

Boy Genius

I was born October 20, 1919 in Ogden, Weber, Utah. My father, Howard Hall, was not a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when he and my mother started going together. But he soon realized that if he were to marry Florence Almina Tracy he would have to be a member of that church. At the time he smoked a cigar, and liked to have a beer with the fellows. But when my Dad converted, he really converted. He joined the Church and gave up the aforementioned habits. He quit smoking and having his occasional beer, cold turkey. In later years he said that occasionally he would dream that he was still smoking a cigar.

I was the first son of five born to my parents. Eugene Melvin was born December 31, 1920, Wendell Herbert was born April 10, 1923, Donald Rey was born August 21, 1924, and Delbert Henry was born June 3, 1929. The first four boys in the family were born in Ogden, Utah except for Delbert, who was born in Marriott, Utah.

While we were still young my parents moved to Marriott, Utah, to a small farm. They thought that would be a wonderful place to raise their family of boys. As I remember this move was made in 1927, because I remember that my Mother had to talk the Marriott School into letting me into the third grade. I had the first and second grade in the Ogden Schools, but the school in Marriott didn't want to let me into the third grade because I wouldn't be the right age until October 20th on my birthday, and the deadline for age advancement was sometime in September. My Mother stood firm, stating that I was very smart. They let me into the third grade.

I liked the school system at the Marriott School. My classroom had the third, fourth, and fifth grade in one room, under one teacher. The advantage was that I learned the advanced material before I was ever promoted to the corresponding advanced grade. This may have helped me ace a countywide test that was given to all Weber County Schools when I was in the fourth grade. The test covered material up to the twelfth grade and became more difficult as you progressed through the test. On the other hand, my advantage in this respect was no different than the rest of my classmates.

Whatever the reason, I got the highest grade of any student from the first grade through the twelfth. We found this out when my Mother was asked to come to the principal's office and to bring me along. When we got there, in addition to the principal there were the Weber County School District people. This was when I was nine years old and in the fourth grade. I guess they wanted to see what this "genius" looked like. The only thing I remember from this experience is that they told my mother I was undernourished and needed a better diet. I guess they didn't want me to die from malnutrition.

Another factor that may have increased my IQ was that my Father or Mother took Eugene and me to the Carnegie Free Library in Ogden often, when they made shopping trips to town. I gravitated towards the science books and Eugene gravitated toward the fiction areas of the library.

Remember that this was in the middle of the Great Depression. We were not the only family that didn't have enough food at times during those years.