
PREFACE – A SHORT STORY

Along with your curiosity, which has apparently precipitated this act of opening my personal history, I feel sure you are wondering why an average individual, such as Grandpa Tom, would bother to embark on an effort of this magnitude. Is there anything in such a life that will attract, let alone maintain readership? Both are interesting and even quite reasonable questions and, I suppose, only the resulting work (if and when completed) will answer them. You should know that the LDS Church encourages members to carry out this very act. Additionally, I have come to realize, as I have looked back on my own progenitors, I would like to know more about their experiences, the times and regions in which they lived and their thoughts about life in general. Even though their lives didn't seem unusual to them for the times involved, I would still love to be able to visit with them and learn more fully how and why they looked at life the way they did as well as learn about some of their experiences.

It is primarily in this sense that I make the effort, even though it is but a one way conversation, leaving no opportunity for response. Of course, that lack of opportunity has its advantages for me and I also admit there is a some desire on my part to be known by them, my posterity that is and impart my views for whatever benefit they may be. Hopefully, this preface will add sufficient light regarding the contents of this marvelous work to enable such readers to determine if they really want to embark on the journey of reading it. Admittedly, it has become too long and contains some sections requiring considerable cogitation to understand what I am trying to explain while others may be boring to some of the unfortunate readers. Even so, it expresses my views of life, as I understand it, and certainly clarifies my motives and methods of communication. Whether it has sufficient value to properly reward the effort taken, is up to each reader.

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The title page of this monumental undertaking has given me some pause for reflection. Should it not be as impressive as the momentous work which it heralds? Would a picture of some sort provide the desired attraction of readership and if so, is there any one picture which best represents such a magnificent and illustrious career as that of Grandpa Tom? These are, indeed, serious questions deserving significant thought as well as the very best answers such pondering could bring about. Ah yes, such a truly masterful work merits a title page, not only of equal interest, but also one which reaches out and grabs the prospective reader saying, **“listen kid, you better read this and develop an appreciation for its great significance or you’ll be in trouble throughout eternity when grandpa Tom gets a hold of you.”**

Realizing that such a visual image could hardly be brought about by title alone or even with a single picture, I finally decided on those in the title page array you now find. Anticipating remarks such as, **“I hardly find that impressive”**, I can only say such lack of discernment will probably result in similar unenlightened statements regarding the work you are about to become engaged in. Now, if that statement doesn't disturb you sufficiently to make you set this book aside, then you obviously deserve all the pain and suffering you may incur by proceeding beyond this point. However, even such unenlightened individuals as those referred to, will probably agree that the pictures do symbolize the changing image I have projected while struggling to find my place among mankind. Additionally, such a group of pictures also seem to symbolize the kaleidoscopic nature of life and of my life in particular. For the unenlightened mentioned earlier, I will explain. The present life of Lethia and I, or the central image of the page, has emerged from the past portrayed by those images swirling around its

perimeter. Like the images of a kaleidoscope the events in our lives result from those that preceded them as our individual knowledge, experience, traits, talents, strengths and weaknesses constantly recombine in various patterns to establish recognizable entities of our progression. Thus, these photos provide, in a limited way, glimpses into that process or should we say windows into that past which has brought your beloved grandpa Tom to his present station in life. In so doing, they may also offer visual evidence in answer to questions such as that posed by my grandson, Joseph, who asked, when he was about three or four, “**grandpa, were you ever a little boy?**” They may also help stem the vicious rumor that all male Obenchain babies are born bald and have never known the joy of a follicular crown of comfort and beauty as do normal humans.

Obviously, the pictures sample, what I might term, certain major facets of my life leaving many events missing. Any photos, I or anyone else can muster up; will only touch on the experiences of any person’s eighty plus years of life. Thus, the challenge facing me in this particular work is to supplement the title page with other appropriate photos and commentary so as to provide my posterity with a mental image of events in my life, the differing environments in which they took place and the times surrounding those events as well as the resulting product which has emerged from the shadows of the past. If successful, those of you who were unfortunate enough to be genetically related to me may find compassion and even forgiveness for my contribution to the genes of their mortality, which they must now deal with.

