

King & Sharon Dalton Courtship and Early Married Life

The following is adapted from Kevin King Dalton – A Biography

A boy is very much a product of the character and attributes possessed by his parents. The way his parents were raised, their struggles and triumphs, their likes and dislikes, and the environment in which they developed, will very much affect the character of their son. Here I hope to show an image of Kevin's parents during their developmental years so that we may better understand the family that he would soon join.

By knowing his parents, it is easy to see from where Kevin came to possess his love of music, knowledge, guns, the outdoors, and athletics; his faith, devotion, trustworthiness, and his mischievous nature which stopped well shy of maliciousness; his creativity, cheerful disposition, etc.

As mentioned before, Kevin's father, King Thurber Dalton was born on December 7, 1938, in Boise, Idaho. His name came from his great-grandfather, Albert King Thurber, and because his mother liked the sound of the initials "KT". His future wife would refer to him as *KT* also. He had one sister, Carolyn who was about 3 years younger.

King and Carolyn had a close relationship growing up and got along well together, especially for a brother and sister. They were good friends. Carolyn described him as a model brother, caring, protective, and good to her. However, King was somewhat of a tease and always had an extremely creative mind for practical jokes. Being a younger sister, Carolyn and at times her friends, were ready targets for this side of King's character. Examples of this include King electrifying her bed with a car battery, wiring a smoke bomb to go off when one of Carolyn's friends (Sharon Brown) started her car, and the time King, out of the blue, decided to put an ice cream cone on Carolyn's nose. Of course, Carolyn was more than able to hold her own with him, as on this last occasion she responded by hitting him with a brick!

King's mischievous nature would be well matched with that of his future wife, Sharon. The prankster in Kevin's father and mother did not end with childhood. April Fools Day in the King and Sharon Dalton family remains to this day a battle of creative genius, with their children at times caught in the crossfire.

As with most *Mormon* boys, King's twelfth birthday was a milestone. He was able to receive the Aaronic Priesthood and be ordained to the office of a Deacon within the church. Within the Dalton family age twelve was also the dividing line between being a child and becoming a young man. As such he would now begin to be treated like a *man*. His mother describes another exciting part of turning twelve and a Dalton tradition that was established.

"... and was now eligible to get a hunting and fishing license. His father had always planned that when his son was twelve he would give him a real gun. When the time came he could not afford to buy one so he gave him the 32 Special which had formerly belonged to King's grandfather, F.W. Dalton, and which Aub his father had had made over. It was a fine, beautiful gun. King was *so thrilled he took the gun to bed with him for several nights*. His father took him to the rifle range and taught him how to shoot." – Helen Thurber Dalton



King T. Dalton at about age 18 with his sister Carolyn

King, like his father before him, became an excellent shot. He spent much time as a youth shooting, hunting rabbits, etc., particularly in the sagebrush plains south of Boise. Later in high school he would compete on the R.O.T.C. Rifle Team and eventually would be a team coach. In the Marine Corps reserves he would qualify as Expert with the M-1 rifle.

In April 1953, the family moved to a 40-acre farm at 6204 Victory Road out on the Boise bench. They bought some cows and began a small dairy operation. King's father was still working for the post office and had to be at work at 6:30am each day. Because of this, King's help in getting the chores done before his father had to leave was critical. He was anxious to do this as his father had offered to give him a \$25 a month salary. This offer had one catch, from that time forward King would have to buy his own clothes, band instrument, car, and anything else he wanted he would have to pay for himself. This was not much of a change for a boy whose heritage had instilled the concept: *If you want it, you find a way to earn the money to buy or do without!* This mantra would be readily passed down to King's children.

To meet his father's work schedule, King and his father would have to get up by 4:00am and sometimes much earlier. Of this experience his mother would write:

"King would finish and wash up the milkers then come in and lay down in front of the radiator and nap for an hour before getting ready for school, but sometimes he didn't get a nap.

We knew this was taxing him almost to the limit, but we needed him, and he was always so good about getting up so early. He never complained once, nor tried to 'renig'. Aub said sometimes he would come out to the barn half awake, but King was always cheerful and got his work done." – Helen Thurber Dalton

He was asked to join the band at Whitney School in Boise where he attended grade school and as his mother puts it, he "*took to the Trumpet like a fish to water*". He played trumpet in the South Junior band and later the West Junior High band where "*he was always first trumpet*". It was at this time that his band leader convinced him to get a cornet, which he finally did at a cost of \$350 that he paid himself with money he earned at \$10 a month. He also played in the Boise High School band and later after intense pleading from the Boise Junior College bandleader he played there as first cornet. He was well known as a fine musician and his interest in music has never ceased.

In Boise at this time, students spent four years in junior high school and only two years at the high school. At age 16 he began attending Boise High School and immediately joined R.O.T.C. Being a Marine's son, R.O.T.C. was in his blood. He loved anything military. He advanced quickly and ultimately held the rank of Major.

He was very meticulous in his dress. This habit lent itself especially well to his love of R.O.T.C. His mother's description of this includes:

"He soon earned awards such as 'best dressed' and how he did spend time polishing shoes, etc. and his uniform had to be just spic and span." – Helen Thurber Dalton

King did well in school when he wanted to, however in high school much of the time the desire was not there. He loved to read and did very well taking tests, therefore school was easy for him, but with little motivation he typically got only slightly above average grades. In regards to this, his mother related:

"He became an avid reader of light novels, mysteries, westerns, science fiction, and adventure. King told several times that sometimes school was boring, and he took to taking novels to school and read, when there was nothing else to do, and he took to reading in classes too much and it irritated teachers and rightly so. One such time, in a class, I guess the teacher decided to teach King a lesson. ... had been explaining a certain thing and King was reading, and at the close, called on King to answer a certain question, and King immediately answered it fully and completely and correctly, and that fact irritated the teacher even more. When we scolded King about these little things, he said, 'Well, I know what it was about, and that is the important thing. Why hand in all that daily work, when I know I could pass the tests!' And that was just about his philosophy toward academic work." – Helen Thurber Dalton

This attitude toward schoolwork changed dramatically with his marriage and the birth of his first son. Realizing that his ability to provide for his family depended on how much he could learn and how fast he could learn it, gave him a great incentive to do well in school. So in college, IRS courses, and the correspondence courses he took he did extremely well, moving quickly, getting virtually straight *A* grades, and was usually at the top of his class.

King was also very athletic. In high school and college he ran cross-country and track. He did very well, received his varsity letter, and won numerous awards. He learned Judo in the Marine Corps reserves. King really enjoyed this and with his Captain and Judo instructor, put on demonstrations of Judo in and around the Boise area.

As a youth, King was generally shy and reserved socially. He had a few good, close friends growing up, but was also very careful about his choice of friends. His standards were firm and he did not care to join with company that even though popular, were doing things that did not meet those standards. At times he was willing to just be the *lone man out* rather than join with a crowd that was doing wrong.

Around girls he was very shy. He was very attractive and girls at church and school liked him, but he was oblivious to this or was just too shy. Dating and dances were definitely not within his comfort zone.

When pressured by his mother he told her that he wouldn't go to dances because he didn't know how to dance. He expressed an interest in learning how to dance so his mother arranged for him to take a course in ballroom dancing, his only problem being that of having to bring a partner. So he enlisted the help of his sister Carolyn, who went reluctantly. King liked this course and learned to dance quite well.

After that he went to dances occasionally, but dating was still out of the question. Then during his senior year in high school, King, as a Major of the R.O.T.C. was required to attend a special military ball and *he had to take a date!*

His mother tried to convince him to ask a girl from church or school, but trying to take the easy way out he worked to convince his sister Carolyn to go with him. He asked her several times, but she was resolute in her refusal, "*it just wouldn't be right!*"

Carolyn ticked off a list of her friends that could be possible dates for him. With each one he'd comment, "*No*" or "*Maybe*". Finally she got down to her best friend, Sharon Brown. He said that he'd go with Sharon, but requested that Carolyn see if she'd be willing to go with him. She talked to Sharon about going to the dance with King, and Sharon told her "*Sure, but he'll have to ask me himself!*"

The rest of this story is best described in the words of his mother:

"A week or two went by, and I reminded King that since this was a formal dance, any date he chose should have time to arrange to get a formal dress if she did not already have one. Still he demurred. Two days before the ball, King said to Carolyn at breakfast; '*Carolyn, will you ask Sharon if she will go with me to the ball? And tell her I will call her tonight!*'"

Carolyn was so excited! She loved King and looked up to him, and she also loved Sharon her buddie. She hoped it would work. It did, and I think Sharon was very gracious in accepting and getting ready on such short notice. Her mother bought her a lovely formal dress. King looked so spick and span in his uniform with special braid on his right shoulder. The Statesman [Boise newspaper] photographer took pictures of King and four others, which was put on front page of the Society news. Well, King must have been attracted to Sharon, for they had dates every now and then."

As mentioned earlier, Sharon Christina Brown was born on February 12, 1941, to Wesley and Ruby Brown. She was born at St. Luke's hospital in downtown Boise.

This adorable little baby girl, the only girl in a family of men, was treated like royalty. Everyone loved her. She had the energy, vibrancy, friendliness, and upbeat nature characteristic of her mother. From the beginning she was always on the go. She also was blessed with the kind and sensitive nature of her mother. These attributes made it easy for her to make and keep

friendships. Making friends was always important to her. She readily became endearing to all with whom she came in contact. To this day you can see brightness come into the eyes of family, friends, and acquaintances when they see her again after any length of separation. Kevin would receive his friendly and cheery disposition from her.

