

GARN J. OLSEN
1911 - 1996

I was born and raised in Spring City, Sanpete County, Utah. I went to school at the age of five. There was no kindergarten back then so I went right into first grade. I always liked school. After my twelfth year I attended Snow College and graduated with a teacher's certification.

That summer, 1932, my fiends and I made a trip to Tropic. I met Iris Rose Ott, four years later we were married. Before leaving Tropic, I visited with the superintendent of schools and was told to complete an application, get refernces and send it to him as soon as possible. I did just as he requested and in August I received a letter offering me a teaching position beginning September 26, 1932. The contract read, "At a salary of \$82.80 a month. For seven months or until funds are exhausted."

I began teaching that fall in Tropic. During the summer I went to BYU and earned advanced degrees. I taught in many towns where I was principal as well. I was teaching in Richfield when Superintendent Moody from Washington County school District called and asked me to come to St. George to be interviewed by the school board relative to becoming the principal of their newest school, East Elementary, which was opening in September of 1955. I was interviewed the following Saturday and given the job.

We moved to St. George in July 1955 and stayed twelve years. I landscaped the new school ground, added improvements and planted mulberry trees all around the building. There was exactly one acre of ground on the south side of the building. I finally got permission to plant grass on the south side. I got the PTA to help. They had fertilizer hauled from Gentry's Dairy and spring-toothed it and harrowed it several times. It was leveled, then I got the 5th and 6th grades and their teachers to rake it by hand. We got a sprinkling system put in and broadcast the seed by hand, then we raked it over by hand again. We had a beautiful lawn.

While I was principal, I organized a chorus of upper grade kids and practiced two days a week. Dr. Terry's wife was our accompanist. She has told me twice since we moved to Salt Lake City, that I was the best principal she had ever been associated with. I had good teachers at East. We all worked together. It was a top rated school.

I made certain scrapbooks of each year's activities were compiled and preserved in hardbound covers. These books can tell the story of East Elementary School far better than I can. They contain a record and legacy of learning, service, and community building. I was proud to do my part.

In 1967, after thirty-five years in education, I retired. I was pleased to have a fellow educator, Dar Smith, take my place at East Elementary. My wife and I decided to move to Salt Lake City, since most of our children had settled in the area. In 1977 we made our final move to Orem, Utah. We are happy, blessed, and content.