Having made my point, I will now comment briefly on each of the various pictures provided with the title page. Beginning in the upper left corner, you see me at the ripe old age of 2 or 3 taken from a family picture shot in Illinois. In a clockwise direction, the next picture validates my forest service stories which took place in the years of 1943 through 1950. To the right of that is a picture of me at about the age of 14 taken in front of our family home on 17th and Irene in Boise. Next is a picture taken at Colorado School of Mines in 1950, just after I enrolled in graduate school. Right beneath it is a traditional wedding picture of Esther and I and the cake, taken on December 29th 1950. I lasted in

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graduate school until the spring of 1951 when I enlisted in the USAF after school funds ran out. The next picture was taken in basic training at Lackland AFB in the summer of 1951 just prior to my transfer to Biloxi, Mississippi. In the lower right hand corner is a picture of our family some four years later as we sat in the front room of the duplex we were renting on the beach in Biloxi, Mississippi. Next is one photo representative of my oil field experiences. It was snapped near Chief Mountain on the north east edge of Glacier Park in 1960. Isn’t that a striking image of me walking towards the truck? Look closely, lest you miss the detail shown including my big wide smile. A truly astute observer could tell I was returning from the geologist’s trailer with essential instructions for the job. Do you qualify? At the lower left is a photo of a proud father feeding his one and only son in Farmington, New Mexico. He was some ten years in the making. Whew, what a job, and the work never has let up since. Just above little Tom and I (referring to his picture, of course) is a view of the same rig near Chief Mountain in Montana. They are coming out of the hole and, as any good oil field hand can see from the diesel exhaust, are in the process of pulling another stand of pipe. The next one is of Esther and me in the late 70’s in Louisiana. Not long after that, about 1984, she contacted a disease of the nervous system, which eventually

deprived her of her life in April of 1990. Next is a picture of Lethia and I walking out of the Atlanta Temple after being sealed on August 15th 1992. The final picture of Lethia and me, which represents the present, was taken in north Georgia in the fall of 1995 during a picnic outing.

I look back on these events in my life and have become deeply aware of its changing nature, which I referred to earlier. While traveling its pathways, adjustments were made as I felt wise through my God given perceptions of its purpose and meaning. Right or wrong, I have arrived at my present status in a rather positive and upbeat mood. I feel good about life and am happy with my location within it as well as what I perceive as its purpose. My mistakes, of which there were many, along with the few successes I can count, have somehow brought me to this point and with the help of the Lord I’ll leave it (life) a much wiser and better being than when I arrived. My wish for my posterity and all those I love is,

of course, the same. To help along the way, I leave them the admonition of the poet who counseled us to:

***Keep a smile on your face
And be sure it's from the heart.
Tho many people often frown,
It's a waste, for life's too short.***

I hope this little effort of providing my life's story for your perusal may contribute to that smile because I, myself, have found life to be far too short to be taken too seriously. As I have made the journey, it has been a fault I am guilty of, unfortunately. I feel sure that when the Lord said, "Adam fell that man might be; and men are that they might have joy", He had in mind at least a small amount of kidding, laughing at one's self and maybe even a little horseplay. In saying that, I might add that such attitude doesn't negate my belief that the Lord has a divine purpose in mortality for each of us.

You should also know that I made an earlier effort to accomplish this particular task about 25 years ago, i.e. writing my life's story, when I succumbed to the pleading of my eldest, Valerie. It seems she needed the life story of one of her parents for a genealogy class she was taking. In the family discussion that followed, I was naturally outvoted (2 to 1) by Esther regarding which of us would do it, when the decision came right down to the nitty gritty. I didn't fully realize at that time that a woman's vote counted twice as much as that of a man. In fact, up to that point, I had always agreed with the concept of women's suffrage but, I soon understood the wisdom of our forefathers. They had denied that right to them, realizing that to unleash such a force would more than offset the freedom they had fought and died for in the war of 1776. In fact, they understood that women's suffrage would naturally result in men's sufferage, considering the two to one voting inequity. However, the sheer numbers of women along with their tireless effort in securing a desired objective eventually overcame a group of men whose forefathers couldn't be defeated by King George and his mighty legions.

But, that's another story which really isn't appropriate in my autobiography because, contrary to my grandkid's beliefs, I'm not that old. However, it might help one who hasn't

experienced such an emotional onslaught to better understand the pressure I experienced in those days and thus the reason I gave in. Surely she, Valerie, missed her calling, which, I feel confident, should have been selling ice makers in the Antarctic or maybe ocean side property in Nevada. Anyway love has a way of drawing even the most resolute into unimaginable morasses. So, in due time, I not only gave in but accomplished her desire and sent my story to her at BYU. It must have sufficed in that she did eventually graduate and from those efforts, it seems, has caught the genealogy bug for which there is no cure.