At the Brown home in south Boise, Sharon was particularly adored by her “big” brothers Fon (age 12) and Roy (age 9), and some close neighbor friends of the family who were Basque, named Lizaso. In fact, one of Sharon’s first friends was little Pete Lizaso.

When Sharon was not quite two years old her brother Richard was born. She would call him *Richie* and thought he was wonderful. The two would be good friends and very close growing up.

In the mid 1940’s the family moved to Stayton, Oregon where they bought and operated the Fisher Dairy. Sharon’s Uncle Lowell Brown and his family were already living there and she had a wonderful time playing with her cousins and taking little trips with them.

The family only lived in Oregon for a couple of years before moving back to Boise where they rented a farm out on Franklin Road. Here Sharon first started school. She only attended the Franklin School in Boise for a month and a half before the family moved to Grangeville, Idaho where her father had bought another dairy in the fall of 1947.

Actually the dairy and family home were located in Mt. Idaho which was a little town a couple of miles from Grangeville. Here Sharon began attending the little Mt. Idaho School. This was a little one-room building with eight grades and 28 students, a couple of whom were in their late teens and of a fairly rough character.

Grangeville was a logging and farming community on the edge of the vast central Idaho wilderness. At times it was a bit wild. But Sharon enjoyed it there and would carry fond memories of her childhood home.

Sharon’s father had to sell the dairy in Mt. Idaho because they couldn’t hire the help they needed to run it and the family moved into a house in Grangeville. Wesley got a job driving the mail/freight truck from Grangeville to New Meadows about 70 miles to the south. Sharon loved to ride along with her father as he picked up the mail from each house on the way down to New Meadows. It was held in a mailbag attached to a post in front of each house along the highway. He’d snatch this bag, as he’d drive by at about 55 miles per hour. On the way back he’d deliver the mail by throwing the mailbag out of the truck window and into open 55-gallon drums the people used for mailboxes. This he’d also do while driving by at about 55 miles per hour. Sharon used to love to watch him do it and was amazed that he seemingly never missed!

At the time, the closest LDS church was in Lewiston, Idaho. The church and raising his family in the church had become very important to Wesley, but the distance to Lewiston was a definite problem. Of this he stated:

“Lewiston was about 82 miles from Grangeville and that was where the nearest church was when we moved to Grangeville. We couldn’t milk, deliver the milk and get to Sunday School by ten o’clock. So Ruby wrote to Salt Lake to see if there was a church closer. ... The mission president of the Northwestern States Mission wrote to us and said if we could search the town and see if there were any other members of the church there, he’d send a couple of missionaries to help us organize the Sunday School. We put an ad in the local paper and said that there would be a Sunday School held at a certain time for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and everyone was invited. The first Sunday we had seventeen members. They came out of the bushes. [They eventually found a number of families who were members.] ... We had the missionaries assigned to Grangeville and they lived in our home on the farm for a while. A little later we were made a branch and I was branch president and a counselor to the branch president until we left and moved back to Boise.” – Wesley Brown

A decade later Grangeville would be a ward and would have a fine church building. It was in this little town that Sharon’s older brothers, Fon and Roy would meet their wives.

At age eight, Sharon was able to take a very special trip to Salt Lake City with her family. While on this trip she was baptized a member of the church by her father in the historic Salt Lake Tabernacle font.

They moved back to Boise where Sharon attended Franklin School again for fourth & fifth grades while the family lived in a house on Denton Street. A couple of years later they moved to another house with a small acreage out on Ustick Road. Here Sharon attended Cole School during her sixth grade. The next year they moved again to a 160-acre farm out on Boise's second bench where they had 120 head of dairy cattle. Here Sharon attended the new West Junior High School as she began seventh grade.

At this time they were living in the Boise Eighth Ward of the church, the same ward as the Daltons. Sharon's father was a counselor in the bishopric.

By this time Sharon had developed a love for music. She was quickly becoming a talented pianist and played clarinet in the school band. She studied hard and did well in school, except that she talked too much. She was a cheerleader and participated in school plays. Her friendly disposition made her popular in school and church. She attended dances regularly and was invited out "a lot".

Sharon had a special group of about 12 girl friends during her teenage years. They had named their group of friends the "Buddies". Within this group Sharon had a "very dear buddy, Carolyn Dalton". The two were and would remain very close friends. With this in mind, it isn't surprising to find Sharon Brown's name on Carolyn's list of possible dates for her big brother's important R.O.T.C. ball.

The R.O.T.C. ball was a turning point in the lives of both King and Sharon. A few months after this they would be dating regularly. King graduated from high school and began attending Boise Junior College, but his relationship with Sharon continued to grow. By Christmas 1957, it was apparent to all that their relationship was getting very serious. This caused considerable concern with King's mother. She thought a lot of Sharon but she was just 16 years old and her boy was barely 19. "They are just so young!"

Little did King's mother know how serious things really had become, because after a formal dance that Christmas night he asked Sharon to marry him and she accepted. However, he didn't announce their engagement for a few months because it took him that long to earn and save the money needed to buy Sharon the special ring they had picked out together. By the time of Sharon's Junior Prom they were ready to make their engagement official. Before the dance King brought his girlfriend back to his house to show his parents her finger with a beautiful diamond ring on it. Later at the dance they made quite a sensation with the news.

At this time King had decided that he wanted to be a farmer. With his father now retired from his position with the post office, the two decided to go into farming together. So in June 1958, they traded their property in Boise for a 160-acre farm at Parma, Idaho.

Initially King and Sharon had planned to get married the following December, however on this farm at Parma was a little house about a half mile away from the main farmhouse. With this little house available to them, they decided to move up their wedding plans.

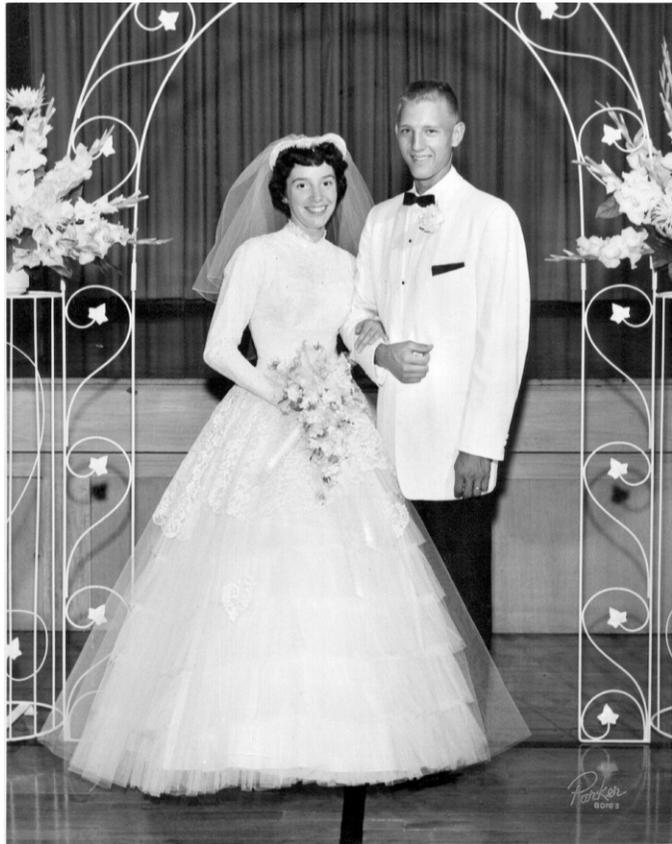
Sharon would often tell her children that when King asked her to marry him, she responded with the question; "Where?" She would say: "I figured that if he didn't love me enough to marry me in the temple, that I didn't want to be married to him!"



Sharon Brown – Age 8

King's response to this question was correct and on Wednesday, August 20, 1958, they were married and sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.

Two days later, a lovely reception was held for them in the Boise Eighth Ward church building. After this they went on their honeymoon, which consisted of several days of camping in the mountains of Idaho. They had told no one where they were going, however they soon ran into Sharon's older brothers Fon and Roy and their families who went camping in the same area. This is why many of King and Sharon's honeymoon pictures include photos of them with Sharon's young nieces and nephews. They did have a wonderful time together and were lucky to have found them as King and Sharon's car broke down, which would have left them stranded in the Idaho wilderness.



King & Sharon Dalton at their wedding reception

After the events surrounding their wedding, life as a new family began for them in a tiny white house on one end of their farm in Parma. In the beginning they had very, very little. As Sharon would put it; *"We didn't have enough money to be poor!"*

They did have the hopes, dreams, and enthusiasm of newlyweds and Sharon excitedly went to work making this little house their home. With the help of her mother and friends, they actually made it look kind of nice inside. However, it had no bathroom or hot water, and had a beehive inhabiting one wall. They did have an outhouse but it was a little ways out into the field. Sharon describes this as such:

"It had an outhouse with two sides. [A men's and women's outhouse?] No, no, *two sides!* The other two were open! If somebody was in the field doing any work, you didn't go!"

Financially things did not go well on the farm in Parma. King and his father were going through a lot of anxiety, with both crop problems and mistakes in the business of farming. King quickly realized that he was lacking in business experience and that even in farming, if he didn't gain at least a basic understanding of business, he would always be subject to potentially costly mistakes.

