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Chapter 7b -Our Life in Logan (1962-1964)

1962

I hated to leave the job at the Berkeley Lab, but the offer was too good to pass up. I was told that if I ever wanted to return I had a job. So, we were on our way back to Utah. Max and Loa hated to see us go but understood the reasoning and opportunity. Just another fork in the road or maybe just a course correction. A year ago, I was struggling to find any kind of work and now a company was paying all our expenses to come work for them. What a concept.

We stayed with LaRue's parents in Providence while we looked for a house. We planned to live in Logan. I would commute to Thiokol which was 45 miles west. I started on day shift and rode the bus back and forth for a reasonable fee. We found a two-bedroom house quickly at 316 North 3rd East that was close to Utah State University.

We had our furniture delivered and settled in. The summer was beautiful in Logan with lots of sunshine. Kathleen now two and a half would get up in the morning, look out the window, and declare "It's a pity (pretty) day". That summer I would get off the bus downtown and walk the four blocks home. It was neat when the kids ran out to meet me.

Fall arrived, and it was time to get back to school. Thiokol kept their promise and put me on straight swing shift working from 4pm until midnight. I was the only computer operator on the IBM 704, and later the new IBM 7044.

I decided to major in Applied Statistics since they had the school's computer. It was an IBM 650. It was punched cards in and punched cards out.

I was lacking two sophomore pre-requisite courses for what I was enrolling in but got permission to take them concurrently. So, I was learning what I needed for learning what I was learning. It was difficult. I enrolled for about 13 credit hours and figured if I went to summer school I could make it through in two full years.

I qualified as a full-time student for the G.I. Bill and with three dependants got \$150 per month. Tuition was only about \$90 per quarter. We were in good shape financially and LaRue would not have to work. I could study and do homework on the job and studied every waking moment at home. On Saturday I would go to the library to get away from the distractions at home. Merlin Olson, who was playing for the Los Angeles Rams, was often in the library working on his graduate studies in Economics that summer.

I rode in a car pool to Thiokol and back after I started school. I scheduled my classes starting at 8am and done by noon or no later than 2pm. The car pool would pick me up at 2:45pm for an hour commute to Thiokol due west through Tremonton. I would get home after 1am and be up and off to school for an 8am class. It was a tough schedule for two full years including summer school.

Statistics required many hours entering volumes of data from experiments into a Friden desk calculator, which would perform statistical analysis. Those old mechanical calculators would grind and chunk away for minutes at a time. If you made one mistake entering the data you didn't get the right results. I wrote a Fortran program that would do the analysis. I would use a keypunch at work to punch the data onto punch cards then run them through

the listing machine. I could then scan the data on the printout for accuracy and make corrections as needed. Then I attached the punch card data to my program and ran it on the IBM computer at work. I had the results in seconds and accurate every time.

I took all the programming courses offered at the university. Homework required writing programs and executing them on the schools IBM 650. Then it was wait for the turn around, and run the corrections until you got it right. It could take several days. At work I could turn the program around as many times as needed until I got the correct results the same evening. I always turned in perfect results, and usually knew as much about programming as the instructors.

Statistics was not all working with data as there was tunderstanding the theory of statistics. A Theory of Statistics class was about as tough a course as I ever took. The outcome was always in doubt on a test.

Summer in Logan was idyllic, and winter was horrible. Walking across campus on a winter morning with the wind coming out of Logan canyon was like being in the Arctic. The last winter we were there I shoveled a snow pile 8 ft high beside the driveway. Winter in Logan now is nothing like it was back then.

Fall was a pretty time also. We enjoyed football games, made real homemade onion rings, and I brewed beer with my old Weber College buddy, Wally Greenwell. At one time we had five different 10-gallon batches stored in our garage. We had the caps labeled one through five, so you knew what batch you were getting. His wife banned his homebrew from their campus apartment after an incident before I got there. Wally had a batch stored in quart bottles up high on the open shelves in their kitchen. He was in class when the campus police hauled him out of class and hustled him to the apartment. The beer was

exploding, and his wife was out on the porch with a few cuts from flying glass. Wally had to throw rocks to finish off the unexploded bottles. So, I had to store the homebrew in our garage.

Wally was a real character. I needed a five-hour elective course and Wally talked me into an "easy" graduate level Economics 100 course along with him. He had all the tests and papers from Merlin Olson who was a straight A student. Wally thought it would be an easy A. I worked like the devil to get a C, one of my worst grades at Utah State.