A great deal of time has passed since then but, having learned little in life, I'm now headed down the same road once again trying to sift through the glacial till of my past and add material of questionable interest from that moraine of my experiences left behind by the activities of life. However, curiosity may be my saving grace in that people, in general, like to read about their progenitors to better understand themselves, I suppose. May my posterity forgive me for this act of indiscretion (writing the autobiography) as well as for placing such a heavy psychological burden on their tender developing intellects (i.e., to read or not to read this work). Having so said; let my posterity and anyone else, related or unrelated, proceed at their own risk.

Knowing full well that this will be a prodigious effort for one who could be more closely aligned with the prodigal son than a child prodigy, I decided to enjoy myself by having a little fun as, I perceive it, and maybe even make it interesting, from my viewpoint that

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is, though not necessarily from that of others who might feel inclined to read it. People of such questionable taste, have to take what I dish out, like it or not. Admittedly however, anyone having the sadistic desire of knowing the deep dark secrets that lurk in this old demented mind must search through the following morass, as I describe it. To make it more endurable, I might suggest to those who call me grandpa, that when finished, they could well find themselves saying, "Look, I did quite well in life in spite of being related to this old geezer." Then again, if they peruse it before reaching emotional maturity, the results could be devastating, I suppose. Even so, one must realize life is fraught with risk and the old adage, "nothing

ventured, nothing gained”, applies here. Now, for those of you who choose to move forward on such an arduous task, I say with all sincerity, “may the good Lord bless you with compassion and understanding (for me, that is) in addition to patience” as you venture forth to unlock this mystery whose complete solution will surely result in a better understanding of **ME, YOUR JOLLY OLD GRANDPA**. God bless!

I shall begin my efforts once again by repeating an introductory poem which I had addressed to Valerie. I would have prepared a new one if, like good wine, my poetical ability had improved with age but, alas, I'm stuck with an engineering mind which has been bent and twisted through exposure to the noise and fumes of oil rigs over my working years. Such was the legacy of my geophysical pursuits as a young man. Thus, I claim no responsibility for the poem or the attempt, which follows to describe the life of an erratic Idaho hillbilly who somehow ended up in Georgia. Maybe it was the call of the Georgia redneck (Oops, don't misinterpret that remark, Lethia) that beckoned me here. Actually, I have long suspected it is something more deep seated and thus beyond my control, like damaged genes brought about by sniffing too many aromatic octanes. Then again, might it not be due to the psychological trauma I underwent as a youth in my relationship with my brother Dan. Such activity might well explain why an otherwise solid senior citizen, such as I, would embark on a rather frantic attempt at poetry and a somewhat rambling story. Personally, I rather like the damaged gene theory because it fits in nicely with today's psychology of excusing us from any personal responsibility. Then again, so does the sibling relationship with Dan and its associated trauma. Either effectively places the blame on someone other than me, and thus I need not worry about ridicule, horselaughs or other denigrating comments. However, I suppose you, the reader, will necessarily be the judge of its quality, if you find any, as you labor through the words which have somehow emanated from this old demented mind due, you will remember, to sniffing aromatic octanes.

ODE TO AN EFFORT OR AN EFFORT I OWED

*An autobiographer,
Obviously I'm not;
But I knew I must try,
Or at sunrise be shot.*

*So with pencil in hand,
And a light by my side;
I thought and I thought,
Then I tried; how I tried.*

*The ideas came quickly,
Even profusely at first;
But I couldn't distinguish,
The best from the worst*

*Then a thought slipped across,
This poor benumbed brain;
If you will listen closely,
I will try to explain.*

*How natural I thought,
To write as they come;
The thoughts, I mean,
No matter how dumb.*

*Don't scoff now, I say,
For in this day and age;
Originality is in,
In fact, it's the rage.*

*But if you really believe,
An improvement in tone;
Might result dear daughter,
Sign it "Author Unknown."*

*In any case, Valerie,
I hope it will suffice;
For you, quite frankly,
I would even do it twice.*

Not really being sure what constitutes a worthy autobiography, I will apply the logic of an oil field engineer by beginning with my earliest memories. From there, I will proceed with my uncanny sense as a wildcatter, following the path designated by my witching stick of experiences, and proceed through life to my present status in the grand old state of Georgia. What that really means is, I'm not real sure where I'm headed but I'll fumble from event to event and try to put them in some kind of chronological order. Needless to say my stories will be well seasoned with my own distorted levity which may or may not be humorous to the reader. None-the-less, such humor will help him better understand the ramifications of breathing too many aromatic octanes (kind of like sniffing glue, you know).