He also wanted to broaden his knowledge to include business and other aspects of life so he could be comfortable and not embarrassed when speaking with others. So he decided to change his direction in college and emphasize business. He also took a LaSalle extension course in business



King & Sharon Dalton's first house at Parma, Idaho

and law. At the time he commented to his mother:

“I don’t want farming to be all I know. I want to learn enough about business so that I will never again get in such a mess.”

With the incentive of needing to support a wife with a baby on the way, King’s schoolwork became exceptional.

As they began attending their new ward in Parma, King and Sharon quickly became involved in church assignments. King worked with the Boy Scouts and Sharon served as organist and with the Young Women’s Volleyball team. They also quickly made friends with several other young married couples.

With their financial misfortunes, soon they had to sell the half of the farm with the little white house, and King and Sharon moved into a room at one corner of the dairy barn. Sharon’s description of this home includes the following:

“We split it [the room at the corner of the barn] into two pieces with a curtain of muslin in the middle. We had a bedroom and a front room!

There was hot water in the barn, not where we were. There was no water where we were. You had to go in where they milked the cows, there was hot water in there. There was an outhouse around the other side [of the barn], you went down to the house [were King’s parents lived] and took your showers and all that kind of stuff.”



King Dalton with his 10-day-old son Kevin

So it was in the corner of this barn, that their son Kevin would find his first home here on earth!

Kevin always enjoyed the distinction of being the only one of his brothers and sisters to have been born in Oregon. Of course, he was also the only one who lived in a barn! But that was rarely brought up.

About eight miles from Parma, across the Snake River which forms the Idaho-Oregon border, sits the town of Nyssa. Nyssa’s Malheur Memorial was very small, however being the closest hospital in the area it would be Kevin’s birthplace.

And so it was late on a Friday morning that about 16 hours of labor would begin for Sharon as she gave birth to her first child. Or would it be *children*? During her last visit, Sharon’s doctor, Grant B. Hughes, had told her, “*I wouldn’t be surprised if you had twins.*” Now with the baby coming about two weeks early, that comment added significantly to the anxiety and excitement of the moment at hand.

That afternoon Sharon and King drove over to the hospital in Nyssa. Later when a mother is in labor or giving birth, fathers and even whole families are allowed in the room with her and often participate in the process. Fathers are allowed to be right there to witness the birth of their children and lend support and comfort to their wives. However at the time of Kevin’s birth the hospital experience was totally different. Sharon describes it this way:

“Now in those days, the dad’s didn’t come in [to the labor or delivery rooms of the hospital], he chucked me in and that’s the last time he saw me.”

(King comments: “*He just sat around!*”)

“Just sat around, dazed, waiting all those hours! And no one is supposed to come in. So I’m in there and there were four or five beds in the labor room, we were just all chucked on top of each other. Anyway I’m in there and all at once in through the door came my mother! She just came in!

I said, ‘mother how’d you get in here?’ She said, ‘I just walked in, you know if you act like you know what you’re doing they don’t bother you.’ *She came right in!* She stayed in there really for about an hour. They finally threw her out. They threw her out when they took me into the delivery room. She had to go out in the hall with everybody else who wasn’t gutsy enough to just walk right in.”

The night of Kevin's birth was already an event scheduled on the calendars of many of the women in Sharon's church ward, as they had planned a shower (expectant mother party) for her that night. They expected that this shower would be a couple of weeks before the baby's birth. Unfortunately, the new mother wouldn't even be able to attend. Sharon remarked:

"So [this shower] was suppose to be for the night I was in labor with him. So Grandpa and Grandma Brown, and Grandpa and Grandma Dalton went over and opened presents, had the baby shower and had such a good time [without us]! Then after they got all that taken care of, they came over to the hospital. As Grandma and Grandpa Brown were coming over, a cow came down off the side of the side hill and ran right in front of them and they hit it and killed it. It went up over the car, just really, really ruined the front of their [new] red car."

So after a rather eventful night for his new family, Kevin came to earth the next morning, Saturday the 16th of May 1959, at 1:54am. Kevin's physical appearance throughout his life was that of a tall slender build, with brown eyes, and blond hair during his childhood and youth which turned brown as he reached adulthood. Those who knew this Kevin might be a little surprised at the description given by his mother of her new firstborn son.

"He was a little cute blond [his skin color]. He was so short and so *fat*. He was 19 ½ inches long, that's all! The shortest kid I had. He was 8lbs 2ozs. ... Just had this little blond cute face, he was a pretty baby. Some baby's are not real cute, but he was a really pretty baby with dark hair and dark eyes."

After a four-day stay in the little hospital in Nyssa, Sharon and Kevin were able to return home to the little room in the corner of the dairy barn.

Babies within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are given a blessing by virtue of priesthood authority and a record of their name is made. Kevin was so blessed on July 5, 1959, in the Parma Ward building. King was privileged to perform the ordinance. It was the first of many priesthood ordinances that King would perform for his children. At this time Kevin had an additional honor that none of his other siblings would have. He was blessed wearing the special gown made by his third great-grandmother, Ann Shepherd Miller and used especially as a blessing gown by his ancestors within the church.

In late August that year, Kevin and his family moved from the barn and into the *basement house* on the farm in Parma. His grandparents and Aunt Carolyn, who were living in that house, rented another little house a couple of blocks away.

At this time Sharon had still not graduated from high school. She was married just after her junior year, but only needed about three credits to graduate. After her marriage she started school in Parma, but with her pregnancy with Kevin and the fact that Parma High School would not allow her to take only the credits that she needed



At left: Kevin with his mother on July 5, 1959 the day he was blessed in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Parma Ward).

At right: The special robe Kevin was blessed in. Kevin's third great-grandmother Ann Shepherd Miller made this all by hand in about the year 1842 while living in Southampton, Hampshire, England. Her daughter and Kevin's second great-grandmother Alice Ophelia Miller Dalton was blessed in it. Kevin's grandfather Audubon Mathias Dalton and great-grandfather Fredrick William Dalton where also blessed in it.

but required that she attend full days for the full year, she had to give it up. Now with Kevin born, and King driving to Boise Junior College each day, she decided to finish at the new Borah High School in Boise. Here she could go to school for just a half-day for half of the school year in order to get the remaining credits that she needed to graduate.

With the school year now starting, a typical day for the Dalton family would proceed as follows:

King would get up at about 3:00am and milk the cows and do other chores. He'd load the full milk cans in the back of an old Ford pick-up they had and after breakfast, he, Sharon, and Kevin would begin their 45-mile trip to Boise.

On the way they would stop in Caldwell and deliver the milk to a dairy there. By hauling their own milk they were able to save the money they would have had to pay to have it hauled. This saved money they were then able to draw from the partnership and use it to pay for the gas to go to and from Boise and for a few groceries.

Once in Boise, King went to the college, Sharon to high school, and Kevin was left with his Grandpa and Grandma Brown who would tend him each day while his parents were in school.

After King's last class he would pick up his wife and baby son, and travel back to Parma where he would milk the cows again and do other afternoon chores with his father.

Most evenings they would go to the church building where they would meet and socialize with about six other couples with young families. The men played basketball, the wives socialized perhaps enjoying a treat someone had brought, and the kids played or were just admired by their young parents. None of these young families had any money, but had a good time enjoying each other's company.

The basketball games would often go until midnight, after which King would go home and go to bed, just to start the daily routine again in a few hours.

Of course after a consistent routine of late nights and early mornings, King was very tired during the day. This caused a particular dilemma as during his drive to Boise each morning he would regularly fall asleep. Of course being young students, who weren't wise enough to go to bed at a reasonable hour in the first place, their solution to this problem left a lot to be desired. Instead of just switching drivers, King would drive while asleep and Sharon would steer the pick-up down the highway from the right seat (Kevin was between the two).

Fortunately this routine was put to an end when one morning a policeman saw this truck driving by him. Inside, he saw the driver with his head leaning against the window sound asleep! He quickly pulled him over and asked him why and just as importantly, *how* he was driving while asleep! After getting their somewhat incredulous explanation he let them off with a kind but stern warning, "*Next time you're tired let her drive!*"

By the time of Kevin's first Christmas he was making the transition from baby to toddler. He was fun for all those around him, doing cute things, with everything in the world new to him. Of course, Christmas with its bright lights, tinsel, and decorations was especially exciting, not only for him, but for his young parents who were able to enjoy the Christmas excitement in a way that only a young child can bring for the first time. Of this his mother remarked:

"That first little Christmas he was just adorable. He was so excited. We had absolutely nothing. I think I spent \$5 on cute little clothes and that's all he got. But he thought the tree was so gorgeous, he'd just squeal! He wasn't real big, about eight months. He walked when he was nine months and he was almost walking [at Christmas time]. But that Christmas was real fun, he really, really was cute.

We lived in the basement of that house [on the farm in Parma] that first Christmas. Carolyn and David just thought he was so cute. David had given her [Carolyn] a big huge dog [stuffed dog] and they'd put Kevin on it and ride him around on this dog, we thought that was so cute. They were dating at that time and they were having a really good time, they were both in high school still."

At nine months Kevin reached another milestone in his young life. Time for his first haircut. His hair had grown to a shaggy inch or two in length, which was *way to long* for his Grandpa Brown who was ever vigilant in making sure that his male posterity looked like men and would use the term "*He looks like a girl!*" anytime one of Kevin's hairs would grow long enough to actually comb. Of course, Grandpa Brown was the designated hair cutter in Kevin's family,

having gained this qualification by having sheared a sheep once. Anyway, Kevin having little concern for his appearance at this time, readily submitted to the haircutting by his beloved Grandpa Brown.

