**The life and**

**Times of**

**Thomas John Redd**

by Thomas John Redd

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Started February 27, 1985

Last Updated January 1, 2014

TO THE READER OF THIS HISTORY;

In this history, or bundle of memories, I have not presented the stories in the proper sequence. I have simply written my memories as I remember them. I have not avoided negative experiences because my intent is not to entertain. I simply want a permanent record of this information. Some of the events should be lost, it is true, but this is what has formed me and molded me. Maybe you can learn from this reading, and avoid some of the pit falls that I did not avoid.

Sincerely Yours,

Thomas J. Redd



**WHAT MAKES ME**

I, Thomas John Redd, was born in Cardston, Alberta, Canada on the 13th of September, 1954. It can be said of me that "I was born of goodly parents." I was the last of my parents four children and therefore was a bit spoiled, although, I never would admit it. My father was teaching seminary at the time I was born while my mother was busy being a mother. My father was the first seminary teacher in Canada.

My family consisted of My Mother, Laurel Dorpha Hill Redd, my father, William Smellie Redd, my oldest sister, Hermie Joan Redd Hornberger, who is eight years my senior, my brother, William Herald Redd, who is six years older, my sister, Ellen Redd Eldredge, who is four years older, and myself. Mom was about two and a half months older than Dad, and that always made it possible for her to tell Dad to listen to her because she was the oldest.

When I was in grade seven we started getting Indian Placement Students in our home, who were supposed to be part of the family. John Hitchcock was the first boy we had. He was two years older than I was and that caused some interesting problems. He felt that he was the oldest and therefore was the boss of me. I really didn't like that, and I rebelled at times because of it. Homer Blackhorse was my second Indian placement foster brother. He was about two years younger than I was. I never really felt good about those first two boys, and never really wanted them to be part of my family. Some of the reasons why I felt that way will be related later in this history. Allan Baptiste was my third Indian placement brother. I really enjoyed him, since he was young enough to be respectful, and bright enough to be fun. He was with the family for all three of my high school years, and then was taken from us when I left for University, because there wouldn't be any other children at home for him to live with. I really missed him in later years, but was happy that Mom and Dad didn't have the burden of more children when I was old enough to leave home. After all, they were almost sixty years old at that time.

Shortly after I was born, my family moved to Grassy Lake, Alberta, where, within a year, we bought our own quarter section farm (160 acres). Over the years we added land to the farm until we had a section of land (640 acres or a square mile) by the time I left the farm. I lived on that farm until my marriage in 1979, with the exception of going to University in Provo, and living in France while I was on my mission. Moving to the farm brought with it a new life style for my family. Among other blessings, we were "blessed" with hail for several years in a row. With farm payments to be made, and the cost of living, Dad was force to teach school for about six years to meet our financial obligations. Mom also decided that she had better start teaching school again to help with our money commitments. She had taught school in the United States for many years before her marriage, and was an excellent teacher. She had teaching assignments in grade one, two or three in Grassy Lake's Chamberlain School. Dad taught at a Hutterite colony for two years, and then was the principal of the Monarch school for a year. He then taught Biology at the Meyers High School in Taber. It was nice to finally have him working closer to home.

The first few years of my life really were the golden years of life for me, and those years are full of memories that I shall try to relate. For many years, I have felt that the perfect age was six. Now that I am older, I realize that I would not want to go back to that age, and that I have some excellent years to look forward to. Six, it seemed, was old enough to enjoy life, and young enough to still be protected by others. It was young enough to still be innocent and carefree. I loved my early days. What a lot of new and wonderful opportunities a six year old could have!

When I was born, I was not a healthy baby. I was a blue baby, which was attributed to celiac. In my early years of life, Mom found that I could eat bananas and get food value from them, where I could not get nourishment from most other foods. I remember one time when the family was eating watermelon, and I had to stick to eating bananas. All the other kids were sitting on the drop eating deliciously cooled watermelon, and I just got the same old food I always got -- bananas. Mom has told me that it was my choice to eat the bananas, and to avoid the watermelon. I don't know for sure if that was always the case.

On the farm, we had many places that we could keep ourselves entertain. The "Drop" was a waterfall in the irrigation ditch that went right by our house. There was a footbridge over the top of the waterfall. We used to love to swim in that ditch. We would go under the falls while we were swimming, and really had an exciting time in that ditch. The water was only about six inches to a foot deep, so we really didn't swim, but we had fun trying. We would let our legs float out behind us as we walked along on the ditch bottom on our hands. What fun it was! I remember going swimming in the ditch a few times with my clothes on, and then a few times when I thought it was smarter to shed my clothes to keep them dry. My cousin, Richard, figured it was best to swim in our underwear, however.

Some important people in my life were my family, and the Torries. Aunt Guinie was my dad's sister. They lived across the road, and a short way north of our farm house. Richard, the cousin closest to my age, and his younger brother, Eugene, were the cousins with whom I spent many happy hours. The Woodruffs were another one of the important families to me as I was growing up. Keith Woodruff was a boy my age that lived one mile west of our farm. At times, we called ourselves best friends, but I never experienced true friendship until I was in University. The Woodruff family was almost a second family to me, and there were lots of kids in their family. Our families spent many happy hours together. There were other important people in my life, and many of the stories I will relate here, include some of those people.

I don't know much about what went on in the delivery room at the time of my birth. I left my home in heaven and came to earth to live, but there are times when I feel that I have been given a glimpse of conditions in that heavenly home from which I am presently absent. During my life, there have been people to whom I am instantly drawn. At times it seems to me that I am intimately acquainted with select people, even though I have never spoken to those persons yet on this earth. I feel that at some distant location we must have been friends and brothers. There must have been a connection in the pre-earth life for those feelings to be so real and strong. Special acquaintances like those are scattered throughout my life.

When I was born, my family was living in a little pink house that I often viewed after my infancy. Whenever we went to Cardston, one of the things we did was to drive or walk by that little house, and reminisce about the times we lived there. That house was destroyed in 1989, after my own young family moved back to Cardston in 1987. It was destroyed to clean up the town. When we returned from a family vacation in 1989, we drove around town to show the kids sights from the past, and our little pink house was gone. I remember nothing of those first few months of my life, and most of the stories that have been told to me about my younger years took place in Grassy Lake, Alberta. I've been told that I was the deciding factor that made us move to our farm in Grassy Lake. I now have mixed feelings about Grassy Lake, and farming. If I was a girl, we would have stayed in Cardston, but since I was a boy, we left the town life, and moved to the farm.

We lived in an old house southeast of town for some time when we first moved to Grassy Lake, and I don't remember that home. It was close to the old Grassy Lake coal tipple, and therefore made it a bit easier to find things to burn in stoves. Mom said that was one of the problems with moving to Grassy Lake was finding fuel to burn in the stove for cooking and heating. She said she would stop and pick up anything that would burn as she drove home. Living by the tipple was nicer than our farm for finding things to burn. There were chips of coal around the tipple for the gathering. We didn't have that luxury when we move to our own house on the farm. The tipple was taken down for safety reasons. The old house we lived in there, too, was recently destroyed, as it had fallen into considerable disrepair, and had not been lived in for many years.

Finally we settled on our own land, not yet ours because the bank owned it, but we were making payments. There was a small two roomed house on our farm, and I thought it was a palace. The house was small and old, but there was warmth and love in that house, the kind all good families should enjoy. When we finally got Natural Gas on the farm, we attached the old coal shed to the house as a small extra bedroom. We also added a small entry way that gave us some storage area, as well as a place for the Milk Separator. Our lunch kits also had a set of shelves right by the door where they were stored. When they were filled, they were easy and quick to grab as you ran out the door to the bus on our way to school.

When it came time to leave that house, and move into our spacious new home, I thought there was nothing worse that could happen to me. I never knew the love and safety of that home could move with us to our new house, but it did. That move occurred about six years after our arrival on our farm. That farm was the setting for the beginning of my life. As of 2003, that little house is still in use on the farm as a storage shed. It has been re-roofed, and re-sided, and the entrance and coal shed have been removed. It had been used as a granary for many years. To make it easier to use as a granary, we removed the ceiling boards for easier access to the grain it held and for greater storage capacity. Will sold the farm in about 2011, and the house was destroyed by the new owners. Most of the historically significant places from the past are being removed; the Cardston house, the Grassy Lake house, Deseret Towers at BYU, etc.

In my younger days, we often took trips out to the tipple as a family, or as a school group. We used to explore it when we went on school field trips, or just went on walks for the fun of it. The tipple had a long ramp that went way up on a wooden tower. Loaded trucks would take coal to the top on the tipple, and the coal would be dumped there. The coal was screened and sorted as it fell down through the tipple's screens and grates. It must have been quite an operation when the Grassy Lake Coal Mine was in full swing. I don't know how many years the coal mine at Grassy Lake was open, but it must have brought some life to the community.

I was the same as most children, and I loved to play, carefully avoiding as much work as possible. I was good at planning just when to go out and play. I also figured out just how far from the house I would have to be so I wouldn't be called to work, or that I couldn't hear a call to come and work. The fields and the back pond were great places to go to avoid too much contact with work.

I used to like to play that I was growing younger. I remember when I played house with my cousins and friends, I really thought that people got smaller and younger as they "grew up." I remember saying things like "when I used to be big, I would do such and such." I wonder now if that feeling doesn't have its roots in the fact that our spirit was large at one time, and we really did have to grow small to fit into our bodies. Perhaps that vague remembrance of a full grown body was a connection to our pre-earth life.

I must have been a big problem for Will when I was little. I remember one time I was supposed to do something with Will, and I decided that I wasn't going to be bossed around by my big brother. I told him that he wasn't the boss of me and that I wouldn't do what he said. He said that I would, so I started to run away from him. It was then that I found out just how fast I could run, that I couldn't run fast enough, that Will could run faster than I could, and that he could really spank hard. There were other times that I was stubborn for Will I am sure, but there were times when I liked him a lot too. I must add that Will never set out to be mean to me, but rather was a wonderful example to follow and a defender of his siblings and family.

One time when we were doing the chores together, Will was milking the cows, and I told him that I loved him so much that I would do anything for him. I really meant it, and I don't think he believed me, or he was going to take full advantage of the situation. He told me to take off all of my clothes to prove it. I did, and he started squirting me with milk. There I was standing there bare-naked and Will was having a great time soaking me with milk that should have been aimed at the bucket. I remember feeling like I had proved my love to him. Actually, I just proved what a gullible fool I was. He told me that that was our secret and I was never to tell anyone about it. I didn't, and I still wonder what would have happened if I had told Mom or Dad. I must have liked milk baths though because this was not the only time that I was soaked in milk. Another incident with Ellen will be related later in this history.

Once when we were on a family trip in the truck, we were riding in the back of the truck, and mom had given me one of her favorite scarves to keep my ears warm with. I often got ear aches and had problems with the wind in my ears. The scarf was light blue, about nine inches by 36 inches, a fairly thin nylon material, and had sort of a line-like pattern woven into it. While we were driving along it accidentally blew away. I thought that was the worst thing that could ever happen. I think mom felt bad about it, and I know that I cried about it, and wanted more than anything to undo that mistake. After I had caught the attention of the driver, we went back and looked for the scarf, but it was never found. It had taken several minutes to get the driver to stop, and I don’t know if we could ever have found the exact location the scarf had blown away. I also am not too sure that mom loved the scarf as much as I did. To me it was a symbol of my mother, and perhaps to her it was just a useful auxiliary article of clothing. When I was six years old, I gave mom a scarf for Christmas that was as close to the first as I could find. It was a little too large, and was a darker shade of blue, but it was the closest that I could find that Christmas season. I remember looking all over for a scarf that would be just perfect. I think that I have been looking ever since for the scarf that would be just right, and I haven't found it yet. I still feel the hurt of having lost that scarf of hers. As I add to this history in 2001, I finally can stop looking for that scarf because Mom died in 1997. She wouldn't be able to use it anymore, but, just the same, if I ever see that scarf again, I will be greatly tempted to buy it as a remembrance of that situation.

On another family trip, I got lost in one of the big department stores we were in. I don't know how it happened, but I remember the fear that I felt then. One of the store ladies picked me up and took me to the front desk and talked on the intercom to everyone in the store about this cute little lost boy. I don't remember anyone coming to get me, but I sure remember being scared.

A long time ago when Lethbridge had an international airport, I first remember seeing Aunt Gert, one of Dad's sisters. She came to visit us, and had just flown into Lethbridge. I don't remember who all went to pick her up, but I was there in the old Mercury truck. Mom was there, and maybe Dad, because with Aunt Gert in the truck cab, it was crowded. About the only thing that I remember is that Aunt Gert always would snort when she talked. What a memory to have of a dear old aunt. Another time, I remember her trying to open one of the New Fangled pop cans, when they first started to have opening tabs on them. We were at her house in Lethbridge, and she was going to give us a treat. She was so excited about having company and all, that by the time she had the pop out of her fridge, and had carried it all over the house to find out who wanted what flavor, etc., she had shaken the cans so much that when she opened one of them, it squirted clear to the ceiling. What a laugh we all had about that!

Each year as I grew up, we always had a garden. I don't know if it was for punishment, food, added work, or fun. One of the best gardens we had was the one that we planted in the old pig pen. I guess that was the best fertilized place mom could think of, and it was fenced off and safe from all the farm animals. It was also close to the well, and when you got thirsty, you could go pump a drink of cold refreshing water. Sometimes we would take a break from the hoeing and go jump in the pond for a cooling swim. When a garden grows like that one did, you don't really mind working in it. We really had a lot of vegetables to put away that year, and that meant cleaning out the pit or root cellar. What a messy job that was! However, the Pigs loved the rotten food that was left over from the previous year. Later in this history I will touch on that messy, smelly job.

Talking about pigs and pigpens reminds me of a time when I had just started in school. We had gone to school one day, and the pigs managed to get into the house. As luck would have it, once the pigs had made their way into the house, they had also managed to close the door behind them as they entered, and they were forced to remain in the house for the entire day. What a mess they made of it. They spilled the slop bucket and went to the bathroom on the beds and chewed up whatever they could find including the bed spreads. The slop bucket was a five gallon bucket in the entrance that we separated milk into and threw all our table scraps in, and even used as a "chamber pot" at times. We really had a lot of cleaning to do that night. And what a smell we had in the house for days to come!

There was another time that we lived with the smell of sour milk in a most uncomfortable way. We used to separate the cream from the milk in the separator. There was little use for the milk, except to feed the farm animals, so it was discarded. The cream could be sold at the dairy in Lethbridge to produce extra family spending money. We would store the cream for one or two weeks in the fridge, and then put it in the large cream can that would hold close to five gallons to take to Lethbridge. One day in the early spring, we expected a cool day, so it would be alright to have the cream can in the trunk of the car until after school when we would head to the dairy in Lethbridge. We put the cream in the can and the can in the trunk of the car. On the way to school, the can had tipped over, but it was never discovered until after school. The day became one of the scorching hot spring days that occasionally happened on the prairie. The cream can lid had popped off and cream had poured out all over the trunk of the car. The heat of the day had soured the cream and the hot, sour milk had soaked into the trunk mats. The smell permeated the entire car and would not give way to our efforts to scrub and clean the trunk. The car was almost uninhabitable for many weeks to come without the windows rolled down as soon as you could got into the car. What a mess that was. I think the smell was as bad or worse than the smell the pigs left in our house after their party there that school day.

The pigs not only made good gardens and messes, but they were fun to ride. We used to ride the old sow in the pig run, and sometimes she would try to get away from us by running through the low pig door into the pig barn. The pig door was an opening in the bottom of the back wall of the pig bard that was only about two and a half feet tall. The pig’s quick entry into the pig barn through that door was fine when nobody was on her, but you sure got stopped suddenly if you happened to be on her, and the wall hit you in the face as she dashed through the door below you.

We used to enjoy playing down at the barn. The barn had a flat straw roof and the granaries had sloped roves. The barn was actually built between two granaries, with a hay stack in the front, and a straw stack in the back. That left lots of roof tops and stack tops high above the ground to play on. We would climb around on the roofs of the granaries and pretend we were monkeys. We would jump around and screech at the top of our lungs. I remember always wanting Richard to be a monkey with me, and Eugene to be our master. Actually we were probably bigger monkeys than we thought.

The barn roof was also a good look-out place for finding the cows when it came milking time. From the top of the tallest granary, we could see all over the farm except for behind the two largest hills. If you could see the cows from the roof tops, all you had to do was just go and get them. If you couldn't see them, then you knew you had to go behind the two large hills. It seemed the best grazing was behind those hills and the cows often hid in the fields behind the hills at milking time. The worst part of getting the cows was leaving that chore until too late in the evening, and having to walk all over the fields in the dark trying to find where the cows were. The dark scared me to death. I was sure there would be wild animals out there to get me.

One of the pastimes that I used to love was riding the bike. We only had one two wheeler, and it was great. It seemed to just glide along smoothly and nicely. It was actually a glider model. What an appropriate name for the bike! It was always a race to the bike when we got home from school, off the school bus, and into the house to change into our play clothes. We could be free to roam at will if we could get to the bike first. There were lots of smooth prairie trails to glide along, and since Grassy Lake was such a flat area, it was easy to speed along with the wind in our face—not the real wind that blew in southern Alberta, but the wind of motion. When the wind blew in southern Alberta, it was really easy to ride east. You wouldn’t even have to pedal as you sped along, but it was almost impossible to go west into the prevailing wind of the prairie. It was especially fun to ride the bike after dad had filled the ditches in the fields. We had great smooth roads to ride on where dad had filled the ditches. Irrigation ditches were ditched into the fields in the spring to allow the farmers to transport water to the fields, and then they were filled in in the fall before the harvest. The ditches were surveyed to follow the curves of the hills without dropping in elevation too quickly so that the water could be carried to all areas of the fields. This often created a patchwork like pattern of ditches all over the field. With the ditches filled, the roads were like a city, because the winding ditches all over the fields that were often parallel to each other. Those ditches created pretend city streets and were always smoothly scraped in the rich dark soil.

My trike was also a fun bike to ride. It was great to sit backwards on the bike seat, and use your feet on the back wheels to push it along. You could turn with the handle bars behind your back. It was like combining that way because it was the back wheels of the combine that steered that large machine. I harvested many imaginary fields that way. We had a larger trike that the older kids could ride, and that made it a real harvest team experience. I love to ride my trike around and around inside the house. We had a loop in the house from the kitchen to the living room and down the hall, and back to the kitchen. We would go around and around at all speeds. We always had imaginary jobs to do. Dad had also made a hitch on the back of my trike that would allow me pull the wagon or a small wooden wheel barrow that Will had made for me for Christmas one year. The Wheel barrow was often in tow around the house. How I loved that bike and wheel barrow.

When we played in the garage, we used to sweep trails in the dust on the garage floor to drive our small toy trucks and cars in. In the dust, we could create roads and farm yard clearings. We would clear fields and cities, using small blocks of wood left over by the power saw as out houses, barns and buildings. We also would create trails for our cars through the ditches and gardens and other places. These were great for our extended pretend travels. After all, our family loved to travel and see the world by car. I had roads that we hoed into the sides of the barrow pits that went half way over to Torries. There were special campgrounds and places that the roads would go around large boulders that served as spectacular mountains scenes, and by the lakes that were the low places filled with standing rain water that had run off the road. We loved to play on those roads just the way we traveled on our summer vacations.

Another person that came into our lives when I was very young was Sister Hood. She had come to help baby sit for the summer for some reason, but I don’t know why. I don't remember much about her, but she and mom were up on the roof of the house painting it that summer. I was so afraid that mom might fall off the roof. I didn’t think that would be good at all, but I remember wishing that Sister Hood would fall off so I could see what it would look like when she hit the ground. David Hood, her son, was also with us that summer, and I guess he was a real brat. I don't remember him at all, except that he did something with a Chemistry Set that was probably Will's. I remember that he pretty well destroyed all the chemicals and things that were in it. I think that set was a Christmas gift of Will’s that he treasured, and all that was left was a few of the small wooden bottle like containers. I think that Will was pretty upset by what David had done.

Another David made a mess of my life as well. David Woodruff was quite a show off and loved to drive around. One day he came over to our place and was not too careful where he drove. He ended up backing up to turn around and he went off the gravel into the garden area that I had made my roads and farms in. He ran over Will’s John Deere tractor and my grain drill. The drill was never repairable, and the tractor became a two wheeled tag-a-long tractor that was common in those days as the farmers removed the front wheels from one tractor to be towed by another tractor to create the early version of a large four wheel drive tractor of today. Will had mostly grown out of toys, and I was the one that was the recipient of that tag-a-long tractor. The tractor was fine, but I sure missed my drill. It was David and Allen Woodruff that broke the door and step off my toy camper, too. I really didn’t appreciate those older boys too much, and I would always try to hide my toys if I saw them coming. Because I was able to hide them many times, I still have some of those toys that I treasure so much.

Our family took several trips in the old 1949 Mercury pickup. We would throw a bed in the back and away we would go. Sometimes we would put a canvas cover over the back of the truck on rounded pipes that made sort of a tent, and sometimes we wouldn’t. We often took the back window out of the truck too, and that made it nice for going back and forth, or for talking to each other. We could also pass snacks back and forth. We often took "Boy Scout Peanuts" with us. Those peanuts were cans of Planters Peanuts that the scouts sold for $0.50 per can for a scout fundraiser. Mom and Dad were supporters of the Scout program, and we often bought the peanuts by the case. Maybe that made it so that we didn’t have so many cans that we were responsible to sell. Don't I wish that I could still buy those peanuts for that same price! We would tie all our camping equipment on the running boards of the truck, making the truck look like an overloaded pack mule on the gold rush trek. One trip that I remember well was to somewhere in the mountains, and we spent the night out on a gravel bar in a river. We had fried chicken for supper that night and boy it tasted good. Dad was an expert at frying Chicken on an open campfire. On another trip after we had the new 1960 Frontenac car, we had a big laugh about Joan's description of the North Star's location. She pointed out in front of her and said that it was right over there behind her. When we went on another trip in the old truck, we took a big mattress cover, and filled it with saw dust from a saw mill in B.C. That was the bed for mom and dad on that trip. Most of the time us kids would sleep in the sleeping bags zipped together out on the open ground. We had fun rolling down the saw dust piles at the mill where we got the saw dust. It was about like going down the sand hills out north of Grassy, only it was softer.

Another favorite place to play was on the roof of the chicken coop. It had a gentle slope, and the top was made of sheets of plywood. The sheets made perfect room floor plans. There were even more rooms in that play house than in our real house. I guess I was a real house-player. I always wanted to be the baby. I liked the idea of other people taking care of me. I also loved to snuggle up to anyone who would sleep with me. I think that same feeling of security that I found in our old house was what I was after.

We liked to play house in another favorite house playing place. It was on the top of a big flat rock that was out in the ditch across the road from our driveway. The way the rock was formed gave you about three rooms, and they seemed plenty large for a house. When I looked at the rock as an adult, I was surprised that it was so small. A knot in a fence post close by made a perfect mail box for us as well. We used to send messages to each other in any code we could think up. We often used numbers for the letters of the Alphabet, or other symbols to make the words of the message. I had bought a book for the Scholastic Book Club called “Codes and Secret Writing,” and that was a great source of special, secret ways to send messages. I loved the book, and the codes, and the intrigue of that note writing. When I started teaching school, one of the things I would always do for my young classes was show them how to encode messages in secret codes. I used that book as the basis for many of those projects.

One of the good things about growing up on the farm was that we had chores to do to teach us to work. I'm sure it was good for Mom and Dad anyway. The kids used to hate to do the chores, and I bet they hated to make us do them all the time, but we learn to be responsible workers. Sometimes I wondered if having cows to milk was really so good because we always had to be home each morning and evening to milk and feed them. It made it more difficult to take off for family vacations and outings. We had to get baby sitters for the cows. Woodruffs would often do our chores, and we did theirs for them in exchange when they went away from home for the night, and they had a lot more cows to milk than we did. I hated to come home from a meeting or a show late at night, and have to go out to milk and feed the cows. It was even worse in the heart of the Canadian winters. When it was really cold, we would even have to carry water down to the barn for them to drink as well. That was hard and bitterly cold work. When I was younger, the job I had was to get the cows. They would be out there in the field somewhere or other, and half the time you could see them from the top of the barn as I have already mentioned, but the other half of the time, I just had to start looking. Then there were the times that I would play until after dark, and then I'd have to go and find them in the dark. That got scary and hard, and you would think that I would learn to do it in the daylight, but I was too much of a player to remember all of the good lessons that I should have learned. Sometimes we would manage to talk Mom or Dad into driving us out to the field to look for them. It sure was great if they would do that for us. In later years, I had to milk the cows as well. The way that I liked best to do that, was to train the cows to stand still in the field. Then I would just take the bucket out to them and do the milking. After I had them trained, I never had to bring them in. I just had to move along with the cows as they grazed, and I milked. I got so that I could carry the filled milk buckets back to the house hanging on the handle bars of the bike. The time for the chores was really shortened if I didn’t have to take the time to go get the cows first.

Once in a while the cow would step in the bucket while you were milking. That really was a mess. The milk was then good for nothing but to be thrown away. It was a shame to see all that good work poured out on the ground. One time John decided to bring the milk into the house after the cow had stepped in the bucket. He saved some of that milk for breakfast. We would always save about two quarts of milk from each milking in the milk cans that we kept in the fridge. That way there was always a fresh supply of delicious cold whole milk for every meal. When we all tasted the milk that John had saved the next morning for breakfast, Dad got mad, and made him sit there and drink it. While we were milking, we also used to have fun squirting milk at the cats. They got so that they could drink it up as fast as we could squirt it at them. I still fondly remember the funny feeling on your tongue if you squirted the fresh warm milk into your own mouth. No wonder the cats liked it so much!

We had a wonderful man for a father. He was always in control of his feelings and emotions. Most of the time us kids would want to do everything we could to make mom and dad proud of us. We never wanted to do things that would upset them or make them mad. I think that was the motivation we had to always do our best. We were always afraid to do wrong because dad might get mad at us. There were times that we talked about dad getting mad, but I must add that he never got really mad at us. I think he would get disappointed with us if we messed up, but never really mad at us. We knew that he didn't approve of what we had done, but he was always in control of his emotions. He never would let a stupid thing decide how he would feel. When we would get mad at some stupid thing, he would say that it hasn't got a brain. It can't be stupid. It must have been the kid that was stupid. I don't ever remember seeing Dad really angry. He was always a nice even tempered man, but the thing that seemed to bother Dad most was not being punctual. When Dad said we were leaving at such and such a time, he meant it. If you were not ready to go with the family at that time, you could be left behind. On some occasions that were of importance, Dad would get quite upset at having to wait for a straggler. He was careful to be sure that we made it to the things that strengthened testimonies, and that we could miss the fun things that the family went to like shows or other entertaining activities.

Once when I was about sixteen, I think I got Dad as close to mad as I ever saw him. Mom was in a hurry to leave for school. She decided that she needed to leave for school to get things ready for the day earlier than normal. I thought that it was stupid to leave so early, and I made a comment that Mom was stupid to leave that early. Dad didn't like me calling his wife stupid, so he came right after me, and turned me over his knee and spanked me before I got in the car to leave for school. That was the only real spanking that I remember getting from my dad. Mostly I tried to be good so that I wouldn’t disappoint him, and I discovered that morning why I never wanted to be on the wrong side of Dad’s feelings.

I really was a little devil in primary. There used to be some red ant hills in the church yard around the old Grassy Lake Church. I wanted to prove that I was a tough kid and would always go and sit in the hills after I had stirred the hill with a stick to anger the ants. I would challenge the other kids to do the same. The idea was to see which one of us kids could sit in the ant hill the longest, with ants crawling all over us and biting us. Generally I was the winner. Then we would go into primary and sit sort of reverently on the benches with our classes with ants crawling all over us and biting us. They would also go crawling away from us, biting anyone or anything that got in their way.

Keith and I decided in one class, that we would try a different trick. We started banging our heads together to see who would get hurt the first and start crying. I was well known for having a hard head, so I was relatively safe. That day, however, mom was teaching a class of big kids right through the curtain from our class. In the old church in Grassy Lake there were a couple of big rooms that were divided off for class with several curtains. Mom heard the commotion through the curtain, and came in to our class. She took me by the ear and hauled me off to her class. I was plunked right in the middle of the big kids and you can bet I was awfully good the rest of that day. Never did I want a repeat of that punishment. I was as good as I could make myself be from then on in my Sunday School classes.

Outside the church we had fun before and after church meetings. One thing that was really fun was to pick the spear grass that grew wild in the natural prairie grass that surrounded the church. We would throw it at each other until we looked like pin cushions. We really had some good wars going on there, and we had a lot of those sticky spears to pick out afterwards. Their heads would often stick tight, and the tails would break off leaving the heads sunk into our clothing, poking and scratching us whenever we moved. There was also a lot of treasure hunting to do in the parking lot. I don't know how you could have so much broken glass in one place, but it was there as thick as could be. The glass was multi colored and of varying sizes. We would pass lots of time waiting for the end of the different meetings our parents attended looking for pretty pieces of brightly colored glass, or anything else that a small kid would think was a treasure. The broken glass was all different colors and thicknesses and we valued it as most people do their jewels.

One time, the treasure was really a treasure that I spent hours looking for. Mom had given me a little paddle lock in the shape of a heart. It had a cute little key that was on a red string. Mom had warned me that it would get lost easily if I wasn't careful, and that must be just what I wasn't – careful. I went over that parking lot again and again, before I got smart and prayed for Heavenly Father to help me find it. It didn't take long after that prayer to find the key. I should have started to pray sooner. That was one of the incidents that taught me that Heavenly Father really does hear and answer our prayers.

Many were the pretend trips that we took in the cars that were out in that parking lot as we waited for the adults to finish meetings. In those days, the cars were always left unlocked with the windows down in summer to keep them as cool as possible, and the keys were almost always left in the ignition. Even when we went to the city, the cars were left unlocked, but the keys might be removed from the ignition and left under the floor mat. It was easy for friends to use each other’s vehicles if the need arose. While waiting for meetings, the kids would drive all over the country in our imaginations, and visit all the exciting places that we had or hadn't seen before. We were smart enough to know that we must never play with the keys or the switches though. Some of those pretend places we traveled were more grand and glorious than any places that any man has ever seen! I think that some of the never seen before places were the most breathtaking. Why, they all should be listed as the Seven Wonders of the World. It's a wonder we could think up such great things. I don't remember what they were, but they were great.

Grandma Torrie was one of my Primary teachers that I remember most. She always seemed to have some fancy thing made to make our classes more fun and memorable. I still have a big red heart that she gave me for Valentine’s Day. I think that I learned the most, however, from mom when she was my primary teacher. She demanded that we learn, not by force, but by making the learning so fun.

