

SHELDON EVERETT CONDIT - MY STORY

(September 8, 1916 to August 16, 2001)

According to my birth certificate I was born September 8, 1916, in a two story frame house, on a 40 acre farm, approximately three miles east of the City of Hagerman, Idaho. Evidently birth certificates were not required by Gooding County at that time as it was filled out and filed in the capital at Boise at a later date by my father. I was the third Son born to John Winford and Delia Ida Bell (Parks) Condit.

My early childhood was on the farm until my mother died in December, 1928. Prior to that disastrous event, I was just one of eight children growing up on a farm. At that time, there were three boys and five girls in the family. Leonard Milton Condit, the eldest Son, was fifteen, Carrol Kenneth Condit was fourteen, and I was twelve. Edna Bell Condit, the eldest girl was ten, the twins - Leona Aileen Condit and Iona Loween Condit was seven, Edith Lenore Condit was five, and Eunice Eugenia Condit was three years of age.

Going back several years from that event, I will just mention a few facts as I remember them. I do not remember dates, or even years of those facts or events, but will mention a few. In my earliest remembrance, the Gilmore family lived approximately one-half mile east of our house. The Condit children and Gilmore children were cousins as "Uncle Burt" had been married to Aunt Millie Condit (Sister of my father). She is said to have died January 19, 1917, about four months after I was born. Of course, I do not remember her, but have heard much about her.

Dana, Lysle, and Merrill, approximated equivalent ages to Leonard, Carrol, and myself; therefore, for a time we had comradeship together. I have no memory of just when the Gilmore family moved, but I do know the comradeship carried over into later years. I have memory of them living at Cedar Draw, I believe somewhere near Wendell [Gooding Co., Idaho]. Carrol and Merrill later "rode the rails" together, and worked together in the shipyards in Tacoma, Washington, during the war years.

Uncle Burt later married an Aunt on my mother's side of the family Margaret Parks (Aunt Maggie). I have been told that Aunt Maggie was bridesmaid at the wedding of Uncle Burt and Aunt Millie. Interesting, if true. Of course, I do remember visiting them often in later years. I dearly loved them both. I note from the Bell (Condit Clan) genealogy that Uncle Burt was born at McCool, Nebraska. I wonder if that was not McCook, Nebraska. I was stationed there at the Air Base in WWII.

Prior to the Fifth Grade, I attended the Rimrock School, a one room schoolhouse next to an alfalfa field, approximately one mile from our farmhouse. I remember it was large enough for eight rows of desks, maybe six to a row. I remember the "recesses" when the only recreation seemed to be playing "marbles". There was an ice-skating pond in winter a short distance from the school. In my Fifth year of school, Rimrock was closed and we were bussed into Hagerman.

In Summer, when there was no school, Carrol and my duties on the farm seemed to evolve into herding our dairy cattle on the canal banks in the Sage Brush country surrounding the farms in the area. The canals carried the irrigation water flowing from the Snake River and there was quite a bit of feed grass along the banks. Dad usually had from seven to ten head of dairy cattle. We sold the milk to a cheese factory in Hagerman. We boys also had to milk the cows as part of our "chores".

In addition to our cattle, Carrol and I occasionally "herded" our neighbor's cattle. We were supposed to get five-cents a head per day, but we seldom saw any pay from our work. Of course we rode horses in such duty. I remember "Old May", an old Sorrel Horse that was very gentle and loved to run. We always rode bareback (no saddle), and I learned to standup on the rump of Old May on a good run. We had to make sure that the dairy cattle did not move into the alfalfa fields as that might prove fatal to them. They would gorge themselves on green alfalfa and "bloat-up." Then they would die unless they were "stuck." That is, a knife wound in the side to remove the pressure of gas.

I remember an old leading and aggressive Brindle cow. I would be laying on the rump of Old May as though I were sleeping, and Brindle would start leading the herd toward an alfalfa field. I would let her get so far, then I would raise my head and yell "Brindle". She would turn her head and look at me, then start leading the herd back again. Who ever said cows are dumb animals. Humans can be like that also.

