

A Short Biography of H. Tracy Hall

I was born October 20, 1919 to Howard Hall and Florence Almina Tracy in Ogden, Weber County, Utah. I was the first of five sons born to this couple. The names of my brothers are Eugene, Wendell, Donald and Delbert. My mother's father, Helon Henry Tracy and her mother, Nancy Naomi Alexander, were early Mormon Pioneers who knew the prophet Joseph Smith personally and went through all the persecutions of the early church.

My grandparents on my father's side came west to follow the railroad. My mother converted my father to the church before they were married and I do not know anyone who was a stauncher member of the church than my Dad. None of the rest of my father's family joined the church.

After arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, my grandparents settled in Marriott, Utah, a small farming community north and west of Ogden. Both my father and his brother served in World War I. His brother died in England of flu while in the service, leaving behind a young widow and two children.

Although my parents met and married in Ogden, when we were still young, my parents decided it would be good to raise their family of boys on a farm. They moved back to Marriot to the place where my mother's family originally settled. My early elementary and secondary education was in Marriott. (Grades 3 thru 8) Then my parents moved back to Ogden.

While I was still in Marriott an interesting thing happened. In the 4th grade when I was nine years old, the school board gave a progressive test to all the students. The test progressed from elementary material to more difficult material. This was given to all students in grades 1 through 12 in the county. Some time after the test was given my parents got a call from the Superintendent of the Weber County Schools asking my parents to come to his office and bring me with them. I had passed the test the highest in the whole district. I guess they wanted to see what this 4th grade genius looked like.

I credit this to the frequent visits my parents made with my brother Eugene and I to the Carnegie Library, five miles away in Ogden. Here I headed for the science section of the library. From these trips Edison, Firestone and other prominent scientists became my heroes. Once my teacher asked the students what they wanted to be when they grew up. When my turn came I said, "I want to be an engineer for General Electric Company—the Company founded by Edison." I think the board was a little disappointed in the skinny little boy who visited them.

Below is an outline history of some of the major events of my life:

1938: Graduated from Ogden High School

June 1940: Graduated from Weber College

September 24, 1941: Married Ida-Rose Langford, daughter of Ernest Fountain Langford and Zina Charlotte Chlarson. Moved into Lucy VanCott's apartments across the street from the University of Utah.

December 7, 1941: Japanese Bomb Pearl Harbor. War declared against Germany and Japan.

June 1942: Graduated from the University of Utah, Honors. Became employed as a Chemist at the U.S. Bureau of Mines. The Bureau had a generous policy to let their employees take off time for classes at the University and make up the time at the Bureau.

May 9, 1943: Daughter Sherlene born.

June 8, 1943: Graduated with Master of Science, University of Utah.

August 25, 1944: Entered the Service of my Country. Seaman First Class in the Navy. Left for Great Lake Naval Training Center in Waukegan, Illinois. Ida-Rose moved back to Ogden. At the Great Lake Naval Training Center I was made an Ensign and sent to Plattsburg, New York for Officer indoctrination. From there I was sent to Hollywood, Florida. There I took a test with 30 other officers for three vacancies for Radar Officer. I was one of the three chosen. I studied Radar at Bowdoin College, Maine and then went down to Boston to finish the course at M.I.T. and Harvard. While I was at Boston the war in the Pacific ended. Ida-Rose left Boston in August to return to Utah for the birth of:

October 19, 1945: Son H. Tracy Hall, Jr. born Hill Field Air Base, Clearfield, Utah.

May 5, 1946: I was separated from the service, returned to Salt Lake City to continue my work on my PhD. at the University of Utah. We lived at 18-D, Stadium village. I did my graduate work at the U under the direction of Dr. Henry Eyring.

February 15, 1947: Son David Richard Hall born while we were at Stadium Village.

August 8, 1948: I received my PhD, with Honors from the University of Utah.

September 1948: We left for Schenectady, New York after I accepted employment at G.E.

While we lived in Schenectady we had a wonderful time. The LDS branch there was full of young engineers and a few scientists. We made many life-long friends while there. We were in Schenectady for seven years. I was the first LDS PhD to be employed at the new G.E. Research Lab at the Knolls in Niskayuna. Three daughters were born to us there: Elizabeth, 7 June 1949; Virginia, 23 Jan 1952; and Charlotte, 20 October 1953.

At the lab, I was with the Chemistry Department until I volunteered to be one of the scientists transferred to the Super-Pressure project, G.E.'s effort to make one last attempt to make man-made diamonds. It was while working on this project that I designed a high-pressure apparatus called "the Belt". It was in the apparatus that on December 16, 1954, I transformed graphite into diamonds. Not pleased with the way I was treated at the lab, I accepted an offer of the position of Director of Research and Creative Endeavor at Brigham Young University. We arrived in Utah late summer of 1955.

BYU scientists (one of whom was our own Dean Barnett) did great things in the field of High Pressure at BYU. BYU became the most important place for high pressure-high temperature research for quite a long time. As time passed I built and sold several high-

pressure machines in various parts of the world. I also did a lot of consulting work with various companies during these years. I and two BYU engineers formed Mega Diamond, a Provo company which manufactured man-made diamonds. Our sons David and Tracy are still involved in Diamond manufacture and research.

Our seventh child, a girl was born after our return to Provo. Nancy: born 1 April 1958 in Provo.

I need to mention the church job I loved the very most and one that I never expected to hold. I was set apart to be Bishop of the Pleasant View 1st Ward, Sharon East Stake, Provo, Utah, on the 4th of July 1976. William Woolf was my 1st Counselor and Reese Hansen 2nd Counselor. Clay Conn also served as 2nd Counselor when Reese was called to another position.

November 11, 1981 at 2 P.M. we entered the MTC to go on an 18-month mission to South Africa. We spent the first year of our mission in Zimbabwe, working with the black Branch in Highfield, Zimbabwe. It was a delightful time. We just wish they could be free. We spent the rest of our mission in South Africa.

We have always been happy that we came to Provo. It's a wonderful place to raise a family.