

Woody's Memories as Bishop

I served as Bishop of the 9th Ward from Aug 31, 1983, to Aug 13, 1989. The call came to me as a great surprise, extended by President James Johnston.

My previous church experience, as for many, began after marriage and an interlude during WWII. My wife, Rachel Quinn, daughter of James A. Quinn, who served as Bishop of the 5th Ward for 22 years, was my companion for 40 years. While raising our nine living children we both served in various callings in the ward and stake. At a young age I was ordained a Seventy by Elder S. Dilworth Young and served two stake missions. One, to Spanish speaking people and later, with my wife, an English speaking mission. After serving as ward finance chairman and/or finance clerk for four different bishops I was ordained a High Priest and set apart by Apostle Boyd K. Packer to serve as counselor to Bishop George H. Carlson.

It is said that each church calling and experience is a school for future service. I had never really thought of that applying to me. I had merely gone about the task at hand.

Later, after serving with President Willis R. Ward as stake welfare clerk for a short time, and upon the reorganization of the stake, I was again set apart by Elder Packer, this time as a High Councilor. I served with President Boyd Henderson for his entire term. At the time the call came to me as Bishop, I was serving as High Priest Group Leader in the Ninth Ward.

With all the involvement of fundraising, welfare projects and other activities as well as helping to train new Bishops and Elders Quorum presidents, I had always avoided being involved in people's personal lives. That was foreign to my nature. It took divine intervention for me to accept that which I knew well to be a Bishop's responsibility. After receiving the mantle and charge as Bishop, by the laying on of hands from one holding the priesthood and authorized by the only person on earth to hold those keys, my inner countenance seemed to change as I went about "my Father's business". My reluctance vanished and I seemed to be drawn to those whose hearts were heavy. Nothing seemed more natural than to seek out those in need. I felt compassion I had never experienced before.

Called first to serve with me as counselors were Max Lamprecht and Morris Bunce. Later as changes and moves came about, other great men were at my side; Allan Swenson, Stanley Hadley, William Clem, Scott Rasmussen, and Frank Smith. They, and all who served in any capacity throughout my tenure were a great support.

Having recognized the urgency to build a strong leadership profile and continuity in the youth programs, we made that our first priority. Throughout my time as Bishop there were dedicated people working with the youth. It has been wonderful to see those young people develop and grow

into honorable young men and women; eagle scouts, missionaries, students, husbands and wives. In many ways they still seem like part of my own family.



Stan Hadley, Woodrow Longhurst, Allan Swenson

As we progressed in calling strong youth leaders, the search for the best scout master continued. To my amazement, my second counselor, Morris Bunce, said, “Bishop, if you will release me, I'd like to be the scout master”. Quickly to my memory came a statement made by Jay Eskelson, many years ago, as he and I sat in a Bishop's meeting. We were counselors to Bishop George Carlson.

Our quandary was much the same; that for a good scout master. Jay proposed a particular man for the position. The Bishop had another calling in mind because he felt the man “has the qualities to someday become a Bishop”. What seemed to me to be a classic statement, whether altogether true or not, came from Jay in very rapid response... “Hell, anybody can be a Bishop. It takes a real man to be a scout master”.

With brother Jay's statement in mind, I listened to brother Bunce. I felt of his motive and his sincerity. At my next PPI with the Stake President I proposed we make that change. At the following meeting with President Johnston, again I proposed that brother Bunce be released as my second counselor to become the scout master. That same inspiration then touched President Johnston's heart. Soon brother Bunce was released as my counselor and called as scout master.

The ensuing weeks and months saw Brother Bunce and the boys in the ward rebuilding an older 3/4 ton Chevrolet Suburban. It still is often seen loaded with boys and camping gear headed to the hills

for an overnigher. Scout camp, girl's camp, temple excursions, and many other youth activities have been championed by Brother Bunce in that vehicle which keeps "going and going and going".

I have long since been replaced as Bishop, but I hope the legend of "a real man for a scout master", as truly Brother Bunce is, will remain in the Ninth Ward for future generations.



(Starting on the front row L-R: Ryan Reay, Jeff Britton, Bryan Stucki, ?, Phillip Byington. Row 2: Heather Huntsman, ?, Bryan & Mark Perry, Jacob Dayley, Thad & Cord Wilkey, Brad Taylor, Rob Meredith, Tommy Bunce, Whalon Quinn. Row 3: Penny Fetchen, Steve & Debbie Call, Nancy Lamprecht, Delayne Hadley, Sandra Davis. Row 4: Bishop Woody & April Longhurst, Julie Stucki, Shauna Judkins, Denise Hadley, Denise Littlefield, ?, Donna Quinn. Back Row: Paul & Sandra Perry, Cheryl Haskett, Tanya Wilkey, C.J. Parsons, Drew Byington, Verlyn & Jodi DaBell. (Picture taken by Scout Master, Morris Bunce))

Youth activities were planned not only for recreation but for learning experiences. One of our super activities was planned around a work project in Teton Valley. We volunteered to help brother Derold Bates in building the Bates family lodge.