The financial situation on the farm in Parma continued to deteriorate and by early spring 1960 it became clear to King that there was no way that both his family and his father's family were going to be able to make it on the farm. At this time he decided formally to pursue a career in business. He had the examples of both his Uncles, Waldo and Milton Thurber who were Certified Public Accountants, as well as that of his late Uncle Erin Thurber and Sharon's brother Roy Brown who were also CPA's. With the accounting examples within his extended family, his pursuits naturally took a course in that direction.

With the farm's failure he had to look for other work. The drive from Parma to Boise each day was also becoming a difficulty. The solution to both of these problems came when Kevin's grandfather, Wesley Brown, needed help on his farm and dairy just outside of Boise and offered King a job milking. So in late April 1960, Kevin and his family moved to Boise and lived with his grandparents Brown.

Kevin's Grandpa Dalton continued with the farm in Parma and milked the few cows that were left. Shortly they left that farm and after a couple of trades ended up with two houses on Menlo Drive in Boise. It was this property that Kevin would remember as he visited his Grandpa and Grandma Dalton in Boise during his childhood.

Kevin enjoyed living with his grandparents in Boise. There was a tire swing in back, a little wading pool that he could "swim" in, and he loved to explore the garden and plants around this house with his grandmother. Having been able to walk for a few months now, he loved to be outside exploring and spring was a wonderful time of year to be out there. And now learning to speak, he was able to describe what he saw.

It would be impossible to envision a more adorable little boy than Kevin as he reached his first birthday on May 16th, 1960. A toddler running about, saying newly learned little words, and surrounded by loved ones. Was he spoiled? Of course! But not by material things, by affection.

In June of that year, Kevin had an opportunity that few children have. He was able to attend his mother's high school graduation. Sharon Dalton graduated from Borah High School in Boise. At the time Kevin was 13 months old and Sharon was four months pregnant with her second child.

King finished his second year at Boise Junior College and in July he got a job with the Internal Revenue Service in the collection division in Boise. He immediately requested a transfer to Pocatello, Idaho, or Moscow, Idaho, the locations of Idaho's only universities. He couldn't afford out of state tuition so these were his only choices if he was to attend a four-year college. They agreed to send him to Pocatello, the location of Idaho State University. However this transfer wouldn't take place until January 1961.

In the meantime, King was required to attend a two-month long IRS school in Seattle. So in August 1960 they packed up and moved to Seattle. Here's Sharon's description of that time:

"When we went to Seattle Kevin was 15 months old and we went clear to Seattle in a little Volkswagen [beetle] with everything we owned. We had his baby bed, stroller, our clothes, our high chair, and a potty-chair, in this Volkswagen and it was full, so Kevin was like he was on the roof shelf.

[This was in the days before seat belts, etc., were an issue.



Kevin with his mother, Sharon Dalton at the time of her high school graduation (June 1960).

What she is describing is the little gap of space between all the stuff they had packed into this Volkswagen bug and the ceiling, where Kevin rode on this 450-mile trip from Boise to Seattle.]

You know that baby never cried, he was so good! He just rode up on that little shelf up there and I guess he could see out. Those were the days before seat belts, so we just put him up there on his mattress on his bed.

When we got into Seattle, we weren't smart enough I guess and our parents didn't help us out with that, we had no place to go. We hadn't gotten a place to [stay]. We were from Idaho! We figured you just went, found an apartment, and you rented the sucker, right! No one would take children! No one in Seattle would rent to somebody with kids! So for the first couple weeks we stayed in cheap motels. And these people ... weren't real happy about having Kevin, they'd say *'If he breaks anything you have to be sure it gets fixed!'* Kevin never broke anything, he was very easy to have. He was good.

[King] was going to school and Kevin and I would drive around in this Volkswagen trying to find anything that would take a child. We finally did find a little one-room thing with a kitchen-front room-bedroom-bathroom thing. [It was] maybe 500 square feet, just teeny. They would take a child.

Poor old Key, he was born a really good child. Thank goodness, because he had a couple of green dummies for parents. You know we'd take him to Sacramento meeting, I don't ever remember really taking him out. He just was good! He's now a little 16 month old with all that energy, a little toddler. He was already pretty much potty trained. He talked very well, very early. He'd just say a lot of things, big words and sentences by the time he was 16 months.

This little house had an alley that ran down the back of it and it was really a busy alley and then this main street right in front of it. It was maybe 10 yards between the front and the back [the street and this alley], no fenced in yard, and then the next one, there were a group of little [bungalows], there was about 16 feet between it and the next one. That was his play yard, that little 16 feet with an alley in back and the street in front, and I told him *'You can not go in that road, you have to stay away from that road!'* You know he never did go towards either thing [street or alley], this was all dirt, and he'd play in that dirt with his cars and things. I wouldn't go off where I couldn't see him real close. He was amazing because he would play right there!"

While in Seattle, this new little family loved to visit a large park nearby called Woodland Park. This park had big pine trees and a lake with ducks, and Kevin just loved that. He loved to go over there to run around, "*climb*" trees or rocks, and "*shoot*" the ducks. He'd always find a stick and spend hours just running around pushing his stick on the ground like a little car or popping toy. College students would jog around the lake and Kevin loved to sit and watch them run. Kevin and his mother spent a lot of time in this park, passing the time while his father was in school.

King was a very quick study, a fast reader, and very motivated when given the opportunity to work at his own pace. He was able to complete courses that were intended to be taken over a period of months or years in a matter of weeks. The combination of these qualities and skills enabled him to move ahead very quickly in his employment with the IRS. This is shown in his description of his time in Seattle.

"I lived in Boise and was waiting for the class [in Seattle] and while I was waiting they had some free correspondence courses they would give you and when you finished them they [the IRS] would accept them as a college degree. So I waited for a couple of weeks, maybe three weeks before the class in Seattle started that I had to go to, so I got those correspondence courses and decided to work on them. Then I went to Seattle and took Kevin, of course. The way they had the course set up they would give you a reading assignment ... everybody in the class had the same length of time, then they would have a discussion for a half hour or so after your reading assignment. So the whole class would start just reading the text. What would take the rest of the class an hour to read, I'd do in fifteen minutes, so I'd read the assignment and then I'd [use the rest of the time to] work on my correspondence course. ... At the end of the 6 weeks I had all of those [correspondence] courses done and they [the IRS] accepted them as the equivalent of a degree. So I immediately applied for a job as an Internal Revenue agent which was a step up [from the collections job for which he had just been hired]. They transferred us down to Pocatello so I could go to school. I worked in collections there until the thing came through as a revenue agent."



Kevin (16 months) with his father at Green Lake in Seattle

With the IRS school completed the family moved back to Boise in the fall of 1960. Briefly they lived with Kevin's Grandpa and Grandma Brown again at Route #4, before moving into a little red house next door. However, they knew all of this was only temporary as they were expecting King's transfer to Pocatello and the start of school in a few months.

At this time another major change came into Kevin's young life. On November 15th, 1960, Kevin's first little brother, Craig was born. Kevin was excited to have a baby brother and loved him, too much at times. However, accompanying this new brother would also be a division of the attention that Kevin had enjoyed alone. As would be the case with virtually any toddler in Kevin's situation, he had a period of adjustment. His mother describes:

"Kevin was always pretty good-natured. Actually the only time I ever knew him to have any temper particularly was when we lived in the little house by Mother and Dad and [Craig was] a little baby and he [Kevin] got a little jealous. He had Grandma and Grandpa Brown's attention, he'd been the center of their [attention], they tended him while I went to school and then we lived next door to them and had lived with them, and ... he had all of their attention. The other grandkids were somewhat older so he was it, he was the cute little grandkid! And then [Craig] came along, so for a few months actually he had what I called crying fits, he'd get so upset with whatever didn't please him at that point that he'd cry and cry and cry until he absolutely couldn't quit. So we took him to a doctor and he said '*boy, you can solve that! Just take a cup of cold water and throw it in his face and he'll stop!*' Boy he did! He only did it twice after that. It was kind of a temper tantrum. There was nothing wrong with him."

Aside from this little adjustment, Kevin enjoyed having a new baby brother. This enjoyment would grow as his little brother would grow and begin to be able to do things. When other friends and playmates were gone, this one would always be there. Here was someone to play with. In Kevin's world of big people and adults, here was *his* subordinate. Here was someone to whom *he* could teach his vast childhood wisdom. Here was someone he could protect and love. In short order, the person paying the most attention to Craig would not be the grandparents or even his parents, it would be Kevin!

The above quote from Sharon gives us an insight into the disciplinary practices of the family. King and Sharon were loving and for the most part gentle in their dealings with their children, however depending on the stage in a given child's development and the misbehavior involved, corporal punishment was used when deemed appropriate. For a young child with limited ability to reason, a spanking was the common punishment or perhaps sitting on a chair in the corner. Older children would be subject to removal of privileges or perhaps a fine. Encouragement was used as often as the threat of punishment. However the term "*No!*" was common in the Dalton home. The best description of discipline in the Dalton household would be practical and common sense. The home was filled with a feeling of love, however, you did what you were told and that without argument.

Truly the greatest deterrent against misbehavior for Kevin as he grew was simply the desire to please his parents. Their approval of him and his actions was always important. In his later teenage years this desire would be augmented by his testimony of the gospel, his conviction to do what he believed was right, and a sensitive conscience.

