friends lived closer to the inner city, and my richer friends lived way out in the county. Not that there were a lot of either. There were not many active teenagers in the whole branch.

I can almost name them all even today: Gil Atkinson, Myrne Williams and his brother, Jack Stadler and his brother Richard, Johnny Grey, Billy Lochhead and his sister Linda, Carol Ohsiek, Bonnie Oscarson, Judy Steinmetz, Butch Shirk and his sister, Donna, Janet Gee, and Bruce and me. That was about it. We were wonderfully close.

Our Sundays went something like this. Dad drove the family to the building three times during the day. First, Dad, Bruce, and me would go to priesthood meeting which was held at 8:00am or so. Then we would go home to pick up the rest of the family for Sunday School which was held at maybe 10:30am. We went back home after that for Sunday dinner and spent the afternoon there. We came back to Church for sacrament meeting which was held at 6:00pm or 7:00pm. That would last about two hours. Then we would come home, have bread and milk for supper, and go to bed.

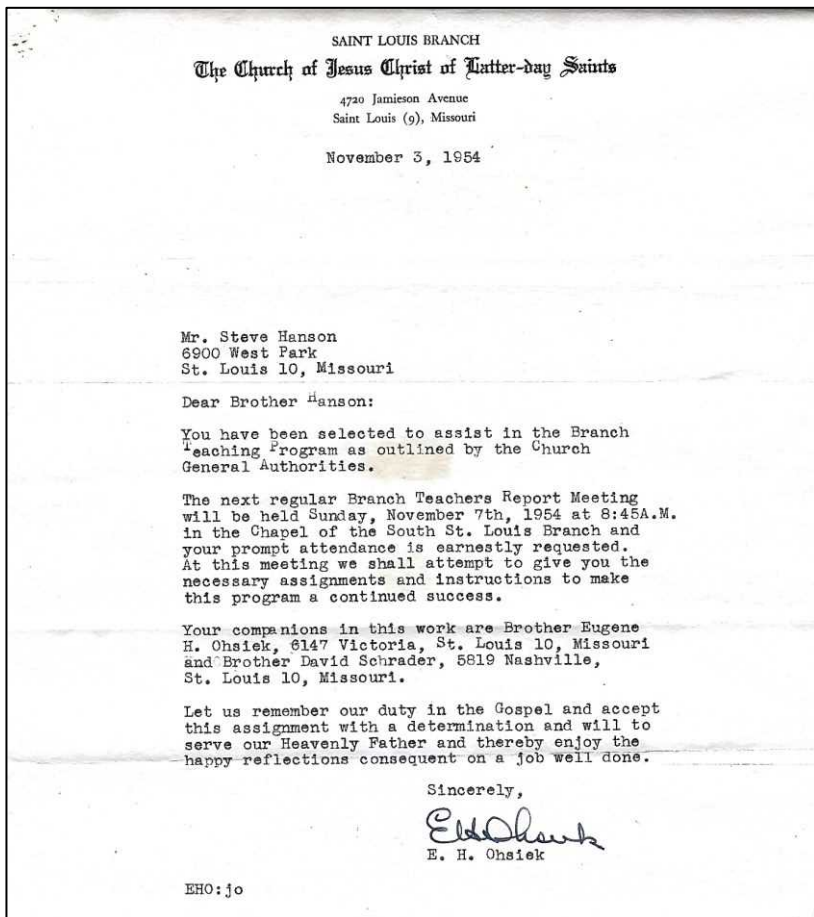
Sometimes Mom and Dad let us go with one of our friends to their home for Sunday dinner and to play and then meet us at Church at sacrament meeting. At other times we had our friends come over to our place for Sunday dinner. I liked that. And sometimes we had youth firesides at one of the members' homes after sacrament meeting.

Young Men and Young Women meetings were held week nights like they

are now, but Primary and Relief Society were also held during the week. Primary was held in the late afternoon, and Relief Society was usually held one of the weekday mornings. Back then very few women worked outside of their homes, so that was a good time to hold it.

I learned about Church service in St. Louis. Mom and Dad were my best examples. I never heard them complain, even though they were so busy with the family and school and Dad trying to make ends meet for us. Dad served as a counselor in the Branch presidency for three of the four years we were there. He was also the Branch organist and choir director. Then he was called to be one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy in the Missouri District that we were part of. Mom served on the Branch and district level in the Young Women's organization, usually in the presidency somewhere.

It was in St. Louis that I learned to become a Branch Teacher (now called ministering). Brother Eugene Ohsiek sent me a letter calling me to serve as a Branch teacher when I was ordained a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. I was to serve as his companion. I was glad of that because Carol was his daughter and my really good friend. We would go out



every month. I took that call seriously because Brother Ohsiek took it seriously.

I don't remember all of the families we visited, but I do remember one older sister. She lived in the absolute worst neighborhood possible in the poorest part of St. Louis. When we drove to see her, we would go through an alley where

huge rats would run in front of our headlights. We walked through a dark hallway to her apartment to get to her tiny kitchen and small room that served as her eating and living room. She might have had a bedroom, but I never saw it.

Her clothes were old and worn. She looked to me like she could die any minute. She never came out to Church. She probably couldn't afford to and maybe was not well enough to come anyway. But she loved having us come there. She would offer us food, but I was always reluctant to take any. For one thing, I was never sure just what it was, and for another, her place was so dirty that I was really worried about catching something.

But while I felt uncomfortable because of the dirt and shabbiness of the room, I felt that I was honoring my priesthood in visiting her and that she was a child of God just like me. I was grateful for that calling. I believe I can honestly say that since that time I have strived to be a diligent and thoughtful home teacher/ministering brother in every assignment I have ever been given. And I thank Gene Ohsiek for the experience that led to my own diligence here.

I loved all of the members of the branch. They were loving and kind to me. I was struck by the great difference in culture and economic status of the branch members. There were a number who were in dental school like us. There were some very poor people who did not own a car but came every time on the bus for Sunday School and would stay all day so they could attend sacrament meeting at night before riding the bus home. And there were wealthy members as well. Like the Oscarsons and the Lochhead's.

But the Oscarsons and the Lochheads and the other members with money never showed it in an ostentatious way. They were the first ones to help when labor or money was required, and they did so humbly and consistently. They were a great example to me.

And we had members with interesting stories. Elsie Boggs, for example, was married to a man who was not a member of the Church and whose great grandfather was Lilburn Boggs, the governor of Missouri who issued the infamous extermination order driving the Saints out of Missouri. Eventually he asked to be baptized, and I think he had to have special permission from the First Presidency in order to receive the priesthood. It was a branch filled with fascinating people like this, and there was no one I would rather be with than the members of the St. Louis branch of the Church.

Church was always an adventure. If the sacrament meetings were boring, we did something to make them not so boring. Usually quiet things. We weren't trying hard to be reverent so much as avoiding bringing attention to what we

were doing so we wouldn't be told to stop. For example, when I was a deacon, my friends and I would have holding your breath contests. No noise, just very red faces. You could be the champion of holding your breath after taking a bunch of deep breaths. You could be the champion of holding your breath without taking a deep breath. And you could be champion of holding your breath after letting all the air out of your lungs. I was the champion of everything. My record for holding my breath after deep breaths was two minutes, and for holding my breath after letting all of the air out of my lungs was one minute. Interesting what was important to me then.

When we went to Church, all eight of us would pile into our Nash—a car that hasn't been made for nearly 70 years. It was crowded with four in the front and four in the back. It really got crowded as we all grew older and bigger. With Mom and Dad so involved in Church, it was always the case that we were some of the last ones to leave after sacrament meeting. We could count on it. In fact, it was almost like there was some sort of contest among the adult members to see who could be the last one to leave the building after Church. We often won that one.

But one Sunday evening, Mom and Dad were both ready to go home while there were still a bunch of people at Church, and we left. When we got home we had a small supper. It was the usual bread and milk because our large meal had been held in the mid-afternoon. Then we went to bed. We were all down and the lights were out, when the phone rang. There was only one phone in the house, and that was downstairs in the kitchen, so Dad had to get up and go downstairs to answer it. Who could be calling this late on a Sunday evening?

It was my brother, Ray. He was maybe nine years old, and we had left him at the Church. Nobody had missed him. We didn't miss him when we crowded in the Nash to come home. We didn't miss him when we sat down to eat our bread and milk. And we didn't miss him when we got ready for bed. And Glen didn't miss him even though he slept in the same bed with Ray.

Ray had not noticed that we had left, because we never left before everyone else had gone. And when he finally noticed that we had left, he didn't say anything to the one or two who were still there because he was sure Dad would come back and pick him up. He watched them close down the Church and lock it up without saying anything and then walked down to the corner where there were some stores that were closed, a bus stop, and a pay telephone. He stood there for a long time and cried. Finally, a woman came by who was going to catch the bus and asked him what the matter was. He told her that his parents had

forgotten him, and he didn't have any money to call home. She gave him a nickel to make the call.

Mom and Dad felt really bad. When Dad picked Ray up he took him to a drive in and bought him a malt to make him feel better. Bruce and I were unhappy. We didn't think that was fair at all. Why should he get a malt when we didn't get one? And on Sunday too.

If I was Ray's dad, I would have bought him a malt and a hamburger too!



17 SUMMERS

A BIG PART OF every summer was spent in Utah and Idaho. That was our annual pilgrimage, and we would always be gone for six to eight weeks. I didn't know it at the time, but I think maybe one of the reasons for this, besides being with extended family and letting Dad catch up on his fishing, was to save some money. Essentially, we lived off our grandparents during that time and that probably was a necessary net savings to our family of many dollars.