And Allen Woodruff was one of the most fun teachers I had. I guess it was because he was so young, and knew how to have fun. He was the Mutual Superintendent, the equivalent to the Young Men’s President, while he was in grade twelve. I really admire that man to this day. I wish that he knew all the good that he has done for me.

I remember riding to primary once in a while with Woodruffs in their old Ford car. It had a heater with garage doors on it. We would play with it more than we would let it be used as a heater. It was especially fun in the summer when heat was not required or needed. I don't know why we played with the heater doors in their car only, but I never remember playing with the same kind of doors on the heater in our truck. Maybe it was because by the time our whole family was in the cab of the truck, there was no room for anyone to get down by the heater, but when I was being taken home from Woodruffs in their car, there was all kinds of room for me to get down there and play. Their road had better roller coaster rides on it than ours did too. It was fun to have that funny feeling in your stomach as you went over each of the hills.

One day our truck was getting fixed in the Ford garage at Taber, and we had a loaner truck that they let us take while ours was being worked on. I remember Mom turning it around in the middle of the road one night over by the church farm, and I also remember playing with all the buttons and knobs on its dash. It seemed to have so many more knobs than any cars I had seen and I couldn't understand the need for them all but they were fun to check out. It is amazing that I didn’t destroy something on the truck in the short time we had it.

While I was in primary, I had two favorite songs. One was "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam," and the other was "I am a Child of God." I could almost see someone leading and guiding me down the aisle of the church whenever we sang that song. I remember turning around to and visualizing the scene of being led and guided down the aisle by Jesus himself. I could see me reaching up and holding his hand as we walked together into our church meetings. That was one of the first seeds of testimony that I felt and knew. I knew that Jesus lived and loved me. It still is a foundation of my testimony to this day. I don’t believe I ever sing that song without the vision of Christ leading me as a young boy by the hand as we walk together in righteousness.

As a child, I thought it was the meanest thing that Keith Woodruff could have done was to make up the song "Little Tom Tinker" about me. It was a fun song to sing, but why did he make it up about me? Why did he have to call me Tommy Tinker, and he often called me that as long as we were in school together. That was proof enough that he wrote the song, wasn’t it? As a little boy, I used to spend hours making up mean songs about him, and I couldn't understand why his mean song always got sung in Primary, and none of the songs I made up about him were ever heard of. I took it as a sign that I had better try a little harder, and maybe I'd get one made up good enough that we could even sing it at primary like we did Keith's song.

It's funny how some items or articles of clothing can be so special to a young child. I had a favorite red shirt that had a train on the front of it. I remember wanting to wear it all the time. That is the shirt I was wearing in Missoula when we were waiting in the truck to pick Mom from summer school the year she went to summer school without the rest of the family. Perhaps I remember it well because of the pictures of me standing on the seat of the truck in that shirt waiting for her to come out of the building she was in, but I really think that I remember it because it was so special to me, and not just because of the pictures that was take on me wearing the shirt. The picture was of me in that shirt standing on the seat of the truck while we were in Missoula, when I was still young enough to stand up full height and still not touch the roof of the truck. I don’t know how young I was, but I was little.

We used to like to play with all the old stuff up in the top of the old house. That was one of the secure storage areas we had on our farm, but it wasn’t safe enough to protect things from us kids. Our old wind up record player was up there, and we would listen to all the records we could whenever we had an excuse to get up there. "Town Topics of Pumpkin Center" was my favorite record. It still is pretty neat to listen to that old record on the wind up record player that I now have in my possession. They just don't make records like they used to. In 2001, I made a CD of most of the old records we listened to. They are pretty scratched up, but they are full of memories.

There was a box of cough medicine up there that Uncle Vic had sent Mom and Dad. It was in little trial sized bottles. Uncle Vic Miller was a druggist in Vancouver. I remember several times that we would try some of the cough syrup out. It really was quite tasty. It's a good thing we didn't over dose on it. I don't know exactly what it was, but it was sweet, and I liked it. It was in little trial bottles that were just the right size for kids, I thought, so how could it be bad for kids? There were some old clothes up there that were fun to dress up in too. While we were up there, we had to be careful not to step off the rafters because we were told that we would fall through the ceiling if we didn't stay on the right boards. I really think that a kid as light as I was would have had no problems with falling through the shiplap, but it sure added to the spirit of adventure – the idea of possibly falling through the ceiling I mean.

When we were growing up, Mom and Dad always tried to make it to the temple each month. It was great when we got to go with them, but a bit scary when we had to stay home without them. I was awfully glad that I wasn't the oldest kid in the family. It was nice to have someone there to look after me. I don't think I would have enjoyed being Joan on those nights at all. One time we got to go with Mom and Dad, and we were told that we could play in a little park not too far from the temple, and so we did. There was a small pool there. First we went wading, and then when the bottoms of our pants were wet, we couldn't see any reason not to get them good and wet, so we tried out the slide that went down into the water. At first we tried to keep our shirts dry, but their bottoms got wet so we decided there was no sense in trying to keep them dry, and we really had a great time in the pool. I wonder what Mom and Dad must have thought to come out of the temple and see four dripping wet kids to take home--in the back of a truck. We all had to take off our clothes and hold them out the side of the truck as we rode home. We were all hiding under the blanket that we used to use to cover the truck seat. On most of those temple trips Mom and Dad would give us enough money to buy a revelo or a drum stick. We would often play in the park by the stream, and would climb the hills. Sometimes we would walk over to our old house, or go play on the foot bridge that was close to the house. We always found things to do, and it seemed that the time Mom and Dad were in the temple would go by quite quickly. I have many fond memories of those temple trips.

The most spiritual and exciting experience that I remember from my early years was one of the time that we were in Utah attending General Conference. Because dad was often in church leadership positions and was a farmer, we would attend general conference quite often. One year when we were there, Mom had left me sitting on a sign post behind the tabernacle after the session was over while she went to the bathroom in the bathrooms behind the tabernacle. It used to be that the General Authorities would leave conference from the back door of the tabernacle and drive away in their cars. The cars would drive in the west gates of temple square to drop off or pick up the general authorities for the conference sessions. I was about three years old at that time. While I was sitting there, President David O. McKay came out of the tabernacle door, picked me up, shook my hand and talked to me. He put me back on the sign post and left. After he was gone, my mom came back. I remember that I was scared and happy all at the same time. I think that was one of the experiences that made me feel especially close to President McKay.

Our family used to attend almost all of the General Conferences of the church while Dad was the branch president. The trips to conference used to be great for us kids. Mom and Dad might have got more tired from the trips than us kids, but the trips were really exciting. We used to spend hours and hours getting ready for the trips. We would wash the car inside and out. Then we would spend hours getting a nice big lunch ready so that we wouldn't have to stop for food on the way to or from conference. The lunch would be packed away in our old bread box. It was a big yellow lard can with a red lid. The first trips that I remember were made in our Mercury truck. We used to put the stock racks on the truck and then hitch a bed up in the top of the racks like a bunk bed, and then put a bed under the top one. That way we had beds for the trip and we used to use them. We would leave from school on Friday night and drive all night to get to conference on time. Often we would arrive at conference just in time to walk into the first session on Saturday morning. It used to be that the tabernacle wasn't ever too full to just walk into even if you were late. In those days, they would pack about 8,000 people into the tabernacle. People were packed as tightly together as was possible. After the last session on Sunday, we would drive all night and be back in time for school on Monday morning. We kids used to ride in the back of the truck and watch the clouds or stars go by depending on the time of day or night. We would watch for sheep and dogs in the clouds during the day and look for the big dipper, etc. in the stars as the miles went by at night. The sandwiches and the nights at relatives houses, along with eating on temple square, the fresh tomatoes and the little salt shakers that dad would buy for the tomatoes, the note books that Dad would buy us to keep notes on conference, the dot games in the notebooks, being afraid of falling over the balcony if we went to sleep, mixed in with the organ and choir, are all memories that I will always cherish. On those long trips, Dad used to stop at a service station for gas, and we had to be back in the truck or car when he was, wither we had to go to the bathroom or not.

One of the chores that had to be done each year was to clean out the pit, or root cellar. It was an old cellar made of railroad ties, and it had some bins in it for all the vegetables that we grew each year in the garden. It was fun to go down there sometimes, but when it had to be cleaned out, that was a different story. The smell of rotten vegetables after not being used for the summer was enough to drive you away. We not only had the smell to work with, but the feel and the look of those moldy rotten squishy things. Then there were the dirty spider webs that clung to your face and arms as well. We used to clean it all out at the end of the summer, and by then it was good and messy. I never could understand how the pigs could stand to eat all the stuff we hauled out of there. They seemed to think that it was candy or something like that.

I have already talked about Grandma Torrie being a good primary teacher. She was also a good cookie maker. Almost every time you went to her house, she would bring out the cookie jar, and share some cookies with the kids. One thing that she didn't do well though was sing. You have to admire her for the effort she made, however. She had one song that she really liked, and sang often. It was "Sown in the Darkness or Sown in the Light." When she sang it, it was hard to tell if it was sung in the darkness or sung in the light because of the way you weren't quite sure if she could see the music or not. She always got wound up and sang her heart out on that song though. It was even worse when it was a duet or quartet with two or four of the same kind of singers. Grandpa Torrie was just as famous for wild singing.

I suppose that a couple of the songs that our family sang may have been just as hard on an audience as her musical numbers were. A couple of the favorite songs we sang were "The Seer, The Seer, Joseph the Seer," and "Cast Thy Bread Upon the Waters." We used to enjoy singing most of the time, until dad, the musical one of the family, would start telling us to do it just a bit more like this or like that. At that point, we would all really rather stop, but we would go on and on and on and on. We did learn to love music and singing though, thanks to him. It was especially fun to sit around the table and sing, with the harmonies all bouncing off the table so everyone could hear them so well.

While I'm talking about singing, I may as well throw in that I actually was good enough – brag, brag – to win first place in a couple of music festivals. One of the first songs I sang at a festival was "I went for a Walk With My Wee Small Pup." Joan played the piano for me, and Mom helped me learn to sing it. It is still rather interesting to listen to the tape we made while we were practicing one day. I was quite a show off, and Mom's sliding from note to note makes it a real embarrassment for both of us. Joan and the piano are the only things that don't have a right to be embarrassed with that little bit of family history.

We also did some singing in Mom's grade one room. We did a bit of choral speech, and as I remember, we did quite well at the speech festival that year too. There was another festival that I don't want to remember, however. I don't remember what song I sang, but it sure was awful. I didn't practice enough, and I sure made a fool out of myself. You would think that I would learn a lesson from those times, but there were plenty more times that I wasn't prepared for something and I did it anyway and felt awful about it. There were some clarinet festival solos I would love to have forgotten. As the time grew closer for the festival, I would take my clarinet and go outside to practice so no one would hear the mess I was making. At times it was good, and other times it was awful.

I had the chance to sing in church a couple of times. I felt better about that than the singing at the music festivals. Mom wrote new words to one song for Christmas one year, and I really liked it. I guess Mom was more of a poet and musician than I ever thought that she was while we were growing up. It was nice to have her like music and poetry so much, and to always have her feeling like we could do whatever we wanted to if we tried hard enough.

I guess that the most fun I ever had with singing was with Ron Bird down at BYU. The year I got home from my mission, I found out what a friend really could be. Ron was that friend. He was probably the first really close friend I ever had. It was through him that I found out how much a friend could hurt you, too. While we were friends, we did everything we could together. We loved to sing and "bum around," as we called it, together. We would drive everyone on the Cougar Band Buses crazy with our bumming and singing. When we were in a spiritual mood, we would sing out of the hymn book, and we would each take a different part of the music. Our favorite song was "Now the Day is Over." We also liked, "There Is a Green Hill Far Away." In the cafeteria we would sing our favorite pop commercial. It was all about the taste of Fresca. We would do the "And now a word about the taste of Fresca for the cowboys, and the sports people, and the normal people, and then we would stand up and sing the "Wow" for the opera singer. It was great to just have fun, and not worry about what other people thought about us. Our favorite spot to sing was under the sky lights in the Morris Center. The way they reflected the sound as we stood underneath them was really neat. The sound would be bounced back into our ears in a delightful way that made it sound like a high quality recording. It almost made some of our singing pretty.

At Thanksgiving that year, Ron Bird invited me to go with him to his home in Idaho. I was so excited about the trip. We would go in my little orange Datsun. It had rather worn out tires on it, but I was confident that they were not as worn out as we would wear them on the farm. Ron's dad ran a service station. That was my down fall. When we got to his place, they showed me into the guest room. It was really nice, but I really wanted to be with someone more than I wanted to be alone. I wanted to sleep in Ron’s room and have the chance to just lay there and talk like I had done with Richard and Eugene when we were growing up. Ron went to visit some of his friends, and that was okay. I could understand that. Then we went all over the town and he showed me all the sights that were special to him. We went to the radio station he worked at, and that was really interesting to me. In some ways that visit encouraged my early interest in television production. I loved the mass media.

On Sunday we went to church, and I wore the suit that I got for seminary graduation, the year before I graduated from High School. It had lived through my mission, and was really looking pretty bad, I guess. I had my old mission shoes on, and I guess I looked pretty bad to Ron's parents. That afternoon when we got back to Ron's house, there was a new suit, a new belt, and a new pair of harness boots on the bed in my room. I had been joking about how I was too poor to have new tires on my car, and I discovered that Ron's dad had put new tires on my car. I really started to feel like a heel. After all that expense that they put out on me, we went back to school. When I got back to school, I found some money that had been planted in my suitcase. I really think that was the beginning of Ron not wanting to be around me too much. I think he felt that I drained his family too much of the things that he would rather have had.

When the winter semester ended, Ron went back to Idaho to prepare for his mission. I really missed him and thought about him all the time. I longed to be with him again. When I found out when his mission farewell was, I decided to take Eric Affletranger with me and we would go see him for that special day. I was so excited about it I could hardly stand it. Another chance to be with Ron! Wow!

It was the middle of July, and a very hot day. We started heading out to Idaho in my little worn out Datsun. It had started to overheat quite often, and also was burning lots of oil. I wasn't too sure that it would make the trip to Idaho. Besides, with the temperature reaching about 105 degrees, we were over heating as we drove. We opened the windows and turn the heater on full blast to try to help keep the heat down. We would drive from one service station to the next, and hose the radiator down with cold water. We knew we could never make it to Idaho, and right as we were deciding to go back to Provo, we saw a bill board that advertise an Avis Rent-A-Car for $19.00 for the weekend. We thought that if we could only make it to the airport in Salt Lake where Avis rented out cars, we could rent a new car and drive on. We didn't have quite enough money, so we went through the ash tray and the seats in the car, and had found some money to add to our pooled resources and we had just enough money to make the $19.00 rental. We walked into the airport, and asked to rent a car. To our horror, they asked us for a $20.00 deposit, as well as the money for the rental. We just didn't have that much money. We finally decided to phone my great aunt Lura who lived in Salt Lake and ask if we could borrow the $20.00 deposit for the weekend. When we got back to school on Monday, I would be able to take money from my BYU foreign students account in the administration building and sent it to her. We drove over to her house, and she came to the door. She was very old and obviously not very well off. She scrounged around and found us twenty dollars from her food money, and we thanked her and left. We really felt like idiots taking that last bit of money she had.

We got the car at the Airport, and hoped that it would have a full tank of gas. It did. It was really nice to drive, and had air conditioning and all. We couldn't have had a nicer car for making that trip. Now all we needed to hope was that we could make it to Ron's place on that tank of gas. We figured we could bum a tank of gas from Ron's dad and pay for it later if we could only make it there. We phoned Ron just a bit before we got to his town to tell him that we were coming. We didn't want to surprise him too badly, and we didn't want to tell him we were coming until we knew we would make it. By the time we got to his home, his mom had arranged for us to stay in a motel in town, because she only had one single bed and she wanted us to be comfortable. We visited a bit, and then went to find the motel she had arranged. We knew that we would have to bum money for gas to get back to Salt Lake, so we didn't want to spend the money on the motel. We decided to get a refund of the motel money, and use that for the gas for the trip home. We would just sleep in the car for the night, and not tell anyone where we had slept.

It seemed that all was going well for us, until Rid, Ron's best friend from right across the street from Ron's house found us, and told us that he would not have us sleeping on the street. He said his parents were away, and we could sleep at his house. We thought that was fine, except for hiding the car from the Birds. We finally worked that all out, and went to his house for a very comfortable bed and night's rest. The next morning we got up and went to Ron's house for breakfast. They asked us how we had slept, and we told them that we had a nice sleep. The bed was comfortable and all. We never said where we had slept. We figured things were going along just fine, until Ron got a call on his CB radio from Rid. Rid told Ron what we had done and we really had to do a lot of talking to get ourselves out of that mess. We felt like heels, and so did the Birds. We had come so far to see them, and the neighbors had taken us in to give us a bed.

We ended up having a very nice weekend, but Birds would not let us go back to school without some money in our hand. We made it back, and I found more money in my suitcase. I really felt like a heel. I took the money the Birds had given us, and paid back my great aunt. But nothing I ever did could help me feel good about all the things that the Birds had done for me; clothes, tires, gas, money, friendship, etc. Ron told me that the best way to pay his parents back was to just be grateful and accept it with an open heart. I tried to do that, and it was a good lesson to me about how hard it can be to graciously accept help when someone offers it.

Even though we had a lot of fun together, I learned a big lesson from Ron. I learned that people really can change, and good friends don't necessarily always remain good friends. When Ron went on his mission, I really was looking forward to his return, but when he got back, he really wasn't very excited to see me, and about all he said was "Hi." He didn't even want to be in Cougar Band any more. I couldn't believe he had changed so much, nor did I want to believe it. We hardly did anything together after that. I tried to go and visit him, but he was too interested in girls, and finding a wife to want to do anything with me. I don't suppose we talked to each other more than twice after his mission. I was amazed that such a good friendship could have such a sudden and complete "endship." What a lesson.

Years later when we were visiting in Utah, I looked Ron up and went to see him at his house. How I wanted to have the same kind of friendship we once had. It was a total disappointment. It was a very strained visit, and it was the last time I ever think I will see him in person. He is a news caster on a local news stations and I like to see the news every once in a while just to see and remember old times. Friendship truly does have an endship.

In 1959 when we started to build our new house, I had not yet started school. I became Dad's chief helper. I wonder how he could have put up with me. I must have been more in the way than I was a helper. I remember having to fill up his nail pouches for him, and even being the cook for him. I made some pretty awful things for him to eat, and he always ate them and never complained. One dish was soggy puffed wheat covered with syrup and then frozen. Another was bread soaked in melted butter. It would be just dripping with butter and he would eat it. He always came down to turn the stove on for me, but I did the rest. He also made a sort of a little house in the new house’s kitchen for me. It was cozy and warm. I made all kinds of furniture and even strung wire around to wire my little house. It is a good thing I didn't try connecting the wires to the power supply. I remember once, I plugged my little Erector set motor into the outlet like dad had done with another motor, and it about blew up in my hands. That was in my nice little house in the kitchen of the new house. Tinker the dog used to like that kitchen house too.

Tinker was a good old dog. I guess that he had his mean times, but he was good company. Once he chewed up one of my toy trucks and that put an end to my elevator building. Without a truck, who needs an elevator? When I started school, Tinker started following the truck to school. I tried to get him to go back to the house, and I was crying because I had to leave him. I guess that is what made him try to follow us. We went the long way around to town, and he got lost. We never saw him again. I remember hoping and praying that he would find his way back home somehow. After about a week, I concluded that he was gone for good. Once when I was visiting as an adult with Eugene or Richard, I found out what really happened. Apparently my dog would go over to Torrie’s and eat eggs and chickens. That was more than Uncle Marvin could stand and he shot the dog.

While the roof of the house was being finished, Will and Ellen decided it would be a nice place to roll my tow truck around. They did, and it wasn't long before they let it roll right off the roof, and it got broken. It was a neat truck. It had all kinds of little tools with it, and it was fairly big. I sure was mad at them for that. It is funny how I really couldn't see how to fix things then like I can now. I wonder why Dad didn't help fix some of my toys that got broken. Was he trying to let me learn to fix things myself or was he just tired of fixing all the things that kids had broken over the years or was he teaching me that it was time to leave childish things behind? I never have managed to leave childish things behind. I think that is because those were such safe, innocent, and carefree days. I remember dad always fixing anything that he thought needed fixing, including some of the things that were intended to be replaced when they were worn out. Maybe he thought that the toys were to the point of being discarded, and the useful things were the things to fix.

I remember well the day we went to Taber to get a new car. It was the first time I wondered if Mom and Dad were crazy. I couldn't understand how a family could afford to have two vehicles, a truck and a car. They found one to their liking, definitely not to mine, and bought it. We were on our way home in the old black thing, and as we went by Fincastle, the motor fell out. I was pleased and even delighted to find that we went back and bought the car that I wanted all along. It was a blue and white Frontenac station wagon. Wow! Was I proud to be seen in that fancy car!

I used to like to ride in the front seat of the car with mom and dad, or in the very back. If I had the very back to myself, I would set up house-keeping. The wheel-wells would be the stoves and cupboards. There was usually a blanket or something that could be used for a bed, and on long trips home, I'd end up going to bed in my Frontenac house and waking up in my own bed at home. It was interesting to see how mixed up a child's directions can become by going to sleep in the car. Generally my sense of direction is pretty good, but as a child, falling asleep in a car would really throw me off. Sometimes, I was sure that we were just going around and around in circles. I remember asking dad on one trip to Utah why we had to drive around one lake so many times before we could go on.

When we traveled, we used to like playing "going to church" in the back of the car or truck. That was where we would decide where or what we were doing, and then take turns doing it in whatever car or truck would pass us by. One car game that was not very fun for me was where we would all try to add up the numbers on the passing cars' license plates. I never could see them far enough away to read all the numbers so how could I add them up? We used to like to hunt for the alphabet on the road signs. Picking out our houses was fun too. It was on trips that I learned to tell the difference in all the different makes of cars on the road. It was there I learned to love the Ford Econoline Van. It sure seems ugly now. Also one Sunday I got to ride with Dad to ha high counsel visit in his companion’s Econoline truck. That was a delight for me!

Our Frontenac Station Wagon went through a lot in its day. I guess I helped to destroy it too. When the car was about one year old, Dad was in town with it, and one of the school teachers was driving down Main Street – not watching where he was going. He ran into the front of the car and dented up the front corner. It is still dented in to this day. The way I helped to destroy it was enjoying the nice warm heat in the summer. I always liked to go sit in the car when it was nice and warm. One day while I sat there in the car with my cold feet on the wind shield, I pushed myself back into the seat as hard as I could. The window cracked right down the middle and scared me half to death. I thought I would really be in trouble, but I was never asked about the crack and I never volunteered any information about it either. The old car sat on the farm in Grassy Lake for many years with a dented front end, and a cracked wind shield. About 1990 when I saw it last, I noticed that someone had gone further with the windows than I did. They had been broken out all the windows. What a shame to see things destroyed like that for no reason at all. It was still a good car, even if no one was using it. It could have been donated to the Renald’s car museum or something.

When I was young, my mother went to summer school in Missoula. I don't remember much about the summer she was away from home, but I do remember that at the end of her classes we drove down to get her. I remember the trip in the truck, and some of the big buildings. I remember most standing on the seat of the truck while it was parked in front of the building that mom was in, as we waited for her to get done with her tests and come out.

Another summer we went to my Uncle Roy's place in Utah. He had some big dump trucks and he took us for a ride up on the mountain side. That evening, at his home, we had fish for dinner. I remember looking out the window as we ate, and seeing the big, beautiful mountains. They may have been pretty, but I was afraid that those big beautiful piles of rocks would fall on us.

Most summers on the farm were busy times with lots of work to do. It seemed that the littlest kids always got stuck with the grain shoveling. I used to hate to have to empty out the pickup trucks as fast as we could. It was normally Ellen's and my job to do the shoveling. It was hard, too, because if you ever got your whole heart into it and really shoveled, dad would come along and tell you not to lift the grain, but to help it run into the auger. When we had one truck, we had a rest between loads, but when we had two trucks, we seemed to be shoveling grain steadily for the whole harvest season. It was really a blessing if something broke down and we had to stop for a while. It was also a blessing when the grain elevator in town was open because the truck could just go there and be emptied without shoveling. It was even worse when you got sent up into the top of a dusty granary to push the last of the grain into the dusty darkness as fast as dad could shovel it up the auger. I remember the panic of wondering if you could keep up, or if you would be buried alive in a sea of grain. It was always such a pleasant relief when the auger stopped, and you knew you had survived one more load of wheat.

I never really liked to have to go drive the tractor either. I always felt that if there was anything fun to do, Will and Dad would go do it, after they had put me on the tractor with the tractor in a nice slow gear, and adjusted the depth of whatever I was pulling. Then they would leave and I was stuck out there going nice and slow with nothing to do but sit there. I remember trying to invent things to do to keep me busy. As my mind wandered, sometimes I was found doing things I really knew I should not do, but which seem so inviting to young minds that are growing up. That sure was stupid, and I bet there aren't many farmers that have ever tried some of the tricks I did. If they did, they may have some repenting to do, just as I did. Maybe those tricks are part of why my driving was a bit crooked at times and temptations strong in later years. Thank goodness for repentance and a Savior who suffered greatly for all our wicked sins.

While farming, I also would try to turn fancy corners when I got to them. I would end up with figure eight patterns going all over the field. It was fun, but it sure wasted time and gas. Maybe if Will and Dad ever read this, they will understand what was going on back then on the tractor. Oh, and we shouldn't forget that I hated to wear a hat, and Dad was always trying to get me to put one on. There wasn't anything worse than trying to choke the top of your head. Maybe it would have been different if we had a big hat for my big thick skull. But no! The closest thing to a good fitting hat was a hat that dad took a hammer to, and made notches in the back of it as he hit it on a sharp corner of iron. It still never really fit. I remember one day being out in the hot sun, and wishing for a hat that really would keep the sun off me, though. I found an old fertilizer bag in the field and fashioned a hat out of it. I tied it on with string, and was more pleased with my invention than any of dad's hats because it was loose and didn’t choke the top of my head, and it really kept the sun off.

The other things that dad always wanted me to wear were work gloves. I hated to have to have my hands in those hot gloves instead of out in the good cool air. I would rather have scratches from the hay we hauled, and blisters on my fingers than wear those gloves. Only one summer did we haul enough hay bales to make me want to wear those dreadful gloves.

After we moved to the farm, we were "blessed" with several years of crop failure. Hail was our worst enemy. For those years we had no crops to speak of. Those storms were really scary for us kids when Mom and Dad weren't home. I remember that we would turn out the gas lights that hung from the center of each of the two rooms in our small house. We were sure they were a fire hazard. We had no electricity. Then we would hide anywhere we could. Later when the power came to the farm, it seemed always to go out in storms so while it was out I remember climbing up on the washing machine in the kitchen. That way I never had to look out the kitchen window because it was at my back and I was far away from the kitchen door. Instead my back would be right against the north window. That was most likely the most dangerous place I could have been in an electrical storm. The scariest part of any of those storms was the fact that we were always left in the dark with those loud crashes of lighting breaking the silence with its crooked angry flashed of blinding light.

We had no electricity on the farm when we first got to the farm. That brought with it some interesting memories. Lighting was the first problem that I remember the solution for. We were close to a natural gas pipe line, but we had no gas in the house. Gas was the answer to lots of our early problems. We pulled the little house closer to the Trans Canada gas line that crossed our field and got gas lights. When we pulled the little house closer to the gas line, we also dug a hole to sit the house over. That became our basement, a fine place to store much of our winter's food supply. We had a trap door in the middle of the kitchen that opened up to a ladder leading down into the cool, damp, dirt basement. We put gas lights up in the two main rooms of our house. They lit the house nicely, but that wasn't all. We learned to live with the smoke that they produced. We kids weren’t allowed to light them if Mom and Dad weren't home, so there were many nights that we kids would sit in the dark waiting for Mom and Dad to return. Mom always said that the fumes from the lights gave her head aches, or perhaps it was the lanterns that we used before we got the gas lights that caused her head aches. I not sure which it was.

Gas was our heating and cooking fuel. We had an old converted coal stove that served as the furnace and the cooking stove. My bed was right behind the stove in the next room, and there was a hole, like a small door way between my bed and the stove. That way my bed stayed lighted, and warm all year round...at least in the winters. It trained me to enjoy toasty warm beds.

A washing machine that doesn't use electrical power was another challenge that faced mom. We had an old top loading Maytag machine that had a gas motor. On wash day, Mom would pull out the washing machine and poke the exhaust pipe out the hole in the kitchen wall and then she would try to start the gas motor. It had a foot pedal starter like a motor cycle kick starter, and she would pump and pump that motor but it seemed that it didn't like her. I seem to remember lots of times that Dad would have to come start it for her. Heating the water on the stove was another of the "fun" parts of wash day that is not seen nowadays. As time went on, we needed more space in our little home. We hitched the old coal shed up to the house since we didn't need it to keep coal in any more, and that became the girls' room. In time we added a small entrance, in which we put the milk separator and shelves for anything that couldn't be hurt by freezing. That entrance was the only room that wasn't kept warm by the cook stove in the winter.

I remember spending more time with my oldest sister than with anyone else in the family. I remember the long walks that we went on. We would walk for miles and see all the wild flowers and plants. I loved to go down to the old willow patch with Joan. With my small hand in her warm hand, I felt we would be happy walking forever. She also was so smart that she could answer all of my little kid questions. I asked her about how plants grew, and what would kill them. I even asked her if you blew your "Snort" on a plant, would it kill it? She always was willing to answer my questions and help me learn.

One time when one of the girls was going to do their hair, they said they were going to put up their hair. My innocent questions was, "Where, on the shelf?" We had a shelf that went all around the top of the bedroom where anything of importance was put. I figured that that must be where that hair was going to be put.

Oh the silly questions of kids. Another day when mom came home from a particularly trying day at school, I was making my usual noises, and Mom finally said, "Tommy, don't do that. My nerves are frayed." I piped up with, "Mommy, what are they 'fraid of?"

Once I did the worst thing that I could have done to Joan. I was playing with her music box, and I didn't know which way to wind it up. I turned it the wrong way, and broke it. She was really upset when she came home from school and found out what I had done. She told Dad about it and wanted him to do something about it. Dad just said that Joan would have to spank me for the punishment if she thought I needed to be spanked. She still remembers that as one of the hardest things she had to do--spank her own little brother.

Christmas time at our house was a special time of the year. We used to make a manger scene each year. All the toy animals and bits of weeds that could be used as scenery were used in that manger scene. Our Christmas festivities were always centered around these scenes. They were the high-light of the Christmas spirit at our home. On Christmas Eve we would act out the bible story, and then we would go Christmas caroling. It seemed to me that the most important part of Christmas was the giving that we did, and not the getting. I guess that our gifts were rather slim. At least we knew that they were not the most important thing that went on at Christmas.

