

# A Short Overview of My Eight Years In TOQUERVILLE

Jon Beatty Fish

Carol Stapley Kemple recently wrote a few pages about growing up in Toquerville and her husband, Jim, passed those memories along to me. She inspired me by that; I wish to do the same here. I'll attempt to keep it short, sweet and simple.

I was born in July 1948, in the Iron County General Hospital in Cedar City. Mother said it was a hot and sweltering day. A week later I was brought home to Toquerville (the Lower Street) to live with my father (Howard L. Fish), my mother (Bessie Beatty Fish), of course, and my two older brothers, Leon E. Fish and Ashley R. Fish. We were residing in a small and modest home built on land given them by my maternal grandfather, John Thomas Beatty.



**As a nearly 2-year old on the Lower Street**

My mother was born and raised in Toquerville and she met Dad at Hurricane High School during the school year that was 1940-41. They both graduated in the spring of 1941. My father left immediately for Long Beach to work in the shipyards. Mother joined him a few weeks later. They were married 12 July 1941, but returned to Toquerville shortly after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. A few days before Christmas Grandma Beatty accompanied them to the St. George Temple where they were sealed for time and eternity.



**Dad and Mother in Long Beach, 1941**

Mother had five brothers living in Toquerville at some time in my childhood. Uncle Dennis and Uncle Lewis lived with Grandma Beatty on the Upper Street, a bit across from the LDS "church house." Uncle Walt, Uncle Reid and Uncle Rulon all lived in their own places in town. We were close to the Beatty relatives and they were all loving and kind to us. Uncle Walt and Uncle Reid were ranchers who mostly worked for the

Spilsbury Brothers. Uncle Rulon owned the “beer parlor” out north at Anderson’s Junction. Uncle Dennis and Uncle Lewis were high school and college boys...who were close to their older brothers and liked to work with them.

I remember when Uncle Dennis and Jimmy Beatty (they were the same age and very good friends) enlisted and went off to the Army at the start of the Korean War. My father, who drove from Cedar City, UT to Jean, NV each day, for P.I.E., would often pick up military hitchhikers and bring them home for supper and a clean bed to sleep in before hauling them further the next day. That was a routine practice in our home and I liked to see the men in uniform. We were raised in a patriotic home.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the 24<sup>th</sup> of July was always celebrated in Toquerville with parades and dinners and games. My little sister would be Princess on a float made from our red wagon. Mother had many aunts and uncles in town and cousins, too, for both of her parents had been born and raised in Toquer, as well. The Slack’s and the Theobald’s were our cousins and everyone was uncle or aunt or some form of that affectionate greeting. We loved to come together to play, visit and eat.

When I was two my parents bought a large home on the Upper Street and we moved from the little house. The new home was directly across the street from Grandma Beatty (Grandpa died before I was born) and just north of the meetinghouse. At about the time of that move Dad was called

to be bishop in the Toquerville Ward of the old Zion Park Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was 27-years old. Elder Spencer W. Kimball, who had been a missionary companion to Grandpa Fish, ordained Dad a bishop. The people of Toquer wondered about such a young bishop, but they got a very good one!



**L to R: Ash, my older brother; Me, Jimmy Stapley, Raneva (younger sister)**

**Our house on the Upper Street in the background**

There were several key positions to hold in Toquer. One was Justice of the Peace. Another was Watermaster. Bishop was also very important and my father appears to have been a

good one. He always wrote to the missionaries and the servicemen and we have copies and responses to those things. He loved to visit in the homes.

He surrounded himself with good people in that calling. His best friend, Morgan Bringhurst, served as his second counselor ... and his cousin, Jessie Fish, served as the clerk and secretary in the ward.

Mother did the town news, always rolled off on a mimeograph machine that belonged to the ward. She was a good typist and had access to all the news via her extended family. The little town was involved in our lives and we were involved in the town. It seemed right to me.