Our ride out to the west was almost always uneventful and was boring. We usually went straight there. Or as straight there as the roads would allow. Most of the time we traveled on roads that had only one lane going each way and went through the middle of towns. Actually, that was okay and made it a little interesting to see what the different towns looked like.

The distance was about 1200 miles, and the object was to get as far as possible the first day. We would leave early in the morning and our only stops were for gas and the bathroom. Hopefully we could take care of both of these at the same time. We never stopped anywhere to eat. We couldn't afford that, so Mom fixed our lunches and snacks before we left. We would travel well into the night, and then sometimes find a cheap motel in one of the small towns we traveled through. There was never a swimming pool. Motels that had those were too expensive. In fact, as it was, some of us usually slept in the car rather than in motel beds to save money.

How cheap were the motels? Cheap. None of them had TV's, and the ones that had radios, you had to pay to use the radio. Like a quarter for a half hour program. That's how long all the radio programs were back then, except

soap operas. They were only 15 minutes.

At one of these motels, Bruce and I decided we wanted to listen to what had been one of our favorite radio programs before we got the TV. "I Love a Mystery." Dad had bought a newspaper, and we looked up the time the program would come on. We timed when we put our hard-to-come-by quarter in the slot so we wouldn't miss any of the show. We were right on. Yes!

And for a half hour we listened intently. But instead of concluding the story, at the end of the show the announcer said, "To be continued." Lousy. We never heard the conclusion.

Driving back to St. Louis after our stay in the west was always a little different. We still stayed in cheap motels, but we did a little sightseeing on the way. Every year we took a different route home, so sometimes it took us three days rather than two. We went all over the west including trips through New

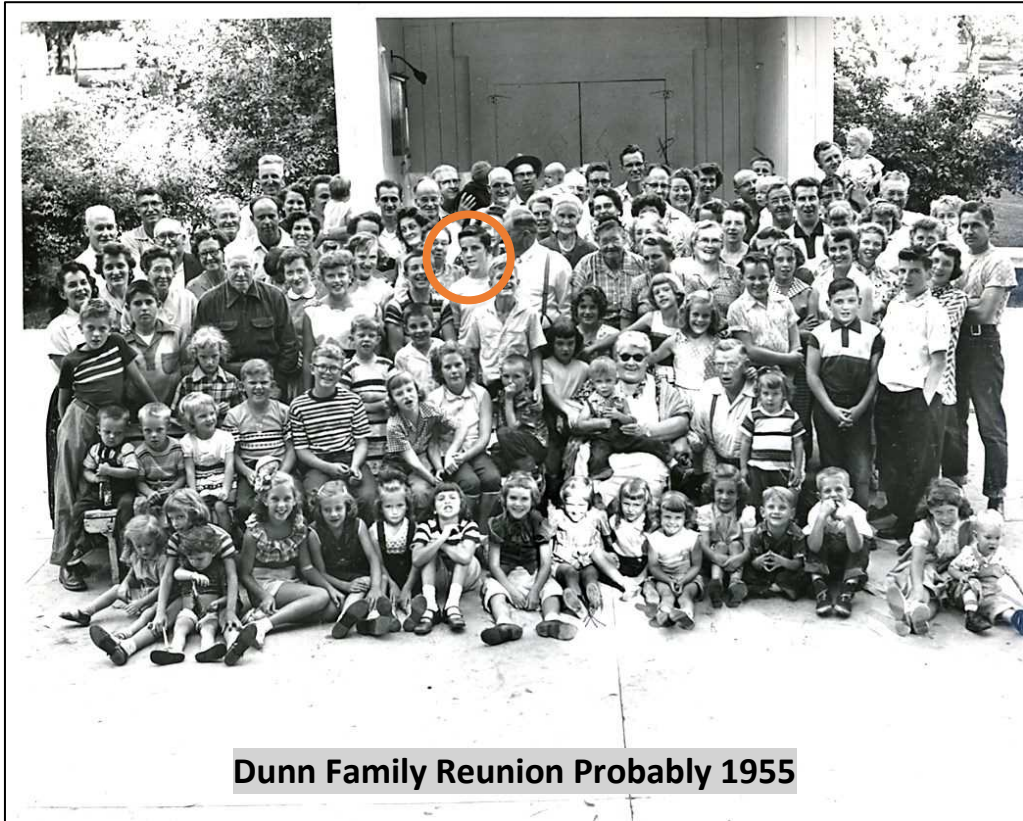


Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and national parks in Utah and Colorado. We even saw Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota with the heads of the presidents carved in the mountain side. That was pretty cool.

What did we do in Utah and Idaho for two months of summer? Well, we always went to Yellowstone and Island Park at some time and played with cousins in Idaho and Utah. At times our family was split up between the two places. Dad and Bruce in Idaho and Mom and the rest of us in Utah. But most of the time we were together in one place or the other. I liked being in Utah with the Dunn family and played hour after hour of caroms with Grandma Dunn. She was really good, and I got to be pretty good too. We visited uncles and aunts in Nibley and Hyrum, and my Great Grandmother Knecht who lived a few houses down the street from Grandma and Grandpa Dunn.

I loved being with my Grandfather Dunn's brothers and sisters especially. As I wrote previously, their mother, my great grandmother, was the second wife in a polygamous family. My mother, Isabelle Jane, was named after her two grandmothers, Isabelle Knecht and Jane Dunn. Both my great grandmother and great grandfather Dunn died before I was born, but I knew almost all of their children from both of great grandpa Dunn's wives. And I loved them and they loved me and they loved each other. It was a wonderful family to be part of.

Here is a picture of one of the Dunn reunions. I was probably 14 or 15 here. See if you can pick out where I am and where my siblings and parents are. (Hint: I'm the one with the red circle around my head.) My Grandfather Dunn is the one in the long-sleeved black shirt middle left, and my Grandmother Dunn



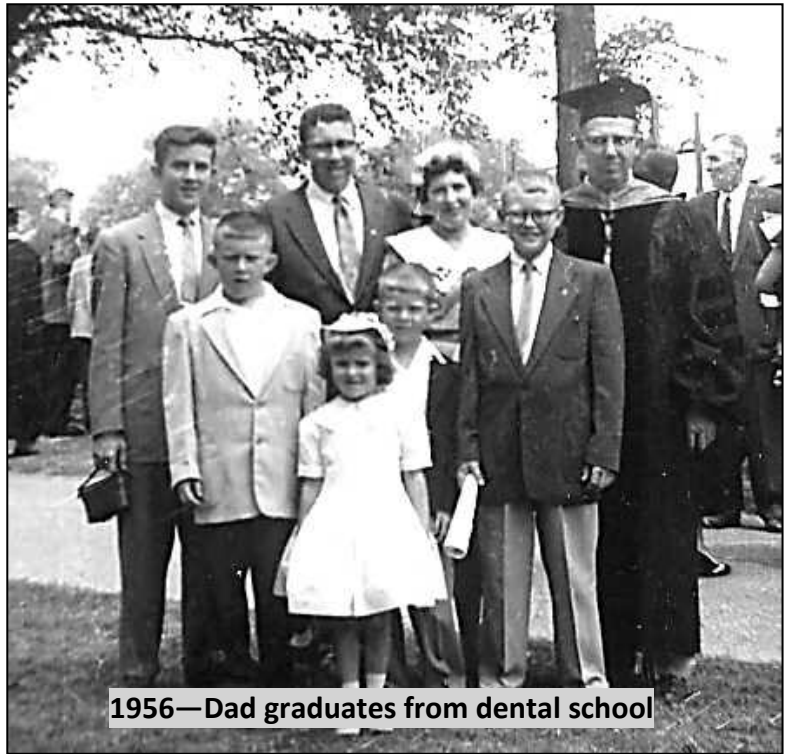
is on his right. On his left in the white blouse is Bobbie, one of my cousins who I really liked a lot then.



18

LEAVING ST. LOUIS

THAT ABOUT TAKES CARE of St. Louis. I didn't say anything about the trips we took to Indiana and Kentucky and up to Nauvoo and Carthage in Illinois. We saw lots of beautiful, interesting things, and that was pretty cool. I also didn't say anything about St. Louis confectionaries where we could buy candy and play pinball. Or about the Duncan Yo-Yo contests I entered. Or about us Southwest High students going to the Chase Hotel for special programs with TV stars, etc. etc.



1956—Dad graduates from dental school

But the whole reason we were in St. Louis happened. Dad graduated from dental school. I was really proud of him. He was now going to be called “Dr.

Hanson.” He did it! *We* did it! No one who was not a part of our family could know what that meant and what kind of price both my Dad and Mom paid for this to happen. Taking a family of eight through five years of schooling is the kind of thing that only heroes do. And Dad and Mom were heroes.

Dad decided he was going into the army after he graduated. Back then, men were drafted into the military whether there was a war going on or not. And if you were a dentist, you were eligible to be drafted up until you were about age 50. My Uncle Merrill found that out. He was drafted out of his dental practice, and he and his family of eight were sent to Germany. Dad wanted none of that, so he enlisted for two years right out of dental school and applied for a commission

Dad was assigned to Ft. Sam Houston in Texas for officer training that would begin the first of summer, and then in September our family would go to Fort Ord, California. I hated to leave St. Louis, but the prospects of living in California where it didn’t snow and palm trees grew and the ocean was next door was pretty exciting too.

We packed our trailer to the hilt with our belongings. But it was too heavy for our car to tow, so we unloaded some of the heavier pieces and one of our good friends said we could leave our stuff with them. The army would pick it up and deliver it to us in California.

Our friends, Jack Stadler and Johnny Grey, came over to say goodbye to us the morning we left. Jack drove his family car. Johnny rode his bike because he wasn’t old enough to drive. He must have ridden at least 10 miles. Those were friends! And off we went. Eight people jammed into our almost new Nash that Dad bought when we sold our house with a very large and very heavy trailer tailing behind.