Wally threw a party at their apartment and invited a bunch of guys from a fraternity. I took a case of our #5 homebrew because it was the worst of the lot. It wiped out the whole bunch of fraternity guys. Wally and I knew enough not to drink it.

There was not a lot of distraction in Logan. We were doing pretty good financially as there was no place to spend it. There were only a few cafe's and they closed early and Sundays. There were a couple of pool halls, and couple of college hangouts and they all closed on Sunday. There was a private club and steakhouse that catered to the affluent as it cost a lot to be a member. Wally worked there as a bartender and he would let me in through the back door. Members purchased their booze at the liquor store and stored the bottles in private lockers at the club. Wally knew the lockers with the good booze. He would get into one and pour me a drink. Wally was a good friend to have in Logan.

The University of Wyoming and Utah State had a huge football rivalry. LaRue's brother Milton (Milt) and sister in law Pauline lived in Laramie and came over to the game the first fall we were in Logan. We had a great time. The next fall the game was in Laramie and we went over. We were excited because Craig Murray was our star fullback and the brother of our sister in law Carma. We knew Craig would run all over Wyoming, but he had

a bad day and we lost. Milt took us to the Elks Lodge after the game and I had to put up with the razzing from the whole lodge. Craig went on and played several seasons and a good career in the Canadian Football League and then coached high school football in Idaho Falls.

1963

I finished my first year at Utah State and enrolled in summer school. Summer school consisted of two quarters with each quarter compressed into five weeks each, and it was intense. I enrolled in both quarters so that I could get through in two years.

We enjoyed camping on weekends and I built a wood camp box that fit in the back of the Falcon. It held our kitchen stuff and a small gas stove. We would borrow LaRue's dad's teepee tent that hung from a tree branch and sleeping bags and go up Logan canyon or over by Bear Lake. The kids had fun with the campfires and roasting stuff on sticks and we had great fun.

Towards the end of the second session of summer school we met my folks up Big Creek in the Pahsimeroi Valley south of Patterson and had a nice weekend fishing and camping. We were sitting around Saturday evening and saw a white Cadillac bouncing and bumping down the hill into the campground. It was Doctor Goggins and his wife who were good friends of the folks when he had his practice in Salmon and we were in Patterson. Norma who ran the bar and café in May told them that we were at Big Creek. Then Harry Blessinger who lived in Pocatello arrived. He was the one that caught us swimming in the water tower and much later would give me his Buick for the weekend when we were in Salmon.

LaRue and the kids went with the folks back to Kellogg as I had a couple weeks of summer school to finish. Then I would take

vacation and come to Kellogg and we would all go to Canada on a camping trip along with Aunt Mary and Uncle Donald, Ronnie, and Lenny.

We caravanned in three cars up through Calgary, Banff, and Lake Louise and had a great time. I remember coming out of the teepee tent in the rain one cold morning at Banff and Dad was sitting by the campfire with a beer and marshmallows. It was a great vacation and we returned to Logan though Hebgen Lake and Yellowstone.

My second year began at Utah State and it was work and study. The Falcon was starting to burn oil, trail smoke, and I started thinking about a new car. Not a used one but a new one. After looking them over a Rambler station wagon seemed the best fit. The front seats would fold flat to make a bed. It would be great for traveling and camping. On December 31st I closed the deal on a new 1964 Rambler Classic 440 station wagon that was gold with a white top. It was six-cylinder, standard shift with overdrive, and had positraction. I couldn't bring it home as it had to be dealer prepped and I had to go to work New Years Eve for four hours. So LaRue had the pleasure of bringing it home. I got home, it was snowing like crazy, and we were meeting friends at the Gaslamp that evening. It snowed over a foot but the Rambler with positraction had no problem. That car turned out to be one of the best cars we have ever owned. With just six cylinders and under powered in the mountains I would put it in 2nd gear and overdrive. It would keep up and run with anything. We sure liked the Rambler.

1964

Now that I was close to graduating I had to start thinking about the future. Thiokol had said they would promote me to an exempt salaried job as a beginning programmer when I graduated.

Production of the Minuteman missile program was quickly winding down. The aerospace industry has a history of letting everyone go when that happens so the future at Thiokol was up in the air.