We left Pocatello early one Friday. Our entourage consisted of campers, cars, trailer loads of tools, sleeping bags, tents, and inner tubes. The youth leaders plus several adult volunteers furnished transportation. The youth of the ward plus a few lucky friends made up one gala expedition. As we debarked at the rest stop overlooking the Snake River someone suggested a likeness to the story of "The Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe" because there were so many kids. I suggested we looked like a modern day "Dust Bowl" exodus.

Our destination was a reserved Forest Service campground overlooking the Teton valley. It was reached mid afternoon and of course everyone was hungry. Knowing that we had reservation for an "all you can eat" chuck wagon dinner down the mountain at Victor, it took no time at all to get our camp set up and be on our way. What a meal it was! Barbecued chicken, dutch oven potatoes, corn

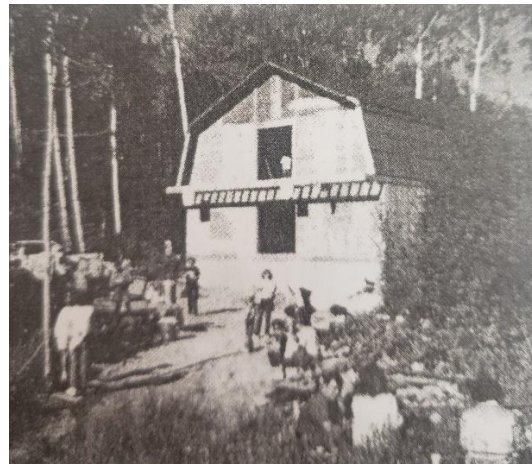
bread, and all the trimmings plus cobbler and ice cream. Included in the deal were tickets to the summer Melodrama which was enjoyed by all.

After the show we returned to our camp where, around the campfire, we sang songs, told stories, and then hit the sack for a good (?) night's sleep.

Morning came rather soon for some, but not soon enough for others. After a hearty breakfast we broke camp and proceeded to the project location further up the valley. What a beautiful sight for a lodge. From there, in the edge of the forest of pine, spruce, and huge aspens, is a magnificent panoramic view of the Tetons. After some orientation by Brother Bates, our activity began. Chainsaws buzzed, wood was piled and brush removed and piled for burning. Dirt was shoveled to backfill around the foundation. Axes swung to clear brush from the parking area and a roadway across the creek. The site resembled an ant hill as people scurried about.



Clearing the brush



Eating lunch

Time passed quickly and our intended portion of the project was finished. After eating a previously prepared lunch we went to the river and got into the water with the tubes for a float trip down the Teton. What an exciting but tiring activity it was. A jolly trip home ended with lifetime memories and experiences not to be forgotten.



Floating down the Teton River

Not as eventful or exciting, but as significant, in contributing to the cause of building the Bates Lodge, were several subsequent work details by the priesthood brethren as the building took shape.

The service was given not for that cause, but as a gesture of appreciation for our efforts, the 9th Ward was extended a standing invitation by the Bates family, to use the lodge, if available, anytime they would like. The ward has been privileged to use the Lodge on occasion, for both winter and summer activities. Thanks to the Bates family for their hospitality. Now old memories remain and new ones are built.

The yearly camp out at Rigby lake is now a hallmark activity for the 9th Ward. On the day of arrival people set up their camp spots, visit, play games and go sightseeing. After everyone has arrived, the grills and the Dutch ovens are fired up for the traditional cook-your-own-and-share dinner. What a grand event! Even now, can't you smell the grilled steaks, salmon, hot dogs and hamburgers, plus dutch oven chicken, potatoes, baked beans, spare ribs and peach cobbler?



Setting up camp at Rigby Lake

The evening activities consist of a program including skits, music, songs, stories and stunts. The second day's events, also exciting, begin with a breakfast of hotcakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, juice, cocoa, and milk. It is prepared by the High Priests Group of the ward.



Merrell Gregerson playing his guitar, accompanied by Bishop Longhurst, playing the harmonica

As the day warms up there are races, games, swimming, canoeing, playing on the beach, water fights, sun bathing, snacking, and lounging in the shade until time to go home.