And another adventure began.

Missouri is nothing but hills. And the roads were beautiful to look at because the shamrock green weed grass grew right up to the edge of the asphalt. But the roads weren’t that great to drive on. All the roads were two lanes with



traffic going both ways. Bruce had his driver's license, so Dad let him drive for an hour or so. And then Dad took over. Within minutes of this change, the trailer bounced off the hitch and remained attached to the car

by the "safety" chains that were about two or three feet long on each side of the hitch. We were coming down a steep hill, probably going 50 to 60 mph. As soon as the hill ended, another one began going up. On our right was the side of a hill also going up at an angle of 30 degrees or so, and on our left at the bottom of the hill was a pasture. Coming toward us down the hill we were facing, was another car. We were in trouble!

Dad couldn't slow down or the trailer would smash into the back of our car. The tongue of the heavy trailer kept bouncing on the ground and lifting the rear end of our car up when it bounced up, jerking our car from one side of the road to the other. And the car in front of just kept coming toward us. They could not see what was happening to us.

We got to the bottom of the hill just before the other car got to the same spot. Dad quickly turned the car into the pasture on the left. The safety chains broke, and the trailer shot off to our right and smashed onto the hillside while we sped off into the pasture. The oncoming car went right between.

When we rolled to a stop in the tall grass, we all just sat there. We shouldn't be alive. I was sitting in the front seat by the passenger window so everything was right there and real for me. Shaking, we looked back at the road. There was hardly anything left of our trailer. And our belongings were scattered for dozens of feet up and down and alongside the hill.

That is how we left St. Louis.

We walked over to the hillside as despair settled in. This was impossible to deal with. But we were all alive and other than a dent in the trunk of our car, the car worked just fine. Dad left Bruce and me there to watch over our things, while he and the rest of the family drove into the small town a few miles away to

see if he could get some help.

The first thing he did was look up the Church. There was a branch there, and he called the branch president. Immediately, that branch president had things under control. Mom and the kids were taken to his house. He drove his own much larger trailer out with Dad to where we were with our belongings, and we piled them onto his trailer and went back to his house. He said he had a brother-in-law in Idaho, and we could take his trailer with our things to Idaho, and then drop it off there. They fed us and put us up for the night. I think we were all overwhelmed with gratitude.

The next morning we started again on our journey, but... The trailer did not fit our car. It was too low or too high or something, and it just wouldn't work. So, we unloaded our stuff again. The fourth time we had loaded or unloaded it in two days. We left our things there with this literal saint, and the Army had another pick up place for our things. Before we were through, the Army picked up our stuff from three different locations, including Idaho.

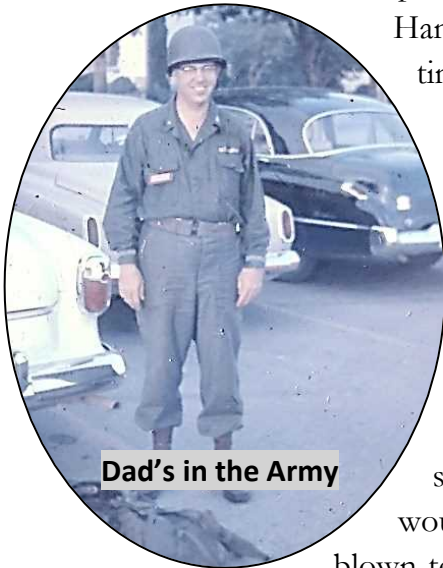
We finally got on our way and would spend our summer in Logan at Grandma and Grandpa Dunn's place, and in Idaho Falls at Grandma and Grandpa Hanson's home.



19

IDAHO FALLS – AN INTERIM STOP

OUR LIVES CHANGED WITH a snap of the fingers. The St. Louis house we had lived in for four years was sold. The friends we had known and loved were gone. And we had no idea at all what our new home in California or surroundings there were going to be like. For four months we would be homeless. Transients bouncing between Grandma and Grandpa Dunn in Logan and Grandma and Grandpa Hanson in Idaho Falls (Picture above is of the Hansons). For me, I would spend nearly the entire time in Idaho Falls.



Dad's in the Army

Dad was gone most of the summer to San Antonio, Texas for officer's training. Mom stayed in Logan with the younger kids, and after spending a short time in Logan for us to receive our patriarchal blessings, Bruce and I went to Idaho Falls for the summer. Bruce was with our cousin, Robert Handley, and I was with Grandma and Grandpa Hanson. This was a change for me. In the past, I would rather be with the Dunn's. But as a full blown teenager, I wanted to be where the action was, and that was Idaho Falls. Grandpa Hanson was still working, and I had a couple of jobs there including working at a service station and hauling hay.



20

THE PATRIARCHAL BLESSING

I WAS NEARLY 16 and Bruce 17, and Mom felt it was time for us to have our patriarchal blessings. I wanted one too. There was no patriarch in St. Louis, because there was no stake there and patriarchs were only assigned to stakes. It was decided that we would receive our blessings from the patriarch in Grandma and Grandpa Dunn's stake in Logan, and that is what we did.

The patriarch's name was Hiram Cash Carlton. He was in his late 70's and glowed like an angel. He sat us down in his living room and explained to us what was going to happen. There were no cassette recording devices back then so he asked Mom if she would type the blessing while he dictated.

He gave Bruce's blessing first because he was the oldest. He would say a couple of phrases or a sentence and then pause while Mom typed. This gave me a chance to listen extra carefully to what he was saying. And I did. I wanted to compare Bruce's blessing to mine to see if these blessings were really individual. That was pretty immature, I know, but that was a bit of a concern for me.

He finished with Bruce and then gave me mine. I was not disappointed. It was very different from Bruce's. Very different. It was short as compared with blessings today, maybe necessitated by having to have it typed while it was dictated. But it was concise with no redundancy or extra words at all. And it was filled with admonition, counsel, blessings, and assignments. In addition, Patriarch Carleton said some things about me that only I knew. He couldn't have known that I would have these certain specific feelings and desires because he had never met me before this day. That really got my attention.

Then toward the end of the blessing he gave me an assignment. Or, rather, the Lord gave me an assignment through him. He said, “There rests upon you the responsibility to gather the histories and genealogies of your forefathers and do work for them in the temple of the Lord.” In my mind, I said, “What???” There could not be an assignment that I thought would be more boring.

I did not do genealogy. And I thought, “What about Bruce? Why didn’t he get that responsibility? He’s the oldest, and this is something the oldest should do. And then I thought about Aunt Tebe and Aunt Hortense. They’re the ones who did genealogy in our family. What meaningful thing could a 16 year old do?

Well, the great spirit I felt receiving my patriarchal blessing was not enough for me to give any kind of heed to my family history assignment from the Lord at that time. And I was able to rationalize away that responsibility until something happened in my life some 14 years later when I was changed, even transformed. I will not talk about that event here, only to say the family history responsibility that was given to me by that patriarch ultimately took on a great meaning for me. I have spent my life since my “family history conversion” striving to fulfill that responsibility. This book is part of that fulfillment.



21

A&W ROOT BEER AND FIGHT

I SETTLED DOWN TO life as a teenager in Idaho Falls. I liked the ward I went to there and made some good friends. I wasn't yet 16 so didn't have my driver's license. My friend and I rode our bikes everywhere. Including to the A&W Root Beer stand. My favorite place to go. A frosty mug of root beer was a nickel. I could afford that. One time we looked for a deal. We went so much that the people there knew us. We asked them how many root beers we would have to drink to get a free root beer. The answer was five root beers each.

So that's what we did. We each drank five root beers. The sixth one, the free one, didn't taste that great. And we were off to find a bathroom to get rid of all that liquid. Smart guys that we were, we couldn't add. We could have bought a gallon of root beer, far more than what we drank, for about half what we paid to get our free root beer. Hmmm.

Well, the root beer stand was the scene of what turned out to be a pretty traumatic experience. One day, we rode our bikes to get a root beer when a couple of teenagers, who were Idaho Falls versions of hoods, pulled up in their car. They started threatening us and razzing us about having just bikes. I told them if they were so tough they could get out of their car, and I would take them on. Remember, I was really dumb. That was sufficient bluster from me though that they didn't get out of the car and just turned on their motor and sped off.

My friend and I drank our root beer, then headed home. We didn't get far when our hoody friends pulled up in front of us in their car with another guy. When my friend saw who it was, he said, "Oh-oh." He told me this was one of

the toughest and meanest kids in town.

Unlike his friends, this guy was not afraid of me.

He walked up to me with a cigarette dangling from his mouth. I was off my bike and was standing there holding it. He got within two or three feet of me and said, "I understand you're pretty tough. You don't look very tough to me." And with that his hand darted out, and he slapped me across my face.

There was something about all of this that reminded me of a teenage bully movie. And I was in the middle of it.

My reaction was immediate. I threw my bike down, and at the same time swung the back of my hand across his face knocking his cigarette into the air. He was certainly surprised, but far from scared. We circled each other, and I was both scared and mad. I kept thinking, "I'll let him hit me once to get myself really mad." And that's what he did.

And I got really mad.

The next thing I know, I am sitting on top of him holding his arm behind his back and trying to snap it off. He is yelling at me telling me what he is going to do when he gets up. He can't get up, and he won't get up until I decide to let him up.

After a minute or two in this position with his arm getting sorer and sorer, I got up. And so did he. Slowly. He yelled some profanities at me and walked away with his friends to their car and sped off.

That was the end of the fight.

