

H. Tracy Hall oral history, tape 15,16

I'm telling about the gentleman from India that came to visit me. I said we better go up to the school and see what you have come to see, so I took him up there and showed him a press that I had built with my own money. A 300 ton cubic press, one with square bases that were cut out of big steel plates that I had been calling the Indian press lately. Anyway I showed him that and made diamonds in it, and he saw how quickly and easily that was done. He left and some diamonds and he went on his way back to India. Well, I ... he left a book with me that he had written. I looked in this book afterwards and found out he was a real big shot back there in India. So, I thought, Oh, Boy, I really blew that one.

I sometimes have so many visitors come through the "Y" I get sort of ignorant to them and don't treat them I've tried to reform in recent years. I'm sure I've turned a lot of people off in the past, but they were coming through so constantly, I couldn't get my work done, but I decided that that's bad for the church, so I have tried to reform and I really encourage them and invite them to stay at our house and all this, that, and the other. Get David involved, take them to Temple Square, whatever I can do to try and help them live their knowledge of the church, which might eventually help us some and, who knows, get some converts. But anyway I figured that was the end of him. Later on they came back and wanted to buy that press. And, of course, I sold it to them in the fall of 1965, October or November.

Ida Rose and I went to India and after having shipped that press over there, and installed it and put it in operation for them.

Sherlene: Did you ever talk to him about that whole thing.

Tracy: Oh, No. No, I never brought up the subject, but the thing you have to realize here is the cast system in India which was officially abolished, but which still exists. It was very frustrating to be over there. Indian scientists do not want to do a single thing with their hands. Manual labor is almost against their religion. It's part of the cast system. Anyone who works with his hands is lower than somebody who just sits and commands and directs and tells. And when I was over there with a crescent wrench in my hand underneath the press trying to assemble it, they didn't like it. I was lousing up their system. "Oh, No! Give the wrench to this man. Tell him how to do it!" It was very frustrating.

My impression of the people who call themselves scientists in India is pretty bad because they do not want to work with their hands and you can never have good science without having Scientists themselves who have a theoretical knowledge also willing to do a certain amount of the manual part of science. I could give you a whole tape or two on India. Mom and I kept sort of a log and diary when we went there and it's in a book. You can read about it in that book we wrote on our trip. I think you'll find that book interesting. I forget what kind of ... I think it's a bound notebook that we both wrote in ... various impressions of our trip, and that's at home in Provo.

Sherlene: With your Books of Remembrance and that kind of record.

Tracy: It's not in that kind of record. No, it's in just a separate bound volume that we would take turns writing in.

Sherlene: I mean, do you keep it with those kinds of records?

Tracy: Oh, it's on my bookshelf with my books in my study.

Sherlene: What are some of the most embarrassing things that have ever happened to you?

Tracy: Before we answer that question, let me tell you that ... my scientific notebooks do contain some comments from time to time that could be about our family history. I've never kept a diary continuously. Mother kept a diary during all the trauma of our General Electric experience before we left there. And you ought to know that that diary exists.

Sherlene: Oh, where is that?

Tracy: Well, it's a brown covered hardback notebook with sewn binding and everything. She kept that faithfully through that whole period, so that's a very interesting thing to look into.

Sherlene: That ought to be typed up as part of our history.

Tracy: She kept a diary there quite faithfully for a long time. It's too bad she didn't continue. But, I would say that diary covers maybe six months, which would be a good thing to know exists.

Sherlene: I'll say.

Tracy: I think it's located on her bookshelf in her study, I think.

Sherlene: What are some of the other things you have hanging around the house that we ought to know about? I know you have a drawer full of silver dollars.

Tracy: Yeah, we have currently, we have two hundred dollars worth of brand new 1963 pennies in sacks. \$200, I think. I think it's fifty dollars a sack. I think we have four sacks. We probably have \$100 in silver coins. You see the penny is our most valuable money right now. Intrinsic value. What it, in and of itself, is worth. The penny has the greatest worth. Isn't that something! (laughter) Isn't that something! Our lowest money has the highest intrinsic worth and maybe you have read in the newspaper occasionally how they want to change the composition of the penny so it's not so valuable.

Sherlene: Ha! That's something!