Beach at Rigby Lake

For several years, while I was Bishop, our Ward had the opportunity to furnish personnel to an out of state professional catering firm that catered the annual American Microsystems Inc. company picnic at Ross Park. Although it was a Ward fund raising activity, we looked forward to the event as a gala party for us as well as for those we served.



Serving A.M.I. employees

You see, after all the guests had been served, it was then our turn at the table. The menu was grilled salmon, corn on the cob, baked potatoes, salad, and rolls, with watermelon for dessert. The preparation, serving and cleanup took many hours of hard work but provided a great opportunity for strengthening the brotherhood and sisterhood of our ward.

Fund raising events such as that and the Stake sponsored 4th of July Rodeo and Barbeque held at the Bannock County Fairgrounds for many years are now, by Church policy, discontinued to comply with tax laws regulating non profit organizations, as well as the liability risks involved in such activities.

Much like the era of pioneering, the era of donated labor in building the Kingdom as once known, has now mostly come to an end. Working side by side with our fellowman, whether active or not, served as a great tool for brotherhood and sisterhood. The legacy of building the Lord's Kingdom will continue. It is we who have to adjust our efforts to the changing times and the way it is done.

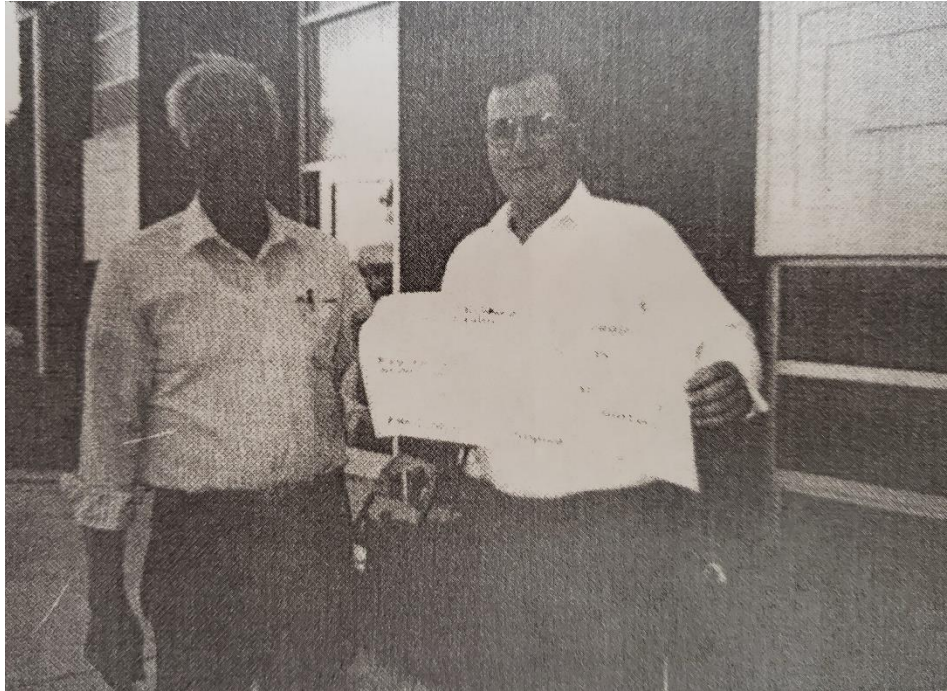
Even in the building of chapels Church policy has changed. It was evident during the remodeling of the Hawthorne & Quinn building in 1988-1989. The structure was initially built mostly with volunteer labor and hard earned building funds. During the remodeling people, other than the planning committee, architects and contractors, were not allowed on the project. There again, liability risks and contract agreements did not provide that opportunity.



Remodeling of Hawthorne & Quinn Building

Initially much consideration was given as to what should be done with the building. There were many undesirable aspects which could only be rectified at substantial expense, but when the final decision was made to remodel rather than build a new building, people were pleased that it would be retained. The original dedicatory prayer, given by Apostle Marion G. Romney, weighed heavily in the minds of those who had sacrificed for the initial building and who had felt the spirit in that inspirational dedicatory meeting.

Only volunteer donations were solicited for the 9th Ward share of the cost of the Hawthorne & Quinn remodeling project. Despite a recent boundary realignment, which took a large share of contributors of record, we were determined to have our ward assessment in on time. To celebrate the successful efforts of the ward members, we had a ward cookout and party, at which time we gave Stake President Thomas Carlyle a check for our assessment.