For Christmas in 1964, our ward was busy trying to raise enough money to build a new chapel. Our branch president asked that each family in the branch not spend money for Christmas gifts that year, but that they put the money they would have used into a little brick model of the church that we were hoping to build, and make gifts for each other that year. It ended up that that year was one of the years I remember best. I started the story book that I have added to ever since that year. I gave copies of about a dozen stories to each member of the family for Christmas that year. It was a big project, and Mom helped me with much of the typing. Many of the gifts we gave each other that year were and still are most cherished.

Not too long after we moved out to the farm, our cousins moved out to the farm across from us. When I was young, it was always fun to go visit them. There were times that I went over visiting the Torries that I shouldn't have. I used to sneak out of the house and over to Torries in the ditches. I remember never wanting to come up on the road because I might be seen. I would sneak up on the road at some of the most hidden places, dash across the road, and go down into the other ditch as quickly as possible, trying to avoid being seen. A couple of times I crawled through the culverts and bridges so that I never had to come up in plain sight. When I did that, I was afraid that some sudden flood of water would come out of nowhere and kill me in those bridges and culverts, or else I thought they would cave in for sure. It was fun to go over to Torrie’s, but it wasn't long before someone would come over to find me. Then I'd be in trouble. There were even times I was in trouble before I was found.

One time while I was visiting the Torries, my two youngest cousins and I decided to put used oil all over us so that we would look like Negroes. We took off our clothes and spread that black oil from Uncle Marvin's cat all over our bodies. We thought we looked just like the cute little boy on the "Dirty Dozen," a then popular kid’s show that we could sometimes watch on Torrie’s TV. We were so proud of ourselves. We made a great mess and had great fun until it came time to wash it all off. Aunt Guinie had been babysitting me, and when she saw the mess we were in, she threw her boys in the tub, and sent me home as quickly as she could. She was really mad. Mom was upset too. She made me sit in the kitchen sink, which also doubled as our make shift bathtub, and soak for the longest time. Then Mom decided to scrub all that oil off me. She grabbed the potato scrubbing brush, and scrubbed so hard that I thought there wouldn't be anything left of me. At least I think she got most of the skin off anyway and taught me a very important lesson. Once was definitely enough for that trick.

Saturday night baths were really unique at the Redd's. Since we had no bathtub, we would use the kitchen sink and drain board to do the job. For someone as small as I was, that was really not bad. I fit right in the bottom of the sink. It was as nice as any tub could be, and I was right at the right height for mom to bathe me, but for the rest of the family it was a challenge. The bigger people would sit on the drain board and put their feet in the water in the sink. The sink and drain board were made of cast iron, so it was fine for the second and third bathers, but the first person had a mighty cold chair while he got it warmed up. Every Saturday night we would all get cycled through the kitchen sink. We would even have to save the little bit of water that we used so we didn't have to heat up so much. When the water was all heated on the stove, we didn't want to have to heat up too much, and when we finally got hot and cold running water, we were in the habit of using it sparingly, and continued to save the water for the next bather. We also had to use the water wisely or we would run the well dry, and that was no treat.

When I was about five or six years old, I was having one of those traditional baths in the sink, and I remember for the first time being really embarrassed that mom had seen me without my clothes on. It was after the bath was over, and she had stood me on the drain board to dry me with a towel, and there I was in all my naked beauty and I remember feeling those first twinges of modesty as she wiped me and got me dressed.

It was always important for our family to be on time to any activity. I remember once that we were on the way out the door for school. When we went out, there was a problem with the car, so we took the old truck to school. We got to about a mile from school, and we had a flat tire. Since we were already later than normal because of car trouble, I told Mom that we could make it to school at bell time if we ran. Mom was getting older at that point in life, and a mile sprint was going to be hard on her. She grabbed her purse that had big strap handles, and away we ran. She was getting too tired to go much farther, and we had little time, so I grabbed her purse handles and began to pull. All she had to do was concentrate on lifting her feet, and I kept her moving forward. It was a long hard run for the two of us, but we walked in the door just as the school bell rang. We had done it together. Mom was bushed, but she was on time. The Lord blessed us with the strength to always be on time.

I was blessed with a vivid imagination as a child. I was always thinking up ways to get into trouble or something. Some will say it was just my imagination, but I'm sure there were always snakes under my bed or in the top of the garage where we used to play house. It really made it hard to kneel down by the bed to say prayers, because you wouldn't want to be eaten by those snakes. Anyone knew that they could just reach out and grab you and eat you or just squeeze you to death. I really used to believe all my snake stories too. Because of my belief in the stories I made up or imagined, I often would kneel down on my bed rather than beside it for prayers. The nice part about the snakes was that they weren't too dangerous if the lights were on. However the snakes in the garage managed to keep me and my close friends out of there most of the time. The only way I would go up there was to go up after my brother or sisters were up there with the lights turned on. When we were young we went to the movie “The Swiss Family Robinson.” Maybe that is what started my fear of snakes.

Dad's camera used to hang over my crib all the time that we lived in the old house. (I slept in the crib until I was six years old.) It was fascinating to me. I never knew what it was, but that didn't stop me from playing with it as often as I could get it down without someone seeing me. It had a neat little door on the front of it that opened up and then kind of accordianed out to make a longer camera than could possible fit in the box itself. There were neat little swing out lenses that were fascinating, and lots of bottoms. Oh, what fun it was to play with. I wonder how many pictures I managed to spoil.

When I was six we moved into our new house and I didn't want to leave the old one. I had learned to love that old two roomed house probably more than anyone else in the family. It was the only home I had known. I suppose that I was just not ready to break with the love and security I had felt growing up in that little house.

I had my wicked side at that young age. I remember, and I probably shouldn't, all the stupid things that Richard and I did when we got together. We would do the kinds of things that we would not want anyone else to see, and we would hide under blankets to do them. We got caught one time under a blanket pulling each other’s pants down, and wow, what a spanking we got for that. That put an end to those kinds of things for a while anyway.

My wicked side came out a few times in later years again, but I had learned that I shouldn't do what I had done then, so I made sure I hid well the next time around. Isn't it awful how we can learn to hide our evil ways instead of just plain stopping them? Now I wish that I could go back to those early years and change a lot of what happened then.

I would like to erase some of the people in my life as well as the events. I guess that is what repentance is all about. Tom Eldridge is one of the influences that I wish most that I could erase from my young life.

Some of the memories that come back to me very clearly at times are things that were really awful. I wish now that I had the courage to tell on Tom Eldridge about the things that were being done at the time, but I didn’t dare talk to anyone about those things because of the way we were raised and Tom had told me it was our secret. No one would believe me, and I would be in trouble if they ever found out about those things too. A few things follow.

When we would take the Eldridges to different meetings or places, as we often did, I would often be the one in the back of the station wagon, and Tom would always volunteer to be there with me. We always had a blanket in the back of the car, and Tom made good use of it to “take a nap.” There were many uncomfortable trips. He always told me that what he was doing was our secret.

At other times, he would hold my arms behind my back and “teach me” the only way to get away from someone holding my arms behind my back. Needless to say, I was really happy when Eldridges moved away, and I was even more grateful when I heard that Tom had died. It was so exciting that I actually shouted for joy. It was like it was finally over.

In 2012 as I reflect on my life, I am finding forgiveness in my heart for Tom Eldridge. As I forgive, I think those pains are being erased and that I can live at peace with Tom Eldridge. I have been thinking about the Hymn that talks about “forgive the folly and faults of youth.” I think that I am starting to see that these experiences might be some of those follies and faults of youth. I have realized that as I forgive others, perhaps others can forgive me of the things I might have done to mislead them.

I also think that if I had life to live over again, I would try not to have the influence of the Lamanite Placement Program in my life. John Hitchcock was really not the place or person for a young boy to learn as much about private things as I did. He didn't mind talking about his body in a way that was not becoming a member of the Redd family. He didn't mind showing off his body as well.

I was so happy when we got the rumor that he supposedly had died. I can honestly say that I never involved in anything as wrong as I saw John but I really wasn’t an angel either. John also smoked and drank with the other boys in our class at school and thought I didn’t know anything about it. He was two years older than I was but was in my same grade at school. I was never so happy as when he finally decided to run away. I really couldn't act happy though, because I was supposed to love him. After all, he was supposed to be my brother. The night that he decided to run away, only Ellen, John, and I were home. While he was packing his bags to go, I was in the room helping him, and encouraging him. I was telling him things like I'll be happy to not have a smoking, drinking, dirty minded Indian for a brother. I was not aware of all the things that John was taking at the time. Afterwards, mom was missing some items and pictures of Will were missing as well. John really liked Will. When I was where others could hear me, I had to sound a bit more upset about the whole thing. When he left, I was actually a bit scared, and a whole lot relieved. I think what scared me was the fact that someone might find out all I had done and said, and all I knew that John had done and said--all the things that I knew about. If there is a lesson to be learned from all this, it is that wickedness never does bring happiness to yourself or to anyone that has the burden of knowing about your wickedness.

The rumor that he had died was clear back in the late 1980s and I don’t know where it came from, but I found out today in 2013 that he is still alive. I am currently hoping that he will contact me. I have left word with the Band office in Masset that I would like to contact him, and they returned an email saying that they gave him my message. Now I just have to wonder if he will contact me, and pray that he does. It would be good to talk to him again. I think it would help with the repentance and healing process for both of us. I know it would be good for me, and I am starting to get to the point that I could forgive him for things that bothered me so much back then. I can even feel a stronger love for him than I ever felt at the time he was living with us. I would hope that a contact with me would help him become stronger in the church if he needs that encouragement and I think he would need it.

Oh, there were good things that could be learned from the placement program too, but I don't think that the good that I learned was enough to outweigh the bad experiences I had in those tender maturing years of youth. I really learned that I loved my own family. I found out that they were pretty good people. Before he came to live with us, I remember almost hating my Will and Ellen at time because the always seemed to want to leave me out of all their activities. I was just the baby brother who got in the way. With Joan it was different. I never felt that I was in her way and she always let me be with her in the things she did. The program taught me to have different feelings about Will and Ellen, and solidified the love I had for my family.

When I had to be the youngest in the family, and I had a foster brother that was older than me, I saw some immoral things that I wish I never had seen. All this was going on in my maturing years, and I don't think that my morals were as good as they could otherwise have been because of what I had gone through. Thank goodness for the kind of home we were raised in, or I would not be the person I am today. There was enough of a correct example and encouragement to let me see that I needed to change and live the gospel better if I ever wanted to be like Mom and Dad. I guess all that I can do now is look forward to the resurrection with hope and an eye single to the glory of God. With all kinds of luck, the atonement might just help me out. Maybe I can be forgiven if I keep enduring to the end. I have learned in later years that we must ***believe in***Jesus Christ, and most importantly, we must ***believe*** Jesus Christ. He taught us about repentance and forgiveness. He taught that we can be forgiven and become clean from our sins, and we need to believe that he taught the truth.

Homer Blackhorse was our second foster brother, and he really was not too bad of a kid. He didn't like to work too hard, and it was nice to have him be younger than I was. That way, I was the boss when we were home together. John was not my boss any longer. Homer was rather lazy when it came to school work, and I used to sort of feel sorry for him when we would all do something fun except for him because he wasn't done with his work yet. He would do his chores so slowly that it was almost unfair when I would get finished and leave him out in the barn for hours alone. I know he could do the chores fast though, because when Mom and Dad would go away and leave us home alone, he often would ask me to make his favorite meal if he would do all of the chores. They were always done quickly on those nights and it was his choice to do the chores himself. Basically he was a good kid that you had to sort of feel sorry for. He has died, and secretly in my heart, I was glad that he was gone at that time partly because he knew some things that I had done to him that I had not repented of yet. I knew I that I should not have those feelings about anyone; much less for someone who was supposed to be my very own brother.

Allan Baptiste was the third and last of my foster brothers. He was a pretty good kid, except for the fact that he liked to participate in some of the questionable activities the boys did at school. He was involved in the boyhood pranks of hitting each other in the private parts as part of their play. He was the youngest of all the kids we had, and since he was so young, he never really did too much too wrong, but it wouldn't surprise me if he would turn out like John in many respects because of his involvement in those boyhood rough housing events involving private areas. It was sad to hear of his passing when we were visiting Mom and Dad in the summer of 1981. Cheryl, Dad, Melissa, and I went out to his funeral in Oliver, BC. In some ways, it was nice to see his life end early, because I think he could have gotten into a lot of trouble if he had to live his own kind of life much longer. The two of us used to have a lot of fun together, and I was actually kind of sad when he didn't come back to our house when I was old enough to go away to university. Actually, the Social worker wouldn't allow him to come back unless Mom and Dad took two Indian Placement kids. They weren't ready to have two Indian kids to keep track of, so they said that there would just have to be no placement kids in our home any longer. If Allan could have stayed with us, I think mom and dad would have seen him clear through a university education if he wanted it. He really missed out on the good that mom and dad would have done.

Even though there were people in my life that I do not wish to remember, there were people that I remember with fondness. One of those people came into my life when I was very young. Torries often had hired men come work for them. One summer Bangerters from Salt Lake came to work for them. Dell Bangerter was a really fun man, and what was even better about him was that he had a camper. They lived in the camper behind Torrie’s house that summer. I don't recall how many kids they had, but one boy was a very special friend of mine. Kent was hearing impaired, and somehow we became very close friends. He had to lip read to understand, and he spoke with slurred speech, but boy, I loved him. He once told me that of all the kids in Grassy, he liked me the most because I was the easiest person to talk to. He could read my lips the easiest. They only stayed with the Torries for a short time, and I don't even think they lasted the whole summer, but we were very good friends. I long to hear from him again. Perhaps he is just another Ron Bird in my life and will not remember me when and if I ever get in touch.

I have finally gotten a hold of Kent Bangerter, and he is the same good friend that he used to be. He has had a rough life, and the last I heard was that his wife left him. He was trying so hard to do things right. I hope he hangs on to the church and the Lord and that the Lord hangs on to him.

Billy Divins was another very close friend when we were going to school. I really thought the world of that boy. He was my first crack at missionary work, and came to primary with me a time or two in grade one. He moved away from Grassy when we were young, and I never heard from him for a long time. When I was trying to get our school class twenty year reunion organized in 1992, I contacted him and had a good talk with him. He was in the military and was doing well. It would be fun to see him again.

Tony Kusalik was another boy that I really liked when I was in school. I was too afraid to do much with him, but I thought he was a great kid. He was younger than I was by one year, and was one of the rich south farmers. I wanted to be brave enough to make friends with him, but I was always too scared. There were many times that I would drive out south by myself and drive by their farm wishing that I could see him. I never did. Once when I got back from BYU, I tried to call him on the phone. He was living in Lethbridge and going to the University there, and he told me he didn't want to see me then. I don't know if he was involved in stuff he didn't want me to see him involved in or not. That was the feeling I got. Maybe he thought I would try to be a good Mormon and convert him. Sometime I might try to see him again.

Years later, I phoned him again, and he told me he didn’t want to remember any of the things about Grassy Lake, and he asked me never to contact him again. It was all too horrible for him to think about. That really hurt, but I have to respect his wishes. I still hope for a time that I can talk to him again.

I had a glass owl salt shaker that one of my great aunts gave me and that was my pride and joy. I used to treat it as part of the family. It had to go to bed, eat, and do everything I did. In fact, until it got broken, I think that we did everything together. I think I was busy having a baby in Torrie’s TV room when it got broken. Playing Mom and Dad was one of my cousins’ favorite games. It fit in so nicely to the being the protected baby that I longed to be, that I liked to play those games. I was the oldest of the three of us little boys, but I always wanted to be the baby that was cared for by others.

When Mom taught school and Dad was working, I was too young to go to school yet, so I used to stay at my aunt’s house during the day. There was a TV there, and that is something that we never had while we were growing up. (Mom and Dad got their first TV for Christmas 1977--two and a half years after my mission.) The one show that held my interest was the "Little Rascals". I think that I liked that show because it gave me good ideas of ways to get into trouble. One of their tricks was to get rid of the kids they didn't want to play with. Well, that's one lesson I learned well.

To Richard and me, Eugene was always getting in the way. One day Richard and I decided to put Eugene in a big old water tank and put the lid on it so we didn't have to play with him. Aunt Guinie was always telling us not to let him get hurt or into trouble. Well, the tank worked rather well to keep Eugene out of mischief. Some of the worst things that we did to keep him from wanting to play with us were to go to the bathroom on him. He always tagged along anyway and he loved us in spite of our meanness.

Another time, all three of us little boys decided to paint the back of Torrie’s house with solid human waste. We went to the bathroom in the sandbox out behind the garage, and then we used some sticks to smear it on the back of the house. It seemed such a nice pretty brown color. Uncle Marvin didn't seem to think that it was pretty though. Well, back out of the ditch...

One other trick that the three of us liked to do was to make bridges when we went to the bathroom. If we needed to go, we would have the person that was going stand up on a barrel, and that way the other two could try to see how many times we could run under the bridge. That is enough of that for sure now.

When I was younger, I often had bad ear aches. I remember crying in the night, and Mom and Dad trying to get the hurting to stop. I had some special ear drops that I used whenever I had an ear ache, but even with the ear drops, and keeping my ears warm and all, I still had broken ear drums from the pressure that would build up in there. When they would break, there was a pussy stuff that would run out of them and they really hurt. I'd have to wear cotton in them lots of the time. When I had a hearing test for teaching school while I was at BYU, I had to be retested several times before they finally decided that I had good enough hearing to be a classroom teacher. It all could have been the ear aches and a stick that Ross Weatherhead threw at me. Once on the playground at school Ross was busy throwing a spear. It was a pointed stick, all rough and slivery. He threw it my direction, and it went straight into my ear. My ear bled and it was really sore for a time. I think I lost some hearing from that experience. It did make that ear tough enough to always have that ear face the wind when we had to walk into the wind. The wind wouldn’t hurt that ear as much as the other.

I don't know how old I was when our family got a movie camera, but I do know that I really liked to be in the movies. I would show off for anyone that would watch me, and it seemed that mom would watch me with the camera if I showed off well. I wish now that I wasn't such a goof, at least not on film. I really get embarrassed if films of me are shown to just anyone. The first night we got the camera, we all went out to the barn to do the chores. We took pictures of the whole chore process, and we really had fun watching the films front wards and backwards when they came back. Maybe that camera is the reason that I really wanted to be able to record my own family history on video tapes.

To go exploring was always fun, but it was even more fun in the Taber Stake Center, now the Taber Third Ward building. When we would go to Stake Conference, there were always two sessions of conference on Saturday and two on Sunday, and then some other evening meeting. There was plenty of time to explore that building, and plenty of places to explore. To us little kids the down stairs part of that building was really a big maze. There were scary looking things in the furnace room and plenty of places to get caught where we shouldn't be. I guess that is what made the exploring so fun. When we weren't exploring, we were busy shocking people on the rugs. I used to like to sit right up at the front of the chapel part during meetings and lay my head back on the top of the bench and look straight up at the speakers as they spoke.

For one of my primary classes, I was assigned to ask the stake president for picture of him. It was really a scary thing to have to talk to President Evanson and ask for something, but I managed, and he sent me a picture. His brother was our president too for a little while, and then he died. That was a real shock for a kid like me. Both presidents died unexpectedly at fairly young ages.

There were some neat big boys in the Taber stake that I always wanted to grow up to be like. One of them was Tommy Evanson. I thought that he was so handsome and neat. He was smart and polite. He was everything that I ever wanted to become. He was a worthy, faithful priesthood holder and was always a good example. I wonder where he is, and if I would be as impressed with him as I used to be. I used to think that he was the only neat and special Tommy that I ever knew. Most of the Toms were not too cool. Tom Grusendorf was a strange guy. Tom Eldridge was a dirty minded monster. Tommy Babick smoked and drank. Tom Walker was a weird old man. Tommy Evanson was so different and so great. I just loved him.

When I was just entering or leaving grade one, I'm not sure which; we went to Edmonton to live for a summer while mom and dad took summer school classes. That was a fun summer. There were some scary things too. I had to go to primary alone one time. I had to take the bus, and I was scared that I wouldn't know where to get off. Just to be there alone was scary enough. I think that Malcolm Earl probably went with me on the bus to Primary, but it still was plenty scary. We lived with the Earls, and what their house didn't go through that summer will never be known. We used to set up rivers in the laundry room and then we would have Indian and cowboy fights down there. We carved little canoes to go on the rivers, and basically had a really neat display down there. Our bathroom was down at the bottom of the stairs, right beside our living room and kitchen. I decided one day that I wanted to have a bath and not a shower. So I plugged the drain of the shower and tucked the shower curtain in so that it wouldn't let any water out onto the floor, and I filled it up to a nice tub level. There was one problem, and that was that the wall leaked and I got the bedroom floor wet. I don't think that anyone else ever knew what caused the problem, because they tried to find the leak for a while, but I didn't dare tell them that it might have been my bath. We used to have a siphon going that we made out of a skipping rope, and it was all over Earl's front step railing. It was really interesting to me to see that water could run up hill. There was a super market not too far from our place, and we would often go there. There were go cart races in the parking lot one day, and that was neat to watch.

Aunt Barbara was up there, too, that summer and we would sometimes get together and go berry picking or something with the cousins. It was fun to be able to go to a cousin's house, but it was scary and uncomfortable. I never was very good at enjoying visiting relatives.

We would go for long walks in Edmonton. We liked to walk across the high level bridge, and we would even walk down to White Mud Park. We went to the Children's Zoo, and we were there for Klondike Day's. We saw a jet plane show and boy was that exciting! We each got a little airplane, and I flew mine all over the world. We used to use two travel pillows for our babies when we would play in the house. We didn't have any toys with us, but that didn't stop us from having a really fun summer that year.

Most of our birthdays were pretty special times. One that I remember was neat because I was sort of upset about only getting a coat for a gift. I couldn't show anyone how bad I felt, but when I put it on, there was a transport dinky toy in the pocket. That was one of my favorite toys for a long time. I lost it in the heating pipe in the hall of the church when it was being built. On another birthday, I found out what a spanking was all about. Tommy Eldridge gave me my birthday spanks when I turned 10, and I don't think I can remember a spanking that hurt so much as that. I was awfully glad he wasn't mad at me, or it might have been even worse. When I was 20, though, my birthday was totally forgotten. I was in France with a companion that forgot all about it. There were no gifts, and no letters, and no special meals or anything. I remember eating a small marble cake that I had bought for myself, and not daring to mention that it was actually a birthday cake. I had told my companion the day before that it was going to be my birthday, and I didn't want to sound like I was asking to be noticed, so I didn't say a thing about it for the whole day.

That truck that I got for my 10th birthday had a sad ending. I was playing with it and some other favorite dinky toys at the church while it was being built, and I put them down by a heating vent. There was a yellow station wagon that pulled a travel trailer and my blue semi that hauled cars. When I went to get them out, they fell down into a pipe I couldn't get at. That was a tragedy, but a 10 year old boy shouldn't be crying about any lost toys, so I never told anyone about them for many years. About twenty years later, I finally succeeded in getting out my semi-truck and I have a constant hope that I can get the car and trailer out in time.

Time has gone by since I wrote that. I am finally to the point in 2001 that I can forget about the toys and not feel like I really want to get them. I just don't care about them anymore. Having the semi has filled the void I had for so many years.

On another birthday, the Eldridges came over for dinner. While I was cutting the cake, I licked the icing off the knife. Boy, did Sister Eldridge get upset about that! She got mad at me and told me that all these people did not want to catch any germs from me. I figured that I should be able do my cake anyway I wanted. It was out of the goodness of my heart that I would give her any of it. On that same birthday, Tom Eldridge gave me my birthday spanks that I already mentioned. That was a shock to the system, because I think that was the hardest spanking I ever got. Why would he want to hurt me so much on my birthday? I guess that the Eldridges were a good way to spoiling the fun of birthdays.

Another time when I was really upset about something that happened at home, and we had gone over to Eldridge’s to drop something off, Sister Eldridge asked me what was wrong with me, and I told her that it was like that all the time at our house. I remember feeling bad about that for a long time, and I still do, because the times that we felt bad at our house were few and far between. I think that it hurt Mom most of all to hear me say that, at that time to Sister Eldridge.

The 24th of July was always a fun celebration for our family. Normally there were ward outings that often took us down to the river to camp for the night. We had pioneer dances in the open air. We would all dress up in our pioneer clothes and try to act the part. Meetings around the campfire also helped to make those excursions exciting. We often had a parade with the primary children. I remember making hand carts with can lids for wheels. I also remember my hand carts falling apart before it made it to the end of the parade. That about broke my heart when it happened, but in reality, I think now that it made the parades more realistic. What pioneer made it across the plains without at least one break down? We had sunrise services and testimony meetings. One time Grusendorff's truck got stuck in the middle of the river ford, and they had to spend the night out there. One year we took the old wooden wagon down there, and that felt all the more like being a pioneer. We had to drive the wagon into the middle of the pond to let the wheels soak up water to tighten the spokes before we took it that far. It was so fun to sleep under the wagon, and get up to the smells and sounds of Mom and Sister Woodruff making pancakes on a campfire. And what fun we had getting together with all the kids in the ward at those outings!

Part of a summer's fun was homemade root beer. When you talk about homemade root beer you should never forget to talk about it getting too old. And when you talk about it getting too old, be sure to talk about Druke. One summer Ellen and I were supposed to clean out the furnace room. We would let the bottles of Root Beer sit for a week to carbonate back in behind the furnace. When we cleaned out the furnace room that year, we found a bottle of root beer that was really old. It definitely had lost its root and kept the beer. We decided to see what would happen if we fed it to Druke. After all, you weren't supposed to waste anything, and feeding it to Druke would put it to good use. He tasted it, and then just started lapping it up as fast as he could. It wasn't long before he started staggering around and got the hiccups. We just kept feeding him more and more of it, and he got worse and worse. Pretty soon he could hardly even stand up. We just roared with laughter. He finally flopped down on the ground and laid his head out on his paws, and just plain looked sick. The poor dog! I suppose he had a tremendous hangover from that trick we pulled on him.

When we used to bring in the food from the garden, we used to love to munch on a carrot or two. It was funny to watch Druke. We would give him carrots, and he would eat them right along with us. It wasn't the only thing that I ever shared with that dog either. As far as I was concerned, he could eat right with me if he wanted. A lot of Mom's good bread got thrown out to Druke. Mom began to think that she made bread just for the dog, and would get upset that so much of what she made went out to him.

Each year our family would have a special time to go out and dedicate the crops to the Lord. That was always a neat experience to go out in the field on the top of one of the tallest hills where we could see almost all the land we owned, and we would kneel down and have a dedicatory prayer. It was at times like that that we really felt close to each other as a family. We also found out that Dad's knee wouldn't bend very far, because he would have trouble kneeling down without something to prop himself up. It was an inspiration to see him do it even if it was hard.

If a family was ever a close family, I think that ours was. There were always things that we did together, and Mom and Dad felt like the whole family had to do most things together, or no one would do them. I guess that is the reason all of us kids were always with Mom and Dad and they never took a vacation without us. However, I really don't think that it was the Family Home Evening program that drew us close together emotionally. When Mom and Dad would decide that it was time for Family Home Evening, we would all moan and groan. The manual used to have a lot of stuff in it that was to be read, and it really got dry to us kids. It seems that we would all race for the big reclining chair for Home Evening because we could sleep better in that chair than any of the others. We had a big red chair that was almost comfortable enough to sleep in if you didn't get the green one, but we really never worked too hard at staying awake. I really feel sorry for Mom and Dad now when I think of how I acted with them--especially for Family Hour, as it was then called.

Mom used to make really good donuts, and she would freeze them in big bags in the deep freeze. Those bags were really the test of obedience. I would always have to sneak a few donuts, and to make it so that mom would never know that I had taken one, I would have to take one out of each of the bags so that one wouldn't look any emptier than the next one. Many were the donut or cookie that was taken that way. In later years, I asked mom about her side of the donut story. She said that she knew they were being eaten, and that's what she made them for. If only I had known earlier, I wouldn't have had to steal so many and I could have eaten them a lot faster!

Mom was also well known for her bread and buns. It was a wonderful day when mom would go to work baking. Generally she at least baked bread on Saturdays. The house was filled with the delicious smell of fresh bread, and it wasn’t long before we would slice into a fresh hot loaf, butter it or put honey on it, and devour that delicious bread. I can still feel and taste the crunch of the hot bread. The first loaf was often gone as soon as it was out of the oven. Mom would wait for special occasions to make her buns. They were just as delicious and much easier to eat. When the first pan of buns was out of the oven we would butter them and eat our fill. Because mom’s buns were so delicious, it was common to have her requested to bring the buns for church, school or community dinners. She would always agree to make the buns for the events, but she insisted that she bring the butter if she was to bring the buns. Her secret to additional flavor in her buns was a bit more salt in the butter. She would often buy butter for those donated meals, but she would take it home and mix in more salt to bring out the flavor. If our own homemade butter was from the freshest cream, she would use it as well. Mom always put a bit more salt in our butter than was commonly used in butter. To this day, I often add a bit of salt to my butter on my bread or buns. It truly ads that touch that mom knew would make her buns a winner. Joan was the one who captured the art of making buns as good as mom’s buns were. When we lived close to her, it was a treat when she would bring out the first pan of buns from her oven. We would eat them the same way we did mom’s. In fact Joan would often make me a pan of buns for my birthday when we were in Wainwright together, and I loved it.

Our garage used to be a great place to play. We would play house in the top of the garage (but only when the lights were on so there were no snakes), and in the downstairs, we would have about as much fun. When the tractor, the 70, was new, we would ride it like a horse. It could be ridden on the gas tank or on the tires themselves. It was so much more fun than the old D. On the D, all you could do was ride along slowly and roughly. When the 70 was in the garage, we would play on it a lot. It made a better horse for me than any real horse could have. It couldn’t buck you off. Actually I didn’t like how unpredictable our horses were. I was buck off Star one time and that was enough for me. We also would sweep roads in the dirt in the garage, and ride our bikes on those roads or play with our toy cars on the roads. Other times we would spend hours playing Red Light, Green Light, or Mother May I. I guess, as I remember how small our house was, it was a blessing to mom to be able to have us play in the garage, and have us out of the house. We would often play No Bears Are Out Tonight from the back of the pickup truck. Shadow tag was also a favorite of our evening games. Most of these games were played with company kids, while the grown-ups would visit in the house. After we got electricity on the farm, one of the first things we bought was a deep freeze. Until we moved into our new house, the deep freeze was in the garage, and was a good place to have a snack—a donut or cook—while we were playing.