Tracy: Oh, I've tried to mark most of my slides throughout the years and many of our pictures. I've seen so many undated pictures of my mother's and former people that you don't know who the people are. The dates or anything. I have been rather faithful in dating slides and pictures that I have taken. So you'll find all that kind of stuff. OK, what was that next one?
Embarrassment?

Sherlene: How about family heirlooms? Do you have some neat things stored away in your drawers that not too many people know about?

Tracy: Probably the most valuable heirloom that I would leave would be my scientific notebooks, of which there are only two. I had many scientific notebooks at General Electric, but, of course, that's their property. I've thought, on many occasions for many years, I ought to try and see if General Electric would give me copies of those, but I've never asked them.

One time Suits wrote to me and he never asked me any questions, you know, about how I felt about this thing he was writing up on the history of diamond, but he just said, "Here's the history of the diamond at General Electric." All wrong, you know, and spread over everybody, credit all over the place and not true correct at all. "But, I was interested in the history, so I gave this big speech in Rochester and here we printed umpteen thousand of these and gave them to the libraries all over the country, etc."

I wrote back to him. I wasn't nasty, I just thanked him for sending me his version of what happened and suggested that ... I would think if he was really that interested in the history of diamond, that he would take the notebooks of all of those who were working on this project and contribute those notebook to the Schenectady Museum, which is a good museum, or else to the ... What's the big one in Washington? The Smithsonian Institution. And let historians decided what the true history of the synthesis of diamond was from the notebook records and not have a corporate officer of a company, who is likely to be biased, tell the people what the history was. I never heard from him. (laughter)

Sherlene: Oh, that's something! I sure hope no one has damaged those.

Tracy: Well, I worry about that. I'm sure they milk them dry because .. I know of one ... those notebooks were during my youthful really creative years, and I had just hundreds of ideas in those notebooks. I'd like to have them to work at. They've milked them dry as best they could, I'm sure. One thing T'd me off because Francis Bundy patented in his name the stacking of belts, which I think they do in their plant, instead of one belt in the machine, you have two or even three belts in a machine. He patented that idea, which was definitely in my notebook as my idea. This happened .. This patent came, of course, after I left the company. In his name and not in my name.

Now I suppose it's conceivable he may have thought of it later and maybe didn't know that ? If they did not pour over my notebooks trying to fish out all the ideas, they would be mighty dumb. I don't think the General Electric Company is that dumb. They should have known that.

Sherlene: What are some of the most embarrassing things that have ever happened to you?

Tracy: Oh, I don't know. I don't embarrass too easily. Probably in your youth when you're a teenager you get embarrassed at things. But I couldn't name anything. Just being around girls is embarrassing when you're a bashful teenage boy. I can't really, offhand, recall any embarrassing event that would come in my mind.

Sherlene: What achievements have given you the greatest satisfaction? You really haven't told about your awards yet.

Tracy: The whole family has given my my greatest satisfaction. Of course, I take great pride in ... I always pray to Heavenly Father to help me in my scientific work and feel that he has, particularly in the synthesis of the diamond. And, I guess, maybe in some ways I shouldn't take all the credit that I have done. I think I haven't got enough credit because the General Electric people diluted it with taking the credit with various people. They deserve credit for developing in their processes and improving the diamond quality and in developing the different types, but they shouldn't take the credit for the first synthesis. That was me. I was the guy who did that, see. And that's the thing. And, of course, that was the breakthrough. That was the achievement, was the initial synthesis.

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Sherlene: I read in a big ad that I saw in several recent magazines. I think it was advertising tooth paste. It listed the hundred greatest, or was it twenty. I can't remember now. I think it was the hundred greatest discoveries in the past one hundred years, or something like that. One, of which, was supposed to be Crest toothpaste or something like that. But it listed synthesis of diamonds as one of them. Greatest! That was with a lot of other very impressive things. And that made me proud to see that.

Tracy: Well, there are different ways you can decide which was the greatest. If you wanted to decide The thing about the diamond was that people worked on it for so long. People had been trying Oh, it depends on how you want to look at the situation, but for at least 125 years to make it. And perhaps even as long as 175 years. Science, including Nobel prize winners had been trying to do this for that long a period of time. And taking that into account, the effort that had gone into it. The guy who finally made it had really done something.