I was literally praying for help because I knew that this kid, who was bigger than me and mean, might have done serious damage to me. As soon as he hit me, and I hit him back, though, I knew I was going to beat him. I felt an infusion of strength that was way beyond me. I didn't have enough experience back then to recognize a Spirit-surge, but I do now. And that was what it was. It came on instantly, the fear dissipated, and confidence took over. I was being protected.

I think, in all honesty, I can say I never started a fight in my life, including this one. My problem was I wouldn't back down from them either. And that was perhaps as bad as starting one. In any case, this was the end of my "fighting career." It was the first and last really serious fight I ever had.



22

MOVING ON

I TURNED 16, AND my Grandpa Hanson thought I ought to have access to a car. And he happened to have an extra one. I think it was a Plymouth and prob-



ably around a 1946 model. He took it in on a trade or something and asked if I would like to drive it. Would I! It was a stick shift with a clutch, and brakes that weren't all that great. But it was a car, and it was the

car I learned to drive with. I think maybe my grandpa took me out once or twice to show me a few things, but that was all the Driver's Ed I ever had or needed. I had my very own car to mess with for about a month and a half before I went to California. That was big time. Too bad I wasn't in the mood to date.

Because we wouldn't get to our home in California before school started there in September, my siblings and I began school in Idaho Falls. Mom came up with the other kids and enrolled us in school. Bruce and I attended Idaho Falls high school for about a month. I really don't remember much about it.

My cousin, Janet Handley, went there, and we did some things together. She was my favorite cousin as a teenager. Her family and my family went on outings all of the time when we lived in Shelley, and we went to her home often. As we grew up, we became really good friends. Her boyfriend was Ron Bitter. Or at least that's who she dated more than any other boy. And Ron became my

roommate at BYU after my mission and introduced me to Joyce. That is another story.

Finally, the time came for us to be on our California adventure. I said goodbye to Grandma and Grandpa Hanson—and to the 1946 Plymouth. We drove to California via Logan and stopped there to see Grandma and Grandpa Dunn. Grandpa Dunn had suffered a heart attack that summer and didn't look very good. I was really close to him, and to see him weak and struggling was very, very difficult. I wondered if I would ever see him alive again. He was only 67 years old.



23

CALIFORNIA—MONTEREY

AND ON TO CALIFORNIA. Eight people in the Nash was still crowded, but I was excited to see what California was going to be like. And I found out—mile after mile after mile of it until we got to Fort Ord where Dad was stationed. It was green. It was brown. It was tan hills dotted with green scrub oak. It was palm trees. It was mountains. It was flat. It was traffic. It was ocean. It was women in shorts with curlers in their hair shopping at a super market. It was palm trees. It was artichoke fields and lettuce fields and vineyards and orchards and beaches and tide pools. And people were everywhere.

When we drove through the main gate into Fort Ord and were waved in by an MP (Military Policeman), I felt like we just arrived in a foreign country. Yellow World War II vintage buildings were everywhere. It had been just over 11 years since the end of that war. Everything looked like barracks. The ground was sand, and ice plants were all over with their thick finger-like waxy leaves creeping beneath small multi-colored blossoms. There was some grass here and there, but not much.

We would be staying in one of those barracks until a home became available at Bayview Park, an army built and owned suburb for families of officers that was on the southwest end of the sprawling Fort Ord.

For several weeks we were in the barracks, and it wasn't all that bad. A bus picked Bruce and me up to take us to Monterey High School, a 30 minute ride. While we weren't the only Caucasians on the bus, I felt like we were in the minority. There were Blacks, Filipinos, Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, Hispanics,

and probably some south sea islanders as well.

I liked it.

And that's the way Monterey High School was. A melting pot of cultures and colors and ideas.

A few weeks after arriving, a house opened up for us in Bayview Park and that is where we spent the next two years. Our house looked like every other house. Stucco walls in a pastel color, flat roof, and a carport. There was a kitchen, an eating area, a living room, four bedrooms (I think), and one bathroom. Everything was very plain and sterile. We even had grass of sorts. A very, very thick weed-like cover that was a bear to mow.



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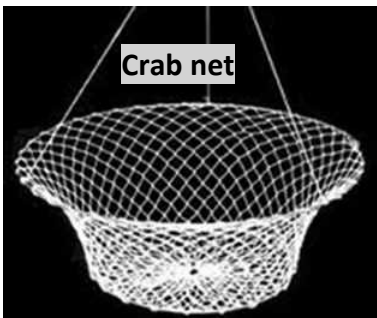
THE PENINSULA

MONTEREY WAS BEAUTIFUL. EVEN breathtaking. While Fort Ord was bleak and sandy and sterile, and Seaside, the town immediately adjacent to Fort Ord, was not a “pretty place,” the rest of the Monterey Peninsula was a picture postcard.

Monterey was an old Spanish town, and the architecture reflected that. With adobe buildings, quaint shops, and spectacular scenery, it was a mecca for tourists. Where it connected with Pacific Grove was Steinbeck’s famous “Cannery Row.” One of my good friends



at school was Jimmie Brucia. His dad ran a bar on Cannery Row that was featured in the book of that name by Steinbeck.



There were no beaches as such on the peninsula. Or at least not southern California beaches. But rock and sand fingers extended into the ocean all around and tide pools were everywhere. The wharves were picturesque too, with fishing boats of all sizes, shapes, colors, and ages coming in and out and around them. And it was on the wharves

that we “fished” for crabs.

Actually it was crab “catching” not fishing. The process was simple. We had a metal hoop about three feet in diameter that had a wire netting attached to its bottom that stretched across the hoop. In the middle of the netting we put a couple of fish heads and a loose wire screen on top of them to keep the crabs from taking them. We used a rope to lower the “trap” into the water.

From the wharf we let the crab trap drift to the ocean floor, maybe 40 or 50 feet down. Once the trap hit the ocean floor, we would let the rope slack a little and just wait. About every 10 minutes or so we would pull the trap to the surface to see if anything was on it. Often there were crabs there. We would put the crabs in a bucket of salt water to take home and cook.

This wasn't like St. Louis at all.

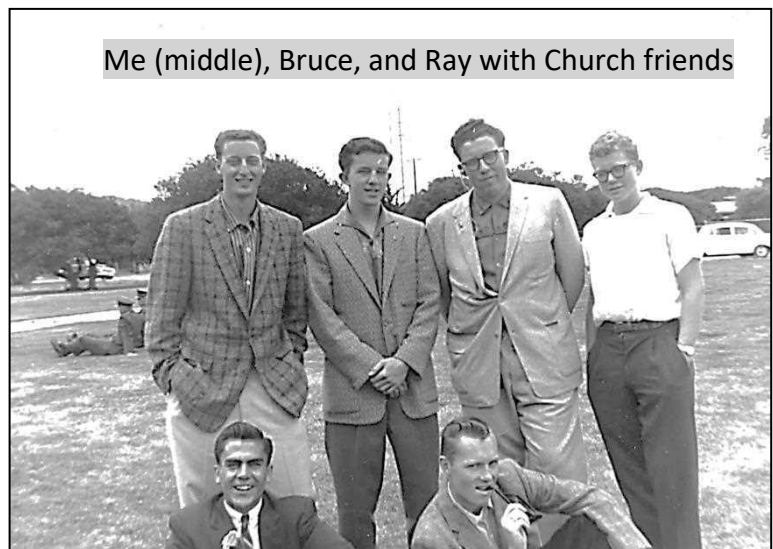


25

CHURCH IN MONTEREY

CHURCH IN MONTEREY WAS not like Church in St. Louis. We still belonged to a branch rather than a ward, the Seaside Branch, but that's about where the similarity ended. For one thing we met in a huge building. It was new, Church-owned, and was called "The Servicemen's Center." Actually, it was a large gymnasium/basketball floor with a stage, a big "social area" with overstuffed furniture, a restaurant-size kitchen, and a bunch of classrooms. There was no chapel. It was designed to ultimately be a stake center, and when the member population justified it, the "rest" of the building would be completed.

But for now it was specifically designed to provide the many hundreds of LDS servicemen and women, who were at Fort Ord, a place to come for recreation and spiritual refresh-



ing. And, almost as an aside, it accommodated our Church branch. Most of the branch members were associated in some way with the military, and attendance

would fluctuate greatly.

Like at my school, the branch had different cultures as well. Two of my Aaronic Priesthood advisers were Hawaiian. Al Ahnee and Charlie Mocksing. I really liked them.

Actually, there were fewer active LDS kids my age here than in St. Louis. Or maybe I wasn't as close to them, so there seemed to be less. We did have enough to form a basketball team though. And thanks to Charlie Mocksing, we were very, very good.

For one thing we had a wonderful gym to practice in all the time. And for another, Charlie was an excellent coach. He made a team out of us. We had some really good players, especially when some boys where members but not very active in Church came out to play. I was feisty and fast, but Bruce was good. He was probably our best shooter and a really good rebounder too.

In those days, there was an all-Church tournament, and you had a long ladder to climb to be able to go to Salt Lake City to be in the finals. Your team had to beat the other teams in your stake, and then beat the other stakes in your region, and then defeat the winners of other regions, and then play for the championship for all northern California to see who would go to the All-Church tournament in Salt Lake.

We were nobodies. Who ever heard of the Seaside Branch? The really good teams were from the wards in San Mateo and Oakland and Sacramento and Stockton. But the Seaside Branch?

We became known though. We were stake champions with our very quick, very defensive style of play and went on to the next division. We always had to do the traveling even though we had the best floor to play basketball on. We made several trips up to the bay area and won all of our games there. The Seaside Nobodies. And then it came down to the last game to decide who was going to Salt Lake and maybe the finals.

We were on the road again, and we got lost. I think we were going to Stockton, maybe a 200 mile trip away. Anyway, we got there just a few minutes before the game was to begin. It was a stake center with a floor that was only 2/3's regulation size or maybe smaller. It was also the home floor of the team we were playing. Not exactly fair.

