

## When I Was a Boy

In the early years of the church, when I was a boy, it was not too difficult to get a General Authority to be the speaker at sacrament meeting. David O. McKay had a home in Huntsville, Utah and was kind of known as our “Ogden, Utah General Authority.” And it was possible to see him walking down the street occasionally in Ogden.

One time, David O. McKay was scheduled to be our Sacrament Meeting speaker. Ena Barnes, our Sunday school teacher, had formed a boys’ chorus, and we were practicing down in our classroom. David O. McKay heard them singing and leaned over to our 26-year-old bishop, L. Grant Lofgreen, and said to him, “Don’t let those boys get away from you!”

Ena kept us plenty busy. In those days our ward imported sacrament meetings whenever it could, and so did the other wards in the stake. She and our young bishop provided many opportunities for us to sing at sacrament meetings all over the valley.

We were kept busy in all sorts of activities. I remember one time our bishop rented a train for a ward M.I.A. outing. In those days all the trains had steam engines. They rented one engine and one car and drove to the edge of the Great Salt Lake, where there was a nice sandy beach. Everyone played in the sand for hours, and stayed to see a terrific sunset. Then we boarded the train and went to a switching station, where the train could turn around and head for where we had started.

Como Springs was another great place to swim in the warm water. We also swam in the Weber River. We also went to Lagoon.

One time we went to Arco, Idaho with our Hi-Hatter’s dance band. The dancers danced so fast there that we could hardly keep up with them. Of course, we went to church there and had the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward Boys’ Chorus sing and give the whole program.

The age range of chorus members was from about 14 to 19 years, so some of the older boys had cars and could help with transportation. We often went to General Conference in Salt Lake City and would manage to get the entire chorus members to attend. On one occasion someone found that our chorus was in town, so we were invited to sing some songs on the radio. We were very excited about that.

Another example of the availability of General Authorities at that time is the fact that Heber J. Grant dedicated our 18<sup>th</sup> Ward meeting house in 1927.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Ward Chorus was a great way to keep us all out of trouble. Out of 18 boys, I can remember only two boys who drifted away from the Church. And that was after they grew up.

Ena Barnes, who organized and directed the Ogden 18<sup>th</sup> Ward Boys’ Chorus, was a cousin of David O. McKay, so she had a little leverage with the First Presidency of the Church. Consequently, she arranged with the First Presidency to let us come to Salt Lake City and sing for them. This occurred on March 26, 1938. We sang for President Grant. Then he had us sing for several other General Authorities. In return he sang for *us*, and told some of his experiences.

Then President Grant gave each of us a copy of a small booklet entitled, “The Power of Truth,” written by William George Jordan, which was signed by all three members of the First Presidency. The book is 64 pages long and is about eight inches by five inches. The cover is red with gold lettering. Every one of us received a book with their three signatures

on it. Additionally, they gave each one of us a belated Christmas card, which was also signed by them.

This card had a reddish envelope and is eight inches by five and one-half inches and looks quite old, after some 63 years have passed by. A fancy silk string shows on the outside. My name, H. Tracy Hall, has been typed on the front of the envelope, and the front page has the following message:

TREASURES  
I would share  
Christmas, 1937  
HEBER J. GRANT

On opening the card, the first thing you will see is a picture of Heber J. Grant. Following that is a photograph of his beautiful handwriting. Additionally, there are 14 pages of wit and wisdom. The First Presidency of the Church at this time consisted of the following: Heber J. Grant, President, J. Reuben Clark, First Counselor, and David O. McKay, Second Counselor.

*To my dear Friends:*  
*For many years I have kept*  
*a little black leather book, in which*  
*I have recorded poems and extracts that*  
*have been an inspiration to me.*  
*I am pleased to share some of*  
*these gems with you.*  
*My wife joins me in extending*  
*very best wishes for an enjoyable*  
*Christmas and a Happy and*  
*Prosperous New Year to you and*  
*your loved ones*  
*Yours Sincerely,*  
*Heber J. Grant*  
*Salt Lake City*  
*1937*