Sundays at home were special times. They were quiet and peaceful, and we didn't do too much that was very wild. Sometimes mom would make great big meals for the High Council visitors, but the meals I remember most are the simple ones. Often we would have peaches and salmon sandwiches for dinner. It was easy and not much of a mess to clean up. That became known as our Sunday dinner. We then would often take a nap, or snuggle up with the scriptures or a good book, with quiet church music on the record player in the background, and read. Dad was often away on High Council visits in later years, and that just meant that the meals and the day were all the more simple since we weren't all together. When I was young, Dad was the Branch President, so he was away a lot for meetings then, too. We often would have our Family Hour or Home Evening on Sunday night as well. I wasn’t too cooperative with that program, and would often sleep through as much of it as possible. I don’t know how mom and dad put up with that. I would come unglued with my kids if they did that to me. But I guess I never did have the patience that my parents had. In fact mom told me once that I didn’t have enough patience to have children. My poor kids!

As a kid, I was always having music going through my head. I was either singing a song or leading the music for some great choir or orchestra. It was fun to me when I was young to just sing anything. My songs all seemed to make sense to me. When I listened to Melissa singing some of her non-sense songs as a toddler, I began to see what it must have been like to listen to me singing. It is funny that it all made sense to me then. Since music was always going through my mind, I was always leading the singing wherever I went. I would be riding down the street on my bike in France on my mission and I would be leading the tabernacle choir. It about drove my companions crazy. Finally Elder Profandis got mad at me for it, and I sort of tried to stop that habit. He held me by the shirt up against the wall and told me not to do that again. We then went and had Ice cream, which was a real treat, as we talked about the problem I was causing for him. I now wish that I still had that gift of music in my mind at all times. It used to be mostly the Mormon Tabernacle Choir that I had playing in my head. What a good way to avoid trouble and bad thoughts! I know there are times that I am whistling or singing, and I don't even realize it, but it is not near as often as it used to be. Perhaps it is just the physical leading of the music that I don't do anymore because there is generally music in my head somewhere.

If I wasn't singing at the table, I might have been spraying at the table. If there was anything funny going on while we were eating, it wasn't safe to be right across the table from me. I would have uncontrollable outbursts of laughter, and whatever else might be in my mouth. One time Richard, Eugene and I made eggs and eggnog. We really had a good time making the food. We used all kinds of food coloring, and had the weirdest looking stuff. Then it came time to eat. We had to have a blessing, and we couldn't get through it without starting to laugh. We finally started eating without much of a blessing, and ended up spraying eggnog all over the kitchen. We wiped it up with dish towels, and then hid the soggy dish towels down in the basement on the top shelf. What a mess that was. Druke wouldn't even eat the eggs that were left over, they looked so bad. Years later the dish towels were found, a black moldy mess, as mom moved out of the house. She couldn’t figure out what they were, but I knew and I never dared to tell her!

Soon after we got the Frontenac, we were in Salt Lake for Conference, and we decided to go out to Seattle to go to the world’s fair. We really made a quick trip of it, but we enjoyed it. We spent most of one night out there, and saw a pen of the future, which has never come out on the market yet, and a man make a drink with a blender. He even put egg shells in it, and it tasted good. Soon after that Grandma Redd got her blender, and it was really interesting to see some of the awful mixes she would eat, or drink as the case may be. She would bring it with her every time she came to stay for a visit.

During the spring and summer we used to like to sleep outside. One time Richard and Eugene and I were sleeping out by the old pigpen, and in the middle of the night the horses came running up to us. We couldn't see what had come because it was so dark. That about scared us to death, and I don't think that we ever really wanted to sleep out there by the pond and pigpen again.

When I was about five, I was bucked off of Star, Torries Shetland Pony when we were at a round up. Dad got kicked by one of our horses once, and Mom got kicked or bucked off once. That was all it took for me never to want to ride horses again in my life. To this day, I really don't enjoy horses near as much as the rest of the family.

Mom used to have some pretty interesting tricks. When we were traveling with mom, and it was late at night, Mom used to entertain us kids by pretending to take her eyes out and put them in her mouth to wash them. Then she would pop them back in. She used to do that when we were waiting in the car for someone or something, and most of the time she did it when it was getting dark. It really was neat to watch, even though it was kind of scary. Probably she did it because it was late at night, and the best way to stay awake while she drove was to dream up some way to entertain the kids and have them laughing and watching her show so she was able to think about more than driving to stay awake. Does that make sense?

Mom was an interesting cook. One of the most memorable dishes she cooked was a bone. She had put a soup bone on the stove to simmer in the morning before school, and then at noon she ran home to get a bit more cooking done on it. But she forgot to turn off the stove when she went back to school. The bone boiled dry, and burned. It got so hot that the bone started to melt. It was actually melted right into the bottom of the aluminum pan, and the house was loaded with the smell of burnt bone. We tried everything to get rid of that awful smell. We used sprays, and we washed our clothes, but we still smelled like burnt bone for quite a long time after that. I haven't smelled many smells that I think are worse.

Actually she was a very interesting cook and could make a meal at any time with any ingredients and have it be delicious. Most of the recipes she used were in her head, a little of this, some of that, and so on. She always said that the basic recipes for cakes or cookies were the same. You just added different things to make them taste the way you wanted. As long as you followed the simple rules she knew for shortening to flour to moisture, you were fine. The item would turn out just fine, and it always did for her. We loved her cookies and cakes, along with the donuts and the bread.

Once I was supposed to take the milk down to the pigs, and Ellen decided to go along with me to help me. That was unusual but I wasn't going to complain. She really seemed to be in a hurry, and I didn't know why until later. We had talked about what a milk bath would feel like earlier that day, but I was too trusting to think that something strange might happen – and it did. When we got down to the barn, Ellen volunteered to take the bucket of milk to pour it over the fence into the pig trough. I thought that if she wanted to do the work, why should I complain? As she went to lift it up over the fence to pour it in the trough, she turned and dumped the whole bucket of milk right on me. I was so surprised I was speechless. Then I got mad and was ready to chew into her, but she was laughing so hard that soon we were both rolling with laughter. What an awful feeling a beauty milk bath must be. Take it from me. I've had one!

Will and I used to fight a fair amount whenever we had to do anything together, but the thing that really takes the cake was the chalk line down the middle of the bed. I guess it was me that decided that it might make Will stay on his own side of the bed, and it did once in a while, but not often. He said that he was bigger, and therefore needed more room. If it wasn't fighting about what side of the bed he was on, it was fighting about him taking up too much room at the table. He always said that he was bigger so he needed more room there too, but I stood up for my rights, until mom moved me over beside her, and Ellen beside Will. Somehow Will and Ellen got along a lot better. I think that Ellen was just too shy to fight for her rights.

While we were building our house, we had the Torries come over for a party or something. During the evening, Eugene was pulling the wagon around in the new house and he fell down the basement hole that had been cemented and was in the middle of the cement slab floor that was the perfect play area when there were no walls to break it up. Walls would have been a protection for the hole as well. The wagon came down right on top of him. Everyone was so concerned and worried about Eugene. I was afraid that he might die. It was good to have him start to act normal again after a short while. How blessed we were. It really could have been much worse. The Lord really does watch out for those who try to live the gospel.

I guess that wasn't the most fun thing we did at parties. I remember the Torries coming over, and everyone playing passing the ring on the string and other parlor games. Another time we played "It" on LeRon, and he was asking questions for hours. We had lots of fun when people came over especially around Christmas and Halloween time. Sometimes we would have spook allies set up for the trick or treaters, and we sure did scare them. Once I decided that I wanted to go Halloweening instead of just staying home and scaring people, and Mom took me around the loop. The loop was the road the school bus went on to pick up all the school kids. Mom told me to get out at the first house, and when we were actually there, I didn't want to go halloweening at all. She made me go up to that door, and that was enough for me. I never went halloweening again. I had gone one other time before that with Torries in town, and that was sort of fun but much easier to do with a when you were in the middle of a crowd of kids.

One of us kid's favorite places to play was a big, old, unused thrashing machine down by the back fence. We used it for a big Pirate ship and would pretend to have wars on it. There were some big old pipes that would swing out from the thrasher, and they were our cannons. Those pipes were what the straw was blown out of when the thresher was running. A weighed balance beam was the trigger for our cannons. We had some great wars and years afloat on that old ship. Down inside, there were oars that needed to be paddled and fans to be run. The rocker arms that shock the sieves were what we pulled on as we sat of the sieves. The sieves moved back and for in response to our “rowing” and added to the fun of the ride. Many hours were spent in there. I wish every kid could grow up with an old thrashing machine close around their backyard.

One more exciting thing about living out on the farm was the trips out to the outhouse. When we had to go out there, and the kitchen was being used by Mom and Dad, we felt that we shouldn't interrupt them so we would crawl out the bedroom window. Night trips were a real challenge for young adventurers. At night when we didn't want to wake Mom and Dad, the window was the normal escape route too. We never escaped for anything but to go to the bathroom though. We all had an intense fear of the dark. We would run out as fast as our little legs could carry us, and we always had to go out in at least twos. Then we would run back as fast as lightning, and slink into the kitchen as nonchalant as possible, as though we hadn't been running at all. It never dawned on us that the thunder of those scared little feet running by Mom's and Dad's window probably woke them up anyway.

I don't remember having a fixed bedtime at our house, but it was almost a standing rule that we had to be in bed – asleep – before Mom and Dad went to bed. We were allowed to go to bed anytime as long as we got up when our parents called us the next morning. This rule, to be in bed before Mom and Dad, was brought on by fear. When Mom and Dad slept, the snoring was loud enough to shake the house, it seemed. It scared us half to death. If we weren't in bed asleep before Mom and Dad were asleep, we sure suffered from fright and it was entirely our own fault. My room was right beside Mom and Dad’s room so I could hear them best of all if I didn’t follow that simple rule.

When we first moved to Grassy Lake, Dad used to drive a cat and scraper to level land for Uncle Marvin. Since mom taught school, I was usually with dad and it was neat to sit on the cat with him for days on end. Dad would turn one of the arm rests around backwards in such a way that it created a safe and secure place for kids to sit. We all loved to go with Dad, and when we weren't on the real cat, our tricycles were used for cats and scrapers so we could be like dad. We always pretended we were digging holes and leveling land just like Dad. It was on the cat with Dad that I learned to love the smell of diesel smoke. I am getting over the idea of that being a good smell. Maybe Cheryl helped to change my love for that smell because it is a smell that really hits her wrong. She chokes and coughs when she smells it. I have had to try to avoid being behind transport trucks on the highway because of her reactions. I really don't enjoy the smell anymore at all.

I was a good lover at an early age. My heart first went out to Jane Woodruff, who lived on the next farm west, about a mile away. On Saturdays, we would walk over to their place and spend some time playing at their house, and then they would walk over to our place with us and play at our house for a while. On the walks back and forth, Jane and I would run ahead of everyone else and kiss each other. However, it wasn't long before I had a new love. When I was six, and just starting school, Betty Corns became my new sweetheart. We rode together on the bus to and from school and really enjoyed each other’s company. I remember having her lay her head on my lap, and I would sing "Oh My Darling" to her. It was the perfect song to express my feelings at that time.

Across one corner of the old house was a shelf that was always a spot of beauty in our primitive home, on our simple farm. On it was the anniversary clock that my mom got for her wedding present. Uncle Roy gave it to Mom. He had bought it in Germany when he was there on his mission. It had a thing that swung around back and forth on the bottom. The clock stood on golden posts and was covered with a tall glass dome. It was a beautiful work of art, and it held my interest for hours on end. We used to have to wind it up only once each year. That was a big event in my memory.

Winter weather in Canada used to cause problems with the plumbing. Our kitchen sink had a pipe that went through a hole in the wall and drained out behind the house. When it snowed too much during the nights, the snow would block the pipe and it would fill with water and freeze. It used to take about an hour of running hot water over the pipe to get it thawed out and running again. We were lucky that that was our only indoor plumbing. We couldn't have many other problems with frozen pipes. There were years when the weather was really cold for extended times and the water line from the well to the house that was buried six feet deep in the ground would freeze. When that happened we had no running water in the house and we would have to be really careful with how much water was used. The first time that Cheryl visited our home in Canada was a spring after a long cold winter, and we had no running water. That was a bit of a shock for her I am sure. When those underground water lines froze, all we could do was wait for the ground to thaw and the water to start running again.

I did finally grow up enough to make it to school. I went to the one and only school in the area, Chamberlain School. Elementary school was great. I finally got to go with my mother instead of staying at home or at my aunt's place, or at Sister Woodruff's place when mom went to school. Mom was my grade one teacher. We used to hide on her. Often we were hidden in the closet, and we would scare her as she opened her closet door to hang up her coat. When the school nurse came, it was neat to be able to have Mom with me to comfort me when I had to get shots. It was pretty neat to have a built in mother at school. We did have to act like she was the teacher though and call her Mrs. Redd. She also has to be careful not to treat her own children as special. We actually had to be treated a little more firmly at school so that others would not think mom was playing favorites with her children. But she would stick up for us if she felt we were being picked on by other teachers unfairly, and that was nice. There were several times that I was grateful that mom was there to defend me.

Mom also had a green nylon dress that was great for static electricity. It was especially bad when she wore her fake fur coat. We used to like to shock her when she would take off her coat. It must have been awful to have 24 or so grade one students trying to shock you whenever you walked into your classroom. I don't know how she could put up with us. It was while I was in grade one that I learned how to skip. I remember skipping all around in the old house. That must have been hard on everyone because the house was so small and the space so limited. I also tried hard to believe in Santa that year. I think I never really believed in him, but I tried that year. I think I knew it was Mom and Dad all the time. One thing that I remember about grade one was the book reading chart that mom kept on the closet door. We also wrote stories and made our own books. That was really fun. I still have the books that I wrote that year. Mom would type the stories we wrote and then we would draw the pictures to go with the stories. That was teaching tool that I used the same way for many years. To write the stories, we had a spelling dictionary box. We would ask how to spell words, and mom would write the words on cards that were added to our spelling boxes. We had to find the right place in the alphabet for words and look for the words first before we asked for the spelling of new words. I needed to ask a lot because my spelling was, and still is atrocious.

Clint Young and I were good friends in grade one. We used to sit across the aisle from each other and try to pull each other's desks over by holding hands across the aisle. I think I would really be mad if I was my own grade one teacher. I went to Clint's Dad's Funeral and saw the family again in the summer of 1994. They surprised me with how well they remembered me. They called me Tommy, and the older boys remembered the times that they would take care of me, and said I was one of their favorite kids to take care of. Clint hugged me and said it was good to see me. Sister Young said she was so glad that I could come. She said it meant a lot to her to have me there. It really was a good experience.

Pat Galvin's mom played the piano for me when I sang in the music festival that year. It was fun to go across town and into the house that was hitched on to the back of the store to practice with her. She really was a help to the community.

We had a really neat cloak room in the back of our grade one room. It was a really large closet without a door with coat hooks and a shelf for lunch kits all the way around the room. It was big enough to have a large table in the middle of the room which was sometimes used as a special study area or work area. Sometimes when our work was done we could play back there. I always played that I was a monkey. That way I could hang on the coat hooks and swing on the bars. There may have been some truth in that game. I really think that I am a monkey at times.

The Scholastic book club was one of the things that I liked most about elementary school. It was neat to start a library of my own with books that I liked and bought myself from the book club. I tried to have my library be built correctly. I would put pockets and checkout cards in the backs of all my books. I tried to keep them in an organized order and I love to have other kids come to our house so that when we played school we could check books out of my library just like we did at school.

When I was in grade four Mom and Dad gave us triple combinations for Christmas. I decided to read the Book of Mormon through that year, and I decided to do it in front of Mom. She made sure I kept that decision, and had me read it all out loud to her every morning. I'm glad that I did it, and I know that I wouldn't have finished it without mom's help. I sure wasn't so happy for her help at times when it took me close to an hour to read the amount she decided would help me make it through the book of Mormon by the time I said I would finish. I am sure it was a way to help my reading too.

When I was six years old, we started building our new house. It was neat to be able to help on it, and not just be in the way. There were plenty of times that a little boy my age was in the way more than being a helper but dad never let on that I was a problem. We moved into it at Christmas my first year at school. The house wasn’t finished yet, but it was roomy and warm, without the worry of keeping the old house warm with the cook stove. I cried and cried when we had to leave our old house because I thought there couldn't be a better house than that was to me with the warmth and love of the family found there. That love and warmth went with us into the new house and I soon learned to love my own room. My room was the room that would become our future bathroom when we finally got indoor plumbing. My room was small and cozy but it had lots of room compared to the space I could occupy in the old house. That space just added to the space I could put things. I often had too much stuff in my room and I wasn’t too neat about putting things away. That led to mom telling me that she wouldn’t force me to clean my room. All I had to do was be sure the curtain was closed on the doorway so she didn’t have to see the mess. I finally learned that it was much better to clean the room and have space to move as well as a way to find what I wanted to find when I needed something.

At school, the times tables and me soon became well acquainted. I was one of those people that enjoys having fun, and my teachers were the kind that like punishing pranks with the writing out of the times tables. Once I had them learned, they became my friends, and Math was soon to be my favorite subject. All through school I did better in Math than anything else. One day I was to stay in and write times tables, but I forgot. When I remembered I came running in to the classroom expecting the worst. Mrs. Ecchorn had forgotten too, and since she had forgotten too, she said I could go out and keep playing. She said it was because I was honest enough to come back in when I remembered.

One of the ways we learned the basic math facts was to have prerecorded math tests. The man on the record would give us the questions with timed intervals of 2, 4, or 6 seconds for us to answer. Then he would tell us to exchange our papers with a classmate for correction and he would give us the answers. One day while we were doing a math time’s tables recorded test, Helen Harder's pencil broke. She started crying, and the teacher got really mad at her. I felt sorry for her. It is funny how different people feel differently about the same event. I liked the tests so much that when I was teaching, I recreated the math tests in the same way and would have the timed tests for my students to do. We had a chart on the wall to record our progress. What a great day it was when all of the students had mastered the tests!

A part of school life in Canada was the singing of the National Anthem, "O Canada", at the beginning of each school day. We would then recite the Lord's Prayer. When the principal, Mr. Dobasov, was in our room for the beginning of the day, he would explain the importance of loyalty to one's country. He would show us how to stand for the Anthem and make us do it with pride. We really were afraid of him but I think we learned to love our country because of the way he taught us to feel the special pride that we should have to belong to a free nation. I don’t think we do enough of that teaching in our schools today.

Being sick when I was young was not any fun. It never is fun to be sick, but it was even worse if there was no one to stay home with. I had to stay home one day from school because I was sick. Mom and dad both taught school and the other kids were all at school too. One when I was sick at home alone, it was sort of fun though. That day I saw a house come driving down the road. I watched that house be moved on to its foundation just across the road from our house. That was one sick day that went by fairly quickly. Most sick days were rather slow and drawn out. I would listen to records and make things with paper. Once I even had to stay home from a church Christmas concert. I didn't like that at all. Mom told me that if I stayed in bed that day, I would probably be well enough to go to the program, I felt good enough to get up and run around the house a fair amount. When the program time came, Mom said I had to stay home because I hadn’t done my part of the agreement. Boy was I broken hearted. Sometimes when I was sick I would sneak over to Torrie’s just so I didn't have to be home alone. Richard and I were sick together once, and that was really fun. Aunt Guinie put us in her bed, and I'm sure she must have dug toys out of it for years to come.

The worst time to stay home alone was when everyone was gone to MIA at 7:00 to 9:00 on Tuesdays, and I wasn't old enough to go. We had no phone, and therefore we had no connection with the outside world. After dark, the house was even more scary than normal. I would run around the house as fast as my scared little legs could go after everyone left for Mutual and turn on all the lights in the house. Then I would check the natural gas things, the stove, the furnace and the water heater, to be sure their pilot lights were on, and then I would look for robbers in every corner of every room, including the basement. With all that done, I would crawl into Mom's bed and stay there until everyone came home. I would normally be asleep when they all came home, so I would wake up in my own bed the next morning. For a while, I decided that I would type a newspaper and sell it to make a little money and to keep me busy on those lonely nights. I could earn 25 cents if there were no spelling mistakes, because mom would buy it for 25 cents minus a penny for each spelling mistake. Most of the time I went in the hole because I was such a bad speller but the time sure went by faster on those nights. I wonder if any of the news in my papers was worth reading.

When I was in grade four, I almost lived on the new monkey bars the school had put in. There was no better place on the whole school grounds to play than those bars. One day, I had convinced mom to let me wear her hiking boots to school. They were pretty cool and laced clear up to your knee. It was neat that I was finally big enough to fit in mom’s shoes, and it was need to have those laces that went way up your legs. I suppose they were tall like that because of the snakes and other dangers you could face if you hiking in Utah where Mom grew up. Because they were taller and heavier than my shoes, when I was playing on the monkey bars during the noon hour, I fell off the bars when I did one of my fancy flips down from the top of the bars. The way I swung out made it hard to hang on to the bars with all that extra weight on my feet. I ended up landing on my chin. Before that time I had a big overbite, and I was supposed to pry on my teeth with a pop cycle stick to get them to go normal. I was never convinced that I could make them move and I was lazy, so I never pried on them. Besides, what was the use? It was me the way I was, and it was okay with me. When I landed on my chin, my jaw was broken and pushed back into place in one easy stroke. I went to the hospital and found that I had nothing wrong with me except for a mighty sore mouth and a sprained jaw, and possibly a break. I had bitten through my bottom lip and was bleeding badly. When it happened, I remember feeling really dumb because I had cried and a grade four boy shouldn't do that. I went into the school and sat in my desk. With so many tears in my eyes, to took me a while to notice all the blood that was coming out of me. I didn't think that it was really anything too serious. My teacher took me to go to my mom in her room. The school nurse was there that day, and finally ended up going with me in the back of the station wagon, as my dad took me to the Taber General Hospital. I wonder to this day how dad would have been at the school at the right time to help out. Maybe he had been working at the new church we were building next to the school and someone contacted him there. If he was at home, it would have been the spirit that had to tell him to go to the school, and knowing dad, it well could have been the spirit telling him to get to town. To begin with the doctors thought that my jaw was broken. The X-rays showed lines in the jaw bone that could have possibly been the roots of my teeth. At least that is what they think, but I think they were right about the brake to begin with. How else could my jaw pushed that far back without any other explanation? The doctors didn’t know me and didn’t know that my bottom teeth were always in front of my top teeth and there was no way that I could change that, even when I was prying on them with a stick. In the end it was a welcomed blessing. My teeth alignment problem was solved and I have been grateful ever since.

Keith Woodruff was one of my best friends at school and church. He and I were about the same size and were both the kind of people that liked to get into trouble. We normally did it together too and that made things worse. Two boys could get into a lot more trouble that one boy could dream up. That was for sure! When I was in grade six, Keith wanted to find out if he could beat me up in a fight. I knew that he couldn't since he was a little flabbier than I was. As a child I was strong enough to hold my own in most of the things I did. Milking the cows and doing the chores, as well has hauling bails, gave me a bit more strength than a young boy would normally have. My, how, that has changed. Keith is the muscle man, and I am all fat. I told him that I didn't want to fight him and that I would hurt him if I did. All the boys in the class wanted to see us fight, too, so finally I decided to grant him his request. At noon all the boys stood around us in a circle out behind the school, and we had a fight. Like I told him, I beat him up and hurt him. I sure felt terrible when we were done watching my best friend run off crying. Never again did I want to do that to someone for no really good reason.

While I was in grade school, I got a dog. We had had dogs before, but none of them were as neat as this one. I named him Druke. We found that name in some Latin dictionary, and it meant something like "under pressure." I loved that old yellow curly haired mutt, and did everything I could with him. We were the best of friends, and still were until the return of my mission. He got to be about 23 years old, and Will decided it was best to put him out of his misery. I don't know how he could have done it, but I guess he never was very fond of animals running around under his feet. He took him out and shot him. There are hundreds of stories that could be told about that good old loyal dog. He love the tractors and love to stand guard. He was a hero in my eyes.

I had two teachers in elementary school that I will always remember. Mrs. Ecchorn was my grade four and five teacher. She was the type of teacher where if you did well, you were her pet. If not, you somehow wished that you never knew her when you did poorly. I guess that I must have done well because I was always on her good side. We made books and did music programs, poetry, and choral speech together in her class. She was set on us learning poetry, and learning to love it at the same time. We used to act out poems, and the chance to be one of the characters was a really great privilege. Even with all her efforts, I really did not learn to enjoy poetry until about 1987 when I was teaching poetry to a class of kids the age I was when she tried to make me enjoy it. Since then, I have written many poems, and really enjoy poetry. I think the reason I started using Poetry in my fourth grade Mountain View class was because of Mrs. Ecchorn’s example. What a power teacher she was to make such a lasting impression on me!

Mr. Thompson was my other most memorable elementary teacher. He ruled with the yard stick, and boy did it hurt. He broke sticks over many of our heads. Probably most of the sticks were broken over my head. He really could hit hard with them too! If you were good and bad, though, you had the privilege of moving your desk up beside his. I say privilege because I loved to be with him. Somehow he was able to love us and rule with the yardstick all at the same time. From up beside his desk, he could hit you hard and often. I really learned from him anyway. I used to spend most of my time right up there in that special spot. In some ways I felt special because he would allow me to be close to him. He was about six feet four inches tall, and very skinny. When school first started, there were no desks in our new grade six room. We were all sitting on the floor when that new teacher walked in, and from that vantage point of sitting flat on the floor, he seemed much taller than he really was. When he walked in, we thought that he was a giant. He was the only teacher that I cried about having to leave at the end of the school year. I remember being dismissed, and then going running back into his room crying to thank him for the year. As I stood there crying, I know that he knew that he had reached the heart of at least one of the little boys in his room. I have had that same experience, as Steven Scott, and Brad Baker came running back into the school to hug me and thank me for all I did for them. Outstanding teachers really do leave eternal influences on their precious students. There are always loved and never forgotten.

It was in grade six that I cheated a lot on my math. I knew how to do it and Mr. Thompson had us do it all at our own speed. We could do it as fast as we wanted, and we only had to show our answers. I found the teachers textbook that dad had used at the colony he taught at, and it didn't take me long to use my head. I went out on the chicken coop, climbed up on the roof, laid down on my stomach, and copied all the answers for the year out of that teacher’s manual. It was nice to be done ahead of everyone, but I've sure been guilty ever since. I really was careful to be sure that I understood the work before I copied the answers for each page however, because I loved math and didn’t want to be stupid on the tests. I thought at that time, that that was good enough. If I could do the work, who cared how I did the workbook pages. I got all the grade six math done about three months before the end of the year. Since that time I have used self-paced teaching as much as I can in my classroom. It really helps the quicker students.

It was always fun to come home after school and head straight for the bike. I would ride it for hours. It didn't really matter where I went as long as I was going. When dad had ditch filled, there were nice roads in the field to follow, and the prairie trails were generally smooth to ride on too. The only time there was trouble was when it would rain, and you would get mud in the chain and everywhere. The bike would then be a real challenge to get home. Oh that was a mess!

Richard and I decided to take our first class journey for scouting on our bikes. We hitched them together side by side so that we could make a double bed on the top of them, and be off the ground. It was our version of a fancy camper! It was really a hard thing to ride because you couldn't ride it like a normal bike or you would end up in the ditch trying to steer it to keep it balanced. We finally left on our journey early in the spring, and it was much farther than we had thought to get to the Bow Island river bridge where we planned to camp. Dad was the scout master, and had told us it wasn't too far, so when he found out how far it was, he came along and pulled us on our bikes for a ways. We hit a rock that we couldn’t see because we were being towed too closely to the truck. We had no time to react to the rock when it came under the truck. We hit it and had a flat tire. We got that fixed, and went on without him. It got dark before we got there, and we took a short cut to save time. We ended up going over the face of a gravel pit with our bikes and all. We finally got close to the bridge where we had planned to camp, and we were tired so we pulled off the road which was a prairie trail, and dumped the stuff off our bikes into a heap on the ground and went to bed hungry on our camper bike. During the night it snowed about eight inches on us but we didn't know that it had snowed until we woke up in the early morning. Dad came out while it was dark and checked our camp. All there was a pile of stuff on the ground and us in our beds on the bike. He asked us if we wanted to go home, and we said no. I don't even think that we looked out from under the covers, so we didn't know it had snowed. By early morning Richard's side of the bed was wet because I had the rubberized side of an open sleeping bag over me, and he had the other side which was just cotton over him. We ended up with the two of us spending the rest of the night in my sleeping bag because it was dry. When we got up what a mess we had! All of our supplies, including our matches were wet. There was no dry wood anywhere and we were starving. We ate a few raw potatoes, and some raw rolled oats, and decided that it was time to head for home. To make the trip easier, we dumped everything out that we could get rid of, and even left our bedding. Richard got sick. I think it was from lack of food, exposure, and fatigue. I did most of the pedaling until Richard's bike had a flat tire. We decided to just ride on on the flat tire, knowing we would ruin the tire, but we would get home. We were really weak and tired from our trip so far, so finally we just left the bikes, and started walking. It was easier than pedaling a bike with a flat tire. When we came to a house it was like finding water in a desert. We mustered up all our nerve and strength and walked up to the house and explained that we were two boy scouts on our first class journey and could we please have a piece of bread. We were starving. They gave us a half a slice of bread, and then the man drove us to Uncle Marvin's. He apparently knew Marvin. When we got there we were starved so we made pancakes and ate so many pancakes you wouldn't believe it, and then went to our house and ate quarts of corn. Never did food taste so good as then. We then got a truck and went after our bikes and sleeping bags. We never did find all the stuff we dumped off along our return path but that didn’t matter to us. We were alive, safe and done with our first class journey. Our next job was to finish our journey log book. Richard was the writer so he recorded the trip, and we even dared to turn it in to our scout master. We past the trip somehow, and we became two of the youngest, and two of the last Queen's Scouts in Canada.

Joan went to university when I was in grade six, and when she came home at the end of her year away from home, she gave me a little rubber monkey named Darling. It was one of my favorite toys, and is still a treasure of mine. After she gave it to me, she wanted to see how far he would stretch so she pulled on his arms, and about ripped one of them off. Will thought he would look better with a belly button and so he gave him one with a leather punch. Dennis Woodruff was a baby at the time, and bit off one of Darling's fingers. All in all that poor monkey has gone through a lot, but he is still a neat treasure to me. He has pins holding his arm on and is missing a finger, but I love him just as much as when I first got him, or even more.

Christmas programs were always a lot of fun. When I was in grade one, I was the chief of the Indians in a war dance. Maybe that was a music festival number, but it was fun. I don't know how the Indians worked into it, but we had fun acting the part. Another year I got to sing a solo in the program and yet another time we marched and danced. Those programs were the biggest events to ever hit Chamberlain school. Everyone in the town would turn out...even Santa.

Mrs. Lefler was one teacher that I didn't like. She taught me in grade two and three. She was the kind of person that was always seeing things her own way. She never understood why people did the things they did. I remember one day I had forgotten a book at home, and she said that it was because I didn't have my homework done. I did have it done, but she made me stand in the corner of the room for most of the morning. It has taken years to understand her, and forgive her for that unfair day and many other happenings of horror during the year.

