Life Sketch of

Richard Stephen Browning

EARLY YEARS

Richard Stephen Browning was born January 6, 1924, in the home of his parents, Charles Henry Browning, and Viola Rebecca McFate, in Sugar City, Idaho. He had two older sisters; Geneva and Florence (we called her Flossy) and an older brother, Cleo. Dad’s family called him Rich. He always said, " I may not have much money but I am always "Rich." And his wife, Mom, could claim, "I married Rich."  
When Dad was six years old he had pneumonia and almost died. The doctor operated on him and took out part of a rib and drained his lungs. The first time he stood up and started to walk across the room he fainted. He had to learn to walk again. Because of this illness he was a year late starting school.   
As a child Dad always liked to play with toy bulldozers and trucks, make roads and bridges, and make tree houses. He never liked school until high school. Then he quite liked agriculture class, an aeronautics class, typing and especially the basket ball games and dances.   
Dad’s family lived in Sugar City during the winter, so that the children could attend school. But in the summer they lived on dry farm on Canyon Creek. It consisted of 640 acres, a three room log house, root seller, barn, machine shed and granary. The house and yard was nestled next to a grove of quaking aspen trees and a hill that sloped to the north, east and west. A spot on the hill was cleared of trees and brush and a thin layer of concrete poured to keep the water from soaking into the ground. The snow would drift in 8 to 12 feet deep. As soon as they could get to the farm in the spring Grandpa would cover this snow with lots of straw to keep it from melting fast. Two cisterns were used for storing the run off. The family would have water all summer for the house, livestock and to water the garden.   
Grandpa farmed with horses until the first caterpillar tractors came out. Grandpa bought one of the first ones available. Grandpa said he could plow as much ground with the tractor in the length of time it took to harness the horses as he could plow all day with the horses. The family also had cows, pigs, chickens and rabbits.  
  
The family use to take their Saturday night bath at Pincock's Hot Springs, now known as Green Canyon. The old swimming pool and dance hall used to be up on the hill, on the point of the mountain, close to where the springs came out of the ground.   
Dad could hardly remember his mother. In the fall of 1932, when Dad was 8 years old, Grandma became ill suddenly and died. Dad’s oldest sister and brother had both married that summer so that leftAunt Flossy to take over the home chores. One time she tried to get Dad to do the dishes. He didn’t want to, so ran out side and climbed up on a rope. The rope broke and Dad fell and broke his arm. He didn’t have to dishes for some time.  
In 1934, when Dad was 10, Grandpa married Margaret Hill Young who had two children, Margaret and Robert (Uncle Bob), who were both younger than Dad. Three boys were born to this union, LeRoy, Kenneth and Irven.   
After several years of hard work, drought, hail and poor price for wheat Grandpa lost his farm . It was a sad day for Dad. Some of his fondest memories are of that grand old place.  
About 1936 Grandpa began operating a butcher shop in Uncle Cleo's grocery store in Sugar City. He also bought and sold live stock. Grandpa could guess the weight of an animal within a few pounds nearly all the time. Business was slow and money scarce.  
Grandpa heard of a big boom at Sun Valley. The Challenger Inn was being built and hundreds of workers were being employed. He thought that would be a good place for a butcher shop. Grandpa made arrangements to move his shop into a store at Ketchum, one mile from Sun Valley. He built a cattle trailer and by taking both ends out he got his 14 foot meat counter and butcher equipment in this trailer and pick up. Thus equipped Grandpa and Dad went to Ketchum.  
Housing was scarce due to the sudden influx of people. They had a home made camper for the pickup, made of three bows and a custom made heavy treated canvas cover, much like a covered wagon, which they lived in for several weeks. Marge and the three younger kids, Margaret, Bobby and Roy came out later. The first house they lived in was a tent house about 16 feet square. It was made of rough lumber floor and walls about 4 feet high with a canvas top. Later they moved into a better home, a cabin.   
Dad attended the sixth and seventh grades of school at Ketchum. He did a little skiing and was a caddy on the golf course. He had a dog named Snip that he trained to pull him on a sleigh. They had some good times together.   
The boom was mostly over in a couple of years and the family moved out of Ketchum. Dad went back to Sugar City and stayed with his older brothers family. Dad was 14 and earned his keep by working in his brother's store after school and on Saturdays, and other odd jobs during the summer. One summer he ran a butcher shop for Van Price in Driggs, Idaho. Dad graduated from the Sugar Salem High School.   
The day after graduation Dad and his friend, Mark Hulet, were hitch hiking a ride to Victor where their parent lived. Their first ride was from Sugar City to Clementsville. They were walking down the road from there when a farmer, Roy Anderson, came along and offered them a job on his dry farm. Mr. Anderson said he could tell a good worker from the way they hitch hiked. The ones who got out and hiked were good workers but the ones that just stood or sat at the side of the road were lazy. Well, Dad took him up on his offer, $90.00 a month, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, room and board, and a farm deferment from the draft. Mr. Anderson and his sons also had a dairy farm in Lost River Valley where Dad helped milk 80 head of Holstein cows during the winter. He didn’t like the cow milking, but he really liked the dry farm.  
Dad would tease us by saying that the dust got so thick you could ride the dust out over the canyon to turn around. Because of the dust they had to clean the air filter quite often. Dad was cleaning the filter with gasoline. Mr. Anderson got after him and said, "don’t use that expensive gasoline. It cost 10 cents a gallon. Use diesel, it only costs 8 cents a gallon."