Such rhetoric hasn't always been a part of my makeup. I leave it to you to figure out just how and where it came in, as well as how you will handle this problem of yours. Why do I say yours? Because you, my dear children, have to

be able to discern the real from the imaginary as I recall various events of life, sort through them, and try to make the rather ordinary worthy of reading. In so doing I would hope to keep an element of validity to the story but at the same time keep you on your toes by adding a little seasoning in the form of pure baloney which may well border on the ridiculous at times.

Such a combination may make it rather difficult to accomplish my real purpose which is, "to pass on to my posterity an appreciation of what made me, Grandpa Tom, tick". Now I'm not referring to a nervous tic for that's not one of the ailments that has yet beset this aging body. Rather, I'm speaking of what motivated me or spurred me to activity and thus accomplish what little I did in life. I would like my posterity to feel some of the experiences and even emotions which I felt, understand some of my hopes and dreams at different points in life and maybe develop an appreciation for the fears and weaknesses that seemed to afflict me at other times, if such is possible. I would also like them to understand just where life has led me, i.e. the convictions and values resulting from life's experiences which now lie within this 81 year old mind and its associated ailing body.

Although I would love to write a story of commitment, excellence and high achievement, I'm afraid that's quite impossible. As a prominent sage (my mother) once said back somewhere in the dimly lit past; **"you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear"**. However, maybe I can come up with a small coin purse from this earlobe called life and maybe, just maybe, some of you, my posterity I mean, may find a coin of interest in what this grandpa has experienced even though there was no real glory or greatness involved. Other than family, my primary accomplishment in life (and it's really a gift from the Lord) is a very strong personal testimony of the restored gospel as accomplished through Joseph Smith.

However, as with most people, there may be occasional instances of success from which I sucked what glory I could and, of course, I will do my best to toot my horn about the same. However, if I were to concentrate on the great successes of my life, I'm afraid there would be little to write about. My story might well be placed in Ripley's "Believe It Or Not" as the shortest of short stories. Now that's a thought! But that's not the point, is it? I am writing this to help you, my posterity, get to know me better,

complete with strengths and weaknesses, dangerous as that may be, and not to foster some imaginary image of a saintly progenitor.

Even so, I don't find myself in an apologetic mode either. Certainly my life has been good in spite of the many mistakes made along the way. To me, it seems useless to compare one's self with others, in that we all came into this life with differing abilities and live life under different circumstances. The good Lord knows what we were given and understands our efforts to build on that base. You might ask, "Why iterate the obvious?" Only to emphasize that the experiences I convey are not meant to generate applause or disdain but simply to explain how I approached life with what the Lord gave me. I can only measure my success by looking back along the path I have followed and compare what I see today with what I understood myself to be early in life.

Yes, with my present understanding, I would probably do some things differently if faced with the same situations again and that, I hope, represents growth to some degree. My vision of life's purpose has certainly changed and certain weaknesses I seem to have been afflicted with as a young man have been ameliorated to some degree. I now find myself quite happy and content even though I know I might well have done more with the talents and energy God has seen fit to bless me with. I also find myself grateful for personal setbacks as well as successes for I now realize both have contributed to my development in life and constitute the foundation upon which my present contentment and optimism for the future rest. Whether all of these considerations constitute legitimate input for an autobiography, I'm not sure. Hopefully, if handled correctly, they will convey to the reader an image of my origin and talents or lack thereof, the forces that influenced my path in life and the resultant individual now approaching the door to that life beyond the veil. Such an image, along with any lesson it may teach, forms the only valid reason I can see for me to expend the kind of effort required to write an autobiography and for you, my posterity, to bother to read it.

When I speak of my posterity, a word of explanation is in order. I have, of course, married a second time to a lady, I might add, who has made me supremely happy. I adore her and thoroughly enjoy spending each day with her, not to speak of the evenings and

nights. Although I think the world of my children, she has made my rather pointless life, since Esther's demise, become one of love, beauty and purpose. I look forward to the hereafter and the opportunity to introduce her to Esther personally as well as to meet her daughter, Julia. Because of our relationship which will continue throughout eternity, I consider her children, in a sense, my children and thus her posterity through them, my posterity. I realize they may not share the same feeling for me and will certainly have a stronger affinity for their earthly father, as they should.

