

The Autobiography of
Justin Alma 'Al' Knapp

1923 – 2015

I was born April 12, 1923 at Hibbard, Madison County, Idaho. Although my birth certificate shows Rexburg, my family was living in the small community of Hibbard, which is just west of Rexburg. Dr. H. B. Rigby was the doctor attending to my mother and myself. As the story goes, he was intoxicated at the time. In spite of his situation, all went well, but he listed my mother's sister, Finny, as my mother on the birth certificate. This caused some concern with the legal record keeping until everything could be corrected.



I was born to Justin Willis Knapp and Mabel Fidelia Hale. I was the eighth child born to this family, which would eventually total nine. Five surviving siblings welcomed me into the family: Claudia Mabel, Warren Ellis, Mary Marjorie, Thelma and Anna. Six years later, the last member of our family joined us. He was named Bernard Elden. Two sisters, Justie and Marie Elizabeth had passed away before I was born.

My parents named me Justin Alma, after my two grandfathers, Justin Abraham Knapp and Alma Helaman Hale Jr.

When I was born I had some immediate health concerns that threatened my life. My diaphragm was unusually high, which put a lot of pressure on my ability to breathe. Also, I had something abnormal in my throat. The doctor told my parents that there was nothing he could do for me and suggested they take me to Salt Lake City, where the doctors there might be able to correct the problem. The decision was made not to go to Salt Lake. Instead my parents called in the Elders of the church, who helped my father administer to me. Faith and prayers were

exercised in my behalf over the next few days. It was quite a relief to my family as the problems seemed to correct themselves.

Not long after I was born, our family moved from Hibbard to Smithfield, Utah where my father worked in a pea cannery. We then moved to Island Park, Idaho, where Dad worked in the timber hauling ties. Our house was made of a wooden frame, a couple of feet high and had canvas over the upper frame. It was called a 'guild'.

When I was four, our family moved to Goshen, Idaho, a small community south of Idaho Falls. It was there that I started school. Our school had two rooms on the ground level and two directly above them. Two grades in each room was the plan for eight grades. Arnfred Christensen was the principal and a good friend to us as well. All of the children used to meet in one room for about the first half-hour. We had prayer, pledge of allegiance and a lot of singing. I remember songs like 'Three Blind Mice', 'Ruben, Ruben I've Been Thinking', as well as patriotic songs and numbers for Christmas programs to be presented at the church.

The gates to our schoolyard were on the order of a revolving door to keep livestock from entering. Sometimes we would climb on the gate and whirl around. Each room of our school had a large stove skirted with a shroud to make it about five feet across at its widest place. The damper worked by pulling a chain. We took turns hauling coal in buckets for the fire. Sometimes when we went for coal in the back yard we would sneak a couple of swings coming and going. The outhouses were also out in the back yard. A large lot was behind the schoolyard, which had a backstop and ball diamond for the whole community. We had a water fountain inside, which was as modernized as it got.

The big dread of our school life was to get caught doing something dishonest or mean and get sent to the principal's room to get the rubber hose. We had our own track meets, and baseball games, as well as jump rope, marbles, hopscotch, red rover, and of course tag.

We used to have 'peanut busts' for the teacher's birthdays. For a nickel we could get a lot of peanuts. When the teacher would write on the blackboard someone would give a signal and peanuts would be thrown all over. Then we would pick them up and eat them as we heard

a story read.

My educational experience was a good one while in Goshen. I was advanced from 1st grade to the 3rd grade, thus skipping the 2nd grade. I had good teachers and good friends. When I was in the 8th grade, I was chosen to be the school valedictorian. This was quite an honor, even if our student body population was not very large. My family moved before the school year was over and so I was not able to receive this honor.

Our family had many good experiences and made many memories while we lived in this area. We used to have a goat and a buck sheep. They would butt heads till sometimes the goat's head would bleed. We had a chicken pen with a baggy wire fence and we had an old buggy, which was not very heavy. We would push the buggy against the baggy wire and the sheep would butt the wheel and we would get a free ride for a few feet

My brother, Warren, had a little mare that was named 'Cayuse'. She earned her name from the repeated trouble she seemed to cause. I remember she ran up to a fence at one time and stopped suddenly, sending Warren flying over the fence. She ran away with Dad and he had to guide her into the back of a hayrack to stop her. In spite of the trouble she caused she had a running walk that was the fastest, smoothest ride anywhere.

One day, I rode this horse over a ditch and across an old net wire fence. Just as I was crossing the wire, I remembered Dad told me not to ride there. I pulled her up and backed her up a step or two. Her hind shoes caught in the wire and over she went. I fell lengthwise in the ditch and she was across the ditch on her back with the saddle horn buried in the sod. Her shoes held her from getting up and her front feet were pawing the air. The water in the ditch forced me to hold my head up. I hollered over and over for help. Dad finally returned from checking the water and was pretty excited when he found us. He tried to pull me out. Finally, he unbuttoned my overalls and was able to pull me free. After I was free, Dad took his shovel and cut the wire that held the horse's hind feet. She got up and we started for home. When Dad pulled on me it strained my back. It hurt me to walk and it hurt to ride in the saddle. I had to stay in bed a day or two. Although it has never stopped me from doing what I have needed to do, I can still feel a weakness in my back from this incident.

This same horse kicked me in the stomach once, knocking me for a roll. I was forced to go to bed again for a day or two. I guess I deserved that one because I had jabbed her in the ribs, which might have promoted the event.

When I was seven, Dad sent Warren and me to Hibbard for a load of logs to build a house. We went through Idaho Falls and arrived at Hibbard late in the afternoon. Our horse team, 'Cap' and 'Jip', were slow walkers. We got our load of logs and started back the next day. We had to sleep overnight along the highway. We worried when trains came by on the railroad for fear the horses would break loose. We got home the third day and I remember the horse's shoes were filled with asphalt. This was quite an adventure for me and I was quite impressed with my big brother's ability to carry out the responsibility.

After dinner on Sundays, the boys of Goshen often went looking for something to do. We used to go to the beet dump and play cops and robbers. We made pistols of wood, using a clothespin on back of the handle to hold rubber bands, which were made of inner tubes. They were cocked by stretching the bands over the front. Some of them shot fifteen yards and they really stung at close range. Sometimes we went to a hill east of the town site where the snow drifted off the hill down across a fence into a field. We had lots of sleigh rides and ski rides on that hill. Occasionally, we got a sleigh or horse to pull us along the roads. That was the height of excitement during our long, cold winters.

I have many memories of times spent with my Dad. When I was small I would beg to go places with him. We walked most of the time, and when my young legs would wear out, he would put me on his back. My arms would hold tight around his neck and my shoes would rest in the back pockets of his overall trousers.

Dad used to use a long-handled hoe to block sugar beets and 3 or 4 of the younger kids followed along to pull out the doubles. I can remember it seemed like this work would never end. I used to get sore knees crawling along as we relayed behind Dad. We knew it had to be done so we'd have the money we needed, but it was discouraging when we could hear hollering at the ball diamond from the kids playing. Our fingers got so green with juice from the weeds and beets that it was impossible to wash off

Dad used to go with us for a swim in the canal after a hot day. I used to walk to the store with Dad. He'd offer me a pop or whatever candy I wanted. I remember there was a candy bar called the 'Saddle Blanket'. It was partly marshmallow with nuts over the top and chocolate covered. It was about 3 x 4 inches and an inch thick. We also had 'Dark Secrets' with marbles in them and 'Dum-Bells', which were two all day suckers on the same stick. When I chose pop, I used to anticipate having it puff back through my nose. Sometimes I chose a nickel's worth of shingle nails and would hammer them into old logs, just for fun.