One event is worth mentioning - at least from my viewpoint. This event could have resulted in this document not existing for the reason that the writer ceased to exist at the time of the event. Most of the RLDS Church family were relatives - Condit's, Dennis', Gilmore's, and one Melvin Parks, Son of Guy. It was a habit, especially in Summer, for the family relatives to adjourn after church to the home of the Grandparents, John Henry and Frances Ezilka Condit for recreation - generally a ball game. For some reason my brother Carrol and I went home early to our family farm one Sunday. We fixed ourselves a sandwich and stood around for something interesting to do.

Our Father had recently returned from deer hunting during the previous week, and his 30-30 rifle was standing in the corner of the kitchen. Carrol, I remember, picked it up and started waving it around in an aiming position. I am sure he had it aimed at me at one point in time, or at least in my direction.. I remember my comment, "Carrol, you had better aim that some other direction, it might be loaded". He replied, "Awe, Dad never leaves a loaded gun around the house". So he aimed it at a Cream Separator standing against the wall about eight feet away. The Separator was used to separate cream from milk, which cream was then sold in town. All the disks and other machinery were in the big bowl on top of the separator... Carrol then pulled the trigger.

I am sure we all have heard of the "big bang" theory about the creation of the universe. Well, to me there was a "big bang". We immediately inspected the result. There was a hole as large as a thumb thru the bowl, including all the disks and other machinery and out thru the wall of the house. I am sure the bullet was out in the pasture somewhere. Suffice it to say that we were both scared as jackrabbits being chased by a dog. We did not explain anything to our parents that day as they had not looked at the separator. However, the next morning our mother came to the stairway door (we boys slept upstairs) and shouted "Carrol, Sheldon come down here". We knew what was up. Facing us on coming down she pointed at the separator and asked, "You know anything about this." We each replied in the negative and one of us asked, "Who did that?" Well, we never admitted our responsibility until many years later after mother had passed away. Carrol informed our Father long after the event.

As previously stated, our mother died in December, 1928. I was twelve years of age at the time, and, of course remember the events vividly. Most of the family had been suffering from severe colds and the flu. Mother's illness developed into pneumonia. She was not taken to a hospital, but remained at home in care of a nurse. I remember the "musterd plasters" they placed on her chest to "draw out the infection."

We were not financially able to stay on the farm as it was not yielding a proper living, and our father had been working in a store in Hagerman to supplement the farm income. Furthermore, there was no one he could hire to live in the house to provide for the minor children while he was working elsewhere. Therefore, the family was split up in order that he could find a better job to provide for our support, and the farm was sold. Leonard, myself, Edith, and Eunice went to live with our Grandparents, John Henry Condit and Frances Ezilka (Parks) Condit. They lived in a two-story log house next to the rim and the Malad River, approximately five miles North of Hagerman. Carrol, Edna, and the twins went to live with an Uncle and Aunt, Sheldon Maurice Parks and Nora (Belding) Parks. They lived on a farm approximately one mile South of our farm at the time of Mother's passing.

Our father acquired a job in a paper mill in Camas, Washington. He worked there for approximately two years, and while there, renewed acquaintance with Pearl Edith Walruff, in Portland, Oregon, whom I understand he had known in his teen years in Hagerman Valley.. She, as I understand, was a divorcee with a boy child. They were married, and the boy was adopted into the family. He was a few months old

at the time of marriage of his mother to our father. He, Clayton, has always been considered and treated as though he were a natural born member of the Condit family. He served as a President of Seventy (Elder) under direction of an Apostle, and is retired now from Church appointment as an Evangelist, living in Phoenix, Arizona. Pearl also had an adult daughter, Ruby (a.k.a. Rose) married to a man by the name of Clifford Lilley. They had a minor Son by the name of Thomas Lilley and a daughter whom we always called "Patty."

