

Falsely Accused

When our family was moving from Marriott back to Ogden City on 664 30th Street, there was some uncertainty whether I should continue on in the county or city schools. It was in the depths of the Great Depression at this time and in losing our five-acre farm. Somehow my parents ended up with a vacant building lot on 16th Street in Ogden, Utah. So I had an opportunity to attend either the county or the city schools. I elected to stay in the city school system and enrolled at the Lewis Junior High School in the 11th and 12th grades. This old high school was located on the corner of 26th Street and Monroe Boulevard.

Many years later I attended the beginning of the demolition of this old school.

This is getting away from the main text of this story so I will shift gears.

One day a sheriff showed up at our house at 664 30th Street to arrest me for stealing a book that belonged to the county school district.

This was a terrible surprise. I had been an honest person for my entire life, so I needed to get to the bottom of this ridiculous charge.

I always tried to keep schoolbooks in good condition because my mother had taught me how to cover the books with what was called linoleum. There were two grades of this material, a heavy one used for floor covering and a lighter material for placing over a table to protect the underlying wood. The material was made from a preparation of oxidized linseed oil and ground cork pressed upon cloth. It was made in various colors and patterns and, in those days, was a very common material.

This is what happened.

I had decided to attend the city schools. I had one book that belonged to the county, so I went to the office of the Weber County School official whose last name I will not reveal because I have forgiven him many years ago. When I reached his office to return the book, I carefully took off the cover to return it in perfect condition to Mr. Blank. He told me that he was very, very busy so I should just place the book on his desk and that is what I did.

But Mr. Blank continued to insist that I had stolen the book.

He was dead wrong but never would admit to his error.

He was also a high councilman in the LDS church. I would see him in our Ogden 18th Ward from time to time. What do you think a young 16-year-old boy would think about that? They never took it off my record!