Dad and I used to go to Cedar Hollow for wood. It wasn't far, but it was exciting to me. Dad was a great ax man. One day, he spotted a large tree and decided it was the one. It took a lot of chopping and the butt cut, or lower trunk, was a full load. We rolled it off the hillside and onto the wagon by using two long poles. Most of our loads were usually dry quaking aspen and they would be so high that we used a log chain to bind the wood on the wagon. The load would sway and rock the wagon when we went through chuckholes and siding places. I used to help pull the brake rope on the downhill, which made me feel strong and important.

One time, we went to Wolverine Canyon. We had our lunch (probably sardines and some hay for the horses). Dad and Warren went up the hill after cedar posts and I had to stay with the wagons to keep some Herefords away from the hay. The cows came up to look things over and I had to decide if I should run or stay put. I wondered if those cattle could upset a wagon with a small boy on it. It was such a relief when they came back with the posts. It was exciting when I saw a coyote while we were riding that morning.

I remember one time we had a father and son outing up on the W.W., (a switch back area in Wolverine Canyon). We sat around a big fire and listened to stories late into the night. The next day, after a hearty breakfast, I asked Dad for his pocketknife and instead of just whittling, I started snapping twigs between the sharp edge and my thumb. Sure enough, the blade came through one easily and laid my thumb open. Games began and some of the men took a tarp and got some of the kids to get in the middle. By pulling tight the kids would flip up in the air. It was quite entertaining, but I didn't go in the center because of my wrapped thumb.

On July 7, 1931, I was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

Saints. Behind our home and at the end of the pasture was an irrigation ditch. This ditch had a head gate, which when closed could back the water up and raise the water level quite high. I remember walking though the pasture to the ditch with my father where he baptized me.

When I was too young for school, Mom and I spent quite a bit of time together. She would tell me stories about her younger days. She was close to her father and she helped him run the store and post office in Marysville. She was always conscious of his penmanship and tried really hard to match it. I remember some times we would peel and slice potatoes in long thin slices and fry them for a treat. She kept a book around that she would read called, 'What Jesus Taught'.

After I was in school, I went to primary. I had some good teachers. I don't remember many specifics on what they taught, but they were such nice ladies. During the 'Trail Builder' years we learned the Articles of Faith. Finally, I was ordained a deacon and was proud to pass the sacrament.

While in Goshen I remember seeing Apostle Richard R. Lyman at our stake conference in Shelley. One time, President Heber J. Grant came to our conference. When we had lunch break he invited us to leave by a certain door so he would shake our hands. Lots of kids were excited about this opportunity so we filed by him. When I came by him with Vere Carpenter he said to Vere, "Haven't you been here before?" It turned out that Verl (Vere's twin) had been just a ways ahead of us. I was amazed that he had paid that much attention to us as individuals. I also saw Melvin J. Ballard at a stake conference.

When I was growing up it was depression years and times were very hard. My family did not have a lot of extras and work was hard to find. I remember how blessed we felt to 'just be getting by'. We often had potatoes three times a day. Our clothes were fixed and mended over and over in order to make them last a little longer. If the soles of our shoes wore out, pieces of cardboard were cut to fit inside and extend their wear until new ones could be bought. The pleasure of each day was found in each other, and the satisfaction of things accomplished, not in possessions or playthings. We had what we needed, although at times even our requirements were hard to meet.

I remember our Christmas celebration as times we splurged a little. We would hike up the hills of Goshen and find a scrub tree. Our decorations consisted of strung popcorn and homemade ornaments, mostly a collection of craft projects we would make at school. One Christmas in particular stands out in my mind. Money was scarce and we knew Christmas would be also. I remember on that Christmas morning getting a little pocketknife. I also remember it was the only gift that year. I remember another Christmas when I got a 'Shooting Star' snow sled. I was ten years old and thought it was the best Christmas ever.

After I had been a deacon for a while and got into the 8th grade, our family made plans to move to Rexburg. We packed our belongings and moved into a home, which we shared with a young couple who lived in a couple of the rooms. We took the big reservoir off of the Majestic stove and put a jacket on it. This heated water for the kitchen and bathroom. I was not used to indoor facilities, so it was a real treat to have a regular tub, toilet, basin and kitchen sink with running water. We even had hardwood floors and they were nice, but slick.

Our landlord, Mr. Anderson, lived next to us. He had a small corral and cow barn behind his house and ours. He kept 6 or 7 Jersey cows, usually milking 5. I used to go and watch him milk sometimes. He had a pair of bridle reins hanging in the barn. I had seen Warren braid leather reins and fool with leather some. Finally, the temptation was too much, and I helped myself to the reins. It wasn't long until he discovered they were missing and confronted me. I felt awful and didn't have a reason in the world to have them in the first place. I decided I was converted to the 3rd commandment, 'thou shalt not steal'. Even though I felt awful when I would come face to face with him, I've treasured the conviction I received. I learned the difference of what was mine, and what was not mine.

When it was time to go to school, I had to go through the main part of the business district to the old rock, three-story Washington School. This was a new experience for me and I had to learn how to cross city streets with lights and traffic. We were in different rooms for each class and it had a shop about a block away. Everybody in a homeroom went together for most of the day. Two or three homerooms of 8th graders were quite different than a few dozen students in Goshen. In order to be on the safe side, I picked out Jimmy Nichols to follow. He

was sort of a loner and had huge ears, so he was easy to follow.

When I was a freshman, we got our first radio. It was exciting listening to 'Gang Busters', 'Renfrew', 'Amos and Andy', 'Lone Ranger', and many others. About this time I would travel a few miles out of town and work for Uncle Les putting up hay.

After my freshman year, we moved to Island Park. It was the summer of 1937. I worked at the saw mill. I started the boiler fire at 6 a.m. so steam would be up at 8 a.m., and we would have the power to saw. I had to have slabs cut and keep the fire going all day. The single cylinder case steam engine was fascinating to me. I had to keep it greased and oiled. In addition to tending the boiler, I helped carry off slabs and lumber from the mill. Later that summer we changed the old case engine for a 2 cylinder Rumley. What an improvement! It used less wood and was more efficient and quieter.

That summer, our family used a small cabin and a slab house near the mill. Dad, Bernie and I slept in the house by the mill and the girls slept in the cabin. One night, when Mom walked between the two cabins after dark, she heard something walking off to the side. In the morning tracks revealed it was a moose.

While in Island Park we enjoyed so many things. The sawdust piles were huge and made a good place to play. Dad and us boys often walked to Tom Creek to fish. We shook jack pines and dumped squirrels out of them. We looked at old machinery and cars in the junkyard. We'd go to Ponds for the mail or to Coffee Pot to fish. Dad and I went out on Sundays with the old truck to bring in logs we were planning to use to build a house in Idaho Falls.

There was always story telling. I remember one in particular that Dad used to tell us about a man named Dodd. He was a tie-hack, who used to send the cut logs down the Buffalo River. One day while crossing a footbridge that spanned the river he met a bear. The story goes he pushed the bear off the bridge into the river with his measuring pole. I was always nervous of the bears and when I was small and would go over night with Dad I would be scared to sleep on the outside of the bedroll. I remember once I went with Dad and a friend of his. I insisted on the middle and as the two men rolled over to go to sleep, the blanket spanned across me like the

San Francisco Bridge. I wasn't very warm, but I felt safe.

That fall, we had a fire at the mill and it burned down. We lost the new Rumley engine. The decision was made to rebuild the mill and before long we had it running again. We rebuilt the mill and made a few improvements. This down time really put the pressure on us because we still had orders to fill, as well as the extra work to get the mill operating again. It was December before we were able to shut down that year. Winter brought a new look to everything with snow hanging on the trees. Two feet of snow fell before we left.