Christmas that year was particularly exciting. With King's job at the IRS the family's financial situation was improving. They would still have several years as a struggling college student family but compared to their situation on the farm in Parma things were definitely improved. Kevin was at a fun age to be given fun things, and now with a little bit of money his parents were able to give him some wonderful gifts. Among the gifts he received that year was a yellow rocking horse with a large wooden head and a small tricycle. Kevin loved these toys and would later pass them down to his younger brothers and sisters, as they would last many years.

Adding to the family's excitement of that Christmas was the recent birth of Kevin's new brother, the marriage proposal of his soon to be Uncle, David Trost to his Aunt Carolyn, and the fact that the family would be moving across the state to Pocatello in a few days.

About the 1st of January 1961, the family moved to Pocatello. Instead of the Volkswagen they now had an old Plymouth that looked like it had been hand painted green. They rented a little house at 657 South 3rd in downtown Pocatello. This was right by the railroad tracks, with the college about three blocks away.

They would only live in this home for about three months. As part of King's new position as a revenue agent, the IRS sent him to a 13-week training school in Phoenix, Arizona.

On March 18, 1961, Kevin watched with his mother as his dad left from Boise airport for Phoenix. While King was in Phoenix, Sharon and the two boys lived with her parents in Boise. During this time Sharon worked helping to prepare for her best friend's wedding. On April 12, 1961, Carolyn Dalton married David Trost in the Salt Lake Temple. Sharon helped with the reception, took pictures, and served as matron of honor. They had a wonderful wedding, but Sharon missed having "*her best man*", as King couldn't be there due to his school in Phoenix.

One very welcome benefit the family received from the IRS schools in Seattle and Phoenix was the fact that in addition to King's normal salary they were paid a per diem living expense allowance. Having lived on virtually nothing since the beginning of their married life, King and Sharon made sure that they lived on about half of this per diem stipend. The remainder they saved and eventually would have enough for the down payment on the first house they would own together.

At this time, King did very well scholastically. The days of just *sliding* through high school had definitely passed. Now with his growing family he was motivated to get ahead and doing well with his studies was becoming habitual. This class in Phoenix was no exception. King was the only attendee who was not a college graduate, but received the top grade in the class and thoroughly impressed his instructors.

Towards the end of King's stay in Phoenix, Sharon drove down and stayed the last three weeks with him. During this time, Kevin and Craig, although missing their parents, had an enjoyable time staying alternately with both sets of grandparents. Soon after King and Sharon's return from Phoenix the family moved back to Pocatello where they would stay for the next 2 ½ years. They rented the basement portion of a house at 594 Richland. The owner of the house, Mrs. Mary Green, lived upstairs.

While in Pocatello, King worked during the day as a revenue agent with the IRS and went to school at night at Idaho State University. King also served as financial clerk in their church ward. Because of his busy schedule there was little time for other activities.

Trips to the park and playground with his mother and little brother were common for Kevin. On occasion the family had outings in the hills near Pocatello and they took a trip in late August 1961, to Yellowstone with Uncle David and Aunt Carolyn Trost. But most of Kevin's time was spent playing



Kevin (22 months) & his mom watching his dad fly out of Boise airport for Phoenix



Craig & Kevin (2 ½ years) being held by Grandma & Grandpa Brown just before they left on their mission to New York.

inside or in the backyard with his little brother.

About this time Kevin's beloved Grandpa and Grandma Brown were called to serve a mission for the church. They were assigned to the Eastern States Mission and worked in upstate New York. They would be gone almost three years working in the town of Oneida and later at the church historical sites around Palmyra, New York. They had many wonderful experiences and memories of their mission were very dear to them, but to two little boys and especially Kevin, their leaving was almost tragic. They spoke of how when they left after saying goodbye to Sharon and her family all they could remember seeing was two little boys crying at the window.

One thing worth mentioning about Christmas 1961 is the making of special Christmas stockings for Kevin and Craig by their mother. These stockings were made of flannel with flannel letters sewn on to form the names of the children. Each was decorated with little flannel figurines of clowns, balls, etc., which were also painstakingly sewn on. This started one of the family's Christmas traditions as Sharon would make a similar stocking for each child, grandchild, and in-law that would come into the family. The stockings would be hung each Christmas in the Dalton home, usually over the fireplace, and filled with goodies from Santa. This would continue for the rest of Kevin's life, even after he was grown, married, and living almost a thousand miles from his mother. Sharon would mail all of the filled stockings to her grown children and grandchildren who no longer lived nearby. They would enjoy the stockings and goodies for a while and mail the empty stockings back to Sharon sometime before the next Christmas when the process would begin again.

About the 4th of July 1962, King and Sharon bought their first house and moved a few blocks away to 3445 McKinley. This was a cute little brick house and the family was very excited to move there even though they had almost nothing with which to furnish the house. For example, all they could afford to put in the living room was an old black & white television set, Kevin's little rocking chair, a rug, and a couple of boxes to sit on.

Another tradition established early in the King & Sharon Dalton family was Easter clothes and pictures. Each year for Easter the children would be given new Sunday clothes. Then before church, while they were still clean and neat they would pose while their



Craig & Kevin (right) on Christmas Eve 1961 – notice Kevin's stocking hanging on the cabinet to his left.



Kevin 3 years old



Craig & Kevin – Easter 1963

Often their clothes, including Easter outfits were made by their mother, as is the case with the outfits they are wearing on the right, which were made by Sharon out of their father and grandfather's old shirts.

father took pictures of each of them. Kevin's Grandma Dalton was an early amateur photographer, developing her own black and white photographs, etc. King greatly expanded on this hobby and at times would work as a professional photographer. It is probably due to this interest that there are so many early photographs of Kevin available. King loved to take pictures and his children were ready subjects, especially Kevin with his big, bright, brown eyes, and cute, chubby-cheeked smile.

By spring 1963, King was nearing the end of his schooling at Idaho State University. He studied hard and the family prayed a lot for him to be able to pass his CPA exam. Although he had always been extremely good at taking tests he was not taking this one lightly. This test consists of sections that may be passed individually. Most applicants take the exam several times until they have passed all the sections, very, very few pass the entire exam at one time. On May 15th King began taking the 3-day exam. By August he received the results, he had passed the entire National Certified Public Accountant exam!

At this time, King's Uncle, Milton Thurber, asked if he would be interested in coming to California to work for him in his CPA firm. By this time King had been doing quite well working for the IRS so the change would only result in a slight increase in pay, but it would give him an opportunity to buy into a partnership in the firm. On top of that he would be working with his *Uncle Milt*, a man who he admired and respected very much.

That summer of 1963, Kevin rode with his father and Grandpa and Grandma Dalton as they drove down to Ontario, California to visit with Uncle Milt, see the area, and decide whether or not to take up the offer. This was the first time that Kevin would see Southern California. Sharon didn't go on this trip because she was expecting another baby shortly. Craig didn't go either.

King told Milt that he would take the job, but that he couldn't move to California until the beginning of the next January, because he still had a few credits remaining before he could get his degree.

With the deal set and plans to move to California in place, they began to worry about being able to sell their house in Pocatello because "*nothing was selling*". Before listing it with a realtor, Sharon put a *For Sale* sign in the front window to see if they would get any interest. Immediately two interested parties stopped to inquire and one of these bought it and wanted to move in right away. By August 7th the family had to move into an apartment because they still had five more months before King would be through with school in Pocatello.

With all of these changes in their lives, King and Sharon's third child and first daughter, Shauna, was born on August 24, 1963, in Pocatello, Idaho.

It was in December 1963, that the Daltons were finally ready to begin their move to California. First, Sharon and little Shauna went by bus to Ontario and lived with Uncle Milt and his wife Madge. The intent was to find a place to live before King came down with the two boys and their household belongings.

She found a nice apartment (781 Wedgewood Court, Apt. A) in a little town just north of Ontario named Upland. The small apartment complex where they would live was located on the southwest corner of 11th Street and Mountain Avenue.

King and the boys moved down during Christmas break at Idaho State University. This move was horrific for King. He rented a U-haul trailer and attached it via a rented bumper hitch to the blue Ford Thunderbird he had bought previously from Sharon's brother Roy. With the help of Kevin's Grandpa and Grandma Dalton, who had come from Boise to help with the



Kevin (4 ½ years) with
"Baby Shauna" (6 weeks)

move, the trailer and car were both loaded to the extreme. This caused the first problem during their journey to California when a few miles out of Pocatello at a weigh station King was informed that his trailer was 1400 lbs. overweight. After about a half-hour of King's polite persuading they were allowed to go on. The next problem was a flat tire on the trailer, which King changed at the weigh station. Then as they finally left the Pocatello area it was snowing.

King's parents followed along behind in their car as far as Salt Lake City, Utah where they all stopped to stay the night with Carolyn and David Trost who were living there at the time. King decided to unload part of the overweight trailer and leave it at his sister's house to be picked up on another trip. Being worried about getting caught in a snowstorm headed through southern Utah, he decided to leave about 7pm, instead of spending the night in Salt Lake as originally planned. His parents remained at their daughter's home and King with his two little boys, Kevin and Craig, started off in their little blue Thunderbird and U-haul trailer. It would take them 20 hours to make the typically 12 hour drive from Salt Lake to Ontario. King would speak of this trip often with a certain dread in his voice, this following comment being typical:

"Pulling that trailer was really slow, car ping as we went up the hills. We got caught late at night in a snowstorm over the Beaver summit (in southern Utah) about midnight with Craig and Kevin. We just barely made it up. ... [I] stepped on the gas and the wheels kind of cut down through the snow and ice and hit the pavement and kind of jerked forward, kept doing that until we finally slid over the top. That was a miserable trip!"

