

The Brickyard

H. Tracy Hall

November 1, 1995

In 1932 our family moved from a five-acre farm in Marriott, Utah to an old house located at 664 30th Street in Ogden, Utah. This house was located on the north side of the street in a brickyard. The dividing line between the Ogden 18th Ward and the Ogden 9th Ward was 30th Street. Somehow, I did not know any of the people on the south side of the street. Later on, of course, I came to know my future wife, Ida-Rose Langford. The 30th street pavement ended at the bottom of Madison Avenue, which as that time dead-ended at 30th Street. From this point eastward it was uphill. High-tension power lines were on the north side of this street.

Being the experimenter that I have always been, I took some of the very fine wire from the wooden boxes that supplied that spark to each of the four cylinders of an old Model T Ford. Then, I took a coil of the wire, attached a heavy weight and threw it over the high-tension lines. The fine wire uncoiled, fell across the lines and emitted a lightning-like flash. A man across the street came running out of the house to see what had happened. But I ran for cover the instant that I could see that the fine wire was going to cross the high tension lines. After a while the man returned to his house.

Later on I told Bishop Grant Lofgren about what I had done and he chastised me. He worked for Utah Power and Light and said that I could have electrocuted myself in addition to bringing down the power lines.

The Great Depression was still in force at this time and good jobs were scarce. My father worked in the brickyard for three dollars per day. I also worked in the brickyard for \$.25 per day. My task required me to keep poking a heavy iron bar into a funnel-like mechanism to keep the clay from clogging up. A rapidly rotating wheel was at the bottom of the funnel and broke up the clods of clay. Often, my bar would strike against the wheel, which was very disconcerting. Later on, I was put on the small pedestal where I had to shake a screen by hand since the pulley to do this job was broken. I was a scrawny kid and was not up to such hard work. I asked for a raise to fifty cents a day and got it.

Interestingly, the clay came from a pit located adjacent to the Ernest F. Langford family home. From there to the brickyard was about five blocks. A team of horses and wagon transported the clay.

Mr. Leak was the owner of the brickyard. There were old-fashioned beehive kilns on the square block and the brickyard encompassed. Additionally, a completely modern state of the art continuous kiln had been partially constructed at great expense but was never put into operation. One of the features of this equipment was a long heated tunnel down which the unfired brick was to move slowly toward the end where the completely fired brick was to be taken off. This is similar to the way bread is made in large quantities.

As an aside, there was a dirt short-cut path that angled across the brickyard from our house to the corner of 29th Street and Jefferson Avenue. Many people including myself would use this shortcut. Often, as I would go across this path an older man coming my direction would pass and say "Hello Ralph." Ralph was my father's brother

who died in World War I of pneumonia while in England. I told my parents about this phenomenon which was of interest to me and my parents.

Streetcar tracks sweeping a curve occasionally took out brick connecting with the Bamberger Electric Line.

Manita Clayton and her family lived across the street kitty corner from our house at 664 30th Street. Her family lived on the south side of 30th street and was in the Ninth LDS Ward. Unbeknown to me at that time, Ida-Rose lived in the Ninth Ward and knew Manita. We lived on the north side of the street and lived in the Ogden Eighteenth Ward. That dividing line somehow kept us from knowing the people in the Ninth Ward. Unknown to me in that time in my life, though, my Ida-Rose also lived in that ward and knew the Clayton family.

Interestingly, after many more years had gone by, our family and theirs came to work at the General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York. By now, she had married Walter Fowler. We were now associated with this family and many more families in the area where we had built a chapel or worship for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. We spent many delightful years in fellowship with many young families who were rearing their children in that place. We came to Schenectady in the fall of 1948 and left there for Provo, Utah in 1955 where I became Director of Research and Creative Endeavor as a Full Professor at Brigham Young University.

Thus began a new chapter in our lives.