My family and I moved to Idaho Falls and lived in a basement apartment at 928 Ada. I had worked at the saw mill for six months, but I hadn't drawn any of my wages, which was \$50.00 per month, so I had some savings I was proud of. In January 1938, Dad, Barney and I began to build our house on a couple of lots Dad had bought in the 300 block of Cleveland. We put all of our spare time in on this house and finished shingling the roof on February 14, 1938. Snow started that night and we felt fortunate to have made that kind of progress in such a short time. It was 18' x 24', and built from the logs Dad and I had gathered during the summer. The wages I had saved gave us a home all paid for. Our home wasn't very large but we were happy in it.

I started high school late that year because we were so late leaving the mill. I had to take a heavy load to makeup for the semester I had missed. I didn't have many close ties, but made quite a few casual friends. I especially liked shop and enjoyed working with the machines and wood. I also enjoyed Geometry. I learned to swim, and enjoyed watching our basketball and boxing teams. I began to realize everyone did not have the same standards I did and so I didn't care to socialize much. Although this was a lonesome decision, I felt it was best. I kept active in the church collecting fast offerings, going to scouts and helping with the sacrament. I graduated from Idaho Falls High School in the spring of 1940.

During my high school years, I spent some of my wages on a yellow bike that was my only means of transportation. Many times I took Anna to school on it. Bernie and I covered most of Idaho Falls on that bike. We went to Reno Park (Tautphaus) a lot. One Saturday my bike was taken while we were at the matinee at the old Gaiety Theater. The next Saturday we

walked to the show and got it back.

I didn't get too excited about school with the city kids, I was more interested in the saw mill, hunting and fishing. I got to be pretty good at driving trucks and workhorses. We hunted rabbits at Mud Lake, deer, elk and an occasional moose at Island Park. Of course we fished quite a bit too. We saw Yellowstone once in a while, which was always a treat. I really enjoyed logging. We used two man saws in the fir timber and we used one man saws on house log sized trees. Chain saws were unheard of. It would take a week or two to harden our muscles and get used to the mosquitoes, but we felt strong and well.

The year after the mill fire, the South's, who operated the mill in Island Park split up. Wren went to Green River, Wyoming to run a mill there. Barney and Charlie stayed in Island Park. I was their only hired help because they were trying to keep expenses down. We logged, sawed, trucked and cut the trees. It was a lot of hard work, but a good experience. I got so I could handle the semi-truck pretty good. Skidding saw logs was interesting. I worked out a loader that pulled up like an overshot; it was swell for flat country loading. Before that we had used skids or skid-ways built on the hillsides. With the loader we didn't have to drag the logs as far. The horses had to pull pretty good until the logs got up a ways, but then it became easier to dump them on the truck.

In all of my experience I feel that I have learned how to make the best of bad situations in the timber, around trucks, with workhorses, cutting trees, and managing heavy objects, etc. Through my growing up years, I learned to be a good ax man, a fly fisherman, a truck driver, a logger, a sawer, a teamster, and a pretty good shot with a rifle. I became friends with my co-workers and seemed to have their respect. During rainy spells and long evenings we played some poker. It was friendly of course, so the game was the attraction and not the money.

After graduation, I stayed in Island Park for the next six months. Then I went to the Southern Branch of the University of Idaho (now I.S.U.) at Pocatello for the 2nd semester of the 1940-41 school years. I stayed at a boarding house and was accepted into the auto mechanics program. I took a New Testament course, but the professor was a disappointment and I didn't learn much. I hitch hiked between Idaho Falls and Pocatello most of the weekends.

In the spring of 1941, I helped with the construction of the Idaho Falls Temple. I was put to work handling pans full of cement. This was heavy work and I developed a strangulated hernia. Dr. J.W. West operated on me. After two weeks in the hospital and several more weeks recuperating I was able to return to school.

I finished my year of schooling at Pocatello and went back to the saw mill for the summer. I helped maintain the truck motors and helped with other mechanical needs. I felt the mechanical basics I had learned at Pocatello were a great benefit to me

Again after working 6 months in Island Park, I started school at Ricks Academy at Rexburg, Idaho. I was just in time to get housing in the dormitory. My room shared a common skylight with the dorm pantry so with a little toss and catch I was able to stock some bread and jam for late night snacks. I remember one time a raw egg was pitched over and the surprise got the best of me. The girls and boys ate together and shared cleanup and kitchen duty. A group of us became good friends through this experience and we spent our free time going to the dances at Riverside and other activities in the area.

I became involved in the drama department and enjoyed participating in a variety of productions. I had the lead in *'WOW, Some Baby'*. We performed this play several times at Ricks and then traveled to the Civic Auditorium at Idaho Falls and did three performances there. It was a great experience!

I was a member of the track team and lettered in the two-mile. The letter I earned was mounted on a sweater, which I wore with pride and have kept through the years.

During my last semester of college, I wondered how I would have enough money to finish my courses and provide for my needs. My savings was gone and I had no time or resources for work. The Rexburg Theater had a 'Cash Night' each week. I had invited a girl to go with me to the movie and our tickets were thrown into the drawing for a \$50.00 cash prize. When the movie ended I heard my name called out as the winner of the drawing. With some extra precaution and careful budgeting, the prize money won covered my expenses and I was able to finish my semester. It has since seemed to me that this was evidence of a blessing rather

than a lucky winner, which I have been grateful for.

In 1942, after I was through with school at Ricks, I decided to go to Evanston, Wyoming and work for Wren South at the saw mill there. This was a special experience for me. Wren and Ruth and their family were great to me. Ruth was just like a sister to me and Wren became a special friend. I used to chauffeur their daughters, Donna and Glenna, to dances at Bridger and Lyman. I got pretty good at driving the big trucks and I joined a work crew cutting and hauling mining props and railroad ties. Glen Harding and Gene Jones were part of the crew and we became good friends. We stayed in a canvas covered sheep camp. I found that the winters in Wyoming were really cold. A quick fire in the little cast iron cooking stove made it comfortable, but it cooled off just as fast. Our eggs used to freeze and crack the shell as they thawed and fried at the same time it was interesting to note that they didn't spread out very far. We would take two teams and bob sleighs up the hill each morning and bring the props back with us. We would unload them and stack them in piles. By spring, we had a good stockpile waiting for delivery.

When the weather permitted, I drove a truck that vibrated at speeds over 35. We called it "Dinny". It was old, but I worked it over and painted it fire engine red with a brush. We used it as a bobtail in bad weather and a semi when the weather was good.

December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. This event forced the United States to activate their armed forces and World War II began. I was deferred from the draft because I was working in the production of railroad ties, which were a premium item in war time. After some time, I decided I would not feel right if I didn't serve my country and represent my family and friends. On November 3, 1943, I went on a bus from Idaho Falls to Fort Douglas, just north of Salt Lake City, Utah. There I started the paper work and physical exams to become a serviceman. I chose to serve in the Air Force.

I was sent to Buckley Field (near Denver) for basic training. We learned the fundamentals, procedures and close order drill. We took aptitude tests that indicated where we could best serve. This is where I met Wayne Call. Together we saw what a big city was like. We visited museums, livestock expositions, penny arcades, rode streetcars, and sometimes we

attended church.

After basic training we received our assignments for further training. I was sent to gunner school at Las Vegas and arrived in early March. For six weeks it rained, but the breezes off the desert were pleasing and made our stay ideal weather wise. We also had some time to go downtown and see the casinos and other sites of the city.

