

Stadium Village

After finding out that Dr. Henry Eyring would accept him as a graduate assistant, Tracy informed the head of the chemistry department at Purdue that he had decided to go back to the University of Utah, where he had been offered a fellowship, and where he would be able to find housing for his family.

The head of the chemistry department was not very pleased with Tracy's decision. He told Tracy that if he left, he would blackball him from every university in the country, and that he would see to it that he would never get another fellowship. Ironically, years later, this same department head was one of those directly involved in Tracy receiving the prestigious "Pioneers in Chemistry" award given by the American Chemical Society, even in the face of objections from General Electric!

Tracy left Lafayette, Indiana by train, and got back to Salt Lake City in time to register for the 1946 autumn quarter at the University of Utah. Had he remained at Purdue, he would have passed up the opportunity of a lifetime—that of doing his graduate work under the eminent scientist Dr. Henry Eyring.

Late in October, 1946, we were one of the first families to move into the Stadium Village housing project, located south of the campus. Our address there was 1556 East Delta Avenue. The building we were in was a one-story building that had four apartments in it, just like ours—two bedrooms, a long living room-dining room, a small kitchen, and a shower bathroom. Our units were known in the village as "the chicken coops."

Stadium Village was fun. We never considered those two years a sacrifice. We had wonderful neighbors, all married students with young children, and all poor. Tracy was soon awarded a fellowship, and with his G.I. Bill of Rights stipend, we were probably better off, financially, than many of the families in Stadium Village.

A word about the G. I. Bill of Rights. To our way of thinking, the G. I. Bill of Rights was one of the smartest bills the U.S. House and Senate ever passed. It allowed educational help for thousands of World War II veterans, who otherwise would never have been able to go to college. I doubt if Tracy would have obtained his Ph.D. without the financial help of that legislation. Thousands of G.I.s received college degrees, and some, advanced college degrees because of the G.I. Bill of Rights. As a result of the bill, graduates of this program formed a huge pool of educated people that benefited industry and education. The graduating G.I.s all earned more than they would have without the bill, and found jobs that paid better salaries than most of them would have made otherwise. In return, the added income taxes they paid to the government probably more than repaid what the bill cost the government.

Next door to us were the McCombers with their twin babies, and next to them lived the Claytons. I don't remember the name of the family in the fourth apartment in our unit, but as I remember, he was a pre-med student.

Across the street, facing us, in another "chicken coop" unit was a new college instructor at the university, who had been unable to find housing elsewhere. Three rows of "chicken coops" to the west of us was a new chemistry instructor, George Hill. George and Melba became our good friends. He is now a retired General Authority. Long-time friends from our Ogden days, Lane and June Compton were behind us to the east in one of the two-story units, as was Tracy's brother Eugene and his wife Joyce, to the west and south of us, also in two-story units. Eugene later graduated as a pharmacist.

There were lots of children, mostly under the age of six. Sherlene had no problems finding playmates.

The University Ward did not know quite what to do with us. The ward was essentially made up of students and formerly established resident families. There was no Jr. Sunday School. We crowded the adult ward classes, needless to say, and all of a sudden there were all those noisy children! The church solved this by making us a separate branch that met in the University Ward building, but at a different time. And that meant that, all of a sudden, a lot of us had church jobs that we had always thought belonged to older and more experienced members of the Church.