

From the oral journal of **Karl Morgan Richards**  
born 1900 in Salt Lake City.  
**son of Sarah Butler and Gomer Morgan Richards**  
William Hartley, director of oral history at BYU in 1973 taped  
this information which was printed into book form

My father, shortly after my birth, was called on a mission to Pennsylvania and my mother, Winona and I spent a little time with my grandfather and grandmother Richards in Parowan, Utah. After Father returned from his mission my first impression was that he had very strong religious convictions. There was a good deal of family togetherness and very close loyalty in the family. Family prayer was a daily habit and blessings on the food. My mother was extremely close to the children. I think she used emotion a little bit. I recall that she would tell stories that would really arouse my emotions. My father took a 1904 model F Buick touring car in on a real estate deal. We became the proud owners of the 29<sup>th</sup> car in the state of Utah. We took trips. We went (from SLC) to Richfield where my mother's sister, Zettie, lived. They had the hardware store in Richfield. I had to run in front of the car through all the towns picking up horseshoe nails and other things that might puncture the tires.

My father had certain very definite ideas about food, and he felt that natural foods were important. I recall we always had fruit, and my friends thought we were rich because in the wintertime we'd have oranges by the case. Father would buy oranges and other fruit by the case. I remember we had a cellar, one of those earthen cellars, and we were always free to go down and get fruit if we wanted it. Some of my friends thought that was evidence of great wealth.

I think we had a very close family. Father was a promoter and as a result we generally didn't have very much money. We found when he died that he had made quite a lot of money in his life, but it had all gone back into other investments. He promoted everything. A lot of mining. Land development in Idaho in connection with the Twin Lakes Reservoir.

My mother was unusual in her charity and in her hospitality. At conference time we would have many guests and I was relegated to sleep on the floor somewhere. Relatives would come from all over the place, and whenever any of my mother's relatives came, they'd come down from the ranch on the train and bring a quarter of beef or they'd bring a dressed chicken or canned wild sage hens or fish wrapped up in leaves and so forth. I was amazed that they seemed to carry them without ice. Some of my younger uncles were great sportsmen and when they would come to fall conference in October they would bring half a deer or other wild meat. That was against the law later. To my mother it didn't make any difference how many came. She always seemed to improvise. I could never understand how she could do it, because there wasn't much money. As I said, my father was a promoter and later on when I was earning money I kept food on

the table. When I was working at the telephone company I furnished the money for the food. My father was working on the millions. My sister, Winona also worked and when I left home she kept the home operating.

People thought we were rich. We had a car when no one else had a car. We had fruits in all seasons. My father sold me on the idea that I should earn my own way. By age eight I was paying for everything. The family gave me food and lodging. I bought all my clothes and paid all my expenses at school.

My grandfather Butler (JLBII) had a gold mine at Kimberly, Utah and he prospered for some time. He would often go to San Francisco, he had some very beautiful daughters, including my mother—and he would come home with some of the finery from San Francisco for his daughters.

My mother had a rather interesting story on this, that one of the apostles, I don't recall his name, came to Richfield and gave a talk on the evils of ribbon inserts in women's undergarments and the need for more simplicity and modesty in women. He had daughter's the same age as my mother and he invited her to come to SL and spend time with them. Well, she had all these fine things that her father had brought her from San Francisco, but she felt it would be inappropriate to go to the home of this apostle and embarrass his daughters. So she left all these things home, and to her amazement when she arrived in Salt Lake his wife and daughters all had very fine underthings and they felt quite sorry for this poor little country girl from Southern Utah. So Mother went to the apostle and said, "What do you mean coming down and telling us how sinful this is, and now I find that your wife and daughters wear these things that you are objecting to?" He said, "Look, Sadie, I can't get my wife and daughters to do anything I ask them."

Starting at age five, I went to Idaho every summer and lived with my Grandmother Butler and my uncles and aunts up there. Then Father helped to build a dam and he bought land up there.

There were certain things in my father's family that I noticed by contrast with my mother's family. There wasn't the closeness in his family that there was in my mother's family. That has been evidenced in later life. Today my mother's family is very, very close as they grow old and die. (1972). There's a closeness not only with the children but with the grandchildren and so forth.