In late 1930 or early 1931, Father and his new bride came back to Idaho, and he obtained a job at a paper mill in Emmett, Idaho, near Boise. Residence was established in Emmett, and Edith, Eunice, and I went to live in Emmett. Later, our Father had an accident on a saw in the mill in which he nearly lost a thumb. Leonard came to Emmett and assumed his job while Dad was healing in order that family support could continue. This was in the midst of the depression. I graduated from the Eighth Grade in Emmett.

I believe it was late 1931 when we moved from Emmett to Bliss, Idaho. We lived just a short time in Bliss, then we moved into a permanent residence in Hagerman. Dad bought a house, and all of us, except the twins, lived there and attended school in Hagerman. The twins continued to live with Uncle Sheldon and Aunt Nora Parks. Oh yes, Edna lived there also. This was still in the midst of the depression, and Dad got a job as one of a three-man crew maintaining the State Highway thru Hagerman Valley.

I graduated from High School in Hagerman in 1936 after having been out of school for various periods as opportunity for jobs on farms was available. Being in the midst of the depression, we boys worked on whatever jobs were available to supplement family and our own support. Almost immediately after graduation, Carrol and I joined a contingent of boys from Central Idaho being transported to Northern Idaho by the U.S. Forest Service to fight "Blister Rust", which was killing the White Pine in Northern, Idaho. Our job was to run string to form alleys thru the forest to pull out the so-called "ribes", a weed that was causing the "blister rust". Our contingent of boys came from surrounding towns in Southern, Idaho. I estimate there was about forty in our group. We were transported to Northern Idaho in Army type trucks. Our camp was about three miles out of Headquarters, Idaho, near Pierce. We were there for about a three-month period, and then transported back to Southern Idaho. While in Northern Idaho we also fought a large forest fire. Carrol left the camp early and returned to Southern Idaho on his own, and joined the CCC's. I stayed for the three-month period.

After returning home, I was faced with the decision as to my future education. I had around a hundred dollars saved up, which was certainly not enough to go to a University.

Because of the depression and the large family, all Dad could say to me as to future education was "good luck, Son". After completing two or three correspondence courses in various subjects, I chose to go to Boise Business College. I had to work in various restaurants, and a boarding house several hours a day for my living in addition to attending the college. I continued this process for about three years, attending the college of accounting and working sometimes full time. I received a basic education in accounting, commercial law, and related subjects.

I believe it was sometime in 1939, Bob Dickerson, one of my church friends, and another friend stopped to see me while I was full-time employed in Boise.. Bob and friend were on their way to Enumclaw, Washington, to seek employment at Mud Mountain Dam where Bob's brother, Lawrence, and my brother, Leonard, were employed. I believed I was not getting adequate pay in Boise, and indications of at least \$1.25 an hour even for common labor in and around Seattle Area was enticing. Therefore, I quit my Boise job, and joined Bob and friend in a trip to Enumclaw.

The United States at that time was building up defenses because of the seeming inevitable hostilities in Europe. When war started between England, France, and Germany I was working with Bob and

another friend building Army barracks at Fort Lewis, South of Tacoma. I had also worked on various other construction projects in and around Enumclaw and Tacoma during 1940. When the draft law was passed, Leonard and I registered in Renton, Washington.

After the Fort Lewis job, I learned of the possibility of employment by the U.S. Engineer Department to work on a construction project at Annette Island, Alaska. I applied and received a contract as a jackhammer operator at Annette Island. The fancy title for my position was "Drill Runner, Pneumatic". That was in October, 1941. I was a civilian employed on an Army installation run and controlled by the U.S. Engineers. We were removing ridges by drilling and dynamiting, then dumping the stuff in the muskeg to make runways. I was drilling away with several others on December 7, 1941, when the Army came racing across the seven-mile plank road across the muskeg, and built machine gun nests around our crew. We did not know until we returned to camp that night that we were at war with Japan.