MILITARY

Dad said, "I couldn’t convince Uncle Sam that farming was more important than soldiering and was drafted on 28 June 1944." Dad reported to Fort Douglas Army base in Salt Lake City and after a few days was sent to Arkansas for infantry training. After seventeen weeks of infantry training Dad and some of his buddies had a choice to make. They could have two week delay in route to going to Japan or they could join the paratroopers, take a an additional four weeks paratrooper jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia and be home for Christmas on the way to Germany beside getting $50 a month jump pay, in addition to the $50 regular pay and then another $50 when they went over seas.  
The recruiters told the men that if they joined the paratroopers they wouldn’t have to march and get blisters on your feet and carry all that gear. They would be flown to the job. Dad said the recruiters where right about not marching, now they had to run. Dad graduated with wings and was home on furlough for Christmas.  
Dad was sent to France and was there until the Germans surrendered. His unit made several practice jumps. They were alerted and equipped with ammunition and on the plane two different times all ready to be dropped on the front lines when the maneuver was called off because of the successful advancement of the ground troops.   
Dad was on the way to Japan by way of the U.S. when the Japanese surrendered. He arrived in New York to a hero’s welcome. Then he was sent to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Since he had some experience in running a movie projector, he was given that job at camp. He would run the projector 3 or 4 hours a night but the rest of the time he was free to do about anything. One of his buddies became assistant to the chaplain and because of his position had access to a jeep and they spent time riding around the country. This was an enjoyable stay but they were anxious to get home. They were sent back to Fort Douglas for discharge.   
When Dad was discharged from the Army on April 29 1946, he came home and went to work in Island Park cutting down mining timber. After a week of that he went to work at a rock quarry near Victor. It was lime rock which was used to process sugar. At first he was using a sledge hammer to break up the rock. Soon he was able to drive the truck hauling the rock from the quarry to the railroad where it was loaded onto railroad cars and taken to the sugar factory. That was a much better job. That fall he went to Sugar City and stayed with his brother, Cleo, and family. He spent the winter working in the potato cellar and chasing girls.