Another thing that seemed different to us in grade two was that we had to wear slippers inside the school. I think that is why Sharon Kast slipped and knocked out one of her permanent teeth on the corner of a desk. Mrs. Lefler had gone to answer the phone and we were to stay in our desk. Some of the kids ended up chasing each other around the room. Sharon slipped and hit a desk with her tooth. There was lots of blood, and when she took her mouth off the desk, the tooth stayed imbedded in the desktop. What a lesson to us all. She had a large overbite never looked very pretty to begin with. She even looked worse after that. Years later, she had her jaw repaired, and she now has faults teeth. It is truly a big improvement.

And what long ugly finger nails Mrs. Lefler had! She splatted them on your desk at least once each day as she did checking. She also had a goiter that was fun to watch as she would read stories to us. It went up and down with each breath. Her voice went up and down too, but not like her goiter. She would talk and then scream, etc.

I was in the same school for junior and senior high school too. There are lots of memories of those years that were fun. I did everything I could to be in anything that had to do with music. I was in the choir. My voice was in the process of changing in grade seven, but that was to my advantage. I was the only person that could sing the highest of the descants, and still sing the lowest of the bass parts. I sang whichever part I felt was most needed at the time. Our music teacher was Mrs. Clemis. She never seemed to look at the music. Later I found out that she didn't. She played them all from memory. She did a beautiful job of playing but could not read a note of music.

In 1965 we bought a truck with a sleeper on it from the church. It was used by the building missionaries that built the Fort Macleod church. That was our ticket to traveling all over the continent. We went to the New York World's Fair in 1965, and followed the pioneer trail to Utah. Another year we went to Montreal and took all the MIA kids with us. We really had some fun times in that old truck. In 1968, mom and Dad took the scouts out to Queen Charlotte Islands to see the Indian kids that had been in our troop. We had a plane ride with all seven or eight of us in a 4 passenger plane. We enjoyed the ocean, and the trips around the island that Sister Lamb took us on. We went up tow hill, and out to the blow holes. We saw a white spruce tree. Other family trips took us to California to the Red Woods and out on California Highway 36. That is the narrowest road I've been on. The pavement was too narrow for the truck at places. There was a cliff straight up on one side and one straight down on the other side. If you met a car, one of you had to back up to a turn out so that you could pass each other. We used to ride sitting on a lidded box at the back of the truck with our feet hanging out the back of the tail gate. The box was the place that we stored all our clothes for the trip. We sat on it to make sandwiches at the small cupboard that was at the back of the shell. We had two double beds in the front of the shell. It made a perfect camper. Hanging our feet out the back of the truck was a great way to view the world. Once a car about scared us to death as we were watching out the back. It just shot by right close to us. You could almost reach out and touch it. At another place, a piece of the road fell off right after we went over it. We had to cross a stream over and over again – fording it. It was really hot on that trip as well. I'd love to go try that road out again and see if it is still the same. On one trip we were blowing kisses to all the little old ladies that we would pass. One little old lady was following us down the road, and we blew her a kiss. She sat up, and put the visor up, and straightened HIS tie, and turned off at the next service station. It really did embarrass him. I think that was the trip to the redwoods. Boy, are those trees ever tall, and big around. We got some sea animals, star fish, clams, crabs, etc., on the way home. They died in the truck, and boy did it stink. We were not very welcome that the service stations, or at the Border Crossing into Canada. The agent got a whiff of us and sent us on our way. We saw a light house and learned to sound like one – the fog horn I mean, and we took a ferry boat out to Vancouver Island and ate some delicious fish. It was the biggest Salmon I have ever seen. We really had some good times in that old truck and camper.

As I got older some of the work we did changed. We once took on a contract to unload a train car of fertilizer. It was in 50 pound sacks, and I never knew a train car was so big. We worked for hours, and even using a hand truck to move it all with, it took us days to get it done. As the farm grew, our need for granaries grew too. We spent a fair amount of time building steel bins. It was nice to have to use them and to see them filled up with the fruits of our labors.

I used to have lots of fun with substitute teachers at school during my high school years. Once we were reading about a vagabond, and there was a picture of one that looked just like Mrs. Russell. I wrote her name under it, and showed it to the students close around me. She saw it and blew up. She sent me to mom's room, and I thought my goose was cooked. Mom just said that she thought Mrs. Russell should handle her own problems, and that was that. Mrs. Hoffman used to read to us. That was a neat way to spend the days that she was there. With Mrs. Jones, our regular typing teacher, I used to have fun getting into trouble. One day we made a fort out of all the old unused text books at the back of the room. I hid in that fort during class, and she ended up chasing me around the room. When she caught me she stood on me and I saw that she had a crooked nose. I told her so and she was so embarrassed about it that she just walked away and left me alone. I used to bug Sharon Penner in typing class all the time too. While she was typing, I would reach over and push a few keys on her type writer. She used to get so discussed with herself for the silly mistakes she thought she had made. When we were in grade nine, we went by bus to Taber High School for shop and home EC class. The boys made shop projects and the girls got to cook. It was a twenty-mile bus trip to go there, and we went each Wednesday afternoon. I loved those shop classes, and made some useful and some not-so-useful items in shop. I think that the trips to and from Taber were the most fun part of the week since we always would have someone picked out to pick on during our travel. I personally enjoyed a bit of being teased and picked on and Dennis Ell was my favorite tormentor. I really did love him and he had a knack for knowing when he had gone far enough. I sort of asked for him to tease me because it meant that he like me and would take the time to spend with me to do it. He really was a great guy. He is one of our class that has died. I longed to see him many times before his death. In fact one of the reasons I set up our twenty year class reunion was so that I could see him again, and he didn’t even go to the reunion. While I was at shop, I became the pet of the teacher there. I had the knack for that kind of thing. It also came in very useful at times.

In grade seven I started playing the clarinet. I played the clarinet because Dad played it. I had tried the cello before, and I hated the practicing. I would like to have played it, but I hated to practice. Once our director, who came to our school once each week, decided that we were going to learn how to do parade marching. She told us that we were to start marching down the road, and when she blew her whistle, we were to turn around and come back. We did almost what we were told. We started marching and then when Miss Walker blew the whistle, we kept right on going. She came running down the road in her tight skirt, and we just sped up. We went about as far from the school as we could go in our small town without going in the direction of the school. When Miss Walker finally caught up with us, she was ready to kill whatever or whoever she could get her hands on. That was the end of our marching in Chamberlain School.

Mr. Dreller was the teacher that everyone didn't want to get on the wrong side of. He had a great big ring and he had perfected his stroke with that ring. He used to put the stone of the ring down in his hand, and then hit people that misbehaved with that hand. The hand didn't hurt. It was the ring and the stone that about killed off the students. I guess I was lucky because there was only one time when I looked around and saw him about ready to hit me. I know that I deserved to be hit, but I don't know why he didn't hit me. Maybe it was because of the fact that we were on a bus going on a field trip, and not sitting in school. I think that I really was the biggest pest in the room.

P.E. classes were the classes that I hated the most. If there was a way to get out of those classes, I'd figure the way out and do it. There were many times that I climbed up a bundle of sticks that stuck up an attic hole above the gym stage. From up there I could watch out of a big fan vent at the class below, and answer when my name came up on the roll call. Up there I never had to participate in all the sports activities when they got started. If there was a way to arrange to do anything for another teacher during that time, I would do that. I was the treasurer of the students’ union and I would fill vending machines during PE. I was a great help with Audio Visual equipment and chose to do most of my helping in that period of the day. I really hated team sports the most. I ended up spending the time that I was in P.E. classes running around the race track rather than having to be involved in team sports. Toward the end of high school I ran the mile in Track and Field, so all the running may have helped.

One day I fell asleep in Mrs. Clemis' Math class. The lesson was extra-long and extra boring that day, and Mrs. Clemis was the strictest teacher in the school. I remember that she asked me a question and I didn't know what she had asked because I was asleep. I simply said that I was sleeping and asked her to repeat the question. I thought that my goose was cooked. She must have had a big heart that day because she never got mad and never mentioned it again. Once another student yawned during class, and she had to run around the school ten times to wake up. I guess it paid to be smart in Math class that day.

Canada had her centennial year while I was in grade seven. There were all kinds of neat displays to go see. The whole school went to Taber to see a big traveling museum about Canada and her history. The museum was a bunch of semi-trucks all equipped with fantastic displays of things that you would see across Canada. The display was neat and there were several souvenirs that were given to the students as well. That year seemed to be the biggest event in all time. It really promoted national unity and spirit. We were all so proud to be Canadian. There were special songs written and composed that I still think of and sing from time to time. I wonder if the founding fathers knew that the centennial would be more important than confederation day. Special awards were given in the schools for different types of achievement. The whole country was caught up in doing something good for others to make it a special and memorable year. It really was memorable.

My favorite teacher in junior high school was Mrs. Clemis. She was really strict, but she had a heart for fun anyway. She taught almost everything--Music, English, Science, Math, French, Health, Literature, etc. She demanded that we do a good job and most everyone liked her for that reason.

She used to play the piano and accompany me when I would go to music festivals. Those festivals were really interesting because they were the source of my greatest pain when I blew it, and my greatest joy when I would win. Once I was so scared that when I looked down my clarinet, I saw my fingers jumping around and that made me more scared and finally I stopped in the middle of the number. Other times I would do a great job, and I owe it to Mrs. Clemis.

High school was little different from Junior high with the exception that I went to summer school in between Grade Eleven and Twelve so that I could have more time for music during the regular school year. I also was in student government. I was the treasurer of the Students' Union, and my senior year, I was the president of the union as well as the president of the class. I was also involved in the vending machine business in the school during those years. I would use filling the vending machines as a good excuse to get out of all the P.E. classes and others that I didn't like. Those were great years.

Government Exams are not, however, very much fun. No matter what the teacher taught us, the government tested us on what the teacher should have taught us. There weren't many exams that I felt like I was really prepared for. I guess I did O.K. though, or I would never have made it to BYU.

When I was in grade ten, the telephone finally made it to Grassy Lake. That was something new and exciting. The first day it was in, we made a very long, long distance phone call to Ellen at University. Actually it was made before the phone was supposed to be working. With the phone we had instant communications with family and friends. It used to be that we had to go to town and use someone else' phone, and then pay them when the bill came. It was also nice for those that were away from home. They could call when they wanted to, rather than wait for home to call them.

Just before I left for summer school after grade eleven, Dad gave me a blessing that I would be protected if I would attend my church meetings. I had to miss some of the meals in the dorm, and make special arrangements to miss out on some of the study time on Tuesday nights, but I went to all the meetings. The Lord blessed me too. Once I was sitting in the open window of the TV room watching the construction next door and some of the guys came up to me and told me to smoke. They tried to make me do it, but I refused. Finally they started to push me out the third floor window because I wouldn't smoke. I just held on for all I was worth, and the Lord did the rest. They were not able to push me out the window and I know that the Lord had given me extra strength to hang on with. While I was there I went to lots of the sights of interest in the city of Edmonton. I went to the children's zoo and the Klondike activities. It was there that I learned to love that city, and the Lord looked out for me there. I go back now, and I wonder how it is that I could have walked around in that part of town and enjoyed it.

I will always remember the clean feeling that I had at baptism. I don't know if I will ever feel that clean again. I know that I should feel that way each week after I take the sacrament because that is what the sacrament is for. In my head I know it. In my heart I believe it, but it sure is hard to really believe and apply what I know is right. I always try to take time to teach the youth that it really is a great thing. We take the sacrament and become clean and pure if we partake of it worthily. After baptism, it was really neat to know that I was now ready to start the rest of my life, and I was to be responsible for all my actions. I have often wished that I could go back to that time, and have those same feelings over again. I know that is what the sacrament is for. I should feel that clean each week when I take the sacrament worthily. I also remember how embarrassing it was to change in the changing room at the church with all those that were baptized that day.

Growing up in Grassy Lake was neat because I was able to pass the sacrament or bless the sacrament almost each week from the time I was a Deacon on. Also I was able to take leadership positions that not everyone would have the chance to hold. I was the President of the Deacons and Teachers, and I was the secretary of the MIA from the time I was twelve on. That made it so I had to go to a lot of meetings with older men, but I was getting used to that because I was often the person that would travel around the stake and help the basses and the tenors learn their parts for stake choirs. Sister Stevens was the stake choir director, and riding with her was an adventure. Once she thought the circus was crossing the road because of all the flags that were up at a construction site. What a bump we got that time as she plowed full speed through the very large marked pot holes in the road. Watching her use the pay phone in Seven Persons was a really humorous side show. She really acted the nut, and tried cranking and banging around on it. It was a fun trip that night.

When I was in elementary school we had the chance to help build the Grassy Lake chapel, and the Taber Stake Center. It was fun to help out where you could. The big water hole at the end of the field drains is what Mom and I can claim as our biggest achievement. We spent one day laying the blocks for that. I didn't help much at the stake house, but was there enough to know that I was not too impressed with most of the boys my age in the stake.

About that same time, I got my camper truck for Christmas. That was one of the neatest gifts I remember getting. I was so happy with that that nothing could have spoiled that Christmas. I made all kinds of pillows, and quilts and other camping things for the camper, and I would play with it for hours. One of the Woodruff boys broke the steps and the door on it though, so I learned to put it away when they came. It was just the right size for my John Deere tractor that I got when I was younger. Mom said that I had to take good care of my tractor when I got it because I wouldn't get another one. I still have the tractor and the camper truck, and I think that I have taken good care of both of those special toys. I still love them and treasure them both.

One day when Dad was fixing the washer, Mom was making donuts. It was a neat day because of the job that I got. I had to sit on the tub of the washer while the glue dried that was to hold a rubber ring in place. As I sat there on the hole, I ate donut after donut. I wish dad would have made more repairs under those same conditions.

Once when we were burning the weeds along the ditch and fence lines, some boards caught on fire. Ellen and I were to throw them into the pond. She decided to throw them end over end, and one of them came down on me. It made a nice big cut in my head. Ellen had to hold the cut shut while she took me to the house. Mom washed out the cut, and then took me to the Taber hospital for stitches. I remember watching the needle going in and out just above my eyes. I also got cut when the wheel fell off the wagon I was riding in once, and I watched those stitches going into me just below my nose. It sure was nice to have a hospital around that could help out at times like that.

I always thought and felt that I was the cause of all the trouble around the farm. I was the one that could get the tractor stuck and Dad would just drive it out. I was the one that hit the power pole with the grain auger of the combine, and I was the one that burnt out the motor on the combine. It was probably me that broke third gear on the 70, but I'm not sure about that. I ran into the combine with the truck, and cut up the right front fender. It was me that hit the house with the truck as I was driving beside the house, and dented in the truck door. Maybe some of those early troubles were because I needed glasses and didn’t get them until I was in grade nine. I'm the one that let the Orange car run into the computer science building at the BYU, and then we had to jack the hole back into shape so that the door would go shut. I'm the one that was driving the Galaxy when the California person came driving right at me with snow covering the windshield, and I took off in reverse, but I got the car smashed up anyway. I thought Will would kill me, but I lived to tell about it. If something was going to break down it would always wait for me before it happened. Maybe it's a good thing that I'm not a farmer.

I already said that I had a good imagination, and I could think up games as well as stories. I used to use the combine for an airplane. The controls said up and down and fast and slow and that was perfect. The platform stuck out like wings. I did a lot of flying on that old plane. Once I decided to be a cheerleader. I was in the back of the grade nine room at school, and the cheerleaders' uniforms were stored back there in a closet. I had Mike Ratz and Keith Woodruff help me pull one of the tight little things on, and I was jumping around being stupid when Mrs. Clemis walked in. She asked what I was doing, and I said being stupid. She said I was right and to get that thing off right now. I tried to obey, but I sure had trouble doing that. The dress was too tight to get off going up, and too tight to get off going down over my pants. Finally I took off my pants to make me a bit skinnier, and then with the help of the two boys already mentioned, and Ronnie Walski, I got it off. It did have to rip a little before it would come off.

I used to like to sit in the steering wheel of the Mercury and swing back and forth too. I don't suppose that that had anything to do with the steering wheel cracking. I also liked to peel the plastic off the seat in the truck. No wonder they looked so bad.

It was really fun to learn to drive that Mercury. I was the happiest person alive when I could finally shift all the gears, and not grind them. Maybe dad was actually happier to hear me not grinding gears than I was. The Model A was a fun car to drive. It was especially fun in the winter on the pond. It would pull sleighs, and we had a great time. We would freeze a crow bar in the center of the pond, and then tie a rope to the front of the model A. It would then drive around and around almost by itself. Later we changed to the tractor to pull the sleighs, and that was even better because the sleighs went so fast you just couldn't hang on and would go flying off. The sleighs were hitched to the farmhand, and the tractor went in reverse. When you stepped on the wheel brake, the front end just flew around! What a ride!

One more car story was the time that I decided to hide from mom when she went into the store. I got down under the back seat of the Frontenac, and then had the seat make itself down on me. I was really trapped. I couldn't reach the top seat to lift it off so I could get out, and Mom was taking forever. That was one trick that back fired. I started crying as loud as I could, and finally someone came along and I told them what to lift so I could get out. I don't think mom ever found out that I had hidden on her that time.

At about the same age, I decided to trade one of my dinky toys with Clint Young. He had a neat tractor, and I had a neat truck. It only took one day for that trick to backfire. I was lucky because Clint felt just as bad about the trade as I did. Two little long faced boys met the next morning at school, and were delighted to know that they could both get their own toys back. I never traded any toys to anyone after that. I don't think that I have parted with any of my junk since that time.

Scouting was one of the things that I did that I now have mixed feelings about. It was neat to work toward something, and then when I got my Queen's Scout Award, I felt that there was nothing left to do. There were some changes made in Scouts Canada, which made it all the worse. The boys were to do more of their own planning. I did do some fun things there however. I made a wooden leg for a scout party, and had my leg tied up behind me. I had a big old baggy pair of pants on over the doubled up leg. It really was a neat costume, and won me first place for several costume parties. It seemed that I was always just too young for many of the scout activities. I missed lots of trips that Keith was just old enough to go on. That really didn't seem fair, but that's the way it was. We were able to go to two explorer conferences, and we had lots of fun there. I even made a fool of myself when I went to a band class with a stocking stuffed in the end of my clarinet. I sang the wrong word in a choir. That made me feel like a heel, since I was sitting right behind a General Authority. I was the president of the housing area that time so I got to bring home a trophy as a memento.

We did have fun with ox teams and making matchless fires for some of our scout parades and outings we went on. For one program we had red river carts, and we put on a play about the settlement of that area. It was fun. I was the mother, and really made a fool of myself. I guess that was normal for the show off that I was.

I remember all the plays that we did in MIA. We did several of them each year, and I was in at least one of them each year from the time I was 12 until I was at BYU. I was also in each of the theme presentation programs during those years. To say it more clearly, I was in every drama production the ward put on from the time I was in MIA until I left for BYU.

I never was a very good sportsman, but I was able to get involved in the school sports program because I was the manager of the boys basketball team. I was given a fair amount of responsibility, including all the taping of the team’s ankles, etc. It was good training, and I'm thankful to Brother Hamilton for letting me travel with the team. He used to even have me say prayers with the team before the games. Sometimes he would have different ones of the boys pray. I got to watch some of the neat people in the school perform under pressure, and I learned from each of them. Gary Corns, and Lorne Hazel were two that I had to ride with to the hospital in ambulances and take care of there until the games were over, and Mr. Hamilton could come take over the responsibility.

Gary Corns was a great leader and example in our school. He was one of the rich Corns family, but that never stopped him from being kind to everyone. He was considerate of everyone. He always had time to show interest in everyone. I really looked up to him with respect and admiration. I was so blessed to have such great examples of kindness, both in and out of the church. People like Gary really helped me to learn a lot about human relations. To this day, if I see any of the Corns family, they are kind and considerate and genuinely interested in people.

When I was in Grade one, Ray Musong was one of the big grade three boys. I really liked him and wanted to be with him all I could. He was always the boy I would want to play with if we had to do something with older kids. I really like him. I often wonder about him and wish I could see him again. Mom and Dad lived in the Musong house in Grassy and each time I visited there, I couldn't help but think about Ray and wonder what ever became of him.

After Joan was married and was expecting Michael, she came up to Canada and left Gilbert in Utah for summer school. During that summer, we had some fun times together. One of our jobs was to refinish the crib that used to be ours, but Woodruffs had been using. It was my bed until I was six years old. We planed the paint off of it and started over with glue and paint to make a crib that was respectable again. One day we went to town to phone Gilbert, and while we were in the hotel, John Dean, our neighbor came up to Joan. He was really drunk and didn't seem to be the kind of person you would want around. Joan hit him, and knocked him flat on the ground. We took off rather scared and upset at the old drunk man. It was then that we figured out that it was John Dean. We never knew just what to think about that situation, and we didn't know if we should make our apologies or not. I wonder what he thinks of that incident.

On the way home from the highway one day, we decided to see if the miles would come off the car if we backed up. We had just gone down to the highway to pick up the newspaper that used to be thrown off at the corner. We ended up backing all the way home. It was kind of dumb, but fun. The three miles came of the odometer as we back up.

I remember Mom doing sewing. She was always able to make what she needed, but sometimes she had some obstacles to overcome. One of them was the old treadle sewing machine. I remember helping her pump that thing along. Then there were several machines that would work fine for Dad, but would always give Mom problems. Dad would tell her just how to work them, and he would show her how to make them work, but they liked to cause problems for Mom. I think they were just related to me. Everything I touched had to go wrong. Still to this day if I use a sewing machine it likes to mess up but Cheryl can sew just fine on the machine and have not problems.

The summer that I lived in Edmonton, I used to really be fascinated by the underground city that was right around the center of the city. I lived right beside the AGT tower, and that was the main entrance to the stores under the city. I would walk around down there and explore for hours. I thought that was the neatest thing to visit, and Ellen wouldn't even go see it with me when she came to pick me up at the end of the summer. She said we had to get right home. I think she was upset that I could spend all that time away from the farm, and that the rest of the family was home working. Actually, she was the only one of the kids at home that summer.

When I went to Edmonton at the beginning of the summer for summer school, Mom and Dad went up there with me to drop me off. We all slept in the little orange car for the first night we were up there. Mom and Dad were in the front, and I was in the trunk. It was a bit crowded. My feet were left hanging out of the car, it was so small. One of the boys at school had a car that was even smaller than that though, and it amazed me. It was a Mini Morris.

The meal time prayer at summer school was always said by a big fat lady, and we all had to stand behind our chair while she said "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen." Then we could all sit down to eat. I would quietly bow my head and say my own prayer thanking Heavenly Father for the food and asking for protection. I used to stuff all the crackers that were left after out meals in my shirt and take them to my room. I had a small suitcase full of them by the end of the summer. I gave them all to Sister McClung, and she made a cracker pie out of them. Boy was that good. Brother McClung was the seminary supervisor in southern Alberta, and he was transferred to Edmonton the summer I was up there. It was so exciting for me to walk into church one Sunday and see people I knew, the McClungs, so far away from home. I ended up spending a lot of Sundays and Monday evenings at their house. It was so nice to be a part of a family, and have friends with LDS standards and values. What a contrast that was from the kids that lived in the dorm.

I said that I slept in the trunk of the car. That was only half of the story. We used to like to ride in the trunk of our big Ford Galaxy 500 all the time. We put a light in it so that we could see, and had a mattress and bedding in it. We made it so we could open the trunk from the inside. That made it safe to be in at any time. We could get out when we wanted. It got to the point where we would fight to be able to ride there instead of in the car. One time we were down in Utah and Joan was pregnant. She and Gilbert went with us down to the parks in southern Utah, and Joan was riding in the trunk. At one gas station we stopped and let her out to go to the bathroom. We got our gas, put her back in the trunk and went on our merry way. It wasn't long before a police car stopped us. Gilbert was driving and he started to get out to see what the police wanted. Two of them got out of their car with their hands on their guns and told him to get back in the car. He did. Pretty soon another car came right up alongside our car in the ditch, and then they all got out of the cars and came up to Gilbert with their hands on their guns and asked him to open his trunk. All the time this was going on, we were talking through the back seat and telling Joan what was happening. Gilbert went back and opened the trunk and Joan sat up and smiled and started to talk to them. I think that they thought that we had kidnapped someone. Finally they left, and told us that we could ride there if we wanted, but I think Joan came up front with the rest of us for the trip back to Provo.

Another riding in the trunk story started out just being a trip up to see the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride. It was to be in Fort Macleod, and some of our relatives were in Canada for a short visit. We decided to take them up to see it and we were going in the truck and camper as well as the car. We got almost all the way there, and the truck had a flat tire. It was about time for the show to start, so we all piled into the car and dad drove on with the whole gang. We got to where the traffic was moving quite slowly, and Dad stopped and told us all to get out and go through the fence so we wouldn't miss the show. A police car drove up right beside Dad and was telling him on the intercom that he shouldn't stop there. The police man was saying "Don't stop there. Drive on." and Dad was saying "Hurry up and get out." Finally the front passenger door of the car opened and out got five people. The policeman's mouth just opened, and he just looked on a bit speechless. Then the back doors opened and out got eight more people, and the policeman's mouth opened even wider along with his eyes. Then the trunk flew up and out got four more of us. The policeman couldn't say a word, but just watched us all go over and crawl through the fence, and then he drove on in shock. It wasn't until the show was over, and we were on the way out of the rodeo grounds that we discovered that we were all supposed to have bought a ticket to get in. The poor policeman didn't know what to do with all of us getting out of the car and crawling through the fence without paying. He just drove off stunned.

On another trip when Jack and Kim Daley were staying with us for the summer, Kim and I rode in the trunk a lot. We went to Uncle Philip's graduation in Washington. I remember once while we were driving along that Kim really needed to go to the Bathroom. He was in misery. Finally he couldn't wait any longer, and he opened the trunk and left a trail of water behind us. It was quite a surprise to the people in the car right behind us.

Another time we took a bunch of Utah relatives up in the Banff and Jasper National Parks. We went on the snowmobile rides at Columbia Ice Fields, and we really had a good time. Dad was teasing the driver all the way, and got him so mixed up in his little lecture that he finally gave it up and just had a fun time with us. The snowmobiles were sort of bus-like Ford pickup trucks with tracks on the back, and wheels on the front. The also had sliding doors in the roof. When we got up on the glacier, we got to stop and walk around for a while. We played in the snow and had a great time. We had a snowball fight up there in the middle of the summer. Mom threw a snowball at another snowmobile that had its roof open, and it went right inside. Mom was so shocked she couldn’t stand it and we all roared with laughter. The other snowmobile was full of richly dressed fancy people. Their lid went shut rather quickly and mom turned red and hid as quickly as she could. We were driven right out over one of the cracks in the ice up there, and the guy opened the door so that we could look straight down into the crack. We could see the front wheel of the snowmobile just hanging there in midair. It really was fun, and informative.

A trip to the Oregon Sand Dunes was another trip with a fun ride. The Sand Dune were huge and we were in a little open topped jeep-like thing. It really could whip around quite quickly. We got in the little dune buggy and away we went. We were going up and down hills that just took your breath away. It was really fun.

When I was in about grade ten I got home from school one day, and I couldn't believe my eyes. Dad had actually brought home a John Deere R diesel tractor. It was really neat to have a little bigger tractor around the farm. Just to have two of them was interesting. Dad rigged up a way to drive both of our tractors from one tractor, and you could run all the controls from the 70. It was really weird to see two tractors going along side by side, with only one driver.

Mom and Dad went to a UGG meeting in Winnipeg one week end, and Homer and I knew that they would be coming home during the night, so we rigged up the tape recorder so that it would turn on when they opened the door and welcome them home. It worked quite well, and when they came home they started answering back to the tape recorder. The sound of the recorder and them talking woke us up so we went out to see them. When we started to talk to them too, they were really mixed up. I also had wired up the tape recorder and the radio so that it could be heard in any room in the house. They didn't even have a clue where our voices were coming from. The speaker system stayed there for quite a while and was great for the news and listening to music.

Often when we traveled to conference we would try to see family along the way. Dad had aunts along the way, and there were several people who lived in Rexburg, Idaho. One of our Great Aunts, Aunt Nellie, rode with us on one of our trips from Rexburg to Utah on one of our trips, and she kept coming up with the dumbest things to say. When we saw a traffic circle once, she said "Oh, isn't that nice. They didn't cut that farmer's field up, but just made the road go around it." That was the last straw, and all of us kids in the back seat of the car just burst out laughing. We had been doing a good job of not laughing at her up until then. She just babbled on and on making no sense at all. What a trip!

When I campaigned to be the high school students' union president there was no one who ran against me. I really had fun with my acceptance speech. I used the line about fools rushing in where angels fear to tread and went running up to the Mic. That was one of my real big successes at public speaking. That got me started telling tall tales, and I won a speech festival after that with some of my stories. What we had to do was to tell a tall tale. That was really fun. I used some of the same speech ideas in many humorous programs after that.

I had to act like a judge in a kangaroo court once, and that was a really big disaster. I couldn't get anything to come out of my mouth in a funny way. I really felt awful about that act.

As the President of the Students' Union, I had the chance to write a constitution for the Union. We also declared war on the junior students union. The idea was to give us a good reason to join the two student unions that then existed. I felt that with only about 60 students in the Junior and Senior High that one union would do a better job than two. We had quite a time fighting with rolled up newspapers in the gym, and since the senior union won, we took over the junior students' union and created only one Union. I wonder if it is still just one union or whether it went back to two of them. As I write updates to this history in 2001, I have to add that the Junior and Senior High students are now bused to Taber for school. There isn't a union at all.

Another great big undertaking at school was to try to make a record of our school choir. We only had three or four boys and about sixteen girls in the choir. It really could have been a bit better of a group, but we sounded pretty good. Some of the kids didn't sound good at all though. Sharon Kast was a true blue mono tone, but that didn't stop her from producing volume. Mr. Andres would try over and over to get her to be quieter, but he never got her convinced that she should stop singing, and Mr. Andres would never tell anyone to give up trying – not in those words anyway. We had some recording sessions, and we came up with some pretty good sounding music. Mom had run the tape recorder, and I did all the tape splicing to make the master tape. We made tickets for records and sold them in advance so that we could get the money for the records before they were made. We needed the money to get the record company to make our records. We sent the tape away to the company, and then we never heard a word from them for the longest time. When we tried to get in touch with the company, we couldn't find where the company had gone. They never did return the tape, and the Students' Union had to return the money to all the people that had already bought the records. I still wish that we had that tape back, or a record of the choir. We really did do a pretty good job.

Our choir was invited to sing in the Yates Memorial Concert Hall in Lethbridge. That is the building that all the really high class entertainment went on in. There would be live concerts and plays there almost all the time. That was a scary experience, but we had fun doing it. We put on a concert in the Taber Stake Center, and we had a pretty good turn out to that concert. Keith was the highlight of the show. He decided to attract some attention and that's what he did. We were standing on risers, and the boys were at the back. The back riser was pretty high. I don't know if it was the height, the heat, or the scare that made him do it, but he fainted and fell off the back. He wasn't hurt any, but it scared us all.