Sherlene: He should have a little more credit given to him. What was the most thrilling day of your life?

Tracy: It was thrilling to have been made bishop of our ward on July 4, 1976. That was a thrilling day. I think Mom was proud of that day too. I don't know if that was the most thrilling day, but it was the most recent thrilling day.

Sherlene: How would you describe your own personality?

Tracy: My natural tendency is to be introverted. I like to think and dream. But the dreams, you know, are not It's daydreaming, but it's daydreaming about scientific things. If you did this, what would happen? And I wonder how I could do that ... this, that, and the other. It's hard for me to be gregarious for long periods of time. I can be friendly and get along with people, but if I'm with people too long, I have to get away. I have to get by myself. I have to have my own periods of just meditation by myself. I could not be with people perpetually. It would do me in. I'm not that gregarious. In fact, I can't spend a whole day constantly with somebody. It's hard on me. It's just because I am somewhat introverted.

Sherlene: I know! It's a miracle that you have been doing this all day. (laughter) How would you describe your own appearance?

Tracy: My own appearance? I was better looking when I was younger than I am now. Oh, I don't know about my own appearance. I was jealous of many of my boyfriends when I was younger because they were so handsome and seemed to have such a way with the girls. (more laughter)

Sherlene: I've looked at some of your early pictures, and you were handsome!

Tracy: I'm not. I tend to be thin and don't have too much trouble with my waistline. In recent years I have had to decline food. Most of my life I never had to worry about eating. I could eat all I could possibly eat. Now I do have to watch it. I would like to stay around 145 pounds. My usual weight is about 155 pounds. I've gone for long periods at about 165, but that's too heavy for me. I would like to be at 145 pounds. I'm five foot ten and a half, small boned. My wrists are very small boned compared to the average man. Mine are very small.

Sherlene: I think you look young for your age. I think you're very youthful looking.

What are some of the happiest memories you have of experiences with your children?

Tracy: We have sort of gone over those. Summer vacation trips and things like that. Performances and their graduation. Things they do in church. The fact that they were active.

Of all the awards and recognitions you have received, which brought you the greatest satisfaction?

Well, I think being Bishop before I am through with it will bring me the greatest satisfaction. It's a recognized position. I was getting so ... you know, I think ... You don't aspire to church positions, but I think I had always hoped that someday I would have the chance of being a Bishop. You know, in those stakes that we're in, where you got stake presidents, patriarchs, mission presidents, almost general authorities running out your ears all over the place. I was called to be a counselor, you see, and having had that experience, as years went by, I, well, you know, you've had your turn. That's the best you can do. But, if you're out in the mission field you get to a bishop or maybe even a stake president. But not here. And I was getting too old, because I'm the oldest Bishop in the stake. They're all younger. They usually pick bishops in their early forties. Even their late thirties nowadays. So, it was a surprise and a happy surprise and I appreciated it. And I like it. I like being Bishop. And I know you're not supposed to recognize Bishops and stake presidents, but it's one of the ordained callings in the church. You know, you're ordained a Bishop. You're not ordained to be a counselor. And I think Mom ... Mom has told me that of all the things that have happened to me, that's the one that she likes the best.

Sherlene: That was proud for all of us. We were all there. To see that happen.

Tracy: And we've just arrived at question number 104, and Sherlene ... I'm worn out and that's the end

Sherlene: Was that the end? How about that!

Tracy: There is still a little left on this tape, but I'm not going to use it up. Oh, there's about ninety cents worth of tape left, but I think that's got to be the end.

Sherlene: Well, what question? What question now, "There's got to be one more question. What question didn't I ask that I should have? A very important question that you always should ask at the end of every interview. What important question should I have asked that I didn't ask? I haven't asked what your deepest spiritual experiences have been?"