The mascot for the airfield was a Gila Monster that looked like a machine gunner. We did our first flying in B-17s, which were considered a workhorse plane. We learned 30 and 50 caliber machine guns inside and out. We were required to assemble the 50, in 12-15 minutes blindfolded. We did lots of class work on theory in sighting and other flying procedures. We shot air to air and air to ground targets. I learned to use the ball turret in the belly of the plane, as well as the other gunnery spots. In order to become familiar with machine gun sights, we used shotguns with machine gun sights. We would ride in the back of a pickup and shoot at clay birds thrown at different angles. This simulated shooting at fighter planes in combat. It was fun, and all that shooting was right up my alley. We were taught that our know-how, guns and cooperation could save our crew and plane.

My next assignment was Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho. We traveled on a troop train, which laid over in Pocatello for an hour or two. Several members of my family were there to see me. At Mountain Home we were assigned to a crew. I became part of Crew #96. We quickly became acquainted and learned to function together. We were assigned to fly in B-24s. I was trained as a waist gunner. The maintenance at the stateside bases wasn't the best, nor the planes used for training. One day, I remember we took off three times in three different planes before we accomplished the mission we had been assigned.

Our last few weeks of training were spent at Peterson Field at Colorado Springs. We were then sent to Lincoln, Nebraska, where we picked up a new B-24, which we were to deliver to England. We started our overseas flight, and were soon in Bangor, Maine. The next day we arrived at Goose Bay, Nova Scotia. I remember stands of lodge pole pine trees that seemed extra tall. The base reminded me of Mack's Inn or West Yellowstone. Of course, every base had a PX where notions, souvenirs, beer and candy could be found.

The next day we got to Iceland, and after a few hours of sleep we set out for Ireland where we spent the night. The next morning, I left my wallet under my pillow for just a few minutes. When I returned for it I discovered someone had beaten me to it. I had a few pictures, 26 dollars and a small notebook filled with mother's thoughts for me entitled "Things I Cannot Say This Morning". She had handed it to me the morning we said goodbye. I treasured it far more than anything else I lost that day.

Our next stop was England. They took our plane and sent us to our base. We never flew or saw that plane again. Our base was at Hardwick, a few miles from Norwich, England. This was to be my home for the duration of my active duty. The base was spread out over quite an area and so I bought a bike, which saved me a lot of walking.

The men in our crew were assigned to a Quonset hut with two other crews. One crew was almost finished with their tour of duty and was scheduled to go home soon. One of the men gave me a bottle cork that he had carried on his missions and considered it a good luck charm. I carried it for about 30 missions before it came up missing. On our 3rd mission, this crew was shot down. They were flying next to us and the next thing we knew, they were hit. First I saw some white objects that looked like Ping-Pong balls above the overcast. As I looked closer I could see it was parachutes. Just then, I looked up and saw their ship fly to pieces. Later we were told that some were taken prisoners. It was eerie to go back to the barracks and have an entire crew missing. Their belongings were quickly removed and another crew moved in.

We were issued 45 caliber pistols and since the city boys weren't very interested in guns, I used to speak for their allotments of ammunition. In return, I gave them my shot of whiskey when we returned from our missions. When I had free time I spent much of it shooting targets.

The statistics we received about the missions we participated in were quite interesting to me. One time we were told that on the average 100 Germans were killed for every GI flying on a particular mission we had just completed. We had hit a huge rail yard filled with passenger trains. I saw a house explode and be tossed in the air by the blast of bombs. I saw a train attempting to cross an open area when some P-51s swooped down and shot it up. As they hit the steam engine it burst sending steam and water in the air, similar to Old Faithful.

One day we got a call warning us of approaching enemy fighters. I looked out the side window of our plane's waist and saw an enemy FW- 180 flying beside us. He was using our plane to hide behind in an attempt to be unnoticed by our fighter planes. I could see that he was blond and blue eyed. I swung my 50-caliber machine gun around and pointed it at him. He reacted quickly and left in a hurry. He was so close it would have been hard to miss him and he knew it.

The Germans had captured some of our fighter planes and so we had to be on the lookout for trickery as they were capable of causing havoc in our own planes. One day, as four P51s flew toward us as if to attack, I cut loose as directed. We quickly learned that the planes were our own troops goofing around. It was a close call and quick evidence of some poor judgment. I doubt they tried it again.

At times we had to haul supplies to some of our ground troops in Holland. We had to fly in fast just above the power lines to avoid machine gun fire from the Germans, who would hide in the hedges. As we approached the drop area we would suddenly raise to 500 feet so the parachutes would be effective in letting the supplies down without damage. The German machine guns cut loose as we ascended and hit us making several holes in our ship. One bullet cut off the oxygen lines about one foot behind my head. This was a critical situation. Luckily we didn't catch any sparks, which would have resulted in an explosion.

Another time, we were sent to Hamburg. The weather was cold and we had high clouds. We stayed together the best we could until we got near the city. The Bismarck was in the harbor pumping anti-aircraft fire at us as well as other guns around the area. It was impossible to hold our formation with such poor visibility. When our bombs had been dropped we attempted to fly out individually in order to avoid collisions. I remember the con trails were so bad, along with such poor visibility that it was frightening. Some planes came into view going on a course that was very hazardous. It was a relief to get over the North Sea and out of such a dangerous pattern. That mission was flown at 23,000 feet.

We did not fly in formation when we would return to base after a mission. Each plane would return following their own course. One day, as were returning, I glanced up and saw one

of our planes flying just above us. It seemed inches away and ready to sit on us. Instantly, I spoke to our pilot over the radio and said, "Lookup". We were so close, that is all the time I had to warn him. Immediately our pilot put our B-24 into a nose-dive. B24s were not made for quick maneuvers and our plane started to vibrate and rattle. The wings shook and flapped and I wondered if they were going to hold together. When we were a safe distance from the other aircraft our pilot had to pull the plane back into control. We witnessed our plane being pushed to the limit. All we could do was hold our breath. We survived much to the credit of our pilot, who was one of the best. I was presented a citation for alerting my crew of danger and saving our lives. This almost mid air collision was one of the closest calls I experienced while serving.

There was another time our tail gunner lost his electricity supply for his suit. It got very cold in those planes at the high altitudes. I had some extra extension cords and by splicing them together and made it possible for him to remain at his post.

When the Battle of the Bulge got underway we were called to bomb enemy lines. We flew over our ground troops until we saw colored flak sent up by them. That signaled where to drop our bombs on the enemy. All the skill and training we had been taught and had learned were used in that effort that day. I am sure we helped turn the tide in that battle.

We participated in several all out campaigns where every available American and British aircraft combined and were sent into action. Several major targets would be pinpointed. Ordinarily we went during the day and the English during the night. They didn't fly in formation as we did because it was dark. We would be on the base, sometimes trying to sleep, and hear the Lancasters and Wellingtons droning across the skies during the night. We were also visited a few times by buzz bombs while on our base. It was nerve wracking. It would start by a siren alert and then you would hear a droning sound. Their planes flew slowly and as they came closer their engines would quit for a few seconds, then start up again and run another 15 or 20 seconds. By that time you better have a ditch or cellar picked out and be under cover.

There were a few times when we returned to base with real potent loads. In order to do that we needed a ground speed over 200 mph. On occasion, we were instructed to waste them in a particular area of the North Sea. This would happen when we had to abort a mission for

whatever reason. Once our plane had been seriously damaged and we had to drop flak suits and anything we could hoping to hold our altitude in order to get to a base for landing. Once we landed we had to be transported back to our base in military trucks and cars. When our plane was repaired we were able to fly again.

Flack is shrapnel or sharp, jagged pieces of metal. From the ground it can be shot really high into the air and can destroy or badly damage aircraft. It was always an anxious time when flack was being shot at you. We knew it was a very real threat. Chaff was like Christmas tree tinsel. During our flights we would drop this shredded tin foil to confuse the radar information used by enemy gunners on the ground.