This team had won All-Church before, and they were big. A lot bigger than us. We were tired after driving five hours, had no time to warm up, and were playing on their home floor which was way too small for us to play our style of ball. They could just bottle us up with their size, and they did.

We lost. Not by much. But we lost.

We all felt really bad about that one, and probably rightly so. This team went on to place in the top three or four in the Church. I thought then and have thought since that that could (should?) have been us.

After a while, it didn't really matter. And for me, today, it doesn't matter at all. Charlie Mocksing and Al Ahnee felt bad, so they bought little plastic trophies for each of us to remember this experience by.

It was at the Seaside Branch that I had my first Church calling. I was the Junior Sunday School chorister and then led music for our branch Sunday School and sacrament meeting too. I also served as an assistant in my priest quorum.

Dad was on the high council and had the special assignment to be acting chaplain for the LDS servicemen at Fort Ord. That was a big job since there were many hundreds of members of the Church there. He oversaw the social activities for the servicemen that were held every weekend at the Servicemen's Center. And every Saturday, for virtually the whole day, that is where Bruce and I were as well. Playing basketball or ping-pong or some other games with the scores of soldiers who would spend their Saturday there.

Then every Saturday night, there was a dance. Girls would come from wards throughout the stake and other stakes as well, but they would still be way outnumbered. The girls loved that. They were always dancing. I wasn't that interested in dancing usually, but it was fun being there. Dad would sometimes play the piano or trombone in the dance band. He was really, really good.

Because Dad was the acting chaplain, we had a wonderful experience. Marion G. Romney and his wife and son ate with us at our Bayview Park home. Elder Romney was an apostle and would become a member of the First Presidency. His son was a serviceman at Fort Ord and worked with Dad. I got to eat with an apostle as a teenager. Elder Romney and his wife also came over to the Saturday dance but didn't dance. I suggested that they dance, and Elder Romney looked at me without smiling and said, "I don't dance."

I can now empathize with that sentiment.

We were part of the San Jose stake. The stake had wards and branches from San Jose down to Monterey—a distance of 80 miles. On the Monterey peninsula there was a ward in Pacific Grove, a ward in Salinas, and our branch in Seaside. They were building a new stake center in San Jose, and we were asked to spend time working on it. In those days, members provided a significant amount of volunteer labor to build our Church buildings. And the local members also contributed about 50% of the cost. So, maybe one Saturday each month,

Bruce and I would go with Dad up to San Jose to work on the stake center. It was hard work. It was fun. And I felt like I was doing my part to build up the Church in northern California.

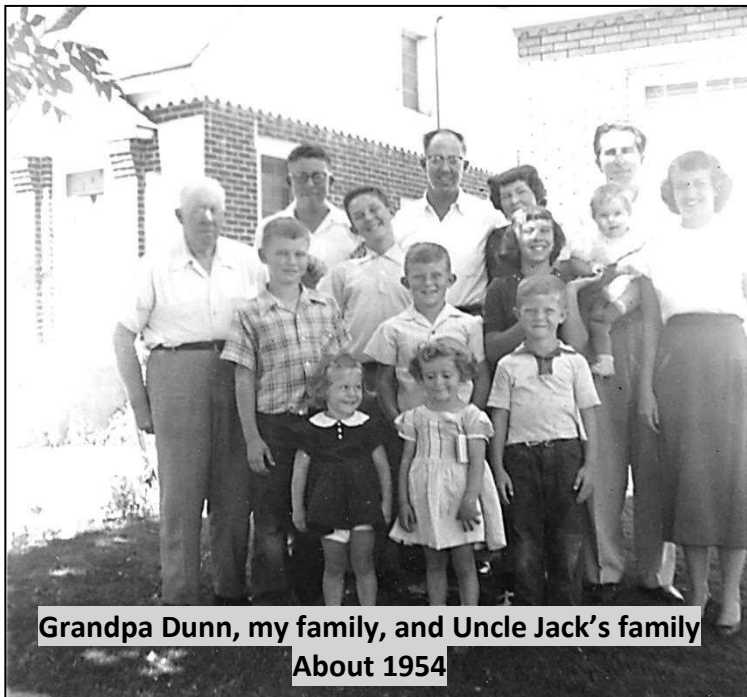


26

GRANDPA DUNN'S DEATH

IN THE LATE WINTER, early spring of the first year we were in Monterey, we received word that Grandpa Dunn was dying. Not from heart problems, but from cancer. I was devastated. Mom and Dad felt that we should go to Logan to see him, if possible, before he died. And the eight of us piled into our car for the 1000 mile trip to Logan.

Grandma and Grandpa Dunn lived in a small house just west of Center



**Grandpa Dunn, my family, and Uncle Jack's family
About 1954**

Street. It sat on a tiny yard and had two bedrooms, a bathroom, a living room, a kitchen, and an unfinished basement. All the rooms were very small. We left at night, and it was the afternoon when we arrived. When we walked into the house, the whole mood of it was different than what it

was when I was here before. It was heavy and sad and smelled of medicine.

Grandpa was in his bedroom lying on his bed. He was in and out of a coma and this had been going on for several days. I started to go into the room when Aunt Tebe, Grandpa's sister who was helping take care of Grandpa, stopped me. "You might not want to go in there," she said. "Your grandpa doesn't look the same."

But I wanted to go in. And I did.

I remember Grandpa always having a very well fed look, but the man I saw gasping for air on the bed was a skeleton. His skin hung on his bones and his cheeks were sunken into his mouth. His eyes were closed and each breath he pulled through his open mouth was heavy. My grandpa was dying. I walked out of the room, sat in Grandpa's overstuffed rocker in the living room, and sobbed.

The adults took turns sitting by the side of Grandpa Dunn's bed throughout the day and night. Mom and Dad decided that Dad would drive up to Idaho Falls with all of the kids because the Dunn house was so tiny. I asked if I could stay and take a turn watching over my grandpa. They said I could, and Dad took the rest of the family to Idaho leaving Mother and me there.

As I remember, we each took a two or three hour shift watching him. When it was my turn, I would read a book and try to talk to him. Most of the time he wouldn't answer. But sometimes he did.

One time he began talking to me plainly, then paused. "Who is that in the room with us?" he asked. There was no one in the room besides him and me.

"Who do you mean, Grandpa?" I asked.

"Can't you see them there?" he replied. "Right there at the foot of my bed."

I could not see them then, but I am certain now there were others in the room with us.

A day or two later Grandpa was fully awake and lucid. A few of us were standing in the small bedroom talking with him. I don't remember everyone who was there, but I was, my mother was, and my Grandmother Dunn was. Possibly my Aunt Lucille and maybe my Uncle Jack were there too. It was wonderful to hear Grandpa speak so plainly and be so alert.

He described in detail what he had been experiencing the last few days at death's door. He had seen and been with his own family members who had died. He talked about how they were dressed and what they were doing. Then he looked at my mother.

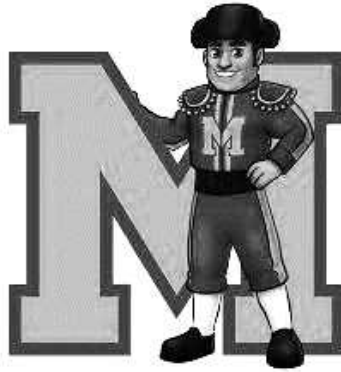
"Don't worry about your twins, Isabelle." He was referring to Rita and

Ruth who died when I was two. “My mother is taking care of them for you.”

The reality of our eternal nature sunk deep within my heart, and my fear of death and “losing” my grandfather subsided.

Grandpa stabilized, and Mom and Dad decided we would go back to California since us kids had already missed a week of school. Just a few days after arriving home, the phone call came that Grandpa had passed away. Only Mom and Dad went back to Logan.

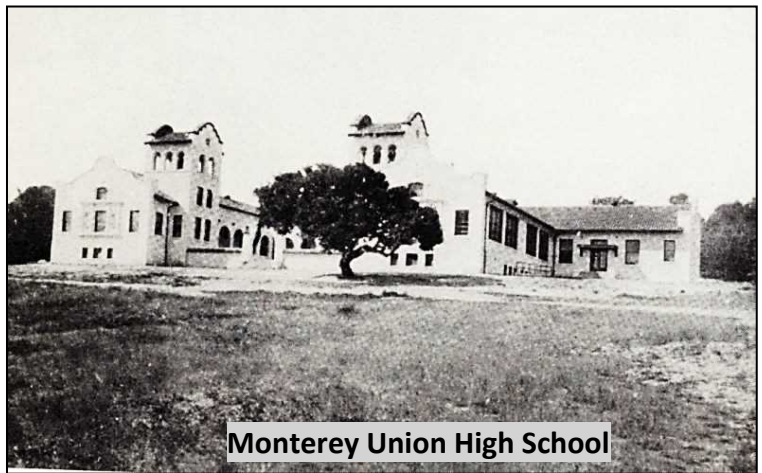
This was the only grandparent funeral I missed. And his was the only grandparent funeral that I did not speak at. But I had testimony building experiences with Grandpa Dunn that I will never forget. I watched and listened as Grandpa Dunn had communication and experience with those on the other side. And I would have missed all of that if I had not asked to take a turn in serving my grandfather.



27

MONTEREY HIGH SCHOOL

RIGHT OFF THE BAT I knew my high school experience in Monterey was going to be different than my two years at Southwest High School in St. Louis and my months' worth of school in Idaho Falls. For one thing, there wasn't just one building. Class-rooms and admin-istration offices and gym and band-room and lunch rooms were scattered up and down the hill the high school perched on. To get from one class to another you not only walked out-



Monterey Union High School

side, but you might have to walk from one end of campus to the other. One way it was downhill. The other way it was up hill. Going to class was an exercise in and of itself.