FAMILY

In February of 1947, Dad met Lois Wheeler at a stake dance in Rexburg. She was attending Ricks College. They dated until school was out in June. The next winter they began dating again. In December Dad went to Jackson, Wyoming to work in a butcher shop. They continued to write and to see each other on week ends. Dad gave Mom a diamond ring on May 16, 1948, and they were married in the Salt Lake Temple on June 24, 1948.  
On the 11th of June, 1949, they welcomed their first child, a little dark haired ,brown eyed baby girl. They named her Janet.   
On January 23, 1952 Dad took Mom to the St. Anthony Hospital in Pocatello. Fifteen minutes later Dr. R.R. Merrill announced to Dad that they had a red headed blue eyed baby girl. This was Carla.  
The rest of the children were born in the hospital with the star on top. Phillip Stephen was born March 12, 1953. He was the first boy. The next child was Elise, born June 28, 1955. Then there were two more boys, Deven Kay born September 2, 1956 and Dale Richard born August 5, 1958. The seventh child came to the family February 22, 1960. We named her Joyce.  
Family was very important to Mom and Dad. They supported their descendants and extended family in special occasions such as blessing of babies, baptisms, graduation, priesthood ordinations, weddings, funerals, musical performances, drama productions, sporting events. They loved family reunions.  
Dad also kept in touch with schoolmates by attending class reunions.

HOMES

Mom and Dad made their first home in Jackson, Wyoming. The home was a small camp trailer, about 15 foot long and 8 feet wide. There was no indoor plumbing. In the front part was a dining area and a kitchen and in the rear was the bedroom. They had it parked in a trailer park where they could hook up to water and electricity. There was a public rest room, shower and laundry that they could use. It was quite comfortable and not much house work.  
When the weather became cold the trailer park closed and they were obliged to find another place to park. One of the customers of the store where Dad was working, an elderly, widow lady by the name of Mrs. Saunders, offered to let them park by her home, which was closer to town. She was very good to them and they really enjoyed visiting with her. She had come to Jackson about 1900 and taught school there for many years. Because of the cold temperature they could not hook up to a water supply, but carried water from the house. In order to have hot water they had to heat it on the kitchen stove. They had an outhouse. The trailer was heated by an oil heater. A barrel of oil was outside the trailer with a small tube attached to bring the oil to the heater.  
The winter of 1948-1949 was one of the hardest winters that has been recorded in this area. The snow was very deep that winter and the weather was very cold at times. The trailer had thin walls and no insulation. Sometimes it was so cold that the blankets on their bed would be frozen to the wall when they awoke. They were thankful to have enough bedding to keep them warm. One night the temperature dropped to 60 degrees below zero. At that temperature the oil could not flow through the tubing, so the fire went out. When morning came they brought a can full of oil into the trailer and put it in the tank on the heater and were able to get a fire going.  
The months of February and March were especially difficult for the Jackson area. Because of the mountainous terrain many snow slides occurred, blocking the roads so that no vehicles could get through. This meant that no supplies of food, medicine or mail could get into the area. Most people there expect to have some difficulties such as this so they stocked up on food and other things in the fall. However, during that winter the road closures lasted much longer than usual. Nothing came into the area for three weeks until they were able to get some mail and medical supplies flown in by air.  
Dad was a meat cutter at a grocery store and his supply of fresh meat ran out. It was necessary for him to go to some farmers, buy some animals and butcher them to replenish the supply of meat. It was six weeks before the roads were open.  
The last of the snow melted about the first of May and spring came again to the Jackson Hole area. Dad traded in the trailer on a new one and they moved in on June 4. It had insulated walls,  
was about three feet longer, had a water heater but not a bathroom. However they really were happy to be living in such a nice home. Shortly thereafter they celebrated their first wedding anniversary. They had experienced several different circumstances , but had learned that they could cope with trials in their lives and also appreciate the blessings they had. It had been a good year!  
In September of 1949 Mom and Dad moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho. The store in Jackson was sold and Dad had to seek employment elsewhere. He dug sugar beets for the U & I Sugar Company. When that job was finished Dad began selling Rena Ware cooking utensils.   
In December a welcome job was offered in Pocatello cutting meat for Okay Food Stores. Mom and Dad never thought they would like to live in Pocatello, as it was a big wicked city, but were very glad to find work, especially that time of year. They moved their 18 foot trailer home to the Barret Trailer Park on Yellowstone Ave.  
In the spring of 1951 Dad bought 5 acres of land on Mink Creek Road for $500.00 from J. V. Frazier. He financed it by selling war bonds that he had bought while he was in the service. They moved their trailer on to the property April 9, 1951.  
When Mom and Dad moved onto the property it was nothing more than a sagebrush covered hill and some Juniper trees. There wasn't even any electricity. The power company said they would not set a pole out in the sagebrush unless someone was living there. Two weeks later they received power. It was four months before they were able to get a well drilled so they could have water. They brought water from town for culinary purposes, but sometimes they dipped water out of a ditch that ran through the property and heated it on a bonfire to do the laundry.   
Dad tried to get a loan to build a house but without a credit record nor enough ground for a farm loan they gave him the run around. Dad didn’t want to go in debt anyway, so they lived in the trailer house for two more years.  
  