I flew in the nose, the tail, and the waist of our aircraft, and one time our pilot let me try the controls. Our pilot was a country boy from Dakota and the best I've ever seen. Our copilot was near his equal. It built our confidence to serve with such capable men. No one ever questioned their decisions about anything, but they would always listen and discuss anything we wanted to say.

When we left on missions we were always fully suited with the gear necessary to eject if necessary. One buzzer from the pilot was a warning to get ready. The second buzzer was the signal to eject. We were given the 'one buzzer' warning just once.

During this time in my life I learned to pray with more meaning than I ever had before. I know my Mother, in particular, was on her knees praying in my behalf much of the time. Those prayers helped keep me safe from danger in combat, but also helped me face the danger that can come from peers, and the influences of wicked places. My patriarchal blessing, received as I went into the service, advised that I should be diligent in learning so I could carry my end of the responsibilities and contribute to our country's effort. My blessing and the prayers offered gave me comfort and guidance as I faced each day and its challenges.

When we could, Wayne and I would get together and spend some three-day passes. We attended church a few times in Norwich. One day, I pumped the organ so it would have the air it needed to provide the music. Some Englishmen invited us to their home for lunch. We took

our allotted food stamps to help the families so they wouldn't be deprived of their needs. It was a sobering experience to see our small contribution provide basic needs for them. I remember seeing children receive their first apple or orange because of our food stamps.

While in London we saw Big Ben and Piccadilly Circus. We found the English lifestyle different and interesting. After dark, the streets were crowded, but unlit because of the 'blackout orders'. Windows and doorways were shaded or boarded to keep light to a minimum in case of air raids. Crowds were generally made up of folks going from one pub to another. At 4p.m., almost everyone took a tea break; nothing interrupted that.

A tour consisted of 35 complete missions. When you completed a tour, you were sent stateside where you could be released or re-enlist. As I completed my tour, I received my orders, packed my belongings and started my trip back to the United States. When we flew past Greenland, I looked down to the ocean and saw icebergs every where. It was a sight I will always remember. The colors of the ocean surface were spectacular. It was some of the prettiest shades of green I have ever seen, and graduated from lighter to darker shades the further you traveled from the shoreline. We were assigned to a ship that was carrying wounded servicemen. We pulled the guard duty and details for a six-day crossing. The ship had two names, Washington and Mt. Vernon. It traveled fast enough that it did not need to be escorted, as submarines were not a threat to it. While we were on the ship we got word that Franklin D. Roosevelt, the United States President, had died. The vice-president, Harry S. Truman, became the next president.

We arrived at Newport News where we spent the night and I remember the food was fantastic. We were served by German POWs, but were cautioned to be patient with them. They would look closely at our leather flight jackets to see where we had flown missions and sometimes their reaction was not the best. The next day, we left by train. I passed through most of the eastern country in the dark so I didn't get much of a tour of that countryside.

I soon found myself at Santa Anna, California. We were treated very well and had snacks of anything from steak to sandwiches, around the clock. We went deep-sea fishing on a PTO boat that had been converted to a fishing boat. I caught a 48-pound halibut. In all of my

fishing experience, I have never seen anything so big. We had to hook it to get it in the boat. I had no way to take care of the fish and so I found a man on the shore and gave it to him. I also caught a bad sunburn.

After a few days of rest and relaxation, I went on to Fort Douglas where my Air Force experience had begun. There my paperwork was processed and I was officially discharged from the Air Force. It was June of 1945.

After a short reunion with my family, I returned to Island Park to again work in the timber. It was good to be back. At my first opportunity, I decided to go to Burley, Idaho, to see my friend Wayne. When I got there I found he had not been discharged yet. I got acquainted with his family, in particular his sister, Lois. I went back to work, but later made a trip to Brigham City, Utah, where I met Lois and a couple of friends. We went to a little lake where we went rowing. Although Lois was not my date, we got better acquainted and I got more interested in her.

On November 26, I went to Burley again. Lois and I had a couple of dates. I returned to Idaho Falls to begin work on a house at 360 Cleveland. I had saved my money from my service pay and with it started to build a home of my own. At Christmas I went to see Lois again. I had purchased a ring and she seemed really pleased with it. We talked of the future together. I spoke to her dad about our marriage, and returned to get busy on 'our' house. Lois came to see me in mid February and when I took her home I returned with some of her household belongings. The next time I saw her was the 26th of February. We were married February 27, 1946, in the Idaho Falls Temple. I remember it was about noon and the Temple President, David Smith, sealed us for time and all eternity. I knew this day was special, but as the years have passed I have come to realize that this was the most important event that has ever happened to me.

We drove to Burley for a reception and dance. We then had an open house in Idaho Falls, at our home. My dad's sisters sang, "Little Sailor Boys", and I recited the "Ballad of Blasphemous Bill McKie". We had a lot of support from our family and friends. I remember two sets of dishes and they turned out to be the same pattern. Lois had purchased some furniture

and we had what we considered a nice comfortable place to start life together. We had no drapes, no groceries, no fridge, an outhouse, no money, no job, but a determination to be a good family. I was really proud of Lois and her petite appearance. Her hair was so neat and her figure held much interest. She played the piano and had a sincerity that made me aware when I looked in her eyes that I had found the one for me. I became determined that I would live for her no matter what.

As we started our lives the money I had saved was gone, and Lois had spent hers for so many things to make our home pleasant. I contacted Woody Arrington and he put me to work remodeling a house. He paid me \$28.00 per week, which seemed to take care of us.

In the spring of 1946, after Lois and I had been in our first house on Cleveland for about three months, we decided to work at the sawmill in Island Park for the summer. As soon as the roads were open, we moved into an old cabin and started building a new cabin for us. It had two rooms and a 'path'. We shared it with a few mice, but Lois made it comfortable and kept it tidy. It was exciting to show her the wild animals and the beautiful scenery that I had grown to love. I trucked the logs to the mill, and she would ride with me, which gave us a lot of time to be together.

During that summer, we decided to sell our house in Idaho Falls and move to Burley. Lois and I cut and hauled logs we could build a house with. We put them on a railroad car and sent them to Burley. Wayne and I bought some ground west of town. We dug a well and built a garage to live in so I could be close to our house and thus get more work done on it. We had our first Christmas in that garage. We fixed a false ceiling in it and put our bedsprings across the ceiling joists. Our Christmas tree stood on top of our dresser. We had so much fun playing house.

I worked delivering milk with Wayne. We would start in the wee hours of the morning, and then I would work on the house after that. For a short time I helped on Dean's crew at Roger Brothers too. It wasn't long before we learned that family deals don't always work out. We decided it would be best to move back to Idaho Falls and settle down. I bought a Ford for \$50.00. I fastened a little platform on the back so we could move items that wouldn't fit inside.

Once we got to Idaho Falls we bought some building lots in the 500 block of Cleveland Street. I decided to build with cinder blocks this time and the work began. We built a garage, which we used as our living room, a bedroom, and an extra room we used for storage. We put a big window on the west, which we really enjoyed.

About this time, Lois went to see Dr. Guyett and we learned we were expecting our first child. We bought a large buggy for a crib and started to collect the things a baby would need. On October 17, 1947, our little girl came to town. One of my fondest memories was the way mom seemed to know what to do and how to do it. She did all the right things for Lois Ann. I witnessed such a great love and dedication that I determined to do all I could to help her and use my energy to save hers. We shared in the tasks that came to us.

From day one, we realized we had received a beautiful daughter and that we would be willing to do all we could to be good parents and friends to her. She had so much hair and was so cute. We were on cloud nine and sometimes a little embarrassed about the way people fussed over her. Ann was 10 weeks old when she got really sick. One night, I sat up with her across my chest and piled extra covers on top of us. There in our pink platform rocker, in front of the oil heater, we spent the night. Mom had been tending her through the day and needed rest so she went to bed. The next day we took her to the hospital and with a little extra attention she was as good as ever. Her hair was dark and thick and Mom always enjoyed fixing it so cute.

