

## **My memories**

### **Reflections on Giles relations**

Grandma Golda knew how to make things delicious to eat. As a really young child one isn't particularly culinary inclined; as long as your stomach is full, you are on to other things. So my earliest memories of Grandma Giles involve fishing. Grandma would travel a long way to put a line in the water and once her line was in the water we were not leaving until Grandma decided we were leaving. In this business of fishing, Grandpa Giles – David Charles “Chuck” Giles served as a sort of personal servant. He was back and forth to the tackle box. He was the netter, the “get them off the line” guy and the guy who gutted them. “The Reservoir” was a name given to a man made lake outside of Soda Springs, Idaho that dammed the Blackfoot river. I thought it was the only lake on earth as a child and I was in my early teens before I knew people fished for all kinds of fish - not just trout and steelhead.

I remember fishing at The Reservoir with Keith and Gehrig came along (he couldn't have been more than 2). Grandpa Chuck was keeping lines in the water for Eula (Golda's sister), Zelma (Golda's sister), and Golda. He also helped Dad keep lines in the water for me and Keith. Uncle Wells (Zelma's husband) needed no help keeping his line in the water. This particular time the fishing was good and joy and elation rang through the air frequently. This was no catch and release operation. The destiny of each catch included a frying pan or oven. Each fish was subject to scrutiny and everyone had to make a comment after examining each catch. I could not tell you today whether we caught rainbow that day or brown trout but I do remember Jerry, Wells and Chuck periodically breaking into spasmodic laughter, usually at some comment made by Uncle Wells. I can also safely say that time stood still during these affairs. No one seemed to be in a rush to get anywhere. Keith, Gehrig and I would build things with rocks or make dams on the beach. If the fishing was good we kept pretty close to the action. We sometimes fished The Reservoir around China Hat – a little butte outside of Soda Springs and we sometimes fished the Reservoir around the Henry store side of the lake. I like fishing around Henry store, maybe the place was called Lone Tree(?), because these little springs came out of the side hill and ran down on the beach and I liked damming them and watching them spread out on the beach. The soil was bright red clay. I will stipulate right now that Keith picked up the nuances of fishing much quicker than I did. (In fact, expand that to all things fishing and hunting.) I had a very middling amount of patience for fishing and preferred to spend time with Grandpa, making his rounds. Uncle Wells and his can of corn bait intrigued me but if the fish didn't respond right away I lost attention. Tracking the bobber as it, well, bobbed, didn't hold my attention. It is my belief that we fell asleep within minutes of getting back into the vehicles to go home.

I will say this about fishing with Grandma and Grandpa – they were in no hurry. It represented a part of life they enjoyed and yes they were older and retired but they could go fishing without a lot of preparation and while recreation was part of the equation, being outdoors and with people you loved played just as big a role. Grandma had infinite patience with fishing; not so much with Grandpa.

Uncle Wells Hepworth sat on a camping chair on these excursions, ensconced upon his Coleman throne, he sat, a philosophic dispenser of financial wisdom and political sense. The banter often divided along gender lines but a lot of playful back and forth happened too. Wells' punctuated

his comments with pauses for chewing tobacco and after tapping the lid and getting a dip he would resume conversing. In later years, of course, Wells Hepworth gave up chewing tobacco because it became too expensive. Accompanying Wells' punchlines were furrowed brows, squinting eyes and/or other facial expressions that peered out from his wide brimmed, but not quite, cowboy hat, in a kind of jubilant sense of near perfection in communicating a truth. Later life would teach me that Wells Hepworth had the unofficial title of "character," (the same title carried by my Uncle Joe Bona). I always got a kick out of Aunt Zelma Chandler (Wells wife) who was not over awed by Wells at all. Her demeanor and personality were very different from my grandmother's and yet the love between them and theirs never lacked. (The diversity in both my Mother and Father's families in terms of activity in the church, personal habits and politics taught me young that people were at different stages of feelings towards to Lord's church and they were all loved anyway.) It was crystal clear to me at a young age that my Dad liked to spend time with his uncles and aunts.

If lake fishing revolved around The Reservoir, creek or river fishing (we always pronounced it "crick") fishing had one grand destination – Wayan, Idaho and the home of Uncle Larry and Aunt Marilyn Swain. After arrival at their home we would head toward Star Valley Wyoming and Tin Cup creek. A dusty gravel road laid out our route to the creek. We often rode in the back of the truck and ate dust with delight. Once fishing began Dad and Grandpa had a harder time here because we were more spread out. Lots of willows and beaver ponds and marsh land separated the holes. Cries of "Chuck" would often come up in Grandma's voice. She had a kind of distinctive high pitch wail that acted as homing beacon and allowed you to locate her quickly. Chuck had to change bait and fix snags. One trip I remember Keith, Gehrig and I all snagged at the same time. Dad exasperatedly shouted out to no one in particular – "I can't fish with all you kids like this." Grandpa soon arrived on that scene and helped him with one of us. We were pretty proud when we could bring a trout back to the campground. I remember lure and bait fishing in Tin Cup. But Larry and Dad were magicians. They could fly fish. Still to this day, I think I enjoy watching people fly fish more than I enjoy it when I myself am doing it. These expeditions often involved my cousins Kevin and Corey and Uncle Larry and Aunt Mary, as I normally called her, too. Larry usually disappeared as the vehicle came to a stop and reappeared at the end with gigantic brown trout. Aunt Mary, as I recall, stayed at the campground and she and my Mom would watch over the food. Pork and beans from a can, chips, hot dogs, and Aunt Mary's potato salad, not to mention, pickles, hamburgers, licorice and s'mores. It seems I joined them sometimes pretty quick when the fishing didn't go my way. Tin Cup may as well have been the best trout fishing stream in the world for the enjoyment of being there. It took me years of reflection to understand that the people made the trip, not the fish.

Leaving the house in Soda Springs brought such emptiness to me when we would drive away. Grandma and Grandpa would wave goodbye and would disappear into the distance and I would turn around in our big station wagon, face the front, and cry softly to myself.

## Reflections on Bona relations

I remember the house in Benjamin where Keith, Gehrig and I stayed when Mom and Dad went to California in about 1969. The house was small and there was a large step between, I believe, the kitchen and living room on the main floor. (The