None-the-less, I'm confident we all will be part of a family of some kind throughout eternity which I leave to the Lord to work out. In the mean time I intend to continue to try to build a relationship with them which is similar to that which I have with my own children. This sometimes includes rather clumsy and awkward acts or words or maybe both on my part which they don't seem to understand or accept. Even so, such efforts are sincere and I am confident that, in time, I will be successful. Accordingly this autobiographical effort, which is probably a better term than autobiography, is meant as much for them as my own issue, should they care to read it.

As I look back on my life, I see it divided into three major divisions or time periods, i.e. my days as a bachelor, my days with Esther and the family we raised together and now, of course, my life with Lethia. I look on all these times as good times and have no real apologies to make or even a desire to change any particular thing. Some of the personal weaknesses I allude to have been lessened to a degree and in some cases been overcome. Others seem to continue to plague me and will continue to do so, I suppose, as long as I walk this earth. I have finally learned, however, that such struggles are what life is all about. Consequently, as I write about my tenure on this earth, I will spend a good deal of time discussing each phase, including some problems, but with emphasis on the positive aspects therein or at least, those I perceive as positive.

I sometimes wonder how I can love Lethia so much and still have loved Esther. Yet, the truth is, I had a wonderful life with Esther and had a deep respect for her as well as an enduring love. Even so, today is today, and I now find I love Lethia with all my heart. Esther is in the past as far as mortality is concerned but my autobiography would be far from complete if I did

not write about our good times together, the wonderful family we raised, the growth we both experienced in the gospel while she was still on this earth and what I feel I owe her for her role as a mother and as my wife. She saw me through some difficult times in life and her loyalty never wavered. She had no vain ambition, only a desire to be a good mother and wife. I still love the memory of her in that role and I respect her for the commitment she made to our marriage and for her struggles to become a better person, even through her illness of the last year. Yes, I will always love Esther but today the love of my life is Lethia. She and I also have unwavering loyalty for one another born of a deep respect.

So, how will I reconcile this problem in the hereafter? I don't really know. I only have faith in the Lord's promises and that things will work out as we all come forth in the resurrection to live eternally as husband and wife or should I say wives. I feel strangely confident that Esther and Lethia will become the best of friends and that our families as well as each of us will find joy and happiness in our existence at that time. So for now I will write about the good things of life with Esther and with Lethia and hope that Lethia, particularly, as well as all others who might read this work, will understand and enjoy the same.

My earliest recollections may stem from memories of actual experiences or from stories told later while I was growing up. In either case, what I relate will be according to my recollection. Others may remember the events somewhat differently and may even be more correct. That I would not argue. However, this effort will include the facts, with or without distortions as the case may be, which reside in this 81 year old brain, seasoned you'll remember, with a little baloney as I deem appropriate.

What it is composed of (the brain I mean), only the Lord knows. Most certainly it's not equipped with a 486 chip or even a 286, let alone a Pentium chip. Speed, it has not. Hopefully however, the Lord will bless me and knock loose from amongst the barnacles those most worthwhile memories which might be of interest to my posterity, inspire me with a little humor and maybe even help me to present them in a way that will be of some interest. What you are obviously going to get, is the story of an average Joe Blow, trying to navigate the ups and downs of life with the help of a compass whose needle

sometimes seemed to be stuck or, in other words, an autobiography written in a rather average manner (Gee, I do hope it's that good).

Now, I'm not really trying to discourage anyone from reading it. Far be it for me to alter such questionable decisions in anyone's life. In fact, if the truth would be known, I'll probably be sitting on a cloud somewhere keeping score on the number of my posterity who were faithful to the memory of "GRANDPA TOM" and sacrificed sufficient time to wade through this morass.

Once again, let me assure you I will try to dwell on the positive side and leave out the more negative or sordid thoughts and acts which I might have foolishly allowed in my life. They could have no positive influence and besides, what grandfather wouldn't want to be remembered for his better side. Even so, I must mention weaknesses, from time to time which have caused me grief, some of which, I have overcome at least to a degree, if I expect to create that mental picture I spoke of earlier. Any progress that has occurred I attribute to the good Lord's grace be it of an inspirational, physical or determined nature. In so doing, its recognition might be of value to my posterity as they struggle through life.