At this time I got an offer to work as a plumber for Ernest Terry. I learned the plumber's skills, which came in handy through the years. I did this work for 10 months and then had a chance to get a better job at Pioneer Machine Company. I wasn't too content there and wanted something more dependable; I had seen too much of seasonal jobs and worried about layoffs. I began my job search again and went to visit with George Keller about work at the Post Office. That was a successful effort and I started as a temporary worker, September 1948. It wasn't long until I was on a regular schedule as a mail carrier. My paycheck seemed quite satisfactory compared to what I had been receiving. I was a carrier for eleven years. I enjoyed being out and about, but always hated the dogs. After 11 years, I transferred inside and became a mail clerk. As a clerk I worked the night shift, which paid a little better and allowed

me to drive school bus on the side.

On August 9, 1949, Ann got a little sister. It was so exciting with two little girls. Kaye was another beautiful baby. Mom and I were so proud. When Kaye got hungry, I would step up to the buggy and say, "Daddy fix it" and she would quiet down until I warmed her bottle. Life was treating us very well. It was hard to imagine it could get any better.

After we got the house built in 1947, I traded our old car for Bernie's bike. I rode it to work and saved our money until we had enough to buy our next car, which was a 1940 Chrysler. That car was a dependable means of transportation for us with plenty of room. It was the first time we could come and go as we pleased.

With the news that our family was going to grow again, we added another room onto our house. This extra bedroom really helped. Douglas Al was born August 31, 1951. He was a healthy boy and it was especially exciting to have a son. Our three children kept us busy and entertained.

We had a garden, planted some trees, fenced the backyard, made a driveway and built a merry-go-round in the backyard. We decided it was time to put in a bathroom to replace the outhouse. We also got an easy spin dryer washer. Both of these improvements made our lives so much better. About this time we got our first 'black and white' television.

On January 24, 1953, Karla arrived and from then on she kept things popping. I built a playpen out of dowels to slow down the traffic. It had a floor in it with casters on the bottom. It helped Mom keep track of the little ones easier.

We decided to make another addition east of the original house, which we built out of logs. We then had a big front room with two large picture windows, two bedrooms, a bath and a small cellar room. The new bedroom had two steps, which made it a great room for kid's with a low ceiling and the steps to play on. We bought the Gulbransen piano that mom had learned to play on and Ann started piano lessons. It was fun to hear her and Lois play for us.

Across the street from our house the city developed a park for Little League and Grid

Kid activities. This provided a great playground for us. Our kids walked several blocks to school, which made it really handy. During the last part of Doug's first grade year, he got really sick and had to go to the hospital. He had Nephritis, a serious kidney disease. This gave us quite a scare. We were certainly grateful when he started to improve and we could take him home. He missed a lot of school, but after several months he was back to his busy little self.

Another son was born, April 24, 1957. Alan C. was a round-faced boy that attracted the attention of all. We were certainly busy now as Mom and I tried to meet the needs of our little crew. We decided we didn't want to raise our family in town, so in the spring of 1958, we found some ground and built a house five miles from town on First Street. By fall, we moved into the half basement and registered the kids in school at Iona Elementary. It took all of our spare time to build the house, fix the yard, fence the pasture, irrigate, milk twice a day, make a clothesline, and top the huge trees that grew on the property. I built a swing for the kids that had a frame taller than the eaves of the house. The kids would try to swing high enough to see over the house.

During this time my schedule was pretty hectic. I had to be to work at the Post Office by 10 p.m. I would work all night and then my shift would end just in time for me to drive the first bus run at 6:45 am. Then I could sleep for a couple of hours before I would drive the kindergarten run at 10:30 a.m. When this run was over, I could then sleep a couple more hours before I started to pick kids up at 1 p.m. I drove five bus runs a day and many days Lois would ride with me to keep me awake. I was serving a stake mission and was then President of the Seventies Quorum. It was a busy time in our lives. I'm sure my little partner was just as busy with the demands of the housework and our growing family.

As the winter passed, I did what I could on the house and the next summer we were able to move upstairs. We had a great view of Taylor Mountain from our front window. We got a palomino, pinto horse, which we named Flake because of a large patch of white on her rump that looked like a snowflake. She was gentle and we enjoyed her for a long time. She had plenty of pep and was a great horse in the hills. She had three colts for us. We got a harness and used her on a cart I made, which was a lot of fun. The next animal we got was a pretty little Guernsey

cow. We called her Tiz and milked her for about ten years. Later came colts, calves, pigs, chickens, and lots of milk and cream. Tiz gave us a calf each year and even twins once. We got our first boxer dog, Lady. What a good friend she was to all of us. What we didn't understand about our animals or farm life we learned from our neighbors, Wes and Thelma High. They were the greatest, always helpful and interested in our kids. We helped with their haying, egg picking and chores, and enjoyed their company and friendship.

The first colt Flake had we named Lucky. She was a dark bay and looked like a typical storybook horse. A year later, she got a full sister that we called Misty. She was patient, smart and buckskin in color with four white socks. She was a good walker, easy rider and did whatever we asked her to. The next colt we named Dandy, a deep sorrel with a wide strip and 3 white feet. She had a colt we called Sonny, also a sorrel with three white feet and a blaze. What was fun about this horse was that he was gated. He used a pace or single foot at times and was a real walker. I really enjoyed riding our horses and working with them.

I made many trips to Palisades and Island Park to fish and ride through the canyons and mountains on horseback. I remember we bought an old yellow and white 3/4-ton Ford pickup. It had side panels for a stock rack made of 1 x 6's. We loaded the pickup and took our kids to Island Park camping. By using the stock rack, we placed slats of wood across its wooden frame like bedsteads. We made a triple-decker bunk bed. We stopped at Rexburg for gas and some people tried to hire us to pick potatoes. It embarrassed the kids, at the time, but we have laughed about it many times. We had a lot of great camping, fishing and picnicking trips together!

In 1960, we welcomed the last addition to our family. JoLyn was born on May 11th. What a cute little girl she was, and she had a full head of curly hair. She was like a little doll and we all enjoyed fussing over her.

In the spring of 1962, we had a lot of snow and the ground was still frozen. We suddenly got some warm weather and it started to thaw and rain. Before we knew it Sand Creek was over flowing and we were involved in a flood. The floodwater ran through the basement just like the Buffalo River. Our animals were in trouble so we took them to our

neighbor's, because their barnyard was on higher ground. I had a 150-pound pig that I put a barrel hitch on and led it to a high spot in their barnyard. It almost chilled to death, but we made a bed of straw and it pulled through. A few men in our ward tried to move us out, but we didn't want to leave all we had behind, so we stayed. We had a fireplace that kept us warm and we felt safe being together.

As the water started to recede we began to assess the damage. The wet back fill had crowded the cinder block walls of the front of the basement. After a few days, the walls moved back and were as straight as before. The paneling in the basement warped and curled and we had to replace it. One of the biggest problems we faced was cleaning up the meadow mice, which had drowned and were floating everywhere. We scrubbed the basement with Clorox water and cleaned it up the best we could. Our furnace had to be repaired. Most of our hay had floated away and the well pump had to be replaced. Net wire fences had collected sticks, weeds, hay, wood and all kinds of debris. Our car got water in the turbo transmission and we could not use it after that. Our church house was flooded too, so many of us pitched in and helped put things back in order there. We never did get rid of the damp, musty smell.