There were a few more LDS kids at Monterey High than at Southwest, but not many more. And none of my friends at school were members of the Church. I was in regular band again. And in a pep band that played at basketball games. That was fun, because we could act funny and play fun songs. Our leader directed with a plumber's helper.

My first year there, I became close to another kid who was new at school. He was a great athlete but had broken his leg before school started and had it in a cast. I first met him in the student lounge. He was by himself, and so was I, so we started talking and became good friends. We met each lunch hour there and joked around.

Somewhere he learned how to flip bottle caps. All soda pop came in bottles then and were sealed with bottle caps to keep the fizz in. With a bottle opener you would pry the cap off and throw it away. He wouldn't throw the cap away. He would place the cap between his thumb and his index finger and with a snap send the cap flying 40 or 50 feet. And he was accurate. He could hit almost exactly what he was aiming at.

And that's what we would do. Or rather he would do, while I watched him and try to keep a straight face. We sat there on a sofa like we were in conversation, his crutches by him. He would look around discreetly to find his target. Always one of the school "tough guys." Then he would casually put his hand with the bottle cap up by his ear and flip the cap with great velocity at his target. And whap. It would hit them just about every time.

We would be looking at each other and talking while all of this was happening. When the bottle cap hit its victim, there was a loud "Ow." and sometimes a swear word (if no teachers were around). They would angrily search the room to see who dared do this. It was futile. There were dozens of kids in the room, and the kid on the couch with a cast on his leg was the least likely source.

When my friend's cast came off, we played basketball together. And we were pretty good. The school had a contest during lunch hour pitting teams of two against one another in a basketball game. It was a round robin tournament for the two lunch hours. We won ours and tall twin brothers won their lunch hour tournament. These guys were on the school basketball team and instead of having the lunch hour winners play each other for the championship, the school just awarded the championship to the twins. Hmm. Stop me if you've heard something like this before from me. We survived that injustice too. We knew we would have slaughtered the twins. 😊

My friend moved, I think after one semester, and I found new friends. One was Al Wagner. He was a really smooth guy, handsome, and funny. And he had the coolest car of any teenager on the planet. It was a Triumph convertible, probably a 1948 version. It was deep red with leather seats and wood trim. I loved riding in that car.

One of our things was to talk “inside out talk.” We would speak sentences while sucking in our breath. It was weird. And fun. The other thing we did was call each other by our names spelled backwards. I was Evets Nosnah. And he was La Rengaw. Pretty soon we had other friends talking inside out talk and saying each other’s names backwards. A crazy group.

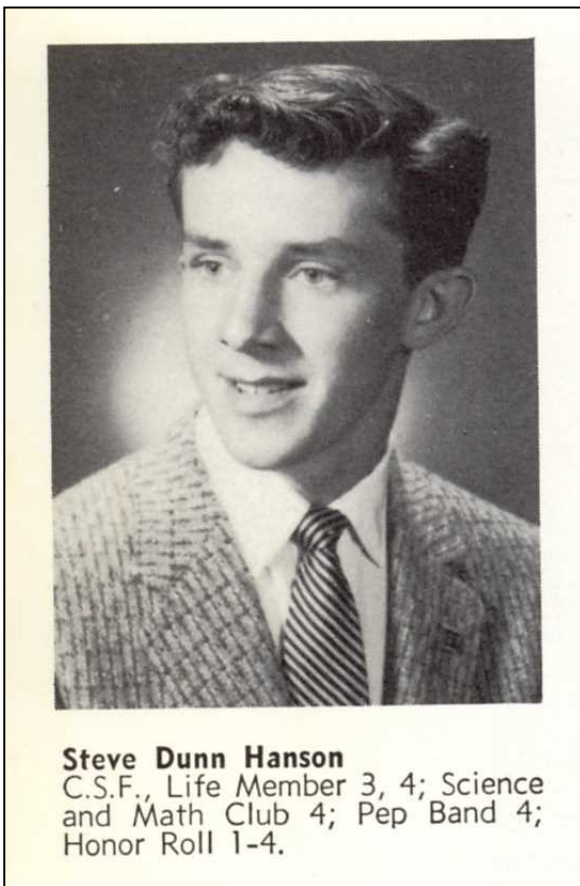
I started to take most of my classes seriously, especially math and English. And most of my friends were the “intellectuals” of the school, but not stuffed shirts. Since I had access to the LDS Service Men’s Center, I invited them over there to play basketball often.

I had a great deal of respect for several of these very sincere and intelligent friends. One of them, Bill Roy, was probably the smartest one of all of us. He was a declared agnostic. But one day he said to me, “Hanson (or Evets.) if I were

to ever join a Church it would be the Mormon Church because it is the only one that makes sense.”

Another one of my friends, Jay White, came all the time to play basketball with us. He never said anything about the Church, but when I came home from my mission, he had joined the Church and was going to BYU. That made me feel very good.

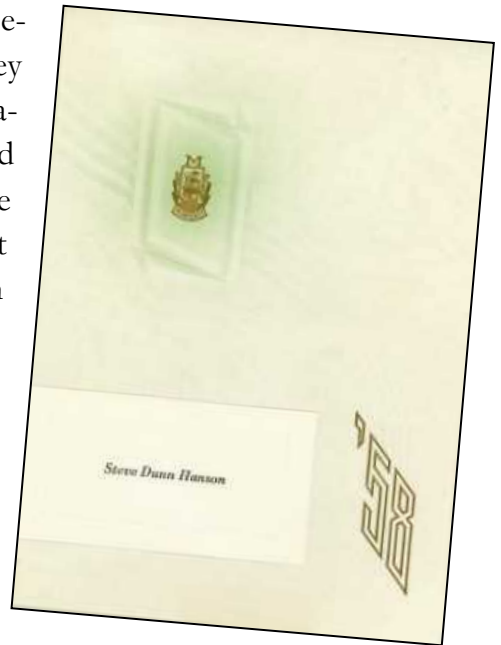
School came to an end. I did well academically and finished in the top 10 in the class. I was a National Merit Scholar and received several scholarships, including one to Brigham Young University. I was also selected as the student “City Man-



ager” of Seaside for government day.

Dad’s military obligation came to an end. He bought a dental practice in Fresno, California where Mom’s sister Lucille Cardon and her family lived. So, that was to be our next stop. The family moved over before my school was out.

Bruce, who had graduated the year before, was in the army for six months, and they left me with some friends of ours there in Seaside for a few weeks so I could finish school and graduate. Graduation was anti-climactic. I made an appearance at the graduation party but left early. I was anxious to get on with my post-high school life, and I was ready to be somewhere other than Monterey.





28

FRESNO—MY TEEN YEARS END

EVERYTHING WAS DIFFERENT IN Fresno. Again. This time it was all positive. For one thing, our home was a new home. The first new home I had ever



Our family in back of our Fresno home -1958

lived in. And it had one and a half bathrooms. It was a split level home with four bedrooms, a large living room, a kitchen with a big eating area, and a family room. Then in the basement there was a recreation room that was also the coolest place in the house. It was great.

And there were wards, not branches in Fresno. There was a Fresno stake with four wards in Fresno. We belonged to the Fresno First ward. And the Fresno First Ward was loaded with kids my age and Bruce's age. Almost immediately I found two who became my best friends, Clyde Pearce and Bob Norman. We were inseparable. We did everything together. We dated sisters. We went into the army together. We had our mission farewells on the same sacrament meeting program.

Clyde was a recent convert to the Church and was all-everything in high school. He had excellent grades and was a basketball star and a football star. The quarterback, no less. He was either the senior class president or the student body president, could sing, and was exceptionally good looking. He was an outstanding speaker and had a great personality.

Other than these things, he didn't have anything going for him.

Bob was a year younger than Clyde and me. He played football because of his size. He didn't like school all that much and got average grades. And he was funny.

Almost from the day I moved into the ward, the three of us were together. Clyde was more "responsible" than Bob and me then, so I spent more time with Bob. We both liked to do kid things. That first summer in Fresno was great with my two new friends. Bob had his own car, and when it was "important" I could use Dad's car or Bruce's old clunker that he bought just after we moved there. I had wheels. And I quickly got a job that gave me all the money I needed.

My first real, honest-to-goodness long-time good paying job was working at Leeds, a women's shoe store in downtown Fresno. I found out that this store was part of a nationwide chain that was owned by Edison Brothers Shoe Company. The company that Roy Oscarson, father of Bonnie who I had some dates with in St. Louis, was the CEO of. I went into the store and asked if I could apply for a job. I told them that Roy Oscarson had told me I could work for his company if I wanted to (which he did). That got their attention and they had me fill out an application. I put Brother Oscarson down as my main reference. They checked on me with him, and I immediately got the job.

I usually worked Friday nights and Saturdays. I rode a bus downtown where the store was, and I always wore a suit and tie. I picked up quickly how to

make sales and make more commission on my sales. I was guaranteed to make no less than \$1/hour, but virtually always made much more than that. On my very best Friday night/Saturday workday I made as much as \$100. And that was really a lot of money back then for anybody and especially a teenager. It was equivalent to over \$1000 in today's money.

I was now 18 and figured I was probably ready to start dating. Up to this time I could count the number of dates I had on a couple of fingers. And my first date in Fresno was with Kathleen Sorensen, who would later become a song leader at BYU. She was a very pretty girl. She belonged to another Fresno ward and invited me to a party because her folks had suggested that she do that since we just moved into the stake and didn't know anybody. I went to the party and had fun. So I asked her out.