**The old meetinghouse on the Upper Street, south of where we lived**



**The interior, looking out the back door...**

Uncle LaRoy and Aunt Geneva Prisbey Stapley owned and operated the General Store and gas station (one pump) in Toquerville – south of the church house. They had four children and their second son, Jimmy, was my best friend if I didn't count my older brothers. We played on the mountain behind our house for a thousand hours in childhood, it seems.

We were also friends with Evan Bringhurst, who died on the operating room table in Salt Lake, when we were children. Doug Heidemann was also a friend of ours on the male side. Gayona Olds, Melodie Beatty and Jolene Anderson were also very good friends – though they were girls... 😊

The city fathers and mothers bussed the school children to Hurricane for kindergarten. Melodie' aunt was a student teacher that year and we thought her the prettiest woman on the earth, i.e., Miss Janice Nielsen. I think I proposed to her.

Back to Toquer we went for regular elementary schooling. While Ash and I enjoyed Room 1 (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>) with Bernice Bringhurst, Evan' grandmother, Leon was in Room 2 with the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders. I believe the two years I went to school there we took our lunches to school. There was a multi-purpose room, there in the basement, where you could sit at tables to eat. I liked school and I liked learning. At the end of the second grade Dad was killed in an accident and when I began Third Grade, we had moved to St. George.

We played in the ditches a great deal because it was wet, slippery and fun. We had adventures in the ditches. We also had flippers to shoot at targets and birds. We chased the blue-belly "racing lizards" in Ash Creek by the gazillions, usually just stopping long enough to throw rocks at them. Once in a great while we hit one and we had to have a burial service. Respect was a big deal taught to us in that era.

One Easter, perhaps 1954 or 1955, the Primary Association of the LDS Church took us on a hike and picnic/egg hunt down on the Ash Creek below the Theobald residence in the south of town. During that event a beehive was stirred up and they chased us up out of the creek and home. My brother, Ash, was stung badly and I remember that his eye was swollen shut.

We went to Primary, in those days, on Thursday after school. Meetings and classes were held in the stand alone Relief Society building that was next to the meetinghouse.

The "church house" was the central gathering place,

though the school was used from time-to-time. There was a church farm across Ash Creek to the west and my father could cut that broom straw with the best of them. We would help gather and bundle, while Mother would tie off. Those were then shipped to Welfare Square in Salt Lake City to be used in the broom making operation there.

My oldest brother was a hard worker, a defender of us all, and pure and devout! He has remained as such his entire life.



**28 September 1947 – Howard and Bessie Fish**

We three boys were joined by three other children, while we lived in Toquerville. Leon had been born at home but the rest of us were born in the Iron County General Hospital in Cedar City. Raneva (1951) became our only sister in Toquer. Howard Martell (1954) and Kevin (1955) were born there, too. I was always happy knowing that I came from a large family and that having siblings was just a wonderful thing to have as a boy – and later as a man.



**Uncle Lewis Beatty lived with us after Grandma died (1951-52)**

The Post Office was in one of the houses across from the Stapley store; where a post office box had a spinning combination lock on it. Dad would often walk Uncle Gus Slack down to the Post Office. Uncle Gus was unsteady in his walk for reasons best understood at Uncle Rulon's beer parlor, but that bothered my father not. We sometimes walked with them and would listen to conversations as we kicked rocks or skipped stones along the route.

Several of the elderly were also often visited by my father. We accompanied him on those routes, too, because he could be bishop and father at the same time. We would stop at the Stapley Store to get Snaps (candy covered licorice) or Tootsie Rolls to munch. On a hot day that might even be a Fudgsicle...

The Stapley Store was a general store. You could buy twine, small rope, nuts and bolts, nails and screws, tapes, tacks and other things beyond groceries. But we got a lot of things from that store. From time to time we would ride to Hurricane and buy groceries at the IGA Market there (I think it was, I'm not positive). We also went to the movies in Hurricane. My father nearly laughed himself into oblivion over *The Long, Long Trailer* with Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball. We got to see the movie serials and grand old Technicolor movies quite a bit in Hurricane.