To accomplish this objective, I will add detail and events as compared to my first attempt some 25 years ago, again as I so deem necessary. You see, I'm not as pressed for time as I was in my early years and, as you may suspect by now, I have become somewhat windier. Maybe that is because I have endured the storms of life. Anyhow, as I unleash this "Nor'easter" on you, I do hope you, my posterity, aren't too pressed for time either, as you batten down the hatches and begin to realize the chore you have taken on. Such detail will help you better understand me, my childhood, my youth and my adult years as well as the times which encompassed my life. If nothing else, maybe such rambling and even incoherent stories may cause you to adjust your perspective of the mid twentieth century as you view it through my eyes. So, I will now proceed with my record, according to my style, my humor and my writing ability or lack thereof. Let the reader beware, lest he feel inclined to censure or complain of time wasted or both when finished.

I have arranged the book in sections and chapters (my, how original) with titles that highlight a particular era of my life, such as "My Birthplace and Early Years", "School Days in Boise", "Forest Service Years", "My Years in the

United States Air Force", "Schlumberger Experiences", or something else that seems appropriate at that particular point. Such titles along with subtitles will provide those individuals, unfortunate enough to get involved, a means of returning to a given situation via the table of contents, should they find a need or maybe even a desire. Such might result when one is trying to explain Grandpa Tom's antics or understand how he or she happened to be cursed with a particular characteristic of mine.

I point out with real pride to that table of contents as a mark of my professionalism and, of course, my computer which handles the more mundane aspects of this book. Well, maybe I shouldn't tell such a bald faced lie. Actually Tom suggested I include each of these while he was helping me set up the format and he even showed me how. So much for any undeserved credit I have attempted to acquire. I guess I'll have to look elsewhere for any needed ego builder.

Within the first two chapters I plan to add family stories which come to my memory (some of which will include pictures) but for which I can't claim ownership. Hopefully they will help portray family life a little better in the Artie Obenchain household in the 30's and 40's. They will appear throughout the years of my youth in random order as my old brain conjures them up. Those who were the focus of the stories will have to bear the brunt of images I portray in my version even though said version may not be exactly as they remember it. All this is done to preserve such stories for posterity and provide the reader with a better perspective of the activities taking place in the household in which I was reared.

Additionally, if you promise not to laugh in my presence, I will even share with you some of my more stupid acts, which have, here-to-fore, been classified "Top Secret". Even though they deserve no special place in this or any other work and maybe no place at all, I include them as part of my growing pains so necessary to complete my story. I will hide them in strategic places where you might least expect to find them. Thus, if the thought of discovering them tweaks your funny bone, you'll have to be ever alert and attentive.

In speaking about my professional life, I intend to utilize about 12 chapters rather than one entitled simply "Schlumberger Experiences". In thinking about you, my posterity, getting to know me, your grandpa, I figure the required time is worth it. In simply reading what I put together,

you will gain a better understanding of the kind of ogre I am as well as what kind of activities I enjoyed though they may be foreign to you. Those who are technically inclined, heaven forbid; may even find my descriptions of the various geophysical measurements interesting, at least to a degree. If you have the tenacity to wade through chapters five through eight, you will certainly have the basis from which to better understand the various field experiences I plan to relate. Because of the length of time involved, thirty one years, some 8 chapters will be necessary to simply describe family and job experiences as well. I think that adds up to 12. My association with the oil business constituted virtually my entire working life, a period of time I found extremely interesting and rewarding in many different ways. Consequently, I wish to convey to the reader some of my experiences on the job as well as in the other more personal facets of my life as a family member.

An overview of the industry I was associated with would seem helpful if not essential to my approach to that era of my life in that it provided the framework for Schlumberger operations and thus for that world in which Esther's and my own life evolved. If I can help the reader successfully develop a rudimentary understanding of those activities fundamental to the oil business, then he/she can form a mental image of that environment as well as gain a basic familiarity with associated terms and principles. I will call this effort chapter five, "An Overview of Oil Field Exploration, Drilling and Production". Therein I hope to provide the reader with an introduction to various terms, techniques and operations which will be referred to in later experiences while on the job.

The next chapter, (#6), will be an introduction to Schlumberger Technique, which includes a brief description of the company's roots and the gradual evolution into the leading wire line company of the world. It will also include an overview of general equipment common to all types of services such as the logging unit itself, the winch, the recording mechanism, etc. Additionally, I have chosen to include activities such as rigging up at the well, depth control and fishing operations in this particular chapter.