The family was now ready to begin a new life, in a new home, just in time for Christmas. Christmas that year wasn't much, a little scraggly tree, an apartment half-unpacked, and exhausted parents. But the family was filled with the excitement of their new home. On top of that, it was winter, and yet it was still warm outside! Something definitely new for a little family from Idaho!

The first week in January King returned to Pocatello to finish his last two weeks at Idaho State University. In route he left Sharon and the kids in Salt Lake City, Utah to stay with and visit Kevin's Uncle Roy Brown and Aunt Carolyn Trost and their families who were living in the area at the time. In mid-January with King's schooling complete the family would return to Upland which would be their home for a long, long time.

Upland in the early 1960's was composed almost entirely of citrus orchards. During Kevin's childhood he would watch as these lemon groves were replaced by tract homes. By the time Kevin would go to high school the citrus orchards would essentially be gone, and the population of Upland would be quadrupled.

At this time Upland was a quiet, safe town, with little noticeable crime and few worries. Kevin's days were filled with having lemon fights with his little brother and friends in the lemon groves across the street from the apartments where he lived, building little forts, playing *hide-n-seek*, and a multitude of other boyhood games. The lemon fights consisted of simply grabbing lemons and just throwing them at each other, trying to hit each other with lemons, kind of like war, but with lemons instead of guns.

There was also a vacant lot to the southeast of the apartments where there were a number of abandoned cars, this was near the parking lot of the old *Michael's* grocery store that used to be there. Kevin would spend numerous hours in those vacant cars with his little brother and friends, playing different imaginary games, having make believe races, and other activities typical of a five year old boy.

The kids would also regularly walk down to the *Stop-n-Go* market (a convenience store) just across from that Michael's parking lot. It was a regular occurrence for them to walk over and get *Icees*, which was a type of slushy frozen drink popular at the time. Sharon would let her little boys walk there alone, although she would often watch them from the corner or out the window or from some other vantage point.

The owners/managers of the apartments were a family by the name of Novak. John and Robbie Novak and their two boys Jay and Chucky lived in an apartment near the Daltons. The two families became close friends. At the time, Jay was eight years old. Chucky, who was about the same age as Kevin, immediately became his best friend. They would do everything together!

Often the Daltons, Novaks, and later the Trosts, would go to a park nearby that the children nicknamed the “*rocket*” park. It was so named because of a large “*rocket*” or large tower climbing toy that was built in the shape of a rocket. The kids loved to go there and play on the *rocket* and on a wooden car built like the car from the cartoon show *The Flintstones*.

During this time the Dalton’s spent a lot of time together doing a variety of activities that cost little or nothing. Money was still in short supply. Craig describes some of these activities:

”We did lots of little family outings as children, picnics, drive-in movies, to play in the park, up Mt. Baldy Creek, etc. When we’d go to a drive-in movie, mom would typically make a ton of buttered popcorn, almost a grocery sack full. In fact she’d put it in a paper grocery bag, the bottom of which by the end of the night would be kind of soaked with the butter. Kevin, Shauna, and I would sit with blankets in the back seat eating popcorn and making a big mess. We’d usually fall asleep by the end of the show, but it was a lot of fun anyway. I remember the old metal speaker that dad would pull off the pole outside and clip it onto the top of the window. These speakers usually didn’t work real well and you had to turn them all the way up in order to hear. I mention this knowing that drive-in movies are a thing of the past and that many who read this may have never experienced one.

Another family outing that we did regularly as little kids was to go over to the botanical gardens at nearby Claremont College. This was usually done in the afternoon or evening and often in combination with a picnic. Mom and Dad would walk along the paths enjoying the wide variety of plants and scenery, while Kevin, Shauna, and I would run around trying to catch lizards and put them in the paper grocery bag that Mom had brought just for that purpose. At the end of the evening we’d let these go, but it was fun to try to catch them. This was an uncrowded and very peaceful area, the solitude of which was usually only broken by the squeals of a young family catching lizards.

Kevin, his cousins Trost, and I would go over to the Cucamonga wash near the Trost’s house and catch lizards and horny toads and the like. We’d also go as a family, often along with the Trosts over to the Los Angeles Arboretum near Pasadena. Here, while the grown ups were enjoying the scenery and peace, us kids would be catching lizards, playing in the *Tarzan jungle* (they had filmed some of the old Tarzan movies there) and little forts, trying to catch the peacocks that roamed around there, collect peacock feathers, feed bread to the fish in the ponds, etc. We would often have a picnic here also. Kevin loved being outdoors doing things like this.”

The apartment complex also had another novelty, a swimming pool. Here Sharon describes the kids first encounter with that swimming pool.

“... we had come down to California from an area that really didn’t have a lot of swimming pools and things like that, the place we were in had a swimming pool. He had another little friend [Chucky Novak] that was the same age as he was. There was a pool in this [apartment] complex and the two mothers were walking down and we were going to take them down and let them swim in the pool. And the two little boys [Kevin and Chucky] were dancing along in front of us and they were saying “*I know how to swim, I know how to swim*”. Kevin had never swam, he didn’t know how to swim! But they were sure both of them knew how to swim. Well both mothers knew they didn’t know how to swim! However, they beat us to the pool and as we frantically stood on the side of the pool, both of them jumped in and swam to the end of that pool! And that’s the way Kevin did with everything in his life, he jumped in with both feet and he made it work! And he did make it work! He was good at anything he did!”



Kevin & Craig Dalton with Jay & Chucky Novak at the “Rocket” park near Upland

In the fall of 1964 King and Sharon's first child began school at *Baldy View Elementary* school. This was on 11th Street between San Antonio Avenue and Mountain Avenue. He would only attend his kindergarten year here. Kevin was very excited about this new adventure. His first few days of school his mother and sometimes little brother would walk with him the few blocks to his school. After that most of the time he and his friend Chucky would just go off to school and come home again by themselves. Craig remembers "*watching for him and Chucky to come running home through the field that was on the corner of 11th and Mountain in front of our apartments. He always seemed so big, and he acted big also!*"

At this time someone at the school or in that area had a "*batch*" of kittens and Kevin got to pick out a kitten to take home with Mom and Dad's approval. He picked out a beautiful little Calico kitten that he named *Dottie*. Dottie would be with Kevin for a number of years and was very, very special to him. It was a wonderful picture, a boy and his little cat. She was so good to him. She would come and curl up on the end of his bed and want to be wherever he was. Over the years, there have been many cats named "*Dottie*" in the Dalton family, but at least in Kevin's memory, there could never be another like his *Dottie*, she was unique. Of course, then again in a little boy's eyes, such things are always unique and special.

Sharon describes a cute incident that happened when he first brought this kitten home:

"Anyway [Kevin] brought it home in the little apartment. Kevin thought it was the most wonderful thing in the world! It was his favorite, loving cat, he talked me into it finally! Anyway [that evening] this little kitten disappeared, I mean absolutely disappeared! Kevin had gone to bed and Dad and I spent until we couldn't stay up any longer hunting for this cat! We knew it hadn't gone outside or didn't think it had gone outside, the doors were not open and nothing had happened. I was in tears, I knew this child [Kevin] was just going to bawl his head off when he got up and this cat was gone. We finally gave up, went to bed, ... said the prayers '*please help us find this cat!*' Got up in the morning, the cat hadn't turned up. Kevin came out, went '*kitty, kitty*', and right then this cat came out from [inside] the back of the couch. It had gone underneath the couch, as soon as it heard Kevin's voice, came right back out! We spent the whole night in absolute misery because this little boy was going to be missing his cat! It had disappeared!"

Thus was the beginning of the menagerie of pets that would inhabit the Dalton household over the years.

In March 1965, Kevin's Uncle David and Aunt Carolyn Trost and their two children, Tammy and Randy moved to California and into an apartment in the same complex. Steven Trost was born shortly after their move to Upland. The two families would live close together throughout Kevin's childhood and youth. They would do many activities and celebrate virtually every special occasion together. Kevin's cousins would be more like brothers and sisters.

The Daltons, Novaks, and Trosts all moved out of the apartment complex on Wedgewood Court within a short time of each other. Kevin would see the Novaks a couple of times after that, but soon lost contact.

Kevin had wonderful memories of his friendship with Chucky. The Trosts, being family and cousins, would continue to be an integral part of Kevin's life forever.

In June 1965, King and Sharon bought a house at 1536 Carnation Way. Carnation Way is a tiny street located mid-way between 15th and 16th



Left: Tammy, Steven, Craig, Randy, Kevin, & Shauna celebrating Randy's third birthday. Birthdays were typical of the occasions when the cousins would get together.

Right: Kevin (8yrs) giving his cousin Randy Trost (4yrs) a ride in a little wooden boat at a Father and Son's Outing.

streets and San Antonio and Euclid Avenues in Upland. In this house they would spend most of their child rearing years. They purchased the house from Marwood Stout who was a member of their church ward and later would become their bishop. The house cost them about \$30,000, which was a lot of money for King at the time. He would worry about the debt he incurred for this house and for several years would question whether he had made a good decision. Time, however, would show that this choice was a correct one.