Dad borrowed Mr. Frazier’s horse and plow and plowed a little garden spot below the ditch that ran through the place. He watered the garden out of the ditch with a syphon hose. They had a pretty good garden, even cantaloupe. It didn’t freeze until the 27th of October.   
Dad rented Anderson’s tractor, plow and scraper and dug the basement and also a place to put the well. Then they had a well driller, Stirling Sigman, come and set up his well driller over the spot he had dug out. The well and pump cost $1,500.00 and was financed with First Security Bank. John Holman was in charge of getting my loan. We hit water at 80 feet, then drilled to 115 feet and perforated the casing that was in the water.  
Shortly after Phillip was born (1953) Dad began working more on the basement so they could move into it. He sold the trailer house to Harry Anderson and sons to finance the project. They wanted it by the opening of fishing season the latter part of May. Dad put up the cinder block walls and got a roof overhead but no floor. The cement was poured in another room but it was not dry enough to walk on when they came to get the trailer. They moved into the one room that had a dirt floor and a trench for a sewer pipe running through it. They put a little trash burner in one end to use for heat and to cook with. This room became the laundry room and garage. A few days later they were able to move into the one room home where it was more comfortable. Later that summer they were able to put a cement floor in a third room and that gave them two rooms and a bath room.. We lived in the basement until after Joyce was born (Feb. 22,1960). Shortly thereafter Dad took the roof off. With the help of friends and relatives he was able to put up the walls and get a new roof put on the top floor. He finished building the house the next year and the family moved into it in May of 1961. He wanted to have brick on the outside of the house. As he didn’t have money to buy the brick at that time, hhe waited for a few years before he finished the out side. Vaughn Chatterton helped Dad get started laying the bricks and he was able to do much of the brick work. A few years later he was able to add a two car garage onto the house."  
One nice thing about not finishing the house all at one time is that he never had to make any monthly house payments. He also didn’t have interest to pay."

WORK

In December a welcome job was offered in Pocatello cutting meat for Okay Food Stores.   
Dad cut meat for Okays for about eight years. In his spare time he plowed gardens and did landscaping with his tractor. Later Dad bought some hay equipment and did custom haying. One time Dad asked for some time off to do some haying. The boss at the store asked him which he would rather do. He told him cut hay. Dad decided to quit the store and cut hay. It was a hard decision to make. The steady income was hard to give up. But he didn’t like working Sundays and preferred working with machinery so decided to make the change.  
His brothers, Roy, Ken and Irven and Lois’s brothers, Delynn and Byron, helped quite a bit in the summer. He also hired some other help, Dale Higgins, Cary Baird, Glenn Blackburn, Clifton Parker and Rex Browning at different times.  
Through the years Dad taught his children to operate the trucks, tractors and hay equipment. All of the boys have helped as much as they could and us girls have also helped some.  
Dad had two hay balers for a while and did custom haying for people in Inkom, Marsh Valley, north to and on the Indian Reservation and also in Arbon Valley. He decided to get out of the haying business and do landscaping only. So he sold the hay equipment to the Pocatello Stake farm. Dad continued doing landscaping and plowing gardens until 1972. At that time Dad bought a backhoe and added digging basements to his vocation. He seemed to be making more money with the backhoe so he concentrated more on that kind of work. In 1975 Rex Browning came to help Dad and they established a partnership called Browning Excavation. They dug basements for many homes and put in sewer systems for numerous people. Grant Stowell hired them to put in the water system in the Indian Hills Subdivision. Dad, Rex and Phillip spent most of the summer of 1976 in Rexburg helping with the clean up after the Teton Dam broke and flooded the area. Dad worked with Rex until the latter part of 1992 when he sold his share of the business to Rex and began preparing to go on a mission for the Church.  
After dad got home from his mission he was watching Janet machine quilt and thought he could do that. He started quilting and ran the machine up until the Charlotte Fire.  
When us children were old enough Dad taught us how to take care of the lawn. When Dad retired he took over the care of the lawn again.