Tracy: Well, I've never had an angel come and stand next to me. I've never had an open revelation, and some have had these things. I have never really aspired to it. I don't think I need it. I think it would be great to have that kind of an experience. I haven't particularly actively sought that kind of thing. The spiritual experiences that come to me, come to me when you may not be expecting it. Some situations, something develops and I get a lump in my throat and I get tears in my eyes and I feel the gospel's truth. Trace the gospels truth, you know. It's right! And that has happened hundreds of times in my life. But, I haven't seen the face of the Savior like some people say they've seen. And some people say you have to see that or you're not going to the Celestial Kingdom. And so I'm not going to the Celestial Kingdom. (laughter)

Ida Rose: Yes, you are, dear, but guide me through the door, too.

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Tracy: ? happens to me, and I have spiritual highs and lows like everybody does. I try to stay on high as much as I can, but sometimes you go months with ... I don't know, you just feel a little bit negative. Not real negative .. and it's all relative, too, because I think as we grow older we are striving to perfect ourselves and we're more critical of ourselves.

But, I frankly, went through a rather long period of ... I don't know what you would call it. Not being on a spiritual high in a way, being lower for no reason that I can understand. It lasted too long, but when I got back on top again was when I went into that cemetery and these guys didn't go with me, and I'm still living on that.

Sherlene: Tell about that. You wrote it the other day, but tell it!

Tracy: Well, there is essentially nothing more to tell than what I wrote in the little book, Sherlene, but ... I'm sure Satan's around, you know, trying to poke you and persuade you and kick you every which way he can, so that if you're in the spiritual doldrums long enough, you know, you can probably get in trouble someday or another. So ... doesn't everybody have those? I'm not unique in that, am I?

Ida Rose: Oh, no. No!

Sherlene: Everybody does.

Tracy: I don't ... I don't doubt that ? in these low periods, you know," that sometimes ? "I wonder if this is all worthwhile." Something like that, you know .

Sherlene: Everybody hits that!

Tracy: But being a bishop tends to keep you on your toes spiritually most of the time. You see lots of depressing things. Get into impossible problems that people have that you wonder how on earth you could ever in a million years help them get out of their problems. Mom was saying the other day that we seem to have the best if not certainly one of the best wards in the church. Way up there in the top, but

Sherlene: In fact, the top, Right! You ought to tell it on the tape. Let's tell about that ward.

Tracy: I was thinking the other day, just yesterday, that our ward is the top ward as measured by ten items which the stake considers. These are statistical items, and when the general authorities come to our stake, they say we're the top stake in the church. So, I have never really thought of this before. It just suddenly hit me yesterday. That, boy, you ought to be real humble, Tracy Hall, you are the Bishop of probably what is the top ward in the whole church. And there are almost 4,000,000 members of the church. Boy, you better do your job right. 'Cause you have a real special privilege. And I have. You know, we have our problems, too, and I wonder what the problems would be like in a ward that wasn't up where ours is, sometimes. But, it's a challenge to be the bishop. I enjoy it. I enjoy it a lot. And I try to do my job. I know that in jobs as you get used to them, that you can tend to slack off. I hope I don't do that.

It's embarrassing to me to bare my testimony on a public record, and that's what they've asked me to do. I have a testimony. As I was just saying, I haven't had a translating experience. It's been a testimony that has essentially been with me all my life. It's had its highs and its lows, but it has always been there. I know the gospel is true, and I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet. The prophet of this latter-day to establish the work in this

time, and I know that our current president Kimball is the prophet. And I know that Jesus is the Christ, as he claimed to be, as the true Messiah. I'm grateful and thankful to him for the great blessing he has brought to all mankind. And I just pray that I can always be worthy of that blessing and take advantage of it and be an example to others and not slip and fall between now and the time I pass away. That's a testimony that is true. I haven't really, you know, I haven't added to that. I've just stated the bare facts of it. That's what I believe. I haven't had any conflict with science and religion in my life and I've born testimony to that on many occasions when I have given talks at firesides and other places. And in church, and I say this in the name of our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We still got one inch of tape, Sherlene. What are you going to do with that?

Sherlene wants to know if I love my children. I love my wife and I love my children very, very much, and I just pray for the best for all of them. Tell them to keep improving. There is always room for improvement. Every day.

Sherlene: We know you love us. I just figured we might as well get it on the tape again.

Ida Rose: Well, I'm going to bed and tomorrow morning, turn it on.

Sherlene: OK. Good night!

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Tracy: A delegate. Delegate to the state convention. First to the county convent