

THE CROSSING

We moved from Mrs. Hart's little white house on 15th street in Ogden when I was about four years old. I was born there and so was my brother, Eugene. This house, distinguished by an oval window in the front door, was rented by my father and mother, Howard and Florence Tracy Hall.

I do not remember anything that happened there. What I know, my mother told me in later years. But I have visited the area and taken a picture of the house. I also have a few pictures that she took. One shows me squirting water with the garden hose. She said this was one of my favorite activities. Another was running down to Washington Avenue to see the awesome thing with clanking wheels that ran along shiny tracks. There were people riding in it. When it stopped it made grinding noises and when it started to go again, it groaned until it got going faster. Then it made a whining sound. Lots of times it would shoot out sparks against a wire that ran along overhead (this was about the best description I could give with my two year old vocabulary). She told me that the "thing" was a street car. Mother or perhaps father built a tall, fenced enclosure to protect me from the dangers of Washington Avenue. But I soon learned to climb the fence and head for the wonderful sights and sounds of Ogden's main thoroughfare. Often rescued in the nick of time from going out onto what Ogden now calls Washington Boulevard, she resorted to some kind of harness and rope arrangement to safeguard me.

Mother had two very fine cousins, Dorothy and Alberta Coop (daughters of her sister Myra) who often visited us at this house and they also took some pictures. I remember a picture of Eugene (and perhaps myself) in a white, wicker-basket type baby buggy. There were also pictures of Eugene and I on the small back porch. I think that this was the first residence of my parents after my father returned home from World War I. He had been stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington and was there when the war ended. I do not know where they lived immediately after their marriage but it must have been a place within the confines of the Ogden Second Ward because I remember mother talking about the good Bishop there who fellowshipped father after he was converted to the church.

From this house we moved to the north-east corner of Jefferson Avenue and 16th street.* There was no house there. It was just a lot with one irrigation ditch on the west side and another on the south. Eugene nearly drowned in the west ditch; I'll tell that story later. This part of Ogden had been an orchard (primarily Cherry trees, I think). Just two lots north of us was Mill Creek. Yes, the same Mill Creek that ran past the northern boundary of our Marriott, Utah farm where we lived some years later. At the time we moved to Jefferson and 16th, Jefferson dead-ended from the north and from the south at the creek because no bridge crossed it. My earliest recollections are of crossing this creek.

*1464 Jefferson Ave.

The recollections are primarily sensory-- a matter of mood and feeling. I was with my parents when they were searching for a lot in this area. Building lots were located on both sides of the creek. Only a plank bridged the high, swiftly moving stream. It was spring in late evening. The air was moist, slightly chilled, and orchard-bloom fragrant. Gathering western skies hid the sun. There were no shadows. My parents and the real estate man were crossing the creek one at a time. The plank was wet and slippery. My turn to cross came and I was quite afraid even though father was holding on to me. The weight of both of us pressed the plank to the waters surface, kicking up a spray that wet our feet. But we made it safely across.

I can't help digress to mention a fact that all of us living along the the Wasatch Front know so well. For many, many years orchards have been prime targets for conversion to subdivisions and the process of clearing them for this purpose continues, unabated, to this day.

Not long after choosing the lot, we moved onto it. Our home was a tent! The only thing that I specifically remember being inside the tent was a piano. How mother cooked, how we slept, and how we ate, I don't remember. It must have been a real pioneering effort on the part of "Mom" and "Dad". Bless their souls!