CHURCH CALLINGS

Dad served in many callings in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.   
He was called to head the Senior Aaronic Priesthood where he helped activate and prepare at least 5 families to go to the temple and be sealed for eternity.  
He was Elders Quorum President. At that time he was over the dinner between the sessions of Stake Conference.  
He was called to be a Stake Missionary where he taught and had about 26 baptisms his first year.  
He was ordained a Seventy. One of their projects was showing movies, with popcorn candy and drinks. They showed the good movies like Old Yeller, Pollyanna, Follow Me Boys, and Seven Brides for Seven Brothers.  
He was called to be chairman of the Genealogy Committee.  
Dad was ordained a High Priest and set apart by Joseph Fielding Smith as 2nd Counselor To Bishop Harold Lloyd. Lynn Holiday was the 1st counselor. One Christmas the three of them went to every family in the ward and sang Christmas Carols. It took them several evenings but they had an enjoyable time.  
Dad also served in Scouting as Cub Scout Committee Chair and Assistant Scout Master.   
Mom and Dad both served together as directors of the names extraction program, as temple workers and as full time missionaries in the Alaska Anchorage Mission. They were assigned to serve in Glennalan and Sitka, Alaska and Whitehorse, Canada. Their mission began May 13, 1993 and they were released from on November 17, 1994.   
Mom and Dad were set apart to be ordinance workers in the Idaho Falls Temple on the 18th December1996. They were assigned to go to the temple on Thursday mornings. and be ready to start at 5 a.m. and be there until 10:30 or 11:30 a.m. They were released on October 30, 2004.  
Mom and Dad served on a stake sponsored sealing team until August 31, 2009. Dad enjoyed going to the temple and knew of the important service that takes place there.  
Dad was a home teacher and was able to touch many lives through that service.

TRIPS AND VACATIONS

Dad was a hard worker. He also knew how to have fun. He liked to play games with family and friends. We was good at checkers and liked to play Racko. But his favorite was a game we call "Mormon Bridge."  
When we were young dad would come home from work and say lets got swimming or lets go camping. How we enjoyed swimming at Lava Hot Springs or Indian Springs or Green Canyon. I have memories of camping in Yellowstone Park, Stanley Basin, Green Canyon.  
When Dad first learned about snowmobiles, we were fortunate enough to get one. Over the years we spent many days riding.  
In 1976 Mom and Dan bought a one bedroom time share condominium in Island Park. They decided that they would like to have more room so the next year bought a two bedroom condo. They enjoyed going to Island Park over the years and always shared the time with friends and family. They would go snowmobiling when the weather was good enough. Almost every year they went through Yellowstone Park. They usually made it to Old Faithful but several times made the loop around Thumb, Yellowstone Lake and Canyon. Other favorite places to go were Two Top and Big Springs. Other places of interest were Mesa Falls and Lion Head. On stormy days we would play games or watch movies. The Club House had a swimming pool, hot tubs, racket ball and ping pong.   
Mom and Dad owned several different Motor homes. They took vacations all over the United States. They have been to all of the states except Hawaii, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, (I’m not sure about Delaware) and New Mexico.   
Rich and Lois were very generous and never took a vacation without a parent, sibling, child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or even a friend along.   
Dad gave us a wonderful heritage. We had a good and comfortable life. We have many happy memories to remember him by. We love you Dad.