**A young Bishop Howard Fish shaking hands with an old Bishop  
Walter Slack**

**Note: Our home in the blurred background, too**

He was just Uncle Walter to us because he was a brother to

Grandma Beatty and that is what our parents called him. My mother thought him a wonderful man. We also had an Uncle Walt Beatty so I always liked that name. It seemed gentle, dignified and well-carried by the men I knew of that name. No two Walter's were better than these two men. (That's me in the arms of Dad in the photo, too.)

My parents banked in Hurricane. We had "Uncle" Legrand Kleinman cut our hair, but it was by hand. Every now and again we went to Hurricane and had Keith Tobler cut our hair in his barber shop. It felt so good! While Hurricane was the "big town" for us – and Aunt Irene lived there (Mother' older sister) wuth our cousins – the little places like Pintura, LaVerkin, Leeds, Toquer and other places got along just fine.

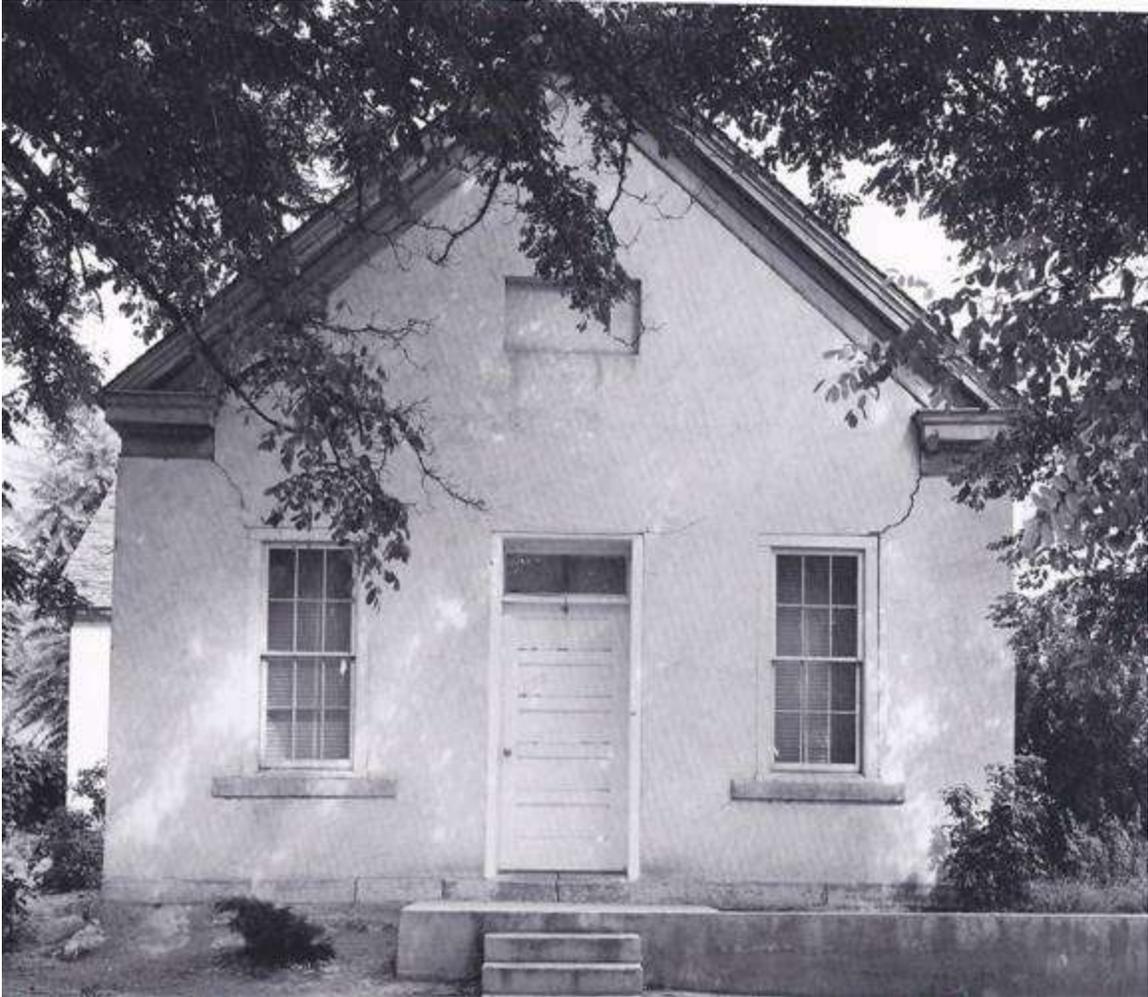
I expected to live in and around Toquerville all of my life. When Dad died suddenly our lives changed dramatically. But those early childhood years were filled with love and affection. I thought every little boy on earth must be as happy as I was.