When I got out of the Air Force I received a letter from the super secret National Security Agency (NSA) that said if I was ever interested to contact them. They were the people we worked for in the Air Force Security Service. I contacted NSA and was invited for a week of testing and interviews. It was exciting as I would get my first flight on a jet airliner from Salt Lake to Washington DC.

In those days the Salt Lake airport was a single long concourse with a boarding area at the end. You walked across the tarmac to the plane. I walked out, and it was a new United Airline Boeing 727. I noticed the tail number N70001, and it stuck in my mind. I was wowed with the power when we took off. A stewardess served two free drinks and some macadamia nuts and then a nice dinner. In the back of the plane was a lounge where you could sit on couches and visit.

(We attended my Air Force reunion in Seattle in 2015 and visited the Boeing Museum of Flight in Renton. Sitting on the tarmac was the first Boeing 727 delivered to the airlines. It was a United Airline 727 with the tail number N70001, the same one that I had my first jet plane ride on. We went up the stairs and sat down inside and it sure looked small)

I was put up in a hotel in Washington DC. An Army car and driver picked me up Monday morning and drove me to NSA Headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland. I began taking academic tests, psychology tests, and aptitude tests nonstop for three days. One day during lunch break in the cafeteria I ran into two NSA guys (ex Air Force) that I had worked with in Turkey, and we had a great visit. Near the end of the third day I was told I would be

offered a job. If I accepted I would continue through the next two days. The offer was a mid level civil service rating and the salary was much less than I would be making as a programmer at Thiokol. I thought about living in the heat and humidity in Maryland, the salary, and the long distance from Utah, and declined the offer. They called for an Army car and driver and told him to take me back to DC and to take me sightseeing the next day. He took me all over Washington DC and I saw everything.

I also looked up, Bruce Maynard, one of my coworkers, and apartment mate in Samsun, Turkey. He had gone back to Germany and married his old sweetheart he left behind, and they now had three daughters. That was a great reunion. He took me to the airport for my return flight on Saturday.

When we lived in Albany/Berkeley California we often visited Uncle Fred and Aunt Merriam in Livermore. Livermore was a nice little town and we liked it there. Uncle Fred worked as a machinist at Lawrence Radiation Livermore Lab. Since I had worked at Lawrence Radiation Berkeley Lab I decided to contact the Livermore Lab about working there. They came back that they could not employ relatives, so that ended that.

The military recruiters were on campus during my last quarter of school. I had been missing the Air Force and had often thought about it. I had over six years of service counting my Air Force time, National Guard, and active Air Force Reserve time. That was a good start on retirement from the military. I went through the process of analyzing another 20 to 25 years as an officer and retiring at least as a Lt. Colonel. It penciled out better than staying in civilian life. I still wanted to be a pilot but was six months too old.

I decided to talk to the Air Force about career opportunities and Officer Candidate School (OCS). I signed up to take the test for OCS and the results came back that I qualified. Then it was to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake for a physical and passed. The next step was a career path. I knew the Security Service had the highest priority. While I liked them I didn't want to be overseas all the time at a remote location.

The Air Force countered with six months of OCS then one year of specialized computer training, which was just what I wanted. The orders came. and I was to report July 5, 1964 to San Antonio, Texas. The more I thought of leaving the family on July 4 the more apprehensive I became, so I cancelled out.

Then the Air Force came back with an offer of two years at the University of Utah to get a degree in meteorology. That was a lot better. Later they came back and said the slot had been filled. By now I realized that if I was back in the Air Force the Security Service would probably override everybody and latch on to me. Vietnam was in full swing, and I could end up sitting on mountain tops, caves, or in the back of spy airplanes over the jungle. I decided it was best to stay a civilian.

I found later that some Security Service people in Vietnam were overrun in a cave and killed. They also lost seven of those spy airplanes. A friend that comes to our reunions flew 222 of those spy missions in the back of an old C-47 over Cambodia and Vietnam. They got shot at a lot and he is also suffering from exposure to agent orange.

I finally graduated on June 6, 1964 with a Bachelor of Science in Applied Statistics from the School of Science. It was ten years after my high school graduation and a little over five years after getting out of the Air Force. It was a great feeling to accomplish what I said I was going to do when I left the University of Idaho in

September 1954. Mom, Dad, and Bev came down for graduation and we had a great time.

end of chapter 7b