According to my contract, I was to receive a two-week leave Stateside after six months. When war was declared, all civilian and Army leaves were cancelled, but in March, 1942, I was allowed to take my normal leave. Returning to Seattle, I called my draft board in Renton for indications of my status for the draft. I was informed that it would not be very long before I would be called.

I returned to Boise to visit my Sisters, and other friends, living there at that time. I was seriously contemplating enlisting to avoid the draft. When a friend informed me of an opportunity to enlist in a Glider Pilot Training Program being initiated at Boise Junior College, I immediately did so. I wrote a letter to the U.S. Engineer Department in Alaska informing them that I was enlisting in the Air Corps, which voided my contract.

Actually, I enlisted in the Army Reserves for ground academic training at Boise Junior College and flight training at Gowen Field in Boise. Upon completion of the program, I was to be called to Active Duty, appointed an Aviation Student, and sent to Roswell, New Mexico for basic training, then to Plainview, Texas, for glider training. I did not qualify for appointment as an Aviation Cadet training as a regular Pilot, Bombardier or Navigator because of a slight flaw in my eyesight, but I did qualify as an Aviation Student. At that time, the Air Corps was still part of the U.S. Army. It was not until long after the war ended that the Air Force was established as a separate branch of service.

Due to a "Snafu" at Headquarters, Ninth Service Command, Fort Douglas, Utah, three of us were called to Active Duty, out of the program of about forty students, appointed Aviation Cadets, and ordered to report to Santa Ana Army Air Base, Santa Ana, California for training. The President of the Boise Junior College was mystified by the orders as we had not had either our final examinations for ground or flight, and we had not qualified for Aviation Cadets anyway. He immediately gave us our examinations, and we were passed and on our way to Santa Ana. I had about thirty or forty hours of solo time flying Piper Cubs at Gowen Field. We never did find out why only three out of about forty were called to Active Duty and erroneously assigned, but assumed that someone in Fort Douglas needed three names to fill a Cadre, and picked the names at random. I soon learned that was typical of the U.S. Army.

We were at Santa Ana Air Base for about three weeks when the "mistake" caught up with us, and we were ordered to Roswell, N.M. as Aviation Students. We completed basic training at Roswell, and ordered to Plainview, Texas, for glider training. Actually, we were practicing "dead-stick landings" in what we called "hopped-up" Piper Cubs. In a dead-stick landing you are actually in a glider.

To make a long-story short, Plainview was the termination of the program. A few of the best were accepted for further training, and the rest were, in effect, "washed-out" I was not one of the best. Again, we never understood why the termination of the program, but the rumor among officers that we queried was that General Eisenhower had put out a call for thousands of Glider Pilots for the invasion of Europe, and before the Army could "turn-off the spigot", they had about ten times as many as was needed.

Those of us that were eliminated were ordered to newly established training bases as "Cadre" for the training of Aviation Cadets as Pilots, Bombardiers, and Navigators. I was ordered to Deming Army Air

Base, Deming New Mexico, which was a Bombardier Training School. I spent the rest of the war as a Staff Sergeant in various types of personnel work. I attended various training schools at Brookings, South Dakota, Mitchell Field, New York, Downtown New York City and Santa Ana, California. While in New York City in December, 1943, I met the girl who became my wife for thirty-five more years. She was home in Jersey City from Graceland College for Christmas when I met her.

Near the end of the war, I was given the opportunity for overseas assignment (among many others who had not previously served overseas), and ordered to McCook Field, McCook, Nebraska. McCook base was part of the Second Air Force. After some training we received a Port Call to depart from Fort Lawton, Washington, for station on Tinian Island. That was where the "Enola Gay" took off from to eliminate Hiroshima.

After the first "atom" bomb, they cancelled and rescheduled our port call. After the second bomb on Nagasaki, they cancelled our port call permanently. I saw (in effect) the "handwriting on the wall" that the end of the war was at hand. I was in a position to have myself put on orders for separation from the service. I was separated from the service at McClellan Field, Sacramento, California, on February 6, 1946.