We played in the streets by the hours. We rode our bikes. We flew kites. We played baseball. We had push carts and we "ran rims" – I loved to watch Uncle Lewis do that. He was real athletic and could do that very, very well. We also delivered papers in the morning and the evening – riding our bikes and having our dog run along side of us. We swam up at the Old Cradle on the Ash Creek. We ran and chased and played for all we were worth. Most families had a cow or a pig or rabbits and chickens – as small time farming existed with

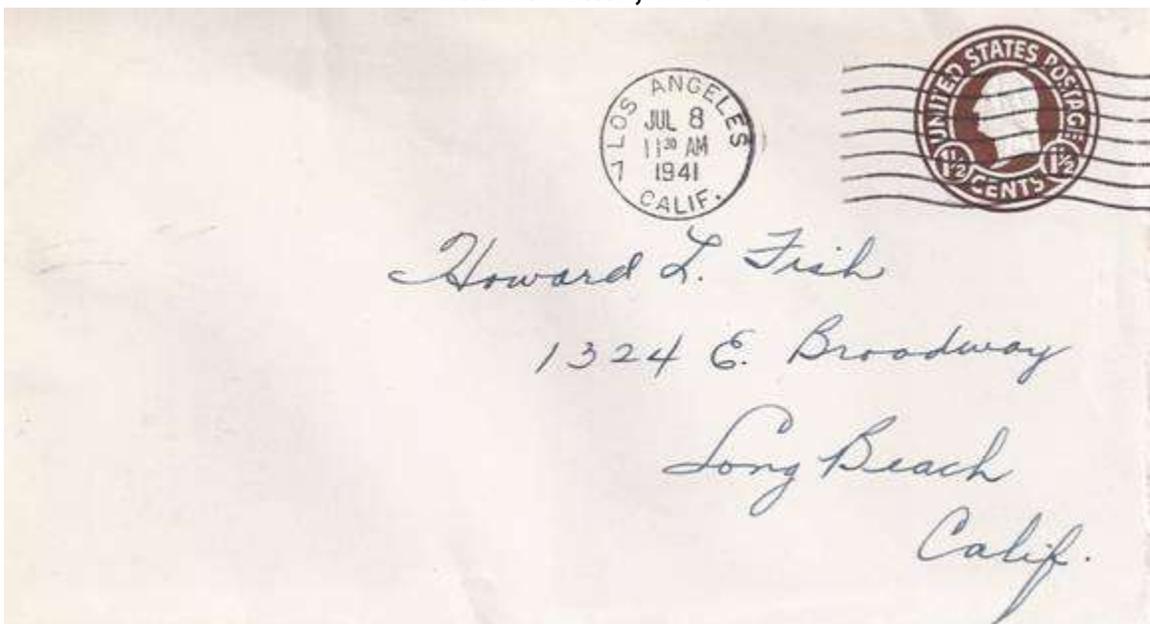
most families either in the backyard or out in the west fields. There were large gardens grown, rose gardens in side yards, fruits and nut trees were everywhere and the ambulance in town was the back seat of our 1950 Dodge on more than one occasion.