In 1965, we got the idea to build again and found three acres on Hitt Road that we decided to buy. We sold our home on First Street and traded our home on Cleveland to a contractor for labor. We built a barn out of some old house logs and a shop where we could store many of our things until our home was finished. We rented a singlewide trailer to live in for six months. It was crowded, but we survived it just fine. We fenced the pasture for our animals and finalized our house plans. The contractor we had traded with worked on the walls in his lumberyard while we put in the foundation and floor. When it came time for the walls, he transported them to our place. One morning we had the sub floor, and by late afternoon the walls were all standing. It was quite an exciting thing to see such fast progress. I took over at that point and with the help of the family we finished the house.

We built the house on high ground thinking we did not want to worry about floodwaters again. We had to have a lot of dirt brought in to grade the yard, but it also made a nice terraced yard. We planted some trees and bushes, grass and mom's annual petunias, and

our home became established and beautiful.

We went to church in Lincoln and the younger kids went to Lincoln Elementary. We had kids in school at Ammon Junior High and Bonneville High School too. I served as ward clerk for a couple of years in the Lincoln Ward. This was a good learning experience for me and I enjoyed it very much.

On June 15th, 1969, I got a call from Bernie. It was Father's Day and he called to tell me that dad had passed away. My mother had been quite sick for sometime. She had had surgery to remove a kidney and slow the cancer that was spreading. She was at the time in the hospital and so it was a surprise to hear that dad was gone since we were expecting news about mom. We planned the funeral and made necessary arrangements for him on that Thursday. I went to the hospital and told mom that he had passed away. Wednesday evening while we were at the viewing for dad, I received a phone call that mom had passed away. Quick preparations and a few changes in the program allowed us to have a combined service for them the next day. It was quite a shock to many of their friends and some family members when they arrived for dad's funeral and found it was a service for both. I felt it was quite typical of the way they were. Dad often took the lead and was sometimes impatient or anxious about going some where or getting home and he would say, "Come on Mabel, let's go." Mom would quietly fall in line and they would go. I suppose sometime between Sunday morning and Wednesday evening dad had said, "Come on Mabel, let's go," and she typically followed him on.

It was quite a change to loose not one, but both of my parents at the same time. We had lived within a block of them for years and within a few miles after that. Our weeks included daily conversations and weekly visits with them. My dad was always someone I looked up to and had always respected his lifestyle and good judgment. Mother was a true friend, a source of unconditional love and kindness. I helped in the settlement of their worldly affairs and knew that their leaving was part of a bigger plan. I made the necessary adjustments to my changed situation and accepted the fact that life goes on. I became more determined to live my life so they would be proud of my efforts.

Our children were growing up, a fact both Lois and I were having to face. Ann

graduated and left for college and it wasn't long before Kaye and Doug did the same. We were so proud of their accomplishments and hoped for the best as we tried to see them off on their new adventures. In 1971, Doug received a mission call to Argentina. This was quite a thrill for our family. He learned the Spanish language and had many opportunities to teach and further the gospel. It was a privilege to have him serve and we realized many blessings because of this service.

During this time, Lois and I had committed to a regular schedule of Temple work. We tried to attend each week. I accepted the opportunity to work at the veil and we looked forward to our weekly assignment. In July of 1973, I got a call to meet with the Temple Presidency. President Hart asked if I would become a Temple Officiator. I was hesitant and concerned because I felt I was too bashful to do such a thing. I was encouraged to reconsider and as I did I realized I could be turning down up the greatest opportunities of my life. I agreed to give it a try and was set apart.

I had always had the ability to memorize easily and went right to work learning the parts and procedures necessary to serve. Lois would go with me and follow the printed dialogue while I repeated each part. She was careful to keep me in line and helped me learn what I needed to know, word for word. It was a wonderful experience to participate in the cast and other work for the next eight years. I was asked to serve on the Temple Committee and enjoyed learning more about the daily needs and requirements necessary to run the Temple. I was a Supervisor for several years, which enabled me to work closely with many great men and women. Lois accepted a call to help in the record-keeping department as a Stake Lady during these years. I know her services were appreciated as she was always so meticulous and careful with details. We made so many good, genuine friends and shared so many wonderful experiences with them.

The highlight of my temple experience came in 1981. Temple President DeVere Harris and I had become good friends. One day he asked me how I would feel about becoming a Sealer. I was surprised that he would consider me for such a responsibility, but I had too much respect for him to say no. A date was scheduled and a group of men from Idaho Falls met at

Church Headquarters in Salt Lake to be set apart. We were ushered into a large meeting room where the Presidency and the Twelve Apostles meet. The Prophet's secretary, Brother Arthur D. Haycock, noted that I had family with me and asked if they would like to accompany me. Lois, Karla, JoLyn and Ellen were invited to be with me for this occasion. As we entered the room, President Spencer W. Kimball stood at the door and greeted us. As I took my turn and shook his hand he stood on his tiptoes and kissed me on the cheek. I was thrilled! I knew he could look me in the eyes he knew how I felt. He stretched upwards again and kissed me, a second time, on the cheek. President Kimball then took turns with President Marion G. Romney in setting us apart as Sealers in the Idaho Falls Temple. President Kimball asked President Romney to set me apart. With President Kimball's poor health and President Romney's poor eyesight, it was inspiring to see these men in such control of this situation and exercising the Priesthood as no other could. It is something I never dreamed would happen to me, and something I will never forget.

I returned to Idaho Falls with an overwhelming sense of responsibility. I tried to read and learn everything I could so that I would better understand what a Sealer should know and do. I did many proxy sealings until I felt ready to perform a live ceremony. Finally, I sealed a man and wife, and their children together. They were a family from St. Anthony and they were my first of many to come. In the following thirteen years I was privileged to seal just under one thousand couples and families, plus thousands of families by proxy. What a thrill! I have tried to keep a scrapbook of the couples that were sealed. Their wedding picture or announcement, which I have kept, has provided me with many memories of special people I have become acquainted with.

In 1983, I had the opportunity to marry Karla and Arlen and later when Justin and Allison joined our family, I was privileged to seal them to Alan and Ellen. In 1994, I was released as an active Sealer, but still have the authority to perform the sealing ceremony for family members. As our grand children have met their companions, I have been able to seal them in the Idaho Falls Temple and with special permission have been able to marry some of them in the Salt Lake, Mt. Timpanogos, and Bountiful Temples. This has been a blessing in my life and something I am so grateful for.

After 21 years, I stopped driving bus and after 28 years, I officially retired from the Post Office, in December, 1976. I started to install fireplaces and do the rock work around them. I enjoyed this work very much. Alan worked with me much of the time, which was an added bonus.

July 24, 1986, Lois and I were out for an afternoon ride on our horses. Sonny slipped and fell on my leg. I could tell it was broken and could do nothing but lay there. Mom took off for the house and called the ambulance. After what seemed like forever, the ambulance came and I was taken to the hospital where my leg was set. A pin was place to help hold things together and after several weeks, I was able to do what I wanted again.

A few years later, about 1990, Lois and I were doing some shopping in Idaho Falls when I suddenly felt like I was not doing very well. I could tell my balance and sense of direction were not like usual. A friend drove us home and I made arrangements to see a doctor. Tests showed that I had suffered a mild stroke. After some time, further tests showed that I was doing fine and any further problem was not anticipated. I certainly felt blessed to have overcome the situation. My right side was left with a persistent tingling sensation and a weakness that has altered my ability to do some of the things I have always enjoyed. But, the adjustments have been few and I am able to do the things that I need to do.

Mom's health became a concern several years ago. As we tried to find solutions to the problems she had, we both realized changes in our lives. She was always busy taking care of everyone and working early in the morning until late at night. As she became less active and unable to do all that she wanted to do, I tried to step in and help around the house and with the meals. Through times of discouragement and frustration, we relied on each other and the Lord for help and comfort. On August 4, 1997 Lois passed away. I have been so blessed to have Lois as my wife - there just never was a better wife. She is my best friend and I miss her. I look forward to the day we will be together again and I will have her by my side for eternity.