Dad and I got involved singing in some other groups too. We sang in the Taber Choral Society. That is where we met Joe Crezan. He worked at the post office in Taber, and was a really good friend of ours. He stopped being my friend when he asked me if he could kiss me though. He didn't just mean a simple peck on the cheek and a hug of appreciation. That was really creepy, and I never wanted to see him again. We also sang in the Coaldale Mennonite Choir. That was a fun group to sing in, and the Cantata was good too. Dad and I would practice our parts wherever we went. I remember driving to and from General Conference that year, and we sang the "Easter Cantata" on the way down to Utah and on the way back. That was the year that the car did a fish tail while I was driving in a construction area. It scared me to death. Thank goodness for a Dad that knew how to handle a car at high speeds on gravel roads. He reached out and took control of the car so I wouldn't roll it.

Along with singing, we also would eat Scout Peanuts on those trips to Utah, or any other family trips for that matter. Mom and Dad always bought lots of canned peanuts from the Boy Scouts, and they would always take quite a few cans with us when we traveled anywhere. The salt would sure make you thirsty, but they tasted good.

When Joan and Gilbert moved away from Wildwood, Alberta where Gilbert was teaching school, their neighbor was selling an old school bus. Mom and Dad bought it for a moving van, and then while I was on my mission they converted it into a camper. I was the one person in the family that always wanted a camper, and they didn't do it while I was home. It ended up quite nice, but has some of Dad's interesting inventions in it. For example, the Beds are narrow at the foot, and wide at the hips and shoulders. It works pretty well though, and was our "Honey Moon Suite" when Cheryl and I got married. We drove it down to the river, and spent one of two nights down there. Will came down in the truck one morning to be sure that everything was OK, and he got stuck in the river. We drove off and left him there, and he had to walk home to get the tractor. Boy was he mad at me.

Dad also bought another bus from a junk yard. It was an old Dodge without any windows, and it was army green. It was a delivery van, and it did a lot of farming for us. It looked like a Hippie Wagon, so it was called the hippie bus. Michael renamed it though. When he was little, I don't think that he knew what a Hippie was, and he thought it was Happy. Mom always liked Michael's name, the Happy Bus, a lot better than what the rest of us called it, and she tried to make the Happy Bus name stick. But really it looked like a Hippy Bus!

Ellen and my ear were always getting into trouble with each other. I thought the sound of her practicing her French horn at six o'clock in the morning was awful, but that is not what I mean when I say trouble. Ellen would get the yard stick out, and hold it under her arm. Then she would vibrate it back and forth with my ear that sticks out right in its way. It was really a weird feeling, but it was kind of fun. Ellen thought so anyway. She and I were always hitting each other on the shoulders. The hits were simply love taps. One day Ellen decided to love tap Mom, and Mom about fell over. I guess we might have been a bit rough when we were younger, but we only hit each other when we were happy and not when we were angry or upset.

Before the Scouts went to Montreal for the 1967 World’s Fair, I decided that I had better make a lunch for us. We had used up all of Mom's good bread in the week we had to cook for ourselves at home. Mom and Dad were gone with the MIA girls, and we would meet them at Baraboo Wisconsin, and then Mom would bring the girls home, and Dad and Brother Woodruff would go on with the boys. Dale Lee was visiting with us then, and Will, Dale and I had used up all the bread that Mom had left. We had hauled bales of hay all day, and at night I started to make the lunch. With no bread, I walked over to Aunt Guinie’s and asked her for a bread recipe. Mom always made her bread with the recipe she kept in her head, and her head wasn't at home. I went back home, and mixed up all the stuff that was supposed to be in the bread, and then it was too late to let it raise, so I put it in the bread pans and right straight into the oven. Then we all went to bed. I had set the electric alarm clock for the time that the bread should have been taken out of the oven. We had one problem though. The power went off for the night. The clock didn't work, but the gas oven sure did. The next morning when I woke up I could smell something burning. It was the bread. I had produced the toughest bricks that ever were made. All the loaves were black as sin, and as hard as rocks. We threw them out, and Druke tried his hardest to eat them. He couldn't even make a scratch in them. They were still lying around and being chewed on by the dog months later. Mom said that when she got home from Montreal with the girls, she wondered what those black bricks were.

When we finally got to Baraboo where we would switch the girls for the truck and let them take the car back home, it was a real shock to see mom. She had been bitten by the mosquitoes, and she was so swollen that I didn't know who she was. She was swollen like that one other time when the doctor gave her some medicine that she was allergic to, and to me it was the funniest thing to watch her scratching away. She looked like she was going crazy, and I guess she was. I guess she could have died, and that wouldn't have been funny. I had the hives once too. I had eaten too many ice cream sandwiches when we visited Joan at BYU. I found out then that the hives were no laughing matter.

On that Scout trip to Montreal, Will and I decided to show our wings. We both had cutoffs that we wore. We never wore them anytime when Mom and Dad were around. I don't think that cutoffs were the type of clothing that we were to wear in our family. Lloyd Woodruff also took us faster than I've ever gone in a car on that trip. In the Woodruff's old car, he was used to putting the gas pedal to the floor and just steering. He did the same in our Galaxy. The car had a big 390 C.I. motor, and boy did we go. When we got close to 100 MPH, I asked him if we weren't going a bit too fast. It scared him as much as it did us when he looked down at the speedometer. We also had to hurry up and wait for Dale that trip. He was so slow it was hard to believe. Once he had to run along behind the truck for a while. That didn't help much. He got left at a service station once too. Nothing seemed to worry him, and he thought that he had all the time in the world. I wonder if he is still that slow.

Another Dale that was not quite the same as the Dale Lee we always waited for was Dale Friesen. He was a small kid for his age, and I really liked him. He went on many scout trips with us, and I really like to have him around. He was a fun-natured kid that like to joke and tease, and was also fun to tease.

And when I think of Dale, who was the son of the store keeper in Grassy, I think of Pat Galvin, the first store keeper's son. Pat was a pretty neat friend. We played a lot together at school. He was a really nice kid. He is single still, and living in Lethbridge. I have talked to him on the phone, but I have never got brave enough to go see him. Maybe one of these days I will stop in and see him.

When we were young, Richard, Eugene and I would always try to come up with money making projects. We would load up our wagons with vegetables and take them to our moms, and have vegetable sales. Some of the food came right out of their fridges, but they would buy one or two things for a few pennies. Once we decided to put on a play and charge for tickets as well as refreshments. It was fun to sell the tickets, go be in the play, and then go sell the refreshments. The play was about the bed bugs, and a guy that was bitten by them. It was only about three minutes long, but we really thought it was something to see.

During my school years, I had some pretty good friends. One of them was Mike McClung. I met him the summer I went to Edmonton for summer school. His family sort of took me in, and we had a lot of fun together. I would go to their Family Home Evenings, and I would spend Sundays at their place. When I first talked with Mike, it was as though we had known each other for a long time. I haven't seen him since 1971, but I sure would like to bump into him again. I have talked with his dad since that time, and I have written to Mike, but he isn't much of a letter writer, and I have never gotten a return letter. In 1991 I saw him again at his grandfather's home, and he didn't even remember me. He hasn't changed a bit, though. He is an optometrist in Medicine Hat.

Also when we were in Masset, Wanda Lamb and I became good friends. We wrote back and forth for several years. She sent me seaweed to eat, and all kinds of interesting things, and I sent her wheat and other prairie farm things.

In Grade nine, Mike from Poland moved into our school. He couldn't speak English, and I couldn't speak Polish. We did become the best of friends though, and could communicate without a spoken language quite well. I would like to see him again. He moved out of our school in grade ten, and I don't know where he is now.

Dennis Ell was a great friend too. He would stick up for me if he thought I was getting picked on too much, but he did a lot of teasing himself. I liked being teased by him, though because I knew that he wouldn't ever really hurt me. He did sort of hurt me physically though, when he would grab my stomach muscles and squeeze them. He would lead me around and tell me to jump and stuff like that. With his grip on my stomach, I would do anything he asked. It hurt, but somehow it was fun. I really became attached to that kid. I saw him about two years ago, and he hasn't changed much.

It was a real shock to me to receive word in 2011 that Dennis had died. It was Dennis that I longed to be brave enough to go see each time we went to Lethbridge. I went to his home and talked with him one year. He took me out to his shop and showed me around. I think that trip out to the shop was so that we could talk in private. We each told each other that we loved each other and that we really thought the world of each other. It was hard for Dennis to express those kinds of feelings. I wish now that I could have had another chance to really visit with Dennis. At our 20 year class reunion, it was Dennis that I longed to see, but he didn’t want to come to it and be in that big of a crowd. I guess I will have to wait until I see him in Heaven. Then we can talk and remember many years of happy times together.

In grade nine, I liked to tease people. I took Sharon Kast's glasses one day, and was running around the room to keep her from getting them back. I put them on, and I was amazed when I looked out the window and saw that the trees had leaves on them. It was then that I decided to tell mom that I needed my eyes checked. I got glasses that year, and was surprised to see that the sugar factory had windows on it. There were rocks on the road, and you could even see the blades of grain in the field in the springtime. I had always thought that the eye chart was more like a memory test than a vision test. I thought you had to kind of remember the letters that were on each line rather than actually read them.

The missionaries used to come to our place quite often, and it was always fun to joke around with them. They would stay for hours, and often went home quite late. Shame on us for making them break the mission rules.

Reamsbottoms were good friends of the family too. They lived with us for a short time after their marriage. Erva was always laughing. It was neat to be around such a happy person. She was a good cook too, and that didn't hurt anything either. Their wedding was about the first wedding that I remember going to. There was a dance and a hat passing for money. This was all after they were married in the Alberta Temple.

When I was in primary, we used to like to catch the bees that used to be in the bushes at the old church. We would take two paper cups, and trap bees in them, and sometimes we would accidentally let them go in the church. How would you like to teach a primary class with a bee flying around in the room? Mom sure got mad at us once for watching the bees, and not paying attention to her lesson.

I have been to the Ottawa Peace Tower two times in my life, and I couldn't go up it either time. Both times we were there, it was on a Fast Sunday. I used to get sick when I fasted. I got about half way up the first time when I got sick, and had to go back down. I guess that I made mom miss the tower too, that time. The rest of the family got to go up and watched the bells be played and everything. The second time I was there was with the scouts on our Montreal trip, and I waited down at the bottom again because I was sick. On the first family trip, we watched the changing of the guards, and saw several big ships. On the scout trip, everyone got sick it seemed. We really had a mess in the truck before we got home. Some of the boys had diarrhea really badly and had some accidents in the truck. We ended up stopping by a stream and giving the mattress a good cleaning. We sprinkled it down with bleach to kill any germs as well, and then we went on. I remember Sardine sandwiches really tasting good when we got good and hungry on that trip. The Redds were the only ones that would eat them though, so we had our fill. I was also sick when we were in Montreal and the scouts were going up to the cross on the top of the hill. I sat at the bottom of the hill and tried to keep from throwing up. I seemed to miss many of the great adventure. In 2013 when we were in the Palmyra pageant, we took the kids to Ottawa and I finally made it up the peace tower. It was a real let down. It was good, but it was not as great as I had dreamed it would be.

In 1995 I took the older kids back east to the church sites, and to Ottawa and Montreal. While I was there I was going to finally make it up that peace tower, but it was closed for repair. That was the story of that trip. Everywhere we went, repairs, floods and hurricanes kept us from seeing some of the things we most wanted to see. We were always just ahead or behind the worst part of the storms, and we know that we were protected by the Lord in all that happened on that trip.

I used to hate Grade Nine French. I ended up with a pretty bad grade in that class too. I remember really working hard on one paragraph that we had to write. I looked up every word, and how to spell each of the verbs. When I handed it in, Mrs. Clemis just said, "Tom Redd, who did you copy that from?" I never tried to do anything good in that class from that time on.

Our grade nine teacher, Mrs. Knibbs, had a pretty bad April Fool’s day that year too. We had moved all the desks out of the school, except for the teacher's desk, and then I hid under her desk, and when she came in and stood behind the desk to make a class announcement, I hit her in the stomach with the desk drawer. Little did we know that she had rolled her car on the way to school that day, and was pretty shaken up. We would have been a little nicer to her if we had only known.

Another time we tricked Mr. Thompson. Sandra Brown forged a note to mom that said that I was getting out of hand and would mom please come down to his room immediately. Tory Fettig delivered the note by asking to go to the bathroom, and boy was I scared when mom came charging in. Mr. Thompson was really surprised too. That afternoon, Mom came in and threw rocks at us and said that we ought to have something thrown at us for doing that to a teacher. It was rock candy though, so when the shock wore off of us kids, we had a lot of candy to eat that afternoon. I think mom had as much fun with that trick day as we did.

Mom was a strict but loving teacher. She knew how to have fun with the kids, and was willing to have that fun if they earned the fun by working. There was a time that her method of control was in question. She had taken a pinch grip on the Shoulder of one little boy and told him to do what he was to do. She was called to the office with the parents there the next day. The boy told his parents that mom had hit him. He didn’t know quite what to say to explain what had happened. When the principal ask the boy what happened, he said she touched me. He asked him to demonstrate, and he put his hand on his shoulder. The principal asked if that was all, and he said yes. The boy’s parents got mad at him. The principal was mad at him. He was reamed out and told to never let such little things stop him from learning again. The whole time mom was sitting there in great relief because she thought that this would be the end of her teaching career. It is funny how the Lord looks out for us. Mom was a good teacher and it was because she had strict control and love. That is just how she controlled her family at home as well. What a great example she was to us all.

We used to make a quite a bit of Ice Cream. One summer, it seemed that we made it each day. I guess that was one good reason for having cows around that needed to be milked each night and morning, and chickens that laid plenty of eggs. It would be kind of fun to be able to make that much ice cream still, but I will pass on the milking.

My favorite Sacrament hymn was There is a Green Hill Far Away. I used to read it during the sacrament each Sunday. It always made me think so much about the Savior to read through the words to that song. I still think of it often, and marvel that the Savior was good enough to suffer for my wickedness.

I remember different times in my life, when we would call upon the priesthood for special blessings. Aunt Nedra was really sick once, and with fasting and prayer from the extended family, and Priesthood blessings, she is still around to tell about her experiences. The doctor told them before the operation that it would be good practice because it was like operating on a corpse. It was a new and unknown procedure. Colleen was sick one time too, and I remember her getting a blessing. She was told that she would never have kids but with priesthood blesses, faith, and prayer, she has had children of her own.

Craig Smith was always a role model for me. I thought that he was the greatest, most spiritual teacher I had in Sunday School. He was an example of humility and service. I remember how neat it was to see Chad, his son, riding with him in the truck when he was out doing his farm work too. Chad was only two or three years old, and loved to be with his dad.

Branding time was a neat time of year. We would often help round up all the cattle on the range, and then brand them and give them their shots. That's where I was bucked off of Star. I used to like to ride with dad on the round up. I didn't mind horses when I was that young, but I have already told about how that changed.

We used to like to go out to the sand hills north of our farm. We would roll down them in the summer time, and sleigh ride down them in the winter time. There was also a big pond close by that was great for pulling sleighs behind trucks on. One day we were down there, and I was being pulled by LeRon. He went in front of Will, and I got hit by Will. He had the brakes on and was just sliding, but it sure scared me. I think that Will was more upset about it than I was though, because he realized how easily he could have killed someone. I was so bundled up, that I never really got hurt at all.

The first Datsun that our family had was a little blue Datsun 1000. It had only 2 doors, and was really tiny. We got some good service out of it for the short time that we had it. We went to Wildwood in it, and we would take the Torries to seminary in it. On Halloween in 1971, Mom and Dad turned it into the Pumpkin when they traded it in for an orange car. That was our first Datsun 1600, with four doors. It was a lot nicer, and bigger. After the little car, it seemed like a Cadillac. While I was in the LTM, Mom and Dad bought a green one that was just like the orange one. I had each of those cars for a while after my mission. Our family has been a Datsun family ever since. Cheryl and I even have two of them now. The car we bought that was a Datsun stopped our love for that car company. It was a real lemon. We put too much money into that car and ended up selling it after only 11 months. We got a Honda, and we were happy to be back in the car we loved so well.

I have often thought about what kinds of impressions we make on people with the language that we use. I was really shocked at Will one day at school. He was in grade twelve, and I had just passed him in the hall. As I went past, I heard him say "Jes", and I couldn't believe my ears. I looked at him and all I could say was "Will". I wonder what he thought about that. I used to make up words to tell my feelings, and I would try to stay far away from anything that could sound like swearing. Hoe Key Crow and Foowie, were two of my favorite expressions.

Stan James was the world's most interesting bus driver. I don't think that he ever looked at the road that he was driving on. He would constantly be staring out the side windows of the bus. At the Railroad Crossing, he would sometimes put the bus in reverse and back out onto the highway. He would always have the gas pedal to the floor, and really gave us some fun rides over the bumps. He was a good fisher though, and would sometimes give us fish. He was better than Carl Johnson. Carl was driving us to a basketball game, and went off the road. The bus tipped up on its two side wheels, and was held up by the snow in the ditch. No one was hurt but we were a bit shaken up. Thank goodness for deep snow in that ditch.

Pets were something that used to cause mom some headaches, I'm sure. One time I had two wild rabbits that ran loose in my bedroom. They sure made a mess and smelled bad, but mom put up with them. They would sleep with me in bed. Finally I made a cage for them, and put them outside where they could eat grass. They both promptly died when they were put in the cage. We also had two snapping turtles that we put in the basement. They disappeared somewhere though. I think that they might have dug down in the mud at the bottom of the sump pump hole. We had picked them up on the highway when we were back east. I bought a turtle at BYU once, and entered the turtle races. After the races, I bought a baby bathtub from D.I. and kept him in my closet.

I used to like to sew and I would make doll clothes and quilts. I made a shirt that I really liked, and a pair of pants that I hated. I made a suit for me when we stayed at Mom’s and Dad's one summer too. One day at a school supper I was wearing the shirt I had made, and Mr. Robinson was saying that he would like to see a shirt that a boy made. He thought that was the funniest thing that I boy would sew. There I was sitting in the shirt I not only sewed, but also made the pattern for. I never told him, and he never knew, but Mom and I thought it was funny.

I used to like to go "swimming" in the ditch by our house, but I never really learned to swim until we went to Aunt Raolla's place just before my mission. I decided that I would swim there, and I did. I had a great time, and loved the water slide that went into her pool. I have taken classes since then, but I haven't improved much. In one class we were to hold our faces under the water as long as we could. The teacher never let me do it though, because he had other kids pull me up before I was finished with the air I had in me. I guess that playing the tuba was what helped me to have big lungs--or maybe it was simply all the talking I did.

Sometimes car accidents are a good way to learn what you shouldn't do when you drive. The boyfriend of one of the girls in our school decided to go to Bow Island as fast as he could. He missed one corner, and the car was totally wrecked. There were little pieces of meat on all the car parts that were thrown everywhere. They had to have a closed coffin funeral for him. Sister Reamsbottom was killed in a car accident too, and she used to drive for a living. She was a bus driver. On one trip, we saw a man that had been killed in an accident. I saw a car in my rear view mirror go off the road one time while I was driving to BYU. I should have stopped, but I didn't. I did watch to be sure that the car stayed right side up and stopped, but I will always feel guilty about not stopping. I only saw it all in the rear view mirror, and I never let on to anyone that I knew what had happened. Mom and Dad were in the car with me. Another time we stopped to help out in an accident, and my electric blanket was used for one of the injured people. It was supposed to be mailed back to me, but it never was.

Driving down the road that went to Woodruffs was a fun thing to do. It was just like a roller coaster ride. Once it was even more "up and down" because there were hard snow drifts on the road that would hold up the car. I had a great time driving down that road until the car fell through one of the drifts, and I was trapped inside. I crawled out the window, and dug the car out with a fence post and went home. I never tried that again. The only other time I tried to go over the drifts was after we had gotten stuck on the way to the colony. I walked to the colony, and got them to pull us home on the tractor. The car was just like a toboggan.

My life history would not be complete without the story of our club house. Richard and Eugene and I made a club and I would always make sure that I was the president. I sure was a brat. I guess that was the luck of being the oldest. After all, the oldest should have privileges. There was an old unused outhouse that was lying down over by Torries. The door was down, but there was a vent by the roof, that we would use for our door. LeRon helped us put a door with a lock on it over the vent. We even made a screen door. The three holes were our windows. There was one for each of us. We painted the outside, and we put an old gas tank on the top of it for our running water supply. Sister Eldridge drove by when they first moved to Grassy Lake, and got her first look at us three kids. We were looking out of the holes as she went by. I wonder if she had anything to do with Bobby, who was our age, never wanting to play with us. Maybe she didn’t want her son playing with three strange kids in an outhouse.

Now I must remember to tell about my graduation from Seminary. I got a new suit for that occasion. I was really excited about graduation, and Mom was going to make it a memorable day for me. Boy, she really did too. I could have died, I was so embarrassed. There was a big formal dinner at the Stake House, and the food was passed to the tables. We had a salad that was all inside a lettuce leaf, and mom couldn't work the salad tongs, so she just helped herself with her hand. She then wanted the leaf that was under the whole salad, and she took it. Salad fell all over, and she just put it back in the bowl with her hands, and sent it on. When it came time for the potatoes and gravy, she spilled the gravy over the edge of her plate, so she just moved the plate on top of it. Then when it was time to clear off the table for the dessert, they tried to take her plate, and it was stuck down to the tablecloth with the gravy. I really hated to have to admit that that was my mother. I could have hid rather than watch her use her "back home" manners.

The suit that I got for that Graduation from Seminary in grade eleven, was the only suit that lived all the way through my mission. I really liked it, but when I first brought it home brand new, Dad said that it was too tight, and it didn't have cuffs on the pants. He was pretty upset with it. I don't know if he was just upset with the fact that it was new or not though. He seemed to have an aversion to new clothes.

Most of what follows will be the stories that I remember from the time I got out of High School to the present time, March 4, 1985. Most of what has already been presented happened before high school graduation.

After graduation from High School, I went to Brigham Young University. I was there for longer than I should have been because I kept changing my major. I had several majors but was finally happy with a double major in Broadcasting and Elementary Education.

After my freshman year at the "Y", I went on a mission to France Switzerland. I would love to go back to France for a visit. I love to travel and can't think of anything worse than to spend a vacation all in one place. I have now been back to my beloved France two times. I took Melissa there in 2006 and mom and I went to Europe in June of 2013. We were on a cruise and then rented a car and drove through the bottom of France. I loved it, but was a bit bothered by all the changes that had happened between 2006 and 2013. It was hardly the same place. It had become to modernize.

The following are some high lights from my life as a missionary.

We were having a Hill family reunion at our farm in Grassy Lake the summer before my mission. There were a quite a few relatives up from Utah, and we were enjoying our time. Aunt Raola and Uncle Darrel were here from California. I was especially impressed with David. I really like that kid, as I did any kid that was that age. He was six and a special friend to me. During the Family Business meeting, I got my Mission call, and read it at that meeting. I was called to serve in the France Switzerland mission. I was totally shocked because Ellen was then serving in that very mission. I was so happy to be called to a French mission. I always wanted to go there, but I knew I was not very good at French. I was to leave a month later, on September 15, 1973. What a fun month of preparations. I was excited about the shopping, the shots, and everything. We left for Salt Lake City on my birthday, and we had a bit of time to visit with Utah relatives before I went into the mission home. Dad gave me a father's blessing out behind some bushes beside the Mission Home. Then I went into the scariest stage of my life. We were in Salt Lake for a week, and we had to learn the discussions in English. It was pretty tough. We went to the Salk Lake Temple with the prophet, and had a wonderful time there with him. We were able to ask any questions we wanted, and it was neat to see that the prophet would tell people not to worry about that when they would ask questions that were not needed. One of the most difficult things for me was to be with so many other young men for beds, prayers and showers, etc. I was embarrassed to be around so many people for such sacred and personal things. After a week there, we went to Provo. It was so exciting to get to Provo and see familiar sites as the Greyhound bus drove into Orem.

We went to the Language Training Mission, the LTM, as it was then called. It was in some of the old buildings on BYU campus. There wasn't room for us to stay at the LTM, so we were in a motel on the south end of Provo. We would get on the bus at about 6:15 each morning and we would return after a long day of learning at about 10:00. The day was filled with classes to learn the language, the culture and the gospel. I loved it there. It was also a time for feeling extreme sorrow for my past wrongs, and a time to try to improve my life. I remember when I had a dream for the first time in French. It was so exciting. It was sort of a thresh hold to cross over into the world of the French. I would often close myself in little closets around the building to pray and study. It was very hard for me to learn the discussions in French, but I succeeded with the help of the Lord. Ellen returned to BYU while I was in the LTM, and it was fun to watch the mail room for treats and letters from her.

At one point, we were moved to the Women's gym at BYU, and that was an interesting experience. There were about 100 of us sleeping in the gym in bunk beds, and we all had to use the showers there together. What a pile of men that was at 6:00 am. We could then walk to the LTM and we could return when we wanted to, instead of waiting for a bus to take us home at night. It was great. That came to an end, and we were again shipped off to the end of Provo and another Motel. More long days and bus rides. There were six elders in each room, and that wasn't near as bad as the 100 in the gym.

Finally the time came to fly to France. We got to the airport in Salt Lake City, and Mom and Dad, Ellen and Will were there. It was so good to see them. We took off and flew for longer than I thought was possible until we got to Switzerland. We stopped in New York on the way. We were taken straight to a hotel and put to bed for a long time. When we got up, it was time for Breakfast. I don't know how long we slept, but I don't think I had any of that "Jet Lag" they talk about. That day we went tracting with the elders from the Mission Home. I was with Elder Assay. I thought he was an extra special example. I was so lost though. We got in a door, and Elder Assay talked about the church. Then he said that Elder Redd would tell the Joseph Smith story. I had understood close to none of the discussion, but I launched into the things I had memorized. At the end of it all, Elder Assay said that what he was trying to say was such and such, and had to tell the whole thing over again.

The next day we were shipped out by train to the cities we were to work in. I went to Montpellier. I loved that city right from the start. I was scared to death though when we got there, because we were to have a discussion that night, and when elders came that knew the new discussions, we were not to use the old discussions any more. I was the first of the new discussion people. We went to that appointment, and I had to teach it. It was really scary, but I found out that the Lord really does help you when you deserve it. I gave the discussion almost perfectly, even though I couldn't understand a thing. Elder Ron Christensen was my first companion, and I loved him. He was great, but I didn't know how great until after I had other companions that weren't so great. We worked steady and hard, but I thought we should have done more. After other companions, I wished I was with good old steady Elder Christensen again. My second companion in Montpellier was Elder Roper. He was not what I wanted to live with. He was lazy and did things that I felt were not right. I was so glad that when I prayed for a change, the Lord answered my prayers, and sent me to Antibes. I had Elder Pettit there, and I found out that there were lots of ways to waste time. The ultimate waste was the day that he cut his toe nails too short so we had to stay in all day.

When Elder Profandis came to take Elder Pettit's place, I was happy to go to work in a steady way again. I loved this companion, and learned a great deal while I was with him. He was so willing to just keep plugging along. We had some of the worst experiences of my mission while I was with him, and some of the best experiences of my mission while I was with him. We were thrown off the porch of one family at one time, we saw the ultimate evil at work when we went to one Catholic priests home, and I saw the devil at one of our investigators apartments. That was a really scary thing, but I was assured by the Holy Ghost that we were protected because of the Priesthood we held. We had a couple of ladies ask to be baptized, and another lady that was a member since she was young, but she didn't know the church was in France started coming out to meetings. I was able to tract out the whole town twice. What an experience. When I got my first greenie, I was able on the third time around the town to tell him what would happen at each door. That was neat. Elder Brown was my Greenie, and I about killed him off, but we worked as hard as I wanted for the first time.

I then was transferred to Grenoble to be with Elder Wilcox. We both arrived in town at the same time, and we were great companions. We worked hard and loved it. We taught more together than I had ever thought possible. We lived the rules to the T and loved it. We later became a threesome when Elder Neilson joined us. The day he came, what I thought was a salesman knocked on the door. I told him we didn’t need anything and closed the door. He knocked again and I insisted that we didn’t need anything and closed the door. A third time he knocked and opened the door a bit upset and was closing the door when he said, “But Elder Redd, I am your new companion.” We took him in and tried to get settled after we determined that no one else for the town was to be moving on that transfer. We were living in a small apartment, and the other two elders in town had their apartment condemned so they moved in with us. What a crowd. Finally Elder Wilcox moved on and Elder Singleton came to take his place. Then Elder Neilson left and the other elders moved out. It was great to be only two in the apartment. I really loved Elder Singleton, and I am grateful I was able to be worthy while I was there. We had some wonderful times together. We taught a sister from America while we were there. Lori Smith was her name. She joined the church. She was a great person. She moved to Salt Lake, and I have since lost track of her. Sister Canis and her daughter also joined the church at that time. It was in Grenoble that I worked the hardest and was worked on the hardest by Satan.

I was transferred to Perpignan after that. I had a pretty lazy companion to begin with, but that soon changed and I had a French companion. That was great. I learned more about the French people, language, and culture with Elder Terian than with all the rest. I loved that City. Rene Roca was the first person to be totally ready to join the church before we met him. He was taught and baptized in a week. I wish I knew where he is now. While we were in that city, the mission was divided. I was then in the France Toulouse mission. I had a new mission president, and was sent home from that mission. What a neat thing it was to be part of the beginning of a new mission.

I flew from Toulouse to Paris and then to Montreal. I got to stop in Winnipeg and visit with Mom and Dad on their mission on the way home. It was great to be with them again. I then went on home and spent a few short hours at home before I left for BYU. When I was there, I was called as a missionary for the stake, and served for a year more as a missionary. We converted every non-member in the stake. I had Steve Ivie for a companion and roommate, and that was great.

I am sure there are many other things that could be in this part of my history, but it is best to have something recorded than nothing. As I think of more great experiences, I will record them also.

I think that my farm background, being away from people, has made me so that I don't know how to talk to people and make close friends. I've never really had close friendships that have lasted other than with my wife and my family. I guess I really don't share the real me with very many people. I never want to bother people or get in their way.

Kids are about the only people that I have ever spent time with, and really been open with. They are great. They are so frank, honest, and open. While I was growing up, I always spent my spare time with smaller children. I guess that's why I have ended up being a teacher in elementary education.

When I first went to BYU, Ellen told me that the most important thing that I would learn while I was there was not the stuff that I would study in classes, but the things that I would find out about myself and the friends that I would make. I found that to be so true. I guess that is what a real education is all about. It's the people that make life good or bad and help us to grow from the experiences we have.