Grandma Beatty had a stroke at the town/ward Halloween party on 31 October 1951 and was taken to her home where she passed away. The town was very sad. Eva Florence Slack Beatty lived a Christ-like life and many in Washington County knew of her devotion to family and to the gospel. Our home was very sad that week.

In that era of my life, in Toquerville, the surnames included: Adams, Anderson, Beatty, Bringham, Fish, Heidemann, Higbee, Kleinman, Lamb, Porter, Slack, Stapley, Theobald and several others. Most were the off-spring of the original settlers and Mormon pioneers who came to the headwaters of the Piute Indian encampment at Ash Creek Springs and Toquerville Falls, under the direction of Brigham Young. Some married into those families, like my father did with my mother. But we were all united and related in some form or other and it made for happy days and good living.



**Relief Society building north of the meetinghouse – Primary and classrooms, etc.**



Four days before Dad and Mother were married



Grandpa and Grandma Beatty on their wedding day, February 1910

**P · I · E**

**TRANSMITTAL OF GROUP INSURANCE AND DISABILITY PAYMENTS TO EMPLOYEES**

TO: Howard L. Fish FROM: Personnel Division - General Office Date 2-16-51  
Toquerville, Utah Box 24

The enclosed represent settlement as indicated on claim submitted:

|                             |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| U.C.D. (California only)    | Check Number:               | Amount: \$              |
| P.I.E. Disability           | Draft Number:               | Amount: \$              |
| Group Insurance <u>3058</u> | Draft Number: <u>126650</u> | Amount: \$ <u>60.00</u> |
| <u>3059</u>                 | <u>126651</u>               | <u>50.00</u>            |

Copy to: G. N. Moore, Salt Lake City  
(Supervisor)



**Beatty Children: L to R: Irene, Hilma, Dennis, Maree, Lewis, Bessie,  
Evadeen, Kathleen  
[At the burial of their brother, Quentin – mid-1970s]**

March 1st

Toquerville, Utah

# TOQUER TOPICS



## MARCH 1953

MONTHLY PAPER EDITED FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE TOQUERVILLE WARD OF UTAH

| DATE      | WHAT  | WHERE  | TIME   |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| March 1   | Barbara H. Kleinman's Birthday<br>Priesthood Meeting<br>(Ward teachers report meeting. Lesson--"8th Article of Faith.")<br>Sunday School Prayer Meeting<br>Sunday School<br>Fast Meeting<br>Union Meeting (Stake)   | Toquerville, Ut.<br>Priesthood Room<br>Ward Chapel<br>Ward Chapel<br>Ward Chapel<br>Stake Chapel | 24 hrs.<br>9:30A.M.<br>10:15 A.<br>10:30 A.<br>12:00 P.<br>2:30 P. |
| March 2   | Lillian D. Bringhurst's Birthday<br>Picture Show for Ward Bldg. Fund  | Toquerville, Ut.<br>Ward Chapel  | 24 hrs.<br>7:30 P.M.   |
| March 3   | Relief Society (Theology Lesson. "Nephi". Teacher--Erma Bringhurst and Barbara Kleinman. Visiting Teachers Message given by Sister Clara Kleinman.)<br>M. I. A. Prayer Meeting<br>Mutual Improvement Ass'n. Meeting (Program given by Mia-Maids. Dancing afterwards.) | Relief S. Bldg.<br>Recreation Hall<br>Recreation Hall  | 2:30 P.M.<br>7:30 P.M.<br>8:00 P.M.                                |
| March 4   | Primary Prayer Meeting<br>Primary General Meeting   | Recreation Hall<br>Recreation Hall   | 3:15 P.M.<br>3:30 P.M.   |
| March 5   | John Lewis Beatty's Birthday  | Toquerville, Ut.   | 24 hrs.  |
| March 7-5 | Three one-act plays<br>(Two comedy's and one burlesque. Put on by Melba Brewer and Co. This is sponsored by Ward Bldg. Fund. There will be an admission.)   | Ward Chapel  | 7:30 P.M.  |