I have always enjoyed riding my horses. I have worn a path through the fields near my home and a trail along Sand Creek. As homes and businesses have moved in around us I continue to ride almost daily, but my choices have been narrowed down. For years I enjoyed

taking the horses and riding in the mountains. Fall was especially beautiful, as the leaves would turn and the fall colors would paint the scenery so pretty. Beckler, the Palisades Lakes, and Split Creek in Island Park and were always favorites. I used to be a pretty good fisherman and have always enjoyed an opportunity to cast a fly or drowned a worm when I could. I have enjoyed helping Rex and Ann with their cattle. Branding calves, trucking the cattle to ranch land at Spencer and Camas Creek and then trailing them have been enjoyable to me. The fall roundups have given me a taste of the west and a cowboy's life, which I really have enjoyed.

For several years, our family tried to have an activity each month. They were always fun for Lois and me. She was usually the idea and work behind them, and quite often everyone could attend, which made it extra worthwhile. When Lois got sick some of the activities had to be trimmed down, but it is still an enjoyable time when we gather together and catch up on the visiting and have some fun. We now have 60 in our posterity and rumors of more on the way. They have each been an added blessing to the little family we started years ago.

I got a pool table a couple of years ago and spend some of my time fine tuning the game. It is great sport to have the grand kids come and challenge me in a game. Over the years I have accumulated quite a collection of music. I enjoy listening to a variety of my favorites and have recorded different selections and shared them with my family and friends. I have always enjoyed working with wood and have built a variety of cedar chests, log pole porch swings and a number of other items just to help pass the time. A few years ago, I crafted some lamps from cedar wood. I gave each of the kids one as a keepsake, which I hope they can use and enjoy.

My lifestyle is pretty simple these days. I try to be a faithful Home Teacher and look after the sisters and families I am charged with. I try to attend the Temple several days a week and enjoy helping with our family file, which JoLyn has made possible. She has done a tremendous work for hundreds of people on the other side, and I am excited to help her with it. I try to be a good friend and neighbor. I have been given so much. I like to find ways to help others that may not have the opportunities I do. My life has been better than I ever dreamed it could be, and I am so grateful to my Father in Heaven for all the blessings I have.

I would like to include one of my favorite stories. I have used it in the sealing

ceremonies, which I have been involved in. I think it has so much for us to think about that I like to share it when I can. It is the story of a man who went on a trip. He rode his horse through the afternoon into the evening. When it became dark he found himself crossing a dry riverbed. A voice spoke to him and said, "Get off your horse and pick up the pebbles that are under your feet and fill your pockets." He obediently got off his horse and proceeded to pick up pebbles and fill his pockets. The voice spoke to him again and said, "Now get back on your horse and in the morning you will be glad and you will be sad." So he got back on his horse and proceeded on his journey. When the morning came he thought about the strange thing that had happened to him. He looked in his pockets to see what had become of his experience. In his pockets he found diamonds and gold nuggets, emeralds and sapphires. He was amazed and certainly glad that he had stopped and filled his pockets with these treasures. But, he also felt sadness. He realized that if he had worked a little harder he could have gathered more pebbles, and that his pockets could have held more.

So it is with life...we go through life and we have good intentions and we do good things, and they all add up and become the diamonds and the nuggets that we gather as we go along. But, I believe that someday we might find that we missed some opportunities to do some of the things that are right or to help someone that needed our help. We might be concerned that we didn't do the best that we could have.

As I get older, I get concerned about a few things. I feel like mom and I are still teamed up and we are hoping for the best and the same things in many cases. The thing that I think we would like to have as a satisfactory nugget or diamond is that our family would continue to be friends. We want you to be friends. You can have a lot of memories and a lot of good things come into your lives if you will appreciate each other. All of us know that each one has talents and values and personalities that are important. We also have spouses that have and do contribute in many ways to the success of our family. We have so many blessings and opportunities and it can only be greater if we help each other along the way. So, I hope you will keep in mind that we would like you to be friends.

I want to tell you that in the years I have spent here, I have learned that our Savior is truly our Savior. Joseph Smith had an important part in our lives. Our ancestors have given us a great inheritance; we have a good thing going. I wonder sometimes if I would have been

strong enough to make up my mind about my testimony if I hadn't had such deep feelings for the heritage that is ours. I hope that you will be busy picking up the pebbles as you go along. There will be a time when we will need to care for one another more than ever; it just comes with the years. I want you to know that I have never been disappointed in the things that you have done. With 60 in our family and more on the way and we all seem to be headed in the same direction. It is a good direction, and that makes me pretty proud. In a family of that many and in a day like this when there are so many things going on that are trying to tear us down in our testimonies and activities.

I know that you know that I have been blessed many times in my lifetime. I have been protected through the War. Any time I got into an airplane and engaged in the war action I was blessed. There were dozens of little instances that could have brought an end to the whole thing if I hadn't been blessed. I have been blessed in the things I have tried to accomplish. We have kept a good home. None of us have ever been hungry and we have kept warm and have had opportunities to pick up pebbles along the way. It is an important program that we look for these opportunities.

I want to tell you that I have no reserve in the love I have for you as my family. I surely have all the love a man could have for my wife and for our church and gospel and especially for the Savior. The opportunities I have had I would not trade for those of anyone I know, as far as my service in the Temple is concerned. I have had it all. I have tried to be deserving. I have the desire to serve my Father in Heaven and to do the things that are right. I hope that I can improve myself enough that I can be with my sweetheart and my parents, and many others that I love in my heritage. I ask my Father in Heaven's choicest blessings to be with all of you as the years come and go. Amen.

Justin Alma 'Al' Knapp passed away January 7, 2015 at his home in Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, Idaho. Al was buried on January 10, 2015 at the Rexburg City Cemetery, Rexburg, Madison County, Idaho.

Dad was left without his sweetheart for nearly 18 years. He kept himself occupied with the horses and in the shop making projects out of wood. He spent time at the pool table, reading Louis L'Amour stories, watching "Gunsmoke" on the TV and cheering for the Utah Jazz. He always perked up when someone would stop in for a visit.

Dad enjoyed going to the LDS Temple. Tuesdays he would accompany his boys, Doug and Alan, to do initiatory work at 6:30 p.m. The crew of temple workers always looked forward to this weekly time and treated him with great kindness and respect. Often after the temple work was completed, the boys would go out for ice-cream. He also was taken to the Temple nearly every Friday morning by Gordon Hales, a son-in-law, performing thousands of endowments for family members.

JoLyn was a wonderful blessing to dad. She made certain that he always had fresh clothes and good meals. She kept the house clean and tidy and played a major role in keeping him healthy and active. She accompanied him to church each week and made certain that he kept doctor appointments. Often they would go out to eat at "Dixie's Diner" or "Smitty's". Dad was appreciative of JoLyn and of her efforts to take care of him.

Dad loved it when the family got together. He was anxious that we all keep our eyes on "the Big Picture". He was not concerned with the material things of this world. He had pure, simple faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. He was devoted to God, to the United States, to the Church of Jesus Christ, to his wife and to his family. What a blessing it is to have had Justin Alma Knapp as an earthly father, example, mentor and friend!

Doug*

This Autobiography of Justin Alma 'Al' Knapp was typed from his handwritten copy and includes information he related in recordings and interviews with him. It is published as he wrote/spoke it and as it has been preserved through family members.

Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy records, as well as family history records in the possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**The concluding paragraphs were written by Douglas Al Knapp, a son of Justin Alma 'Al' Knapp. They were added to this autobiography to clarify and pay tribute to our father.*

Modified – February 2016