In my mother's family there was a second wife which was a little burden on the family. The second wife was the daughter of a very fine man. He failed to indicate that the daughter was not his but an adopted daughter. She had certain limitations, and while there was a good deal of love, I think there was a feeling of inferiority on the part of the second group. I know my grandmother (Nancy Francetta Smith Butler) never had feelings like that, let alone treated those people differently. Her feelings were feelings of great love. But I found that this

other family felt inferior and I think it was a great trial to my Grandfather Butler (JLB II) that the family hadn't turned out the way he had hoped. I have known the offspring. They really have been very nice, but they always had this feeling of stepping back. I don't think any of them have distinguished themselves, but they have been good people. Some of the young descendants I've been able to help occasionally. Some of them are very able, very capable.

The two families lived in the same town for a time. Then there was a separation after Grandfather died and the first family moved to Idaho. Eventually the others came up to Idaho too. I guess there was a little separation there. Some went one way and some the other. But I saw all of them in Idaho. I think my mother's family always did everything they could to help them. (Did your mother regard the children of the second wife as her brothers and sisters?) Yes, I think they spoke of them as that in introductions and so forth. But there was never the closeness between the two families that there was in her own family. It used to bother me as a child but I can't say that my mother's family was responsible for that. I don't think they would have gravitated to them in Idaho if they had felt that way. I think they wanted to be near people that they liked. But it was one of the polygamous situations that I didn't feel was too successful.

I think the summer trips in Idaho had a great influence on my life. We would sometimes be late in leaving, because of Father's business, and we would either go up on the train or drove in the car. When we went up on the train we'd go to Gooding, Idaho and one of my uncles would come down from Camas Prairie, pick us up, and we would go up to Camas Prairie. I remember one year we were late. It was almost the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. They always had athletic contests—catching the greased pig, climbing the greased pole for prizes, etc. Also there were foot races, so I ran back of the rig as we drove up to the prairie. By the time the 4<sup>th</sup> of July came along I was so stiff I could hardly walk.

My father bought me a .22 when I was very young and I was allowed to shoot sage hens when that was proper. I'd shoot rabbits because they destroyed crops. The first time I took the gun to Idaho I was five or six years old. Mother was very opposed to it. She said, "That's not nice. It isn't good for a little boy to have a gun and to kill things." She was very opposed to it. Father said, "No, he needs to learn these things. He's unusual." Of course all fathers think that. "Where most boys wouldn't get it till ten, he deserves it at five."

One trip Father said, "now there's a rabbit. Can you see it sitting up on that ridge?" I said, "Yes." "Can you hit it?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You have to raise your sights." I said, "I know. I've tested it." So I raised my sights and shot. Apparently I broke the rabbit's back. Have you ever heard a rabbit cry? I thought my mother would die! That rabbit cried like a baby! She said, "Look what you've done to my boy by letting him do a thing like that." It was a bone of contention between Father and Mother for some time.

When I went to Idaho in the summertime there was always a trip into the mountains and I recall some very interesting trips. We'd go up with young people, teenagers or in their early twenties, unmarried, with several married couples as chaperons. They were very gracious, I think, to take little kids, but we were good camp workers. So they'd take us back into the hills. I remember going to both the Big and Little Smokey where we had to have both pack and saddle horses. My job was to see that there was always plenty of grouse, sage hens and fish. Others would bring in some of the game, but I had to see that there was plenty. I think these uncles of mine were taking advantage of my youth, but I loved the assignment.

I had a lot of fun on these trips. One time all of the young kids went over to some hot springs where years ago gold miners had built a swimming place out of logs and the hot water had preserved them. Then they had made troughs to bring the water into this bath house. The trough that was impregnated with this mineral water had been preserved over the years, but the trough that brought in the cold water had disintegrated. So we ran hot water into this bath house but there was nothing to cool it off. We worked our way an inch at a time into this hot, hot water and played around. It was a deep swimming pool and about ten by ten feet. When we tried to get out we couldn't. We had lost so much energy that we couldn't crawl out. Someone gave me a boost and everybody helped and I got out, but it took me sometime before I was strong enough to pull the others out.

Mother had been counseled at one time to drink a little beer and one of her relatives had a brewery here. So he would send beer up to Mother and she wouldn't let any of us touch it but she would occasionally drink this beer for her health's sake. Then some of this family, who were not active members of the Church, when they came to the house enjoyed tea, so Mother would prepare tea. When I was curious about it she let me taste the tea, but she never let me touch the beer. She didn't attach as much importance to the tea as she did the beer.