At the time they purchased the house it had 3 bedrooms, a front room with a brick fireplace, living room, kitchen, and two bathrooms. A few years later they would add another room that would become the parent's master bedroom. The kids grew up sharing bedrooms, that was another part of life in the Dalton household. The front yard had a lawn with a small plum tree in the middle and a large tree growing at one end that was excellent for kids to climb. The lawn was hedged around the edge with juniper bushes, which the kids nicknamed the "*stickery bushes*". A patch of ivy grew between the street and sidewalk. In front of the kitchen window was an olive tree, which caused Sharon considerable grief as she had an allergic reaction each spring when it bloomed. The kids would also have to clean up the olives each fall when they would rain down all around the front yard in a purple, squishy mess. For little kids that olive tree was great fun, messy but fun! Eventually Sharon could stand it no longer and about 20 years later had it removed.

In the back yard was a large cement patio. To the right of the patio was a small lawn that was just large enough for a swing set. Later this swing set would be moved behind the garage and a large wooden playhouse given to Shauna would take its place. Behind the left side of the patio at the end of a long cement driveway was a detached garage that was used to store just about everything except a car.

The kids loved to swim and to their utter excitement found that this new house had a large swimming pool! Craig describes their first experience with this pool:

"When we moved in we found tons of glass marbles in the bottom of the pool. We'd dive down and gather up these marbles, throw them back in and do it again and again. Doing this we got fairly good at holding our breath under water. It seemed like there were hundreds of these marbles, big ones, little ones, different colors and patterns. There was also a diving board and later Dad installed a slide into the pool."

There was an area of thick bamboo growing in the back corner of the yard just to the side of the pool. The kids called this area the "*bamboo forest*" and would play *Tarzan* and other games in the bamboo. A large block wall bordered the property on three sides. They would play *hide-n-seek* and other games wandering around on the brick walls. This was especially common when the Trosts would come over for birthdays or other occasions.

There was a little field area back behind the garage that was first used as an attempted garden plot. Later Kevin and Craig would fill this rather larger area with a few inches of sand. They hauled it wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow full from a pile that had been delivered in front of the garage. This area was called the "*pile*" as in sand *pile*. Later it became known as the *pile-pile* because the dog would use this area to do her *duty*. The boys would have to clean the *piles* off of the *pile*, therefore it received its name of "*pile-pile*". Craig described another use he and Kevin found for this area behind the garage:

"Before the sand, swing set, and other toys were put in this little field we got the bright idea of digging a tunnel and building a fort there. We started digging all these tunnels with soup cans and little garden implements, and dug around there quite a bit with visions of digging underneath the walls and tunneling all over the neighborhood. I think we got the idea from watching *Hogan's Heros* [a TV show at the time]. Our ambition didn't take us that far and the tunnel didn't last that long. Mom knew we were digging tunnels, but I'm sure she didn't know the extent of our plans. One night she saw a TV show where some kids had dug tunnels that had collapsed on them. That put an end to our tunnel digging! This was just as well because shortly thereafter it rained and the tunnel collapsed and just made a big hole in the ground, which filled with water. We put some of the old vinyl from the swimming pool in there and made a pool out of our tunnel. Of course we already had

a real pool, but this was one *we had built!* Besides our pool was kind of muddy and great fun. I'm glad Mom didn't look behind the garage very often!"

In the fall of 1965 Kevin and Craig began attending *Magnolia Elementary* school, which was only a couple of blocks west of their home on Carnation Way. Therefore, it was very common for the kids to go over to the school grounds on weekends and after school to play. This he would usually do with friends from the neighborhood that surrounded the school, of which they had many. Craig gives this description of what life was like in the neighborhood.

"Often we would play baseball, *3 flies up, or 500* in the street. We would regularly break windows and got pretty good at replacing them. Mom would make us chisel out the old glaze, buy the new glass, and putty it in place ourselves. We would go over to Magnolia School and play football, we'd play football in the street too. We'd play in the lemon groves before they were replaced one by one with tract homes. We'd also walk almost all over the neighborhood on the block walls that were around almost every yard. One thing that used to bother Kevin and I was that our bedtime was typically earlier than the other kids in the neighborhood. It was kind of an annoyance as all our friends would be out playing still and we'd have to go to bed (this was more of a problem during the summer when it was still light much later). On occasion they'd come walking along the block wall outside our room and taunt us through the window.

As children we would also play baseball and football with Dad, Uncle David, and our Trost cousins. We'd sometimes go over to our cousin's house in Ontario and have neighborhood football games with them at the school across the street from their house. The Trosts would also come to our house regularly and go swimming. The video that Scott put together shows the image of our swimming activity that was very common with us swimming, playing around the pool, or laying in a puddle of water on the hot cement getting *warmed up*, and of course, Kevin's dog Gidget running around and around the pool nonstop barking."

When Kevin was about eight years old he gave his little Huffy bicycle to his brother Craig. At the same time Kevin was given a black Schwinn 3-speed bicycle. This bike was a larger *grown-up* sized bicycle and had the gear shift lever on the handlebars so you would change gears using your right thumb. Kevin knew that the Huffy bike was being given to his brother, but he didn't know that he was getting this new bike. His parents had put the bikes in the *dark room* (where his father developed photography in the garage) with bows on them to make them look present-like. Kevin was sent to the dark room under the pretense of getting something for his mom with the belief that he would find his gift. Kevin went out, pushed passed the bikes to get what he was sent for and returned. Upon his return he said nothing regarding the bike, so his parents sent him again on a like errand, with again the same outcome, mission accomplished but no mention of a bike. This occurred several times and finally his puzzled parents asked him "*did you see anything else in the dark room*". His response was "*No*". He was so focused on performing the tasks requested that even though he had to push by the bike in order to get into the dark room, yet he didn't notice it. Finally his parents took him out and presented him with his bike.

At times King and Sharon could be very creative in finding ways to discipline or teach their children. Craig described one such creative teaching moment, which relates to the kids bicycles.

"Like most kids we were not very good about putting our things away. We had a habit of just leaving our bikes lying on the front lawn or in the driveway and Mom and Dad would scold us frequently about putting our bikes away. Mom over and over would say, "*if you don't put those bikes away somebody's going to steal them!*" Well one day our bikes just disappeared, somebody *had* stolen them! Kevin and I searched frantically for those bicycles but they were just gone. Mom said several times in a very, *I told you so*, way "*Now if you wouldn't have just left those bikes laying around you wouldn't have lost them*". We were very upset.

The DeCarly family were our next door neighbors to the north of us. They had an older boy, at least he was older than us, probably about four or five years older than Kevin, by the name of Johnny. He was a really good neighbor and did a lot of things with us. Kevin really liked him and enjoyed his company, he was like an older brother to Kevin.

Anyway, a couple of days after we had lost the bicycles, Johnny came and told us he had found them, he knew where they were at. So Kevin and I went on this odyssey with Johnny to go retrieve the stolen bikes. Before you knew it we were several blocks away and there were our bicycles laying in somebody's front yard. Johnny told us "*OK you guys, you need to sneak in there and get the bikes without being seen or whoever stole them will probably beat you up!*" So Kevin and I, in our best stealth like fashion or at least as stealth like as

seven and eight year old boys are capable of, snuck slowly up to the bikes, grabbed them and rode home as fast as we could going ninety miles an hour, at least our hearts were anyway. We were so happy to have our bikes back. It wasn't until some time later that it dawned on Kevin and I that the bikes weren't really stolen, that Mom had put Johnny up to removing them from us and storing them elsewhere in order to teach us a lesson to put our bikes away and not just leave them laying around the yard. We learned that lesson well, *for awhile.*"

Sharon loved to see her children building things and the children were regularly provided with amusements that required building. Things like *erector sets*, *lincoln logs*, *tinker toys*, etc. For example an "erector set" was a common toy of the time that consisted of numerous metal pieces full of holes, and screws and nuts that were used to bolt these metal pieces together to form all kinds of different structures. They have similar things made of plastic now. The kids became very creative and regularly would build various contraptions out of erector sets. *Tinker Toys* was another building kit that consisted of a bunch of wooden dowels and spools with holes in them, which you would connect together to form whatever you wanted. *Lincoln logs* were sets of pre-cut little logs that you could build little log cabins or other buildings with.

Another thing that Kevin, Craig, and the other neighbor kids would do, particularly under the tutelage of Kevin's older friend Johnny DeCarly, was build *carts*. These were not *go-carts* and not really *soap box derby type cars*, they were just little coaster cars that consisted simply of a board that the driver would sit on, with four wheels under it. The front wheels were attached to a 2x4 or like board that had a rope attached to each end and would pivot in the middle. The driver would steer by pulling on these ropes. Kevin and his friends would coast these down the street, having races, etc. Sometimes they would take their *carts* over to the steep asphalt hill in the school play area or a steep street a couple of blocks to the northwest of Kevin's house.

Kevin also really enjoyed playing with *trains*. When he was about six years old he received a *Lionel* train set. Craig gives a description of Kevin and this train set:

"He played with this a lot and would leave it set up for weeks on the floor of his bedroom. He'd run the train around and around, put stuff in the way for the train to run into, or powder in the train's stack which would make smoke. I can still remember the smell of burning *transformer* in our bedroom. The old transformers would get hot and when the train would get stuck or something it would smell like burning electrical insulation, which it was. Kevin would spend hours playing with his train sets."

Kevin also loved to play with a *chemistry set* that he received when he was about eight years old. He would play for hours doing various experiments. He was also given a microscope about the same time. He loved to look through this microscope and was fascinated with the microscopic world. In particular he enjoyed examining blood cells, leaves, cork, fly wings, and pond water in which he could usually find protozoas, amebas, etc.