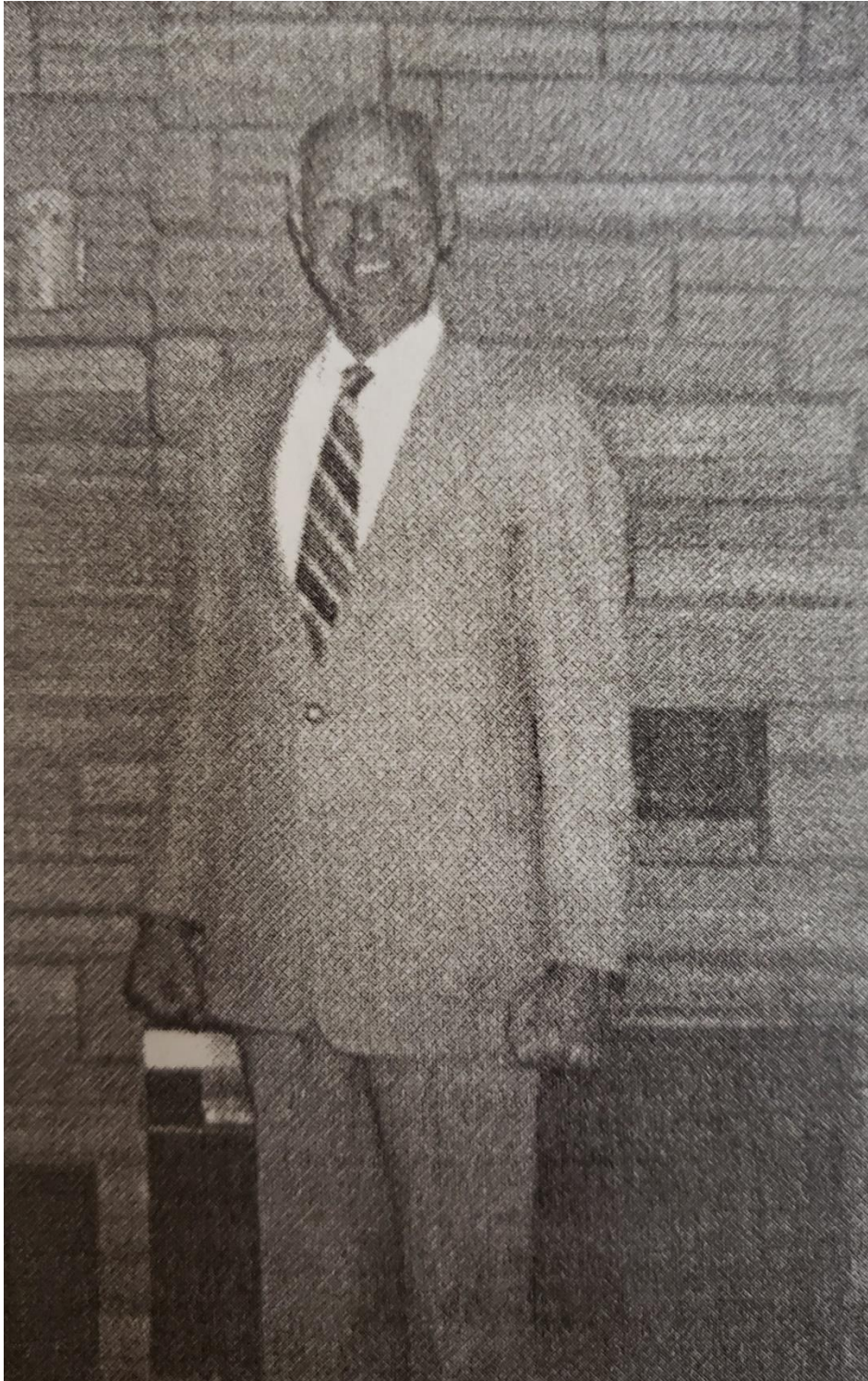
Bishop Longhurst presenting check to President Carlyle

I am sure the Lord is pleased that his people honored the words of His servant, President Romney, and that the edifice will continue as a refuge to the souls of those who worship Him therein.

During the time I served, one very significant event comes to mind that had a great effect in the ward for good. Realignment of the Stakes in the area also affected ward boundaries and reunited a portion of the 26th Ward that was previously part of the 9th Ward. The love and acceptance of those good people was evident in every aspect of ward activity.

At this point in my life I have known ten Presidents of the Church. I can testify that each are Prophets of God and that through each, in His time, the Lord directs the affairs of His Church. Through that same Priesthood power all faithful servants are inspired in their callings.

I feel honored to have served the people of the 9th Ward, and under the leadership of this great Stake, I enjoyed an outpouring of the spirit, and a love for the people forever to be cherished.



Bishop Woodrow W. Longhurst