After separation from the Service, I rejoined my wife in Palo Alto, California. We lived for a short time in Menlo Park, California. The only civilian education I had received was in business, so I enrolled in Golden Gate College in San Francisco for graduate accounting. After receiving my degree, I obtained employment with the State of California as a Sales Tax Auditor in San Francisco. I worked for the State for two years, afterward receiving an opportunity as a Federal I.R.S. Field Agent. I was soon transferred to Sacramento; thence to Yuba City where I served as Agent in Charge of that Post of Duty. Later, I was transferred to Monterey, California, where I served in the same capacity. It was a larger office. In 1963, I was transferred back to San Francisco where I worked as a Field Agent (much of the time on very large International Corporations). I also served time as a Field Manager over other Agents. I retired from the I.R.S. in 1979, after the death of my wife, Lucy, from Cardiomyopathy.

It was also soon after separation from the Service in San Francisco that Lucy and I again started attending the Reorganized Church. I had been baptized when I was nine, but had never really become an active member because of events. It was in San Francisco that I was ordained a Priest in the Church. I was ordained an Elder in Yuba City. I served three years as Presiding Elder of the Monterey Branch. When I again was transferred back to the Bay Area, I became active in the Walnut Creek Branch. Then, when the San Francisco Bay Stake was organized in July, 1964, I was ordained a High Priest and to the San Francisco Bay Stake High Council. I served as Presiding High Priest in Walnut Creek Congregation and El Sobrante Congregation for several years.

Our family was started in 1947, one year after separation from the service. We have four children David Everett Condit, Michael Duane Condit, Shelley Rae (Condit) McClean, and Susan Elaine (Condit) Brooks. David lives in Virginia with his wife Virginia, (Ginny), and they have two adult children, and two grandchildren. That makes me a two-time Great Grand Father. Duane and wife Lynn have three adult children, Seana, Mariah, and Dylan. Shelley and Tom have three teen-age boys, Tommy, Bobby, and Timmy. Susan is divorced and has three minor children, Lucy, Marie, and William (Billy).

As previously stated, my wife Lucy passed away December 19, 1978. That was nearly a deathblow to me. In two months time, I lost nearly twenty pounds and lost interest in my job with the I.R.S. Then, I came to my senses and realized that I had to start a new life for myself. Sometime prior to her death, Lucy and I had been seriously thinking of going to Bangkok, Thailand, to visit David (my eldest Son) and his family. David was an Army Officer attached to the American Embassy in Bangkok while working with the Thai Army. This gave me a good opportunity to "get away for a while". Therefore, I went to Bangkok.

I was in Thailand visiting various interesting places for two or three weeks. While in Hong Kong on the return trip, the plane was delayed about four hours in order to bring in a new crew from Tokyo. While roaming around, I came upon a Lady whom I recognized was from the plane. I casually asked, "where are you from?" She answered, "I am from Enumclaw, Washington." I said, "Oh, Enumclaw, I know where that is; I used to work there." As it turned out, we had fourteen hours flight to San Francisco to get acquainted.

I visited her in Enumclaw two or three times in the following months, and she came to California two or three times. I retired from my I.R.S. job, and we were married in September 1979. She was a divorcee with a family parallel to mine.

Mary (that was her name) and I have been living for Nineteen years (at this writing) in Benicia, California. She still owns property in Enumclaw, and we also have a joint residence there. Her primary family is in and around Enumclaw and Seattle. We visit there often, and also visit David and Ginny in Virginia, and Mary has a Niece in North Carolina whom we have visited. We are just enjoying our retirement years, and growing old together. Mary passed her Seventy Fourth birthday on August 25th, and as of this writing, it so happens that I am enjoying my Eighty Second birthday with family and friends. In the words of Robert Browning in his famous poem, my wife and I are just enjoying the "last of life for which the first was made."

September 8, 1998