Another hobby Kevin began pursuing as a child was that of photography. He worked with his father in learning how to develop his own pictures, print them, mount them, and a variety of different aspects of photography. As a child he was very good at this and had free access to his father's dark room and photography equipment. When he was ten years old he went on a trip to the Teton Mountains in Wyoming where his father went on a climbing expedition. While on this trip Kevin took a picture of a moose in a marshy wilderness setting. It was a beautiful picture for which he won an award. He was very good at photography even as a young child.

Kevin's childhood was filled with numerous opportunities to learn many different skills and hobbies and participate in a multitude of different activities. As a child and youth Kevin was able to do, see, and experience things that most people can only dream about their entire life. His parents made that possible, as they did for all of their children.

On August 1, 1967, the family expanded a little larger with the birth of his second sister Valerie Ann. Valerie was an extremely bubbly and vivacious little girl with very blond hair and bright blue eyes. She inherited many of the character attributes of her mother and grandmother, in that she was *always on the go!* She never stopped and she always made a multitude of friends

wherever she went. She was truly adorable, even though she learned to walk and talk very early and never quit!

A year later in the fall of 1968, Kevin's family expanded yet again. This time the family was joined by an eight year old Apache Indian boy from Bilas, Arizona by the name of Darwin Hadley. The family had become participants in their church's Indian placement program. This program was designed to help Indian children who lived on the reservations to get a good education and live in a good stable family environment. In describing this program and Kevin's foster brother Darwin, Craig wrote:

"Darwin stayed with us for four school years, going back to Arizona each summer. He became a good friend of ours and we all got along fairly well. Actually it gave Kevin a break from fighting with me, because Darwin got to take his place being just older than I. Kevin was a good brother to Darwin and a good example for him, taking him under his wing so to speak. It was somewhat of a trying experience also. It did give Darwin a chance to get a better education and to live in a stable family environment with righteous parents and see what a good family could be. But each summer as he would go home, my mom would get very frustrated because the things that she had done and the progress that she thought that she had made, would be seemingly undone when he would come back to school the next year. She was disappointed when he didn't return after that fourth summer. Nevertheless, Darwin has stayed in contact with the family from time to time. And it did give him a home and a family to lean on in times of need and a good example. It was also good for the family in many ways."



Kevin 10 years old with Darwin and Craig at a Cub Scout pack meeting.

Darwin was a cute little boy with big dark eyes and a wide grinning smile. He was very shy around new people, but would open up very quickly once he got to know them. Kevin did a lot with Darwin and was a good big brother to him. Kevin, Darwin, and Craig all shared the southwest corner bedroom in the Carnation Way house. After the fourth year, when Darwin was about 12, he decided to stay in Arizona. That would end the family's experience with the Indian placement program. However, King and Sharon continued in their love and concern for Darwin ever since. It lasted only 4 short years, but this would remain the family Darwin could always depend on.

The Dalton children had numerous pets growing up, including mice, hamsters, rats, turtles, fish, insects, etc. Craig even kept some black widow spider egg sacks, which they watched hatch in his underwear drawer into what seemed like millions of little spiders.

They had an area behind the pool in his back yard that was informally designated as the pet cemetery. Numerous shoeboxes with little animal skeletons were buried there. The Dalton children would have little funeral services for them and put rings of stone around them with flowers on their graves. This became a ritual, as each child would bury their animals there with the others attending the service to help mourn or provide comfort to the griever. Except for fish, which simply were buried *at sea* in the toilet, as Sharon often put it "*just flush'em*", although occasionally even the fish got some sort of maritime service. The animals were buried to rest in peace, except a few which were exhumed just to see if they were still there.

These pets formed an integral part of the Dalton family and so I'll mention a few of those that pertained to the families early years in the 1960's.

We mention Kevin's cat *Dottie* earlier. When Kevin was six years old this calico cat Dottie had kittens. Like any sane mother, Sharon didn't want any more cats around the house, so they proceeded to give away these kittens. Eventually they got down to this one little black kitten that

they tried over and over to give away but nobody seemed to want. At one point they had even given it away to one of Craig's friends at school but his mom said he couldn't keep it so they had to go get it from him. Finally, out of what seemed like no other recourse and with much pleading from Kevin and his little brother, their mother let Craig keep that kitten, which was named *Rango* after a TV show that was aired briefly at the time.

This cat became very, very special to the family. Dottie died a few years after that, but Rango lived to be about 21-22 years old. She was there throughout their childhood and even into their adult years. Kevin did love and enjoy that cat very much.

Kevin's older neighbor Johnny DeCarly introduced him to lots of different things in the neighborhood, he really opened up the world to the eyes of two little boys. Johnny had a friend who had snakes and with the snakes he raised mice and rats to feed to them. One day, while visiting this "*snake guy*", Kevin was given a rat. His mom hadn't given Kevin permission to keep a rat but being that it was easier to get forgiveness than permission, and knowing his mom's soft spot for cute little furry things (yes, even rats are cute when they're little), Kevin took it home anyway.

This rat was white and brown. Kevin named him *Herman*, *Herman the Rat*. He was named after *Herman Munster* from the TV show *The Munsters*, which was on at the time. This rat actually became very endearing to the entire family. I don't believe that his mom was very enchanted with the concept of keeping a rat as a pet at first, but he was a very special rat and Kevin loved him very much.

When Kevin first brought him home, he kept him in a cardboard box and then eventually got a cage for him, but most of the time this rat was left to just run around the house. He would come and sit on Kevin's chest when he was lying down or would ride around on Kevin's shoulder just like a pirate's parrot. The image of Kevin with Herman on his shoulder or running around the back of his neck or down his shirt is indelibly impressed on his little brother's mind. Kevin had such fun with Herman. Sharon would later let her children keep other rats, mice, hamsters, and a menagerie of other pets, but in the rodent family nothing compared with *Herman the Rat*. Herman lasted a year or two and then died.

Now for the family dog, when Kevin was eight years old his parents decided that he could have a dog. There was this litter of Collie pups that were bred as show dogs that they looked at and in this litter was a puppy that had a defect in one eye. It was a little white area, which was unnoticeable to Kevin, but would prevent the puppy from ever being a *show dog*. So Kevin got to come home with this fuzzy little Collie puppy, which instantly took to Kevin and loved him dearly and which Kevin loved the same. He named her *Gidget*, the name coming from the old "*Gidget*" movies.

Through much of her life, Gidget had an ailment called *collie nose*, which made her nose scab over and peel in places like a sunburn. Kevin's mother would put salve and medication on it to try to prevent it or cure it. It got kind of ugly but it didn't seem to matter to the kids, they loved her anyway.

Gidget was a very friendly and loving dog with children although with strangers and others that she perceived as threatening she would be aggressive. She was definitely very protective of Kevin and the other kids. If she thought they were threatened she would snarl and no doubt would have attacked if not restrained. She would even bark and snarl at other kids she thought



Kevin, Craig, and Valerie with some new kittens

were acting mean to Kevin. She was always a comfort to have around and made the Dalton kids feel like they were walking on top of the world and invincible when they were with their dog. Craig describes what life was like with Gidget:

“Gidget loved to play with us. Anything we were doing she wanted to be right there. One of her favorite activities was running around the pool watching us swim. She would bark nonstop as she would run around the pool, stop briefly where we were, and then bark and run around the pool again. This would continue the entire time we were swimming. She’d seemingly run around that pool hundreds of times. Mom and Dad would yell ‘*make that dog shut up*’, but nobody could stop Gidget from barking and running around the pool if we were in it. If you watch the family video that Scott produced closely you will notice her running around and around the pool. She hated getting in the water though.

Gidget would sometimes run around with Kevin on his paper route and would always sit with him while he folded his papers on the front porch. She was an extremely smart dog. She knew that he had to put a rubber band around each paper as he folded it and that as soon as he finished folding the papers he would leave. So wanting him to stay with her as long as possible, she would put her paw on the pile of rubber bands to prevent him from putting a rubber band on the paper he had just folded. He’d move her paw, get a rubber band, put it on the paper, fold another, and right before he’d pick up another rubber band she’d put her paw on the pile again. When she’d get scolded about putting her paw on the rubber band pile, she’d start putting her paw on the stack of unfolded papers, or sit on the paper pouch to keep the papers from being put inside. She was amazingly creative in her attempts to delay his leaving.

We would also go running with Gidget. Kevin and I in grade school and later would go run. We would run over to Benson Avenue and back which was about 3 miles. Gidget always wanted to go with us and we would take her on occasion, although Gidget would get tired and not want to keep up after a while, so we tried to avoid taking her.”

Gidget would remain with the family until she was found dead one day while Kevin was on his mission in Spain and Craig made a steel box and buried her in the back yard. To Craig’s knowledge she is still there. Like Dottie and Herman, there would be other dogs named *Gidget*, but none would be the same as that little boy’s fuzzy collie puppy, nothing could take her place. Joseph Smith when asked whether or not animals would be resurrected stated that he hoped to be reunited with a horse he dearly loved. Assuming we are allowed the company of departed animals in the next life, surely there will be a joyful reunion between Kevin and his Gidget.



Gidget

This seems like a good stopping point in this sketch of the first 10 years of King and Sharon’s life together, where they lived and the beginnings of their family. I’ll leave it to my brothers, sisters, and I to relate our own special memories of them.

Like most young parents they didn’t know squat about raising children, but they did love them and focused their lives around them, and that’s what made them successful parents.

They started their life together in a shack from which a move to the corner of a barn was a step up and ended up with treasures immeasurable! Those 50 years have been pretty darn good!