Chapter seven will be devoted to open-hole measurements, i.e. those types of geophysical activities that are carried on in a well prior to running casing. I intend to include brief descriptions of all the various types of tools I had

the occasion to be involved with during my 31 years with Schlumberger. My attempt to describe the principles of these instruments as well as a basic description of how the results are used will be a challenge for you and for me. In the first case, I may bore you to death and in the second case; it will take some imagination and originality on my part to keep from losing you all together. After all, at this point you will only be half way through the book. Surely you don't want to quit yet. Computer art work will be a big part of such explanations but my skill in that area will need to improve drastically to be helpful at all. Keep your fingers crossed and your charity available.

Next, we come to chapter eight which will cover cased-hole services or what we generally term completion services. The latter term, however, only encompasses part of the cased-hole service work which we eventually got involved in. That is production logging as well as more complete well evaluation are also included and they really aren't part of a completion activity. They do, of course, influence such activity. At one time I had thought I would include all Schlumberger services in one chapter but, as I got into the open-hole area, it became apparent that I would have sufficient material for three chapters. That's what happens when you have a windy grandpa and particularly when it's a subject I like and spent half my life in.

The ninth through eleventh chapters will encompass my field years with Schlumberger and the 12th through the 16th my staff and management years. Both will include family as well as experiences on the job and the latter will take me through retirement and Esther's death. I feel sure you'll wonder if some of these experiences are really true and a few should give you a good laugh. Their validity is a problem you'll have to establish yourself. Can you separate the facts from pure baloney?

Chapter 17 will then cover retirement in Denver while 18 will cover my two plus years as a widower, my marriage to Lethia and the years we have spent together in Georgia. Chapter 19 includes a couple of later trips that have meant a great deal to me, i.e an Alaskan cruise and a European family history trip. There we met and had a reunion with long lost relatives in Germany, whom I now have special feelings for.

During the past 17 years of composing this work, I decided to add a few chapters regarding my reflections on life and the gospel, as I

understand it. Thus, chapter 20 discusses my reflections of a secular nature, chapter 21 those of a religious nature and chapter 22 the great apostasy that occurred after the demise of the 12 apostles. Chapter 23, then, describes events leading to the restoration in 1830. Throughout the four chapters you will find numerous quotations from historical figures and various modern authorities, as well as some biblical and Book of Mormon scriptures, which I believe support my views.

Although I have no intention of burdening anyone with my religious views or even my general philosophy towards life, my thoughts of chapters 20 and 21 will necessarily be influenced by them in my concept of life's purpose. I don't believe I, or anyone else for that matter, can really separate such spiritual beliefs from their daily temporal lives. If sincere, they become an integral part of the fabric of our lives and to a large degree govern our daily actions. I sincerely believe such governing brings out the best in me and will in any person so deciding to live by similar precepts. Those who reject religion as meaningful may well find my reflections of little value except, maybe, from a curiosity standpoint. Similarly, chapters 22 and 23 explain my understanding of religion in the world today, why I think there is so much confusion and, from my perspective, why I am confident a restoration of the gospel as taught by Christ; has occurred and exists in the LDS Church. Though the reader may have little interest in the subject, the materials upon which I base my conclusions are factual and can be evaluated by anyone desiring to become so involved. Chapter 23 contains, as well, an expression of my own feelings, based on what understanding I have gained over the years in the Church. Though I think the concepts therein are true and legitimate, I don't claim expertise of the sort that would claim infallibility. Thus, the reader will simply have to take them as an expression of what I believe.

Many of the concepts and principles I now feel strongly about weren't, unfortunately, practiced throughout my life and in some cases were discovered almost after the fact. From my perspective they represent growth on my part and do most certainly help govern my life today. Thus, they represent grandpa today, not ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. Hopefully, the grandpa of tomorrow will yet be different with improved internal traits if not external characteristics. I don't intend to try to argue the

correctness or validity of such principles or my point of view but rather will try to describe events which led me to such views and why I now hold them to be correct.

This last chapter (i.e. 23) also contains my own witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel and the various precepts taught therein. Those special feelings emanating from such a witness as well as experiences leading to it will be reserved for the closing comments I plan to make there. Having just reviewed chapter 23 for what I hope is the last time; I realize I have made numerous references to the necessity of reading the Book of Mormon with an open mind as well as stating my own witness of the book. I suppose such repetition is a mark of an inexperienced writer. Even so, I have decided to leave them as is because they emphasize my feelings at those particular points in the chapter. Besides, I have never made a claim regarding excellence in writing and this book constitutes the evidence as to why. Also, all distributions, including CDs and books are freebies and one receiving a copy can hardly complain about being taken financial advantage of or my heavy handed salesmanship.