Our date was to the Stake's 24th of July celebration at the large park in Fresno. We got to the park and were walking toward the "activities," when we saw Mom and Dad with my Grandmother Dunn who was staying with us for a few months. I introduced Kathleen to everyone.

But instead of saying, "Hello," Grandma Dunn simply said, "Is that your natural color hair?"

What? I knew that Grandma was outspoken, but this was over the top, and I started turning red. Kathleen was more than a little flustered and replied, "Well, no. I put a rinse on it."

"I can't stand girls who do that. It makes them look so cheap," was Grandma's immediate reply.

Mom and Dad whisked Grandma away

I tried to explain that Grandma was that way with everybody and that she didn't mean anything. Kathleen was very polite and nodded her head in understanding. It was my last date with the future BYU song leader.

The rest of my summer was better. And then it was time for school. Instead of going to BYU, which Clyde did, Bruce and I attended Fresno State College in the fall. I was not that interested in most of my classes and earned no more than a B average. One of my college classes was in communications. I was pretty interested in that class and got an A. The professor liked me and gave me some unique opportunities outside of school.

Back then, the comic strips in the Sunday newspapers were very popular. Every Sunday morning, one of the local radio stations sponsored a program where Fresno State students would read the latest comic strips over the air, voice-acting the part. Theoretically, the kids at home would be reading the comic strip

as it was read. I was invited to be one of the readers.

At the beginning of each show we would encourage the children who were listening to send in a postcard letting us know if they had a birthday coming up. Then we would read over the air the names and ages of the little children whose birthdays would be in the next week and sing happy birthday to them. Each of us were given several names to read. For one show, I decided to add a name of my own.

“Here are some other boys and girls who are going to have a birthday this week,” I said in my best radio voice. “Tommy Hemsley who’s going to be 7; MaryAnne Farnsworth and she’s going to be 5; Ronnie Gibson is going to be 9; And Pricilla Becket is also going to be 9; And look at this. Bobbie Norman is going to be 18.”

That was my last radio show.

My professor gave me another opportunity. I don’t think he heard about the Happy Birthday episode. This time I was to drive a “sound” truck and announce that the Boston Pops Orchestra with Arthur Fiedler directing was in town. The truck had three or four loudspeakers mounted on the top of the cab, and the driver would make the announcements as he drove around town. It was really, really loud, and they don’t allow that kind of advertising now. I drove up and down the streets of Fresno for a few hours making my announcements. It was fun.

Then I decided to go by Bob Norman’s high school while he was in class. The windows were open because the schools didn’t have air conditioning back then. Wishing him happy birthday on the radio kid’s show wasn’t enough of an embarrassment for him, I thought. So...

“HELLO BOB NORMAN.” I said into the microphone with my coolest voice. The sound hit the high school with a huge WOP. Heads came out of the windows, and I quickly drove off down the street.

Bob was embarrassed. Yes!

I loved the Fresno First Ward. Our first bishop was a good guy, but... He was a life insurance salesman, and he sold me a life insurance policy that I really couldn’t afford. I don’t think a bishop should sell an 18 year old a life insurance policy. I don’t think anyone should sell an 18 year old a life insurance policy.

But the next bishop was really great. It was Dad. Mom had been serving as the stake Young Women’s president when Dad was called, and she was released. President Sessions was the stake president, and he came over to our house to issue the call. He asked all of the family to be there, and that was pretty neat.

However, I never did that as a stake president because of the confidential nature of the call. I just had the husband and wife meet with me. But I'm glad President Session did that.

My life was different as a bishop's son. I found that I was always being looked at and expected to be an example. I didn't care for that too much. But I should have. And I should have been more responsible. I was given Church callings, like music director in the Young Men's mutual, that I didn't do too well with. I also led the congregational singing during Sunday School. I liked doing that.

Back then we would always have time for a "practice" hymn during Sunday School opening exercises. And many times I would invite members of the congregation to pick their favorite hymns to sing. My organist, who was my age, didn't like that because she didn't have a chance to practice the hymn before she had to play it. To make matters worse, for her, I would encourage Bob and Clyde to request hymns that we never sang and nobody even knew were in the hymnbook. Like, "Each Cooing Dove," for example. She really didn't like that.

The year after we moved to Fresno, Bruce left for his two and a half year mission to Sweden. That changed everything. I knew that this was the beginning of the end of the family relationships that were all I had ever known here on this earth. And I didn't like that. I wanted everything to stay the same. I was glad that Bruce was able to go on a mission, but I wouldn't see him for at least three and a half years, because I was going on my mission the next year. The family would be completely changed by the time we were together again. That feeling was very, very difficult for me.

I was 19 when I was ordained an elder in the Melchizedek priesthood by my father. I was not at all sure I was ready maturity-wise for this to happen, but knew it was the right time for me. Dad gave me a beautiful father's blessing along with the ordination. Then the stake president, who was assisting in the ordination made an extraordinary statement.

"Satan desires this boy that he may sift him as wheat."

I didn't know what to make of it. My parents didn't know what to make of it. I do now, and throughout my life I have found out exactly what he meant. He was prophesying by the Spirit and with a voice of great warning. Why Satan should pay particular attention to me was, for me, a great mystery. It has only been in my later years that I have begun to understand possible reasons why.

After Dad had served approximately a year as a bishop, he and Mom decided to move back to the Monterey Peninsula and set up his practice there.

Things were not going as well in his Fresno practice as he had hoped. How that affected me, you will soon see. But a significant person was brought into my life as a direct result. The new bishop was Bishop Hyde. A doctor who became my mentor and perhaps in some very important ways, a literal life changer.

But I am getting ahead of my story a bit.

It's probably time to introduce Sara Jane King. I said that Clyde, Bob and I dated sisters. That is true, though Bob only dated Sara's sister Dawna a couple of times. Clyde, however, was as "tied" to Connie King as I was to Sara.

Sara's mother was my mother's counselor in the stake young women's organization. And Mom had hired Sara to help with some housework and to iron clothes. That's where I first got to know her, and my dad was continually urging me to take her out. That's what I did. Not once, but constantly for two years.



Sara and me 1960

Sara was the only serious girlfriend I ever had besides Joyce. She was a very pretty young woman and was really fun to be with. But hers and her family's relationship with the Church was not the same as mine. She went to Church, she believed, and most of the time she followed the teachings. But there seemed to be limits to how close to the Church she wanted to be.

For example, she and her two sisters were not only beautiful young women, they were outstanding swimmers. Their folks arranged for them to swim underwater ballet in the swimming pool at the largest hotel in Fresno with a huge underwater glass window

situated in the bar. While the patrons were drinking, they could see these young women swim underwater. It was a great draw for the bar. Ultimately, that would also take them to swim at a hotel in Sacramento, and I made the Sacramento trip several times. I didn't want to think about it then, but of course swimming in front of a bar was no place for any young woman.



29

BACK TO FORT ORD

IT WAS JULY OF 1959. I was nearly 19, and I would be going on a mission in a year. Back then, young men were called on missions when they were 20 years of age. Bob, Clyde, and I were in my bedroom. We were all having kind of a rough time with our girlfriends, and we were letting off steam.

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM
REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE
SSSS Form No. 2
(Rev. 5-20-56)
Approval not required

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SELECTIVE SERVICE LAW

Steve Dunn Hanson
(FIRST NAME) (MIDDLE NAME) (LAST NAME)

SELECTIVE SERVICE NO. 4 68 40 522

RESIDENCE AT REGISTRATION 4521 East Weldon
(NUMBER AND STREET OR R. F. D. NUMBER)

Fresno California
(CITY, TOWN, OR VILLAGE) (ZONE) (COUNTY) (STATE)

August 5, 1940
(DATE OF BIRTH) (PLACE OF BIRTH)

WAS DULY REGISTERED ON THE 12 DAY OF August 1958

Elizabeth L. Hollie
(SIGNATURE OF LOCAL BOARD CLERK)

Somebody said, “We ought to join the army.” And that idea caught hold. There was not an all-volunteer army then, and we were eligible to be drafted. We registered with Selective Service when we were 18, and we could be called up at any time to serve two years in the armed forces.

The United States military had a program, though, that allowed young men to serve active duty for six months. They then could be called up in the event of an emergency for a number of years. That was called “the reserves.” We decided that would be a wise thing for us to do. That way we would get our military obligation out of the way before we went on our missions, and we wouldn’t have to worry about being drafted when we came home and were in college. Besides, that’s what Bruce had done before his mission.

And that is what we did.

We enlisted, and we had our physicals which was an experience. We were all lined up without any clothes on while a doctor and his assistants walked down the line looking at us. They all stopped in front of me and looked at my feet. “Do those things ever hurt you?” was the only thing they said.

I answered, “No.” And that was it. If you’ve seen my feet, you probably know why they asked that question.

We were told to report for active duty at Fort Ord. I was going back to my old home. Our girlfriends thought we were nuts, I think. But we weren’t.

It took me all of 30 seconds at Fort Ord to know I didn’t want to make this my career. Actually, I knew that before we ever got to Fort Ord. But I really knew it at Fort Ord. We went through a whirlwind of “hurry-up and waits” for the first three or four days before we began basic training.

We had regulation haircuts timed at no more than a minute a haircut. You don’t need more than a minute to clip all your hair off. Shots. I’m not talking about a tiny, sharp syringe here. I’m talking about a big gun that shot the serum through my skin and into my blood with both arms getting it at the same time



and leaving blood trickling down them. Then there were a zillion boring indoctrination meetings, getting army clothing where the fit didn’t matter, and having our first experience with army food. At least that’s what the army called it.

Then basic training. I found out

quickly that the first thing I wanted to do was get the “new green” out of my fatigues. And that happened the more often I washed them with water thick with starch. The paler my fatigues were, the less like a new recruit I looked. I found out that was really important. Known new recruits were treated lousy.