I have talents that I have worked on and developed to a certain level. I am grateful for them. Music is one of my strong points. I have written some music, and enjoy playing instruments. I played the clarinet, the flute, the Tuba, and the baritone. I was in the BYU Cougar Marching Band for about six years and I loved almost every minute of the time I spent there. Music will always be a part of my life.

It was in the BYU marching band that I met Cheryl, and we became good friends. We had our first date, and not long after we were married in the Manti Temple. We have been blessed with one daughter whom we named Melissa, and are currently waiting for the second addition to our family.

A lot has change from 1985 to 2001. We now have nine children, and are busy all the time with the demands of kids. Melissa is married, and that really doesn't end the need to be with us and to share time with us. It usually is time spent late at night. She really likes to be up late, and so do I. I hate to get up in the mornings no matter how much sleep I get. As I review this history in 2013, a lot more has changed. Melissa is no longer married to Dave Kerr. She has been bouncing a bit. She completed an associate’s degree at BYU-I and then worked her way up in Wal-Mart. She finally quit there, and after a few other jobs, she is working at the Post Office. That has been a good job for her.

Our last son was born in 2002. We now have ten children and 6 grandchildren with two more on the way. Taylor died in 2013 and we miss her sweet spirit. She taught us a lot about enduring with patience. We look forward to seeing her in the next life. It is amazing how quickly the kids grow up. It won’t be long and we will have an empty house—if the grand kids will stay away. I guess that kids are truly a heritage of the Lord. We are blessed to have the kids we do. I have learned a lot from each of them. Aaron and Dallin have served missions, and Jordan is now preparing to go into the mission field. We have been blessed by their service.

Upon Graduation from University, I took a job teaching Grade One and Two and High School band in Manyberries. We really loved the town, and the people were great. We have several close friends in that area still. After one year of teaching there, the pressure of a principal that didn't care for me became strong enough that we decided to take a job teaching at Holt Colony School in Irma. The people there were really nice to us, but after two years, we thought it best to move into the Elementary school in Wainwright. I taught grade one for one year, and then the French position opened. I took that job, and enjoyed working with almost all the students in the school. After a teaching the French program for four years in Wainwright, we moved to Mountain View. I taught many things there, including grades 1, 3, 4, 5, computers, band, and grade 9 French. I taught in Mountain View for eight years and then transferred to Del Bonita where I taught the elementary grades, and high school computers. That school became too small and was closed after I had been there for three years. I then was moved to the Milford Hutterite colony where I taught grades 1 to 9 for two years. I was able to move to Magrath and taught grade 1 or 2 for the next five years. In 2005 we moved to Utah. I taught Grade 1 at Valley Crest for a year and then became a School Technology Specialist. As a specialist, I have taught at Valley Crest each year, and have spent one year in each of Diamond Ridge, Granger, Vista, and Mill Creek Schools. The last seven years as a specialist have been good years. There have been challenges but I would have rather have these challenges instead of the regular classroom trials. If I keep holding out, this will be the longest time we have spent in the same teaching assignment, even though the schools have changes, and the longest time that we have spent in one house.

That was a brief resume of the years following university. Here are more details. When I started BYU in September, 1978 and had decided to really enjoy cougar band and also help others to enjoy it because so many people had helped me to enjoy it in the earlier years. I also was really going to serve the band like I never had before. I met many great people and one of them I thought was a nice person, but I wouldn't ever get to know well. I later got sick and was tired of staying in bed, so I went to the "Y" center and that person kicked my foot as she was following in my footsteps a little too closely, right beside the Theater. I soon found myself asking her to go to the show the following Monday with me, and Cheryl accepted. I really enjoyed being with her because we could do anything together and have fun doing it because we were just friends. Two days later I called her and asked her to go for Pizza and she accepted to my surprise. I thought that the shortness of the invitation and the fact that she was too good for me meant that she wouldn't go. After the first date, I decided that that was the type of person I wanted to marry, and after the second date, I felt the Lord was trying to tell me something, but I didn't want to listen. Two days later, we went out again and the Lord told me she was the person that I was to marry. For a month we did a lot together and then I asked one night at a fast Sunday Fireside "What would you do if some dumb Canadian asked her to marry him." She said she'd probably say "yes", so the following Monday, we picked out the rings and bought them. Then I decided I'd better get on the ball and ask her to marry me. Luckily she did say "yes". 7-11 sounded like a fun day to do it on so we were married on 7,11,1979 in the Manti temple in Utah. As the time rolled nearer to our wedding date, I felt more and more a part of her and grew to know her better. For the last 2 weeks we were single, I was at my home, and she was at hers. Those were long weeks for us, but shorter for me than her. I had a lot of farm work to keep me busy. It was a time that really let me see the qualities I had taken for granted in her. Before the 2 weeks, we did all the last minute rush jobs for our wedding, announcement, etc. What a pain. We were together more and more, and it was good to have a job to work on to do at those times. I gave her her ring on a rose, and she wouldn't even look at the ring. She just looked at the rose and said it was beautiful. I kept saying for her to look closer. She finally saw the ring and started to cry. We had a nice long walk that night and just enjoyed each other’s company.

One of the events of my college years was a bit of time I spent with my brother, Will. He was good at sports and loved doing all the things that everyone enjoyed. Utah was the place for perfect skiing, so while he lived here, he took up skiing and became quite good at it. He felt that I should do more of the Athletic things than I did, and he decided to invite me to go skiing with him one day. I had a night class the day we went, and we knew we had to be back for that night class. It was a perfectly delightful day. I think that it was the first time that Will had ever wanted to include me in his activities. Most of the other times he did fun things, it was with others his age. This was a day I had him to myself and I loved it. We drove to the ski slope, and he told me everything I needed to do to ski. All I had to do was watch him. I tried to be brave and do things the way he did, but I was quite a flop. We got on the ski lift and went to the top of the hill. He had showed me how to hold my feet so the skis wouldn’t catch on anything and all, and promptly at the top of the lift, I got caught and fell getting of the lift. What a mess! The lift didn’t stop and wait for me to clear out of the way. It just kept dropping people off all around me and on top of me as I tried to get out of the way and put my skis back on. I got that done, and I became very good and putting skis back on. The skis had a little cable that attached to my leg so that when the ski came off, it would stay with me instead of going down the hill on its own. That became very important to me at this time. Once I was ready again, we started off, and Will showed me how to get doing across the hill. Then we would have to turn and go zigzag down the hill. Every time I turned, I would fall down and my skis would come off. I felt so stupid, and I guess I was. I continued to go down the hill in that fashion. Ski a bit, fall down, put my skis back on, try to get up, and ski a bit, only to fall again when I had to turn, and start all over again. Finally Will said that he would ski ahead, and he did. He probably made at least two trips down the hill for every time I went down. I mastered the art of falling. After a few times up the hill following the pattern of falling at each turn, we made it down to the bottom of the hill at the same time, and Will looked at his watch and said we had just enough time to make one more run if we hurried. We got on the lift, and all the way up the hill I kept thinking about all the time it would take me to get down. I knew if I could just stop turning, I would be just fine. It was the turns that stopped me. I remember asking Will what happens when someone comes up behind you and he assured me that it was okay and no problem. He was probably thinking that there was no way I would ever be at the point of skiing well enough to catch up to anyone, but he didn’t know the plot I was hatching in my mind. I had decided that I would make it down in time if I just went straight down the hill with no Zigzag and no turns. That is just what I did. I started out fine. It had started to lightly snow. It was an exhilarating feeling to be going and not falling. Down I went, Faster and Faster! As I picked up speed, the tiny snowflakes that were falling began to really hurt as they hit my face. It was like they would cut me. My poles were used to keep my balance, but I was beyond the speed where you could put them on the ground. I was holding them in the air, swinging them every which way for balance. Then they became even a more important tool. I was yelling at people to get out of the way and flailing the poles in the air for emphasis. If I saw someone coming up in the way, all I could do was yell and warn them to get out of the way. I was going much too fast to alter my trajectory without taking a nasty spill, so on I went, faster and faster! Finally the end of the hill was in sight and I was relieved to know I was still alive, and there was hope of stopping. There was a rise going up from where you stop at the bottom and get on the lift again to go up that went right up to the ski lodge. With my tremendous speed, I zoomed up that hill at lightning speed, and managed to stop just before crashing through one of the large picture windows that overlooked the ski hill. What a trip that was! I was fast—much faster than I would like to have been. I had to wait for about 15 minutes for Will to get down the hill, and he was skiing fast. I think he saw me shoot past and figured he had better get to the scene of the inevitable accident as quickly as possible. That was my first glorious ski trip; time to myself with Will, at least in the car to the hill there and back, and a wonderful chance to see how good my brother was and try to be just a little bit like him. What a day to remember!

As Ellen had said, the people and friends that I met at BYU, were the things that meant the most to me. Aunt Nedra said that I would regret going to BYU for the rest of my life. I guess in a way she was right. I have regretted having to leave BYU, and say good-bye to so many good friends. Ron Bird was the best friend I could have had. I have talked about him briefly, but I should tell one more story about him. After the Winter Semester, he had gone home for the spring. He was getting ready for his mission, and when I got word that he would be speaking in church, I wanted to go up to his home in Idaho and hear him. I got Eric Affeltranger, another good friend from Panama, and we started off for Idaho. We were in the little orange car, and it was over heating. It had been acting up for me and I was scared of it. We had the heater on full blast, and that didn't keep it cool either. It was really hot outside, so we drove down the freeway with our feet and arms out the window. I had to keep my gas pedal foot in the car, but the other foot was out the window. At Salt Lake, we decided that we had better go back home. I really wanted to go on though, and Eric was happy about the break too. We saw a sign about renting a car for $14.95. We went to the airport to get a car. We managed to scrape up our $14.95, and went in for the car. They told us we needed a $20.00 deposit too. We went out to the car and found a dime in the seat, and went back in to a phone booth to phone Aunt Lura. We begged the deposit from her, and were sick to see her take it out of her food money. We went back to the airport anyway, and got the car. It had a tank of gas, and we thought we could make it to Ron's place. We did finally get there late at night. We had phoned ahead, so they knew we were coming. Ron was gone, and Sister Bird gave us twenty dollars to go to a motel in town for the night. We went and cancelled the reservation she had made, and ran into Ron's next door neighbor. We had planned to sleep in the car, but he said to spend the night at his house. We did, and filled the car with gas with half of the money, and we were going to leave the other half there when we left. We went to Bird's for breakfast, and we had to be careful how we talked about our night at the motel. We said we had slept well and all kinds of things like that, but never said we spent the night right across the road. They finally found out about where we had slept, and we felt awful. We gave back the rest of the money, and were ready to head for home. They asked how much money we had, and we said that we would make it back home. They were insistent, and we said we had no money. They sent $20.00 with us, and we finally got back to Salt Lake, paid Aunt Lura, and went on to BYU. What a trip that was. When we got back to BYU, we mailed the $20.00 back to the Birds. I bet that they thought that we were the most foolish people in the world. They probably didn't want their son to do anything with a nut that takes off without any money.

On another trip there with Ron, They had given me a suit and boots, and lots of other clothes. I think they must have thought I was penniless because of the way I talked about the car tires. I said I couldn't afford snow tires, and then they saw how worn the tires I had were and they said I needed new tires. They about put tires on the car, but I got away without them. I think all of that giving was where Ron started to not want to be around me as much. I was really self-conscious of all the stuff they gave me, and sort of avoided Ron too. That really is too bad that a friendship like that had to end.

That same year, I had a really neat roommate. We both had just returned from our missions, and were doing the kinds of things that we did on our missions. We studied the scriptures, and exercised. Steve did more of exercising than I did. He would do pushups with me sitting on his head. He needed the extra weight for a proper exercise period. He was always using shaving cream for everything but shaving. I would get an ear full of it when I answered the phone, or my pillow would be full of it. We played a lot of tricks on each other. In about 1997 I finally found out where he was. He has been in a mental institution since the time we were together. I must have been hard on him. I would love to see him again sometime.

Cougar Band was the place that I found most of my friends. Marshall Pratt was another neat person to be around. He was sort of quiet, and liked to do the same kinds of things that I liked to do. He liked to eat lots of ice cream, and was willing to do anything that would be fun--without hurting anyone. He liked to hurt my hands though. We would play slap for hours at a time. He played the Trombone. I think that was the place that I learned to like the lower brass instruments. I later learned to play the tuba, and baritone. I'd like to see Marshall again. Maybe someday we can meet again. In 2000, Aaron and I went to Sean Eldredge’s wedding in Texas. On the way home we stopped and saw Marshall. It was so good to see him strong in the gospel, and to see the trials that had made them strong.

The year after my mission, I dated a couple of girls. One of them went on one date with me. She had only one leg. We had a long talk about the value of life. It was interesting, but I don't think that I could ever enjoy her company for too long. The other girl thought that she was going to marry me. She was a nice girl, but had a rich taste. I never could have satisfied her taste for fashion and style.

During the summer I took a trip back to Georgia to visit her family. They wanted me to stay with them and not at a motel. I didn't want to do that. I also was overwhelmed with their house, and all the things that they did. Her parents were both excellent lawyers, and they certainly did not lack for money. The matching Mercedes Benz Cars in the drive way were my first clue that life was a bit high for my taste. So was the Swimming pool in the back yard, and all the endlessly beautiful rooms in their huge house. I would have gone nuts if I stayed in that situation too long. I went on over to Texas and saw two friends that I had known from the dorms. They were my home teachers when I was going through the hardest time of my life at BYU. It was so good to see them. I then went on up to Aaron Forbes place and enjoyed a good visit there.

The story of Aaron began right after my mission. I never met Aaron for quite some time after that though. I was really happy with everything that was happening for the first two semesters of school after my mission. Steve Ivie and I were roommates, and there could not have been better pair. We were just like missionaries still on our missions. We even were called as stake missionaries, and converted every non-member in our stake. How is that for a record? The trouble was that we never really became ordinary people for the whole time we were together. We were still Missionary companions, so the hard part of becoming normal people again came when we were not going to room together any longer.

When I was going to lose Steve as my roommate, I decided to move into a single room in Desert Towers. That was a stupid thing to do because I am the type of person that needs to be around people, but I don't find it easy to just walk up to someone and start talking and it takes forever for me to make friends. A single room just isolated me. I had also moved to a different building, and was new in the branch, and therefore had no ties with previous acquaintances and ward spirit. I decided to try to make friends. That sounds dumb to decide to try to make friends, but that was a decision that I had to consciously make. I looked for people on my floor that I could spend time with. After the spring term was over, and I didn't know anyone yet, I was about ready to go nuts. I was extremely lonely.

During the summer term, I kept looking and praying for a friend. I seemed to get the answer that if I read the scriptures daily, and did all the things that I was supposed to do, I would find a friend. I was working in the cafeteria, and I was really getting depressed there as well. Finally I quit my job, and that was even worse. The normal day to day things were not working out for me at all. My grades went down, and I was terribly lonely. I kept on doing the things I should do spiritually, and it seemed that everything was against me. I talked to my home teachers about my problem. They were a really neat pair of Home teachers, and they were trying to help me, but as soon as I told them what was going on in my life, they were changed, and I had a second pair. The first pair of Home Teachers were the two boys I visited in Texas during the summer when I went to Georgia. I talked to the second pair, and they were changed. I stopped talking then, but my home teachers were changed regularly each month. I tried to reach out to the Elder’s Quorum President for help but could not reach him. He was too much of a different class of person and wouldn’t or couldn’t relate to my problems. I was alone—totally.

Nothing was stable in my life, and I had no one to talk to. We went through three R.A's. in the dorm that summer, and lots of the kids on the floor were moving to other floors. There were two kids across the hall from me that I spent some time with. Eric was a fairly good friend in some ways, be we had nothing really in common. Maenat was form Thailand, and was really different. I really long for someone that was like me and didn't just take me in because they thought I needed it, but because we were alike. I often took my mattress into Eric and Maenat’s room for the weekends, but I still needed a real friend, and not just someone who felt sorry for me. I got in trouble for moving mattresses, but I didn't care. I had company.

Mom and Dad came home from their mission and talked about being in a big rush to get home. Then they went and stayed for several days with Ellen and they visited with Joan a lot too. They did spend most of 24 hours in Provo. Some of that time, I was in class, and some of it I was working. It really hurt to have them leave me so quickly. I had written a letter to Ellen for her birthday, and the letter I got back came in time for my birthday. It said Happy Birthday, and then it told me that I had spelled Eldredge incorrectly, and I shouldn't do that. I don't remember what else happened at the time with the family, but I felt like I was worth nothing to them. Oh, Ellen had Heidi, and I got complimented on being a new Uncle by one of the Torrie kids a week after the baby was born. I didn't even know Ellen had been expecting. I found out about the baby one week after she was born and not from the family. How those things hurt!

Cougar Band, which had been my strength in the previous years, was really awful that year. On the band trips, I was told by several of the kids on the bus that I couldn't sit with them because they were saving that seat, and then no one would sit there. One person told me I couldn't have an empty seat because she was going to sleep there. I was on the instrument loading crew, and the bus drove off and left me at one of our stop. All I was doing was loading the kids’ instruments as fast as I could. Lots of the kids teased me about being left. It was either me or their instruments that would be left behind though. Our bus didn't have anything but suit cases on it so they didn't think about waiting for the instruments to be loaded on the other three buses. We had to learn so much so fast, that there wasn't enough time to make friends, and I was learning to play the tuba as well. That was hard.

I had given kids rides down to band practice from the Fine Arts Center, and that had been a source of satisfaction to me. At least someone in this world thought I was worth something, even if it was a changing load of kids getting a ride to band, but then my car broke down. I had to walk to band, and as I was walking home, another guy from band stopped in his truck and picked up everyone on the street that was walking home except for me. I was the only one that had to walk up to D.T. that night.

I had about decided that life wasn't worth living anymore. I figured that the best thing to do was to get out of the way, and not be around to bother people anymore. I had access to the roof of our seven story building, and a jump from there would end it all. But before I was ready to do that, I would walk through the D.T. Cafeteria one more time. I thought that I just might see someone there that I knew. As I walked through the hall where the dishes go when you are done with them, one of the French horn players from cougar Band said "Hi, Tom." That was all he said, but that was all I needed. My plans changed completely. I began to worship the ground that kid walked on. I marched about ten yards behind him in most of the shows that we did that year, and I watched him constantly. He had a belt that had David written on the back of it, so one day I got brave and said "Hi, David." I goofed and he told me that his first name was David, but that he was Aaron.

I used to watch out my window for Aaron to go down to eat, and then I would run down just to be in the same room that he was in. I never dared to sit anywhere close to him, but I could see him. That helped me to feel like someone cared. I would try to walk down on campus at about the times that I would see him going to classes just to be within twenty feet of him. It didn't matter to me if my classes were at those times or not. I just had to be on the sidewalk where I could see him. I honestly thought that he was the neatest person I had ever met.

While I was feeling alone, I went to the temple. While I was there, I had one of the neatest temple experiences I have ever had. All during the session I felt very alone, and wondered if even the Lord had forsaken me. After the session, I sat in the Celestial Room for a while, to think about how useless life seemed to me at that time. I remember praying and saying "Father, are You there?" When I had said that, someone that I couldn't see came up and hugged me for a long time. After He held me for a long time (about 5 minutes), He told me that someone else needed him now and he would have to go. Then the hug stopped, and I left the temple feeling so good. I knew for myself that the Lord lived and cared for each of his children.

Finally one day, we had a Cougar Band fireside, and the speaker told us that if we appreciated someone, we were to tell them. They would never know it, unless we did. After that fireside, I got brave enough to go over to his room in Deseret Towers to talk to him. I stood in front of his door for a long time just not daring to knock. Finally I knocked, and he answered the door. I don't think I had ever been that close to the man I had been admiring all that time. He really was a nice guy. During our discussion, I told him that it was all because of him that I was still around. I told him that he had been the one person who had saved me from what I had planned. He said he knew I needed help, and that is why he had talked to me that day. He is always so spiritually in tune. I pray that I will be able to be like him someday.

We became the best of friends, and the tables were turned. I learned later that he had actually decided that He had better keep his eye on me, and if he didn't see me each day, he would check into where I was and what I was doing. He told me that he just knew what I had been thinking, and that he felt that if he made contact each day that everything would work out OK with me.

Aaron was not the most super active in the church at the time, but I dare say that he was more in tune with the spirit than most other people ever are. I openly can say that I love that man. He went on his mission, and has since married, but I haven't dared to see him after his mission because of what happened with Ron Bird. We used to go swimming a lot. He was great as a teacher, and he taught me to dive. It seemed to me that there couldn't have been a better person in the entire world. He was truly a savior for me, and I will always be in his debt. I have often said that if I have anything to say about him at the day of judgment, I will do all I can to be sure he gets a fantastic reward for all the good he did in this life. Because of him, I have thought a lot about the judgment, and I hope and pray that my faith and trust in him can be of benefit to him. He may have problems, and not go to church all the time, but he does more for people than most so called Christians. No amount of praise is too much for him, so I had better stop and go on to the next story.

The exciting part of the whole story of Aaron was that in 1986 after we had been in San Diego for a visit there, we came up the coast to Vancouver Island. Aaron was stationed in Seattle, and I got up enough nerve to stop and see him at his home there. He wasn't home when we first went by his house, and I was almost ready to say forget it, but I left a note on the door and told him that after we ate, we would be back. If he was there we would see him. If not, we would be on our way. He was there, and it was just like nothing had change. We ran up to each other and hugged each other, and we knew that our spirits were friends just as they had always been. We had a really nice visit, and have been in touch ever since that time. In 1992 we saw him again in California just before he left the services and went overseas to work in New Guinie. I don't know how long he will be gone, but I am sure that we will meet again, even if it is in heaven. He is truly a great, dear and wonderful friend. He is my example of what friendship really should be. I love him dearly.

Another friend was Kent Barret. Kent liked to run for exercise. I ran a bit with him, while I was looking for the friendship that I found in Aaron. One summer he went on tour with one of the BYU groups, and he left me his stereo to "baby sit". It was great to listen to it, but one day, I spilled some pudding in one of the switches. I had to get the switch replaced, and boy did I feel dumb about almost wrecking it. He came home, and was grateful for the service I had done. I wonder where he is now. In 1997 I found his address and phoned him. Kent couldn't even remember a thing about me. I guess that is another Ron Bird story.

One of the classes that everyone takes at BYU is Health 130. That is the class to help you build endurance, or else to help you lose fat. I took that class right when I got home from my mission. I only weighed 115 pounds, and my endurance was great because of all the bike riding we did in France. I gained 15 pounds and didn't exercise once, and passed the class. That is really a rare thing to do.--I mean pass it without doing one thing.

Cougar band trips were usually the highlight of the school year for me. And the best part about them was the trip home on Sunday. We would have Testimony Meetings. I loved to have those meetings traveling through God's creations. The spirit was really strong, and usually we had conversions from those trips. Our trip to play in Washington D.C. was no exception. We had some of the high church authorities with us, and they said that they enjoyed the spirit of our meetings too. That trip was to play in President Nixon's inaugural parade. We really had fun in the capital, and boy did we ever have to march fast during the parade. There were times when we were running and playing at the same time. There were bands along the route to take the place of any band that fell behind.

I was the secretary for Brother Skousen for one year at school. He was a really interesting teacher. I loved to go to his class, even though it was at 7:00 a.m.

While I was at BYU, I was a stake missionary or a Branch Mission Leader most of the time. As a stake missionary one year, we were able to say that we converted every non-member in the stake. That is something that most missionaries can't say. Alan Baker was a really neat person to teach. He was so interested, and sincere. I guess that all the people that get taught the gospel, and accept it, are just about the same though.

One day, just for something different to do, Eric Affletranger and I decided to drive up to the Y. We made it a long way up there in the orange car. Kent Barret had a small Volkswagen, and the three of us tried it in his car. We didn't make it, but we went farther than we had gone in my car. Finally we tried again in my car, and we actually made it up there. What fools we were. The poor little car took it in stride though, and seemed to enjoy it.

The first day that I was an RA was an interesting one for me. They asked me to be the RA for the problem floor right in the middle of the year that I had met Aaron. I think I had more problems than anyone else, but I enjoyed the job, and did well at it. They kept me for a second year, which was something they didn't do very often. On the first day, one of the boys on the floor went into insulin shock. I didn't know what was up. We got the ambulance there, and we just got him to the hospital in time. I never want to have to go through that kind of responsibility again, but what I had learned helped me to respond to Mrs. Clifford when she went into insulin shock at school in Wainwright on of the years I was teaching French there. I had gone to the staffroom which was not usual, and she was in the same condition as the boy at school. Sugar did the job.

Some more Cougar band stories are about the things we did on trips. When we went to different cities, we would often feel like we could be dumb, and no one would know. I used to like to "make a Pig of Myself at Farrell’s". I even ate a pikes peak once. That is enough ice cream for six people. I always have said that there is always room for ice cream. We also would march down the middle of the road, and try to look like we were important. On one trip I was the driver for the equipment van. I liked to drive, but I sure missed the fun of the buses, as well as the testimony meeting. I was even picked as one of two clarinets to go to a basketball game one year. I really appreciate Bruce Bastian for that. He was a great leader and friend to most of the people who knew him. I guess life had a way of being unfair, though, because BYU fired him later on just because he didn't have a Doctor's degree. I never really thought that a clarinet was very important to the Cougar Band, and there were times that I would prove my point. Sometimes I would play the wrong song just to see if anyone would notice. It never seemed to matter. Often, I would take my TV to the ball games, and then I would watch something more interesting, but I would be there to play my instrument. One time the band director got mad at me not for watching it, but for not letting him watch it too. I used to like the song "He Ain't Heavy," more than any of the other songs we played, and I would always ask for that song. Bruce would sing it as a solo with band accompaniment sometimes.

At one of our branch talent shows, I did a stupid number, and won the hearts of most of the branch. I did my "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread" and the wings of a Pioneer song. I have used them a lot since that time, and they seem to work well for campfire songs as well.

I enjoyed traveling, and would take the chance to go anywhere anyone would invite me. Larry Martin and Jack Brooks invited me to Vancouver, Washington. I really enjoyed that trip, and found those two boys to be great friends. I still hear from them once in a while.

When I first went to BYU, I flew down to Salt Lake City with Carol Michael. We had a neat trip because we went through a storm. It was neat to see the clouds flashing by the window. I never dreamed it would be like that. The clouds down below were so beautiful. They looked so soft and fluffy. It was nice to have Will at school that first year. I used to spend lots of time sitting with him in his office. I bet he would like to have gotten rid of me, but I sure liked having him around.

Once I decided to hide Dave Wood's contact lenses, and the best place to hide them that I could think of was in my own eyes. I didn't wet them or anything and just stuck them in. Boy did they hurt. I had to dig them off my eye with my finger nail. Later, after I had my own lenses, I scratched my eyes twice, and had to have my eyes patched up for two different days. It was really a different experience to be blind for a day. I went to the temple blind with our stake mission, and I really got great service from the temple workers.

Robert Duncan was another friend that I should have helped more. He would come around to the different rooms in the dorm, and stand in the doors and just watch people. I used to ignore him, and then something happened that really opened my eyes. He attempted suicide by overdosing on some pills. I remember wishing that I had spent more time with him to help him by being a friend. I spent a lot of time with him after that, and he wrote to me for a long time afterwards. After the experiences of my life, and what Aaron did for me, I should have been more able to see the problem before it happened. I still am killing myself for that experience.

Just to be a pain, I would like to play tricks on other guys in the dorms. Once I decided to hide under the bed of some of the guys. The beds were like a couch in the day and would pull out for the back of the couch for the night. I would pull the bed shut on me after crawling down in the crack between the mattress and the back of the couch, and then just wait for that guy to go to bed. He would come in and get ready for bed. Then there would be the prayers. After he was in bed for a while, I would reach up and grab him. I did that to David Brathwait, and He just lay there for a minute or so and then every muscle in his body went stiff, and he jumped up with a holler and ran and turned on the light. I crawled out from under the bed and walked to my room and locked the door. David just stood in the middle of his room shaking. When I was safe in my room, he was finally ready to kill me, but I was safely locked away.

I have already told about how I met Cheryl. When we first met each other’s parents, Cheryl had it rough. When she came to Canada, we had had a bad winter, and all the water lines to the house were frozen. She got the old treat of the outhouse and no running water. It is a wonder that she ever decided to move to Canada.

Not too long ago while I was pondering about repentance and what the Lord thought of me, I had a nice experience. After fasting and praying about my standing with the Lord, I was kneeling in prayer, and a voice seemed to say to me, "Go in peace my son. Your sins are forgiven you." I really had a neat feeling then. I guess that I felt similar to the way I felt when I have had other sacred experiences. What a blessing it is to know that if we try to live right from this time on, we can be forgiven and return to the presence of the Lord--Our Father.

In the summer of 1985 we went to a Redd family reunion, and I had the chance to go para-sailing on land with a parachute. I had trouble with the chute, and ended up breaking my leg. It was a really painful experience. I managed to teach school in September, but was on crutches for six months. I got the cast off then, and went back to crutches for quite a while. I taught the French program at the school at that time. I manage to hop around my classroom without much trouble.

Once when granny and Aunt Pat came to Canada to visit us, we were having quite a few religious discussions. They figured that Cheryl and I were lost forever. Finally I asked them what it meant to be saved. The said that all you had to do was accept Christ as your savior. I said that I have always accepted Christ as my Savior. The next day when Granny said the prayer, she thanked God for saving me. I guess I am one of the few Mormons who have been saved by the Baptists.

In 1987, we moved to Cardston after we had just finished the nice new house we had bought in Wainwright. Things fell right into place with the move, and we knew that the Lord wanted us in Cardston. I taught school in Mountain View. I wondered at the time why it was that we were to move to Cardston. I prayed about it in the temple one day, and was told that it was for the kids that I was then teaching. Those kids are through at Mountain View School this year, and I feel a great need to move on. I wonder if it all relates. As I look back on those precious boys, I still think of them as some of the best that I have taught. I wonder what will become of them. Chad was the boy I called my little apostle. Steven was a great spiritual giant and a friend to all. Armes was just a precious wonderful boy. How I loved that whole group of boys—there were only two girls in the whole large class.

I was called to serve with Bishop Watson that first year we were in Cardston as the Executive Secretary. That seemed like an answer to my wondering about the purpose of our stay in Cardston too. Those four year with Bishop Watson were wonderful years. The Watsons lived two houses down the street, and our kids were always with the Watson kids. It was wonderful to have their influence in our lives. Often at meal times some of their kids were at our house and some of ours were at their house. Each family just made it a practice of feeding whoever was at the house at meal times, and that way we knew that all the kids got fed. Watsons moved to Lethbridge after we were in Cardston for four years, and we really missed them. They ended up moving to Magrath, and then out to Saskatchewan. I dream of being able to move back close to them. That has almost happened a time or two when we have been in the Hill Cumorah Pageant together. It is great to see them from time to time. We were told this summer that they are moving back to PEI and we will likely not see them again unless it is at the pageant.