Being an engineer, I relied on logic to a high degree as I examined the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and other writings for the first time. I even read a book on Archeology and the Book of Mormon. I was slow and very cautious in my approach because I knew it would alter my approach to life. I must say, I was taken by the reasonableness and logic of all the materials I pursued. I spent some four years in my study and listened to at least that many sets of missionary discussions before accepting an invitation to join the LDS Church. I was guilty of striving to understand without realizing the need for the Holy Spirit to bear witness as described in Moroni 10:4. Hence, my development of appreciation for their truthfulness was slow. I have since had numerous manifestations of the Spirit, non-visual in nature, which have given me a sure witness of Christ and His atoning sacrifice as well as for the truthfulness of all the precepts set forth in the restored gospel. My testimony of these things will surface throughout the four chapters and is written primarily for the benefit of my own posterity. I hold these feelings and experiences as being especially dear and sacred having been gained over the years through study, prayer, service and even spiritual chastisement.

In total, my autobiography has grown far beyond anything I had originally imagined as new ideas evolved during the composing process. The sum of the ideas finally utilized, constitute my concept of how to best describe for my posterity, how life has molded me, as an individual. Relating one's major interests and activities of life, it seems to me, will best accomplish such a definition. This is essentially what I have tried to do and the result has become somewhat of a monster. Though all facets may not be of interest to a given reader and maybe none, I feel the varied types of discussion involved will have provided one suffering through it, with a grasp of Grandpa Tom's aging character. As I have previously stated, the reader will find no accomplishments worthy of public recognition but only the daily struggles of a rather average individual. I have, with my somewhat twisted humor tried to give the reader a laugh or two, mostly at my own expense. Even so, there is a serious side as well, which surfaces primarily in the last section describing my view of life and its purpose. In summary, one might say, the various facets included describe my love of life and family, the outdoors, my profession as a geophysical engineer and my belated love of the restored gospel. I say belated because of the time it took me to accept and digest the principles I have found therein.

Now, since I have a little room left on this page, let me expand a little with some thoughts on the value of life's experiences. In my estimation, very few of us, if any, will really discover or develop any truly original thought or object of value. That is, what we learn in life comes from studying other peoples' views and developments, which have gone on before us. So it was with our forefathers who wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They had lived under tyranny and were determined to establish a system in which no man or body of men could usurp the power of government and use it for their own ends. They realized that even good men could be influenced by vain ambition to establish and maintain their personal power without the consent of the governed. Thus, the Constitution was wisely written through inspiration to provide a balance of power shared by the President, Congress and the Supreme Court. The federal government was to rule through the consent of the governed and not in the reverse order as we see today. Furthermore, the federal government's power was expressly limited to allow the various states

and people therein to assume their individual responsibilities in the majority of issues in life. Unfortunately, corruption has crept in at virtually all aspects of society; being fed by a desire for power and recognition as well as individual greed. Much of the populace spends their free time on entertainment of all kinds rather than studying the issues that control the destiny of this country. We see many of those types seeking entitlements of all kinds rather than accepting the individual responsibility required of an informed citizen and voter and thus he or she sells their freedom for a mess of pottage.

Rather than being the originators of worthy principles and values, we usually try to accept and make a part of our lives that which we deem worthy; absorbing or applying the same. We observe the lives of others; including those who have gone before us, to help make our judgment. However, it is in the application of a principle or moral act in our own lives that provides a personal measurement of its value; making it part of us and not just a topic of discussion. In so doing, we become contributors; not mere observers, to the strength of that principle; whether it is political, moral, ethical or religious in nature. It is that effort that truly establishes our belief or faith in the same. Thus, we might say that our effort to preserve the freedom our forefathers established requires both an understanding of its principles and political involvement; if we are truly sincere. Such involvement, in my opinion, should be a minimum of informed voting and the acceptance of personal responsibility for one's challenges in his or hers day to day living situations.

I'll close this preface by saying; as we go through life, we look through our individual windows of experience, accepting or rejecting scenes we deem beneficial or, in the latter case, harmful. Our perspective is limited by our experiences and our lives are eventually molded from the sum of those scenes going before us, which we accept as desirable. Thus my story, which follows, is just another window of life, which the reader can peer through to evaluate the choices I made along the way. In so doing, he or she can judge for themselves whether said choices support or run counter to their own personal views and activities.

The preceding ten pages should explain to the reader the reason why I added the phrase "A SHORT STORY" to the title PREFACE.