For eight weeks of basic training we had our bodies taxed to the max.

Little sleep and long, long days of marching and carrying heavy packs and exhausting exercises. It was amazing how quickly our bodies got in shape, and we got into great shape.

Then off to the rest of my six months army experience.

I was trained to be a clerk typist. I already was a typist. I was actually a good typist, but I had to go to eight weeks of clerk typist school so I could be an army clerk typist. Really pointless I thought.

Six months passed, and the whole experience was major grow-up time. Patience was a particularly important attribute that was tried and tested and enhanced. Being yelled at, cursed at, ridiculed, ordered about, and restricted in about every important way made patience mandatory.



Bob was in my company. Clyde delayed coming in the army so was a week or two behind us. Being able to talk to Bob all the time made a great difference.

And then it was over. We were back to Fresno. And for me everything had changed. Again. My family had moved to the Monterey Peninsula. For a short time I stayed with my brother Ray in our Fresno house until it sold. Then I moved in with Bob and his family. I lived there for the next three or four months.



30

DECISIONS

BIG TIME DECISION WERE sitting there for me to make. All my life, I had planned and prepared to go on a mission. But as I approached 20, I began to waver. Why? Well, probably for two reasons. One certainly was Sara. We were talking about marriage, though I knew I wasn't ready for that yet. And the other? To underscore my not being ready for anything as serious and permanent as marriage, was my overall challenge with growing up. I didn't want to grow up, I think. I saw my mission as major grow-up time. I knew what changes were occurring in Bruce's life as a result of his mission, and I think I was afraid to go there.

Bishop Hyde was exactly the right bishop for me at that time. He understood my feelings. He had been there himself; and he had made the leap of faith needed to go on his mission. He told me, for example, that his wife was not who he was dating when he was in such a quandary about his mission. He said that his girlfriend was not there when he got back, and then he asked, "Do you think I made a mistake?" I thought about the very beautiful and wonderful wife he had and his great family, and I shook my head. No. But I was doing my best not to let his sensible, compelling example apply to me.

I was having a really tough time. And I kept praying that I would know what the Lord wanted me to do. That was the wrong prayer. I already knew what the Lord wanted me to do. I should have been praying for the strength and wisdom and peace to do it.

Well, I had a couple more adventures before decision time. Part of the

army deal was that I had to go to summer camp. Every summer for the next five years, if I were in the United States. Summer camp was not a recreational activity. It was playing army and living like a soldier for two weeks. So Bob, Clyde, and I took off for summer camp at Camp Roberts, California. One of the hottest places on this earth. It was dirty. It was hot and got up to 125 degrees. It was not a really fun place to be. What made it worse was an eruption of the ulcer and iritis in my right eye that I had suffered as a kid in Shelley 11 or 12 years before.

There were a couple of cardinal rules among soldiers in the army. One was that you never volunteered. If you did, you would often be given an unpleasant task. A second was you avoided like the plague going to sickbay. Rumors had it that if you were assigned to sickbay, you may never be released. And if it came time for summer camp to be over and you weren't released, tough. Sickbay is where you stayed. At least, that's what I thought, so I didn't report my eye problem.

Big mistake. And remember, I did some dumb things.

My eye got worse and worse. It was dying. I was literally going blind in that eye, and it was horrible to look at. But I still did not report it. We were released from summer camp, and, thank goodness, I was smart enough to go to Monterey where my parents lived so an ophthalmologist that Dad knew could take a look at it.

"This eye is a disaster!" he said. "I don't know if we are going to save it." He put me on heavy duty medications. Mom and Dad wanted me to stay with them in Monterey. But I wanted to go back to Fresno. That's where my job was and Sara was. The problem was I had no way to get there, except... I hitchhiked. Yeah. Dumb.

My eye eventually healed, but not without some permanent damage. And I think as a direct result of what I didn't do then, I have been troubled with severe problems in that eye throughout my life.

There was one more adventure. Bob, Sara, our friend Emily Hernandez, and I decided we wanted to go down to Disneyland for a few days. We started off in my car, a Nash Rambler with a motor that sometimes heated up. We got 10 miles out of town when that's what it started to do. So we took Bob's car. He didn't like that. I didn't blame him.

The plan was to drive down, go to a big dance in Long Beach, and then to Disneyland the next day. Sara and Emily had arranged for a place to stay, but Bob and I had not. But we had a plan. An army buddy of ours lived somewhere around Orange or Santa Ana near Disneyland and told us that he would love to

have us stay with him when we got down to southern California. All we needed to do, he said, was to come on over, and he would put us up.

We went to the dance, dropped the girls off at their house, and then went searching for our friend's home. As I remember, we found a pay phone and called him, and he said, "Come on over." And we did. But there was no offer for us to stay. We hinted as directly as we dared that we didn't have a place to stay, but still there was no offer. Finally, about midnight, we said we had better go. And he said, "Goodbye. Thanks for coming." And off we went. We had no idea to where.

We had very little money and of course no credit cards. No one had those back then. So, we looked for a really cheap motel or hotel that was open and had room. We searched and searched and finally came to the Raymond Hotel. A fleabag of a joint. I don't even know what city it was in. But we were dead tired. They had a room with a double bed, and we took it. It probably didn't cost more than a buck or two. We slept. But there were bugs all over the place. We got out of there as soon as we could, picked up the girls, had a fun day at Disneyland, and drove all night to get back to Fresno. The Raymond Hotel really made this adventure memorable.

It was getting decision time. Mom and Dad were very worried. They could see that I was likely leaning away from going on a mission. I knew what they wanted me to do, but they were wise enough not to push it. Bishop Hyde was working overtime on me as well. Sometimes I bristled, but most of the time I listened. And Sara... Well, she was doing her best to appear neutral, saying it was my decision. She didn't want me to go though.

And then it happened. I woke up one morning and everything was okay. I had a great calm feeling and knew that I would be going on a mission. The Lord had answered the prayer that my lips were not offering, but my heart was. "Please give me the strength to do what I ought to do."

It was an extraordinary transformation and was immediate. I was going. I told Sara, and she was okay with it. Disappointed, I think, but supportive. I didn't tell my folks though. I wanted to surprise them.

Bob, Clyde, and I went through the interviewing process with Bishop Hyde and our stake president who had recently replaced President Sessions. And the missionary recommendations were sent in. The next step was to be interviewed by a general authority. The closest general authority to us was going to preside at a stake conference in Bakersfield some 120 miles away, and so we were asked to drive down there to be interviewed by him. Four of us, including our friend Charles Parker, who was also from our ward, got into the car and drove to Bakersfield on a Sunday afternoon.



We were interviewed by an assistant to the quorum of the Twelve who had recently been called to that position. It was the most intense interview I have ever had. It lasted only five minutes, but I felt like my whole soul had been turned inside out and every atom of it examined.

His name was Gordon B. Hinckley. 😊

Now for the wait. It didn't take long. We all got our calls about the same time. I was going to Australia. Now it was time to tell Mom and Dad.

I called them. Talked to them for a few minutes and then told them that I had just received a mission call to go to Australia. There was silence, and then there were tears.



This completed my teenage experience. I was now 20 and would be on my mission in two months. My life would change again. And again. And again.

I have always wanted to do the right thing. And my testimony is that when that is the case, the grace of the Savior is sufficient to nudge us in the direction we ought to be going. Every experience I have ever had has born witness of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that gospel has been restored in its fullness through Joseph Smith and is contained within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For that testimony and desire to abide by the truths of which I testify, I am most grateful. Please take a look at ***The Things I Have Learned*** that are included on the following pages.

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

Things I Have Learned

Seek happiness. There *is* such a thing as happiness or joy that's different than pleasure, and I want it. It brings *consistent* peace, purpose, and a love for others (especially my family) even when nothing else is working in my life. I have watched others who are truly happy to see what they are doing that makes them so, and then try to do the same. That works!

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Don't worship my mind (or anyone else's). They are false gods and undeserving of my adulation. Worshipping them gets me *nowhere!*

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Find out who I am. Ultimately I will become exactly who I *want* to be. Over time, I have found who that is. *Desire* is everything.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Be kind, don't judge another, be righteous. When I do this, I am walking with God.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Recognize the fallibility of my senses and my logic. There is a source of knowledge outside of my mind and my physical senses that is *sure*. It is the Spirit, and it is real. I have learned to recognize it and listen. Without it, I am blind and deaf to that which has the greatest meaning.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Be willing to change. I want to see in my life what I need to change to bring me *fulfillment*, and that is the *key* to my changing. My pride is an obstacle here, and striving for *humility* is vital. I am unable to make the most significant changes by myself. But if I *ask*, *grace* and the ultimate source of that grace, Jesus Christ, are there, and that is *sufficient*.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Deal with reality. Joy and sorrow go together. Without the one, the other does not exist, and the degree I ultimately feel of the one, likewise, determines the degree I am able to experience the other. This has to do with the eternal principle of *opposition in all things* (See 2 Nephi 2). I am learning to deal with this, and my reality is expanding.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Serve others. This is *LOVE*, and that *mind-set* brings me great joy.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Let The Book of Mormon bless my life. That Book has affected my life in the most sublime ways. It has taught me of Jesus Christ. Since I was age 20, I have read it on the average over once a year. It is what it claims to be—a revelation from God; a hold-it-in-your-hands miracle. If it were anything less, I would have stopped reading it decades ago.

Love Grandpa

Things I Have Learned

Remember that I am an eternal being. My time on earth is, by anyone's definition, *temporary*. As I have come to recognize my own *eternal* nature and *divine* potential, I am able to make the *most* of my stay here. *Only* by following Jesus Christ is that done. That is what I have chosen to do.

Love Grandpa