I had the blessing of working as a temple worker on a baptism team for many years in Cardston. I felt that that was one of the best jobs in the temple. I really enjoyed working with the youth, especially the young men. It was wonderful to feel the strength of some of the better prepared young men as you stood by them in that holy house. The last few years have been tougher there, because of changes in the calling. We were not set apart as workers when the temple reopened. I missed that blessing.

The year we moved to Cardston there was a temple pageant that was a wonderful experience for us all. We were able to go to the pageant each night and feel the spirit so strongly, and relive the strength of some of the early Cardston pioneers. I was in the choir that made the recording for the pageant, and then to be here and be in the small choir that acted in the pageant was wonderful.

We now (1994) have six children and are richly blessed by the Lord. Melissa is extremely musical. Dallin has had foot problems that are miraculously solved. We have had a good life here, and we know that the Lord loves us and blesses us. May we always be worthy of his blessings.

In 1994 I transferred from Mountain View to Del Bonita. I taught at a wonderful little school there, for about four years. To begin my teaching there, I taught grades one, two and three. I had a very small class, and really liked the job. The community was very supportive. It was nice to have the support of parents instead of the challenges I had my last year at Mountain View. In March of that first school year I decided that it would be better not to have to travel so much and be so far away from my family. In the middle of the first year there, we moved our family into a very small teacherage. We practically had to stack the kids in the bedrooms. We made a double bed bunk, and a single bed bunk. We had what we needed in our "camping out Home." It was cozy and tight, but we enjoyed it. On the next Christmas, we decided to sell our house in Cardston, and rent two teacherages. We stored stuff in one, and lived in the other. We tried to buy the two houses, but the division took so long letting us have them that we finally gave up and looked for a larger house in the community. We finally moved into a large house on a farm east of town, and we had a great time living in the country. That house is now completely gone. It is amazing that so much of our past is completely erased. The members of the branch out there were wonderful people, and we still have great friends from there.

Melissa had a really traumatic experience as she was coming home from band practice in Magrath. There was a car accident that she watched happen, and then she ran to the aid of a lady that went flying out of the car. The lady died in her arms. From then on, it was very hard for her to make the trip down the Del Bonita highway. In October we decided to look for a place that we could rent in Magrath. The idea was to be ready to move into Magrath after that school year. Cheryl and I went to Magrath on Friday before Thanksgiving. We stopped and prayed on the way and asked for the Lord to guide us in our house hunt. We checked all the houses we could afford to buy, as well as all the places that could be rented. We found nothing that would be big enough for our family. We were just going to drive around the area of town that Melissa said she thought we would enjoy living in, and by chance Cheryl saw a for sale sign on a house down a side street. We backed up and took a good look at the house. It felt like the right place. We got to see the house, and hoped for the weekend that we could have a miracle fall into place so we could buy it. On Saturday morning the miracle happened. Will and Peggy offered to help us with the down payment. What a blessing that was. On Monday for home evening, we took the kids to see the house and waited for the call from the realtor. We got word that the house would be ours on November 24. Latter we arranged to move into the house on November 21, 1997.

Another challenge that year was that Mom was slowly dying of stomach cancer. We didn't know what was wrong with her then, but on December 18, 1997, she died. It was really hard on me. I missed her so much. Just littlest things would make we start to cry--a small word Mom would have said, or an action that someone did. Christmas was rather hard that year. We had all kinds of people in our house, and we had to feed a small army. Mom's funeral was on December 21.

In November 1997 we moved into Magrath. I drove out to school for the rest of the school year, and we hoped that we could keep the school going, even though it was getting very small. I taught all of the elementary grades for the last year I was there. I only had about eight kids in my room and two of them had been mine. With our move, the class had only six kids. It was a really nice group to work with. I loved them and miss them now. Some of them have changed so much that I can hardly even know them when I see them now.

I was transferred to the Milford Hutterite colony in July of 1998. I enjoyed a great year at the colony, but my second year was like a trip to outer darkness each day. During the summer, the Hutterites cleaned out the office, and threw away lots of the things that I had ready for the next school year. I told them that I didn't appreciate that one bit and that was what started a smoldering feud between the German teacher and anything to do with English school. At one point he had us all have a conference with the superintendent. What a mess that was. He sort of got told to let us do our thing, and we would let him do his. We were not to do anything without his approval. He started telling lies about what the Preacher wanted at school, and I finally called his bluff and went to the preacher. The preacher was on my side, and couldn't understand what Dave was up to. Dave got in trouble from his preacher, and the year went a bit better. I really had a challenge with the German teacher. He had decided to get rid of me because I made him live by division guidelines that he had never followed before. He was upset that he had to buy school supplies for the kids, and that I wouldn't allow him to have free access to all the school records. I was so happy to be transferred to grade two in Magrath in the fall of 2000.

When I was in Magrath, I was teaching only grade two, and once again knew why I taught. I love to be with the little kids. They are so precious to me. Dallin was in my class, and I loved to teach him. I have taught all seven of the older kids in the family. What a privilege to teach your own kids.

My history would not be complete without mention of some of the special students that I have taught. Some of them have helped me and changed my life for the better. When I taught in Manyberries, I had a few special friends there. Murray Mack was in my band. He was a great young man. He was so kind and respectful. Todd Kusler, Todd Thompson, and Robbie Meyer were really special kids. In Wainwright, Dion Blyan, Mike Smith, Vern Stockle and Darcy Mullen were special friends. Darcy used to love to be with me, and I love to have him around. He would stop by my room each day on his way home, even though I was not his classroom teacher. He is one student that I have written to many times since I taught him. In Mountain View, Steven Scott, Chad Baker, Armes Parrett, Brad Baker, Devon Nielsen, Scott Smith, and Michael Makenzie were my favorite students. At Del Bonita, Justin Jones and Brandon Stewart had to be my special students. I had special friends in Magrath in my class. Tyler Hansen, Jason Murray, Dallin Redd, Dillon Toone and Keeton Sheridan are just sweethearts. I have also really enjoyed Jordan Zaugg, one of the Grade five students. He often came to visit me. He is so considerate and thoughtful. I love him to pieces. I have taught Marco Casillas and a few other kids in West Valley that I really loved. Davie Hernandez was a boy I loved and tried to help that ended up getting me into a bit of legal trouble over faults accusations. I still loved him and wish I could see him again sometime. I would like to know what became of him. He had the makings of a great leader mixed with the makes of trouble with his home life. There are many other students that I could mention, but those are probably the ones I will remember most.

It seems that I don't know how to have friends and keep them if they are adults. I look at the men in our ward that I admire, and there are not many of them that care to be with me. That is a challenge for me. It seems that when opportunities arrive that could let me get to be friends with someone, something changes and there is no more chance. Cheryl seems to have plenty of people that she can talk to and she seems so much more able to make friends. I guess that is one of my challenges in life. Perhaps I will meet my friends for the preexistence sometime in the future, and my life will seem more complete.

A lesson I have learned from life is that you have to sacrifice many things that you might have dreamed of doing so that you can do what is needed for your family. I always dreamed of singing in the Tabernacle Choir. That dream just is not a reality. I have to give it up because I have so many kids that need my attention. I also longed to travel to France again, but that is out of the question. It would take too much money from the family. As I become older and I still have young children, I realize that I will be very old before my kids are grown and on their own. There won't be much time left for me to serve adult missions, or travel or any of those things I once thought I might do. I used to think that four kids would be a perfect family. I might have done some of the things I dreamed about if I had stopped there, but I am sure that the Lord wants me to sacrifice to have the children he wants to send to our home. Sacrifice is worth eternal rewards. Of that I am sure.

Lately the Lord has blessed me with some of those dreams. I had the chance to try out for the choir and was heartbroken that I could not make it into the choir after two tries. As I think about it now, I know that the Lord did what was right for me. I am better off to have the time away from the choir so that I can do other things that the Lord needs done. I have been blessed with the dream of a lifetime to return to France two different times. That was great. The first visit was just as it was when I was there. The second was after much change in the culture and country of France. I love to see the country in 2006.

I served as the young men’s president for two years when we Moved to Magrath, and really enjoyed the priests for those years. David Bennett, Michael Bly and BJ Harker are great young men. It will be interesting to watch them grow and progress in life. I was called to be the elder’s quorum president in September 1999, and have been struggling to understand how men can be so careless with their commitments to the church. I pray that I may be of service to these men as I strive to strengthen their testimonies. Jack Regehr has been a special help to me since I moved into this ward. I had him for a counselor for a year and a half. He gave such good advice and counsel. I then had two new councilors, and things seemed to really be going well. I am delighted that we could talk people and people's needs in our meetings. We didn’t have complaints about having meetings either. Colin Henninger and Wade Johnson have really took their assignments seriously and tried to do a great job. I loved working with those men.

Melissa was married in 1999, and is lived in Lethbridge. There were some big challenges that I faced to have her not marry in the temple. I really had to learn to let her make her own choices. She was taught, and she needed to do what she felt was right for her. I was so delighted when the time came that she was married in the temple in September 2000. It was nice to have her close enough that we could do things with her once in a while. How nice it is to see your children do the right things with their lives. I pray that we will be as happy with the other eight kids as they continue to face the trials of life.

On April 28, 2002, I woke up early in the morning with a sore stomach. It sort of felt like when I eat wheat, but it stayed all low. Then it focused on the right side. I felt like it was appendicitis, and after church I went to the hospital to be evaluated. I ended up in Lethbridge not long after, and by 7:00 pm, I was in surgery. They removed what they called a "hot" appendix. It was nice to know that it was over, and that it wasn't worse. It was nice to know that I wanted to have the situation corrected too. I had been thinking before that if I ever got cancer, or anything that could be critical, I would like to just let it run its course and get it over with. Now I know that I still have a bit of desire to go ahead and live out the life I have been given.

I had a very hard class to teach in Magrath that year. The average of the class was much lower than the classes normally are. There were a few kids that really need a lot of attention, and for some, giving that attention has been a life saver for me. Russell was a real sweetheart, even though he needed a lot of extra help with his school work. He really became a great friend to me. He is a treasure that I will want to keep in touch with. I pray that my influence on him will help him want to do what the Lord would have him do with his life.

In May of 2001, Melissa made a big decision to leave Dave and get on with her life. She came to our house and asked to stay a while--until she could go to Rexburg, Idaho. I questioned her decision, but I knew that she was acting wisely and sanely, so within a week, I took Melissa to Rexburg, and had her living in an apartment by the first of June. Everything fell into place so well, and by the middle of the summer, we were with her in Idaho Falls helping to start proceeding for divorce. Everything worked so smoothly, that I was certain that the Lord was in control. Melissa was concerned, and relieved with the peace she felt when everything was finalized on October 3, 2001. Her chapter of life as a single person could begin again, and she made the best of it. It was wonderful to see her doing well in school, and attending the school of her dreams. I pray that she may continue to follow her dreams, and be the person God would have her be. There have been trials and challenges to get her to where she is now, but we also know that the hand of the Lord is guiding all her actions. I wish we could know the outcome of our lives, and know how to best work to achieve what the Lord wishes of our lives.

Heather was a challenge that year. She really had a thing with boys. She had them in her room, and she had been in places and with people that she should not have been with. I prayed for her often, and I prayed that I would be a help for her. She has great potential, and can do great things with her life, or make great mistakes with it also. It will be hard to watch her blow it, and it is great to watch her become what she should become. She definitely is making the best of life the way she is living her life now. There are struggles and she is strong and faithful.

We made several trips to Rexburg to lend support to Melissa and Aaron when he finally got there. We took our vacation one summer to Rexburg and found the neatest campground out by some big sand hills. We had lots of fun there, and will want to return there in the future. It is good to see Melissa making good decisions and getting the education she dreamed of.

I am grateful for memories that help to hold us strongly to the church. There are times when the memories of testimony building times are what carry you through life. I am struggling right now with my own self-worth. It has been good to read through this record, and be reminded of what has made me strong in the past. I love the Lord and the Church. I sometimes feel that I don't mean anything to the Lord, but I will keep trying to do what is right. I am grateful for my testimony that God lives, and life is worth it. May I always be strong, and set a proper example for my family and friends, most of whom are the young kids I work with at school. Christ lives and suffered for our sins if we but repent and turn to him. We will suffer in this life, and we need to sacrifice our time and lives for the building up of the kingdom of God, and our families. You don't always get to do the things you want in life, but you have to hold on and do what is right. I pray that I may do so.

A lot has happened since I last recorded my feelings in my history. I think that the most significant change was the way that the Lord directed us to move to Utah. At times I wonder why we are here, and at other times I know that it is what was best for our family. We were told by the Lord to move here, and we took the leap of faith and did what the Lord directed. The events leading up to this move are recorded in another document that is too personal to include in this document. (I have since added that document as a part of this record but it will not be published in public copies. It is the dated journal type entries that comes later on and are marked for removal before publishing.) I have learn many things over the past few years, and one of the things I have learned is that life is full of challenges. It never stops surprising us, and Satan never stops trying us.

As I write at this time, November 1, 2006, I realize that the longer I live, the more I learn to trust the Savior. I have often heard it said that we must believe in Jesus Christ. There is more to it than that. Not only must we believe **in** Jesus Christ, but we must **believe** Jesus Christ. As we go through life, and make our own mistakes, we learn to go through the process of repentance. At times we know that we have done what is needed to complete the steps of repentance, and that is like believing in Jesus Christ. We have a hope of better things to come. But then there are the times that we need to go a step further. We need to believe Jesus Christ. When he says we are forgiven, we had better believe it and know that we are forgiven. As I think of people who join the church later in life, and sometimes after some real wild living, we see that they believe Jesus and know that they are forgiven. They pick up the pieces of their life and go forward, never looking back. That is just what Christ taught. He who takes up the plow and looks back is not a worthy servant. They are dwelling too much in the past, and worrying about what cannot be changed. We need to take up our burden, and go forward, leaving everything on the Savior. He will do what he promised to do. He will bare our burdens, and he will not recall our past errors. Oh that we can learn to be like Him and not have the recollection of our past sins make us feel less that we really are. We are children of God–a God who loves us and cares about us. What one of us would truly hold another person down for some mistake that they have made? Don’t we try to help them progress. God who is perfect is much more capable of helping and sustains us than we are capable of helping others. These are the real lessons in life. The things we need to teach ourselves. It is ourselves that need the lessons learn more than others. May we always live our lives so that we can return to live with our loving and perfect Father.

After the summer of 2005, Dad began failing quickly, and by the time that US Thanksgiving was here, he was almost totally confined to his bed. He always wanted to go to the temple, and was constantly asking if we were going. He would wonder where his suitcase was, or his recommend, even when he was not able to move. I sat with dad about two weeks before he died for a Saturday. He was constantly talking about the temple and the trip to the temple.

On Christmas day 2005, I called dad and talked to him. His speech was very slurred that day, and I was worried about his health. I didn't go see him, but it was no surprise to me to have Will call me at about 1:00 pm on December 26, 2005 and say that dad was getting dehydrated and they were on the way to the Doctor to have him checked. I waited for a call to confirm the visit, and at about 6:00 pm, they called and said he would be kept in the hospital. When he was finally checked, there were several things wrong with him. They checked his blood oxygen level, and it was at 68. The doctor said that at 70, a person goes into a coma. He said Dad was a very sick man. After getting the oxygen level up above 85, he felt it was time to see what else was wrong with him. They did the routine checks, and found that he had a bad bladder infection. He had fluid in his lungs, and had pneumonia. They did another check, and a count that should have been between 60 and 130 was at 2700. That was a certain indication of advanced cancer. Previously, his PSA count had far exceeded anything the doctors had ever seen, and they knew he had prostate cancer. They x-rayed dad and found he had bowel cancer. That was the cause of no movements for about the last four weeks. He had a broken pelvis, and some cracked vertebra. The blood test showed that he had a recent heart attack as well. As I sat with him Monday night, and visited with him, he was able to talk and think clearly most of the time in the early evening, and he asked some interesting questions. He wanted to know if it was worth having a family. It was like he was trying to see if he was happy with the way I was living. Then he wanted to know if I was happy with my own family. He talked about it being too hard to raise a family in this modern world with all the troubles that kids face today. During the rest of the night, he was awake about every five minutes seeing things that weren't there. He wanted to know why there were red worms on the ceiling. He asked about the chimney brush that was up there too. He was constantly asking about the man and little boy that came. He wanted to know who they were. He wondered why we were sitting in the car for so long. Did we remember the suitcases? Where was his recommend, and when were we going to the temple? Why wouldn't I turn the car off? I told him over and over we were in the hospital and that he was in bed and needed to rest. His questions persisted. Will and I called Joan, and Ellen Monday at about 10:00 pm and told of the events of the day. Joan said she would come on Wednesday. Ellen would wait until we started the Red Cross events that could pay for her flight. During the night, Dad would try to pull off his oxygen sensor that was on his middle finger, and he tried to pull out the IV. Finally in the middle of the night, he looked at his finger, and said in a very serious tone, "Oh, a candle on a candelabra." That was the last time he tried to pull that off, but he would check his "candle" every once in a while. He was constantly reaching up into the air and catching something that he would take in both hands and put in his mouth and chew up. He would take the IV pipe in one hand, and hold it to his mouth and suck it. When I asked if he wanted a drink of water, he would say he just had a drink, and he didn't want to overdo. During the night he threw up some very dark liquid with little brown sanding stuff in it. The doctor told me Tuesday morning that was a sign of bleeding stomach ulcers. Dad could eat very little, about a teaspoon of food, and he only took small drinks. He was a very sick man. I couldn't see how he could last too much longer, so when the doctor came in at 8:00 am Tuesday morning, I asked him to help with Ellen's Red Cross flight arrangements. He helped, and by 2:00 pm that afternoon, he called me and told me that everything was in place and she would be on the next flight. That meant that she could be there as early as Wednesday evening, but no earlier. Aunt Barbara was to arrive by bus at about 12:45 pm and I got her and took her to do a turn at the hospital with dad. She had a good visit with him until about 3:00 pm, when Dad was not able to respond to anything anymore. We thought he was going right away. Because of the wiggles he had, we asked for morphine at about 6:00 pm and more at 10:00 pm. There were no responses from Dad at all that afternoon and evening. At about 11:00 pm, I called Will and told him I thought it was time to give him a blessing and release him from his misery if needed. Will came back to the hospital with his sons, Peggy and Barbara to give the blessing. Will told him his life was complete, and he could go when he needed to. Toward the end of the blessing, he released him from his earthly mission, and then told him that he would be able to communicate with his daughters when they arrived. We sang some songs, and told him good bye, even though there was no response from him. They went back home, and I spent the night with Dad. It was a peaceful night. At 2:00 am, Dave called from Italy and insisted that I change the arrangements with the Red Cross so that he too could come and have his flight paid for. He insisted that I call them now, and he would stay on the cell phone the whole time and listen to the conversation. It was pointless, as the Red Cross will pay for only one person's flight, and that would be Ellen's flight. I was awakened only once more about 4:00 am by the nurses as they changed dad's position. I was so glad dad couldn't respond because I knew that being yanked around and up onto his side would be so painful for him. Soon after the nurses left, I returned Dad to his back, and tried to make him comfortable. At 6:00 am Wednesday, Will came in to say, "Hi Dad! How are you?" to Dad as he went to work. Dad said he was fine. I was shocked to hear him answer, and was renewed in my hope for communications with Joan when she would arrive that day. She was to be there early in the morning. By 11:00 am, she wasn't there, so I called her to discover that she was still in bed. She said she would dress and come by midafternoon. Barbara came to take over the vigil, and I went home. I was to come back in the evening, and see about who would be there for the night. Joan wasn't there yet by 8:00 pm. Kathleen was at the hospital at that time, and told me that Joan had gone to the airport to get Ellen. I was sick, because by then I had the flight number for Ellen's arrival on Thursday night. At about 9:30 pm Joan got there. I was concerned about her late arrival, but what could I do. I knew there was nothing that could be done. I sat with Dad for another sleepless night on Wednesday. Dad's oxygen level kept falling below 85, and his monitors would ring. It upset me that all the attending nurse did about it was to turn down the alarm volume so he wouldn't be bothered. That meant that I had to listen all the harder for the quiet alarm, and then try to find ways to have Dad breathe more of the oxygen coming to him through the tube. I would cup my hands gently over his mouth and nose to help trap any oxygen there around him while he breathed. That brought the level back up to above 85 so the monitor would stop alarming. Later that morning as I left the hospital, I met the nurse that was with dad the previous nights, and she was really tired looking. I said that we missed her with Dad. She asked if we had complained about the service because she couldn't think of any reason she was not assigned to be with Dad that night. I feel that she was the only nurse who really cared about Dad, and treated him with dignity. It looked like she had been working under stressful situations and I realized that there are unfair and frustrating situations in any job with any leaders. Joan was to be at the hospital early Thursday because my family had tickets to the new Joseph Smith movie at 9:00 am. I was to leave at 6:30 am to be home. Cheryl had to leave for a welfare assignment at 7:30 am Thursday. I left at twenty to seven with no Joan there. Also Dad was to be checked out of the hospital by 11:00 am Thursday, and we wanted Joan there for the Doctor's visit. With delays, things went okay, and Dad went to Will's house in the early afternoon. Sean phoned and told me he was getting his mother at the airport, and I told him that is what should have happened with the arrangements in the first place, instead of having Dave arrange for me to get her. Thinking things were taken care of for the night, I didn't go see Dad that evening. Cheryl left for Rexburg to pick up the girls that evening. They had lots of people at Will's, because of Jason's wedding on Friday. I went to the temple with the family Thursday at 5:20 pm. After which, I went home to bed. Friday, I went to the wedding in the Salt Lake temple at 9:00 am. After the wedding I did WACs and enjoyed that while we waited for pictures to be taken. Then I went home and took the kids to see Grandpa. It was a short visit, but they talked with him a bit, and he couldn't talk to them much because he was so tired. Jason's reception was that night. Cheryl got home in time for us all to go. During the reception I took Laurel and Kari to see Dad. Laurel told him to go with Laurel when she came for him. Saturday, I went to see Dad, and I knew that his time was short. I asked when we would take the oxygen off. Ellen was not convinced that we should do it soon or quickly. We delayed, and finally I went to get Cheryl. I didn't expect to see Dad last the day. When I got back, I took the oxygen tube out of his nose, and he failed quickly. I called everyone together, and within five minutes, he was dead. He died at 4:20 pm., Saturday, December 31, 2005. We phoned funeral homes, and only one would work with us on New Year’s Eve. We arranged for a coffin, and a funeral on Monday, January 2, 2006. Sunday, Will and his sons, and Aaron and I went to dress the body at 5:00 pm. The funeral on Monday was good. There were simple gospel talks and lots of relatives and friends. Tuesday, January 3, 2006, we waited for the legal papers needed to transport Dad. We took him in our van to Canada, leaving about 1:00 pm when everything was in place. We crossed the line with no problems, and took him to Lethbridge at about 2:30 am Wednesday morning. At the Border they asked me how many people were in the van, and I told them five living, and one dead. I thought that would shock them, but it didn’t seem to faze them. Laurel wouldn’t sit right by the coffin in the van, and she told me years later that she was saving a spot right by the coffin for Mom to sit in as she rode with him to Canada. Laurel always was close to the spirit in things like that. Thursday, January 5, 2006, we had a viewing in Grassy Lake, and buried him in Raymond at 3:00 pm. I was able to say the family prayer in Riverton, Utah, give a short biography of Dad in Grassy, and dedicate the grave in Raymond. We were blessed to have Aunt Irene's house for our stay in Canada. After visits with Friends, we returned to Utah on Saturday. What a rushed two weeks!

Again I add to the history of my life. I am writing this on Monday, April 18, 2011, and a lot has happened since I last wrote. I think that the most important lessons that I have learned are included in a document I mentioned earlier, and I have decided to add it to this document as a record of my feelings and life learning but to remove it from the published version. The details contained in the document are not needed to explain the events mentioned earlier in this history. By no means should others think they have to learn these lessons the same way I have learned them. I have also included more details in the part of my history that talks about Tom Eldridge. I have included significant facts that have formed my life.

Here we are at in August of 2012. I will add a few items to my history and try to relate things that make me what I am. This has been an interesting few years. We have had experiences that I would not trade for anything. In 2010, our family was able to go to Palmyra, New York, and participate in the Hill Cumorah Pageant. That was a marvelous experience. We were among great people, and our testimonies grew tremendously as we play the roles of people from the Book of Mormon. I was an Alma convert. I loved the couple of minutes I was on the stage. Alma was a wonderful person, and during one of the rehearsals he hugged me. What a joy it was to be hugged by a prophet of the Lord. That was a feeling that I want to experience again in my life. I long to be hugged by anyone. I have learned a lot about me over the past few years. I was called to serve as the Stake Executive Secretary. That is a job I have always loved. I could do it well, and I was successful. In that position I know I was able to serve well. At the end of 2011, I was released from that call and called as the second councilor in the Bishopric. I served there for about five months, and then was called as the first councilor. I enjoy the work with the Bishop.

We have been on several cruises over the past two years. I have loved traveling that way. It is great to have all the food you want at any time you want it. You can be spoiled by waiters and they become close friends you long to help. We went on a Book of Mormon Cruise and a Family History Cruise. We enjoyed those a lot. We decided to take the family on a cruise for Christmas. They loved it. We have decided to do more cruises.

This summer I took the younger kids to Canada and had a wonderful visit there. I was able to experience many of the places we used to love. They are still just as great. I love the Canadian Rockies. We traveled in our trailer and had all the comforts we needed. It was ideal weather and we had no car trouble except for a flat tire.

Cheryl did not go with us because of the surgeries that Taylor had. She stayed to help with the little grand kids. Cheryl really is a special lady to do that, and to put up with me. I love her and pray that we can be perfected together.

I have had times to reflect on my progress. There are times that Satan has tried me very strongly, and I have tried to be strong and firm. I want to do what is right. I want to be able to return to Heavenly Father, and say that I have done my best. I want to do what is right. I want to help others return too. May the Lord bless me as I try to resist temptation and overcome the trials that I face. May the Lord bless me and give me strength to continue in life—to live so that I can be made perfect and without those earthly faults that haunt me. I love the Lord. I love my Savior. I want to be like them and to be with them. That I may endure to the end is my humble prayer to the Father. Give me strength to go on in righteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

This has been a good few months. I have come to grips more and more with who I am and what I want to become. I want to live the gospel. I want to return to live with my loving Father.

Over the last months of 2012, I have had new insights into my life. I decided to type my mission journal. That was an interesting experience. There were some painful memories that have become sweet as I have seen my personal growth. I have seen that I have truly turned from some of the sins and desires that I once had. I still struggle with my challenges, but I know from years of living that I can be strong. I can resist temptation. I think that I can even help others progress because of my experiences.

This past Sunday, October 21, 2012, I had the chance to teach the Deacons’ quorum. It was a chance to tell them things that I feel are important to them, and to warn them of the snares of Satan. I talked about preparing. The Aaronic priesthood is the preparatory priesthood. We talked about preparing with money for a mission. We talked about physical preparation. We talked about spiritual preparation. I told them that they are a noble generation and the Lord has a wonderful mission for them to fulfill in the future. I advised them prepare for those calls, however simple the calling may be. Then I told them I truly respected them and looked up to them. I talked to each boy individually and told each boy why I loved them. Trent Magill, Nathan Redd, Rhet Anderson, and Tanner Anderson were really touched. Trent was in tears before I was done. Each of those four boys got up and immediately gave me a warm hug when the lesson was done. Only Anthony Holland was not so willing to be around me. He was quiet during the lesson and that was a step in the right direction. I think he was feeling the spirit. Oh how I love those boys. I pray that they can be strong and faithful, and that I may be a tool in the Lord’s hands to help them keep going in the right directions. How I love to be with them. They truly are great.

After reading and review that history, I wanted more than ever to talk to President Sager. I got his phone number and left a message. He actually called back. We had a short talk. It was so good to hear his voice. He is the closest thing to a father that I have left in this life. We talked about setting up a mission reunion for April. He said he would call back and set up a time to meet with him. I am extremely nervous and excited about that reunion. I hope I can survive the encounter. I long to hug him and have his arms around me in the way that my father or my Heavenly Father would. I pray that it will all work out for the good. I also phoned Elder Pettit. That was a good talk too. We will have to get together there again too. I hope that I will be able to find more of my companions and others I admired. A mission truly is a special time.

In April of 2013, we had the dream of a lifetime mission reunion. It was a lot of work but it was all worth it. It was so good to see so many of the missionaries I once knew and to hug them again. It was wonderful to see most of the companions I had worked with so closely. It was good to see that we all loved each other still. We even have people that are no longer active in the church who showed up and loved the evening. It was truly a good event, and may lead to more positive experiences in many people’s lives. It was worth all the effort and months of searching to find address of lost people. It was an evening of pure delight as we listened to each other tell about the trials of life and the fact that the gospel is true, and they had grown and overcome challenges. The evening ended perfectly with the testimony of President and Sister Sager. A lot of work and worry went into the planning and execution of the evening but it was all worth it. It would be nice to have another reunion in the future, but I will not be the one to volunteer for all that work again. It has been nice to be in contact with friends form the past that helped us really learn to love others and serve them as only the Lord’s servants can. It is true that the source of pure love is our Savoir. I love my Savior and long to feel his love and acceptance too. May I always live that I may receive that blessing.

It is my prayer that I may be worthy of the blessings that I am given. I pray that I may enter his kingdom and live in joy and happiness with my dear wife Cheryl, and my children. Life is short, but if we live as best we know how, we can have these cherished blessings. I testify that God lives and Loves each of us. We are his children. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is just what the name says--His church. The fullness of the gospel can only be found in his church, and that is the only path leading to true happiness and joy.

This has been the story of my life up to the present. I'm sure that many of the experiences I have had since university are not recorded, but those that have been recorded have an importance that I may never know. If the future reader would care to judge my life, I am the first to say that I am not worthy of the blessings that are mine. Please don't make the mistakes I have made. Be clean in thought and deed. Avoid evil and flee from its face. God blesses you as you try to live worthy of returning to the presence of our Father. Remember to love and serve your fellow man. You never know what a great influence you may be to others. And to my descendants I say that I love you and trust you. You can be better than I was, and you can avoid much of the guilt and sorrow I have experienced by remaining faithful and clinging to the principles of the gospel. Pray often and seek divine guidance. You will receive it if you ask for it. With all my heart, I want to help you to live a good life. Endure to the end. Follow the promptings of the still small voice that is within your being. God bless you. I love you.

**Important Information**

Homer John Blackhorse

Birth: 11 November 1957, Gleichen, Alberta, Alberta

Death: 1 January 1978

Allan Lee Baptiste

Birth: 11 January 1959, Oliver, British Columbia, Canada

Death: 16 August 1981

John Hitchcock

Birth: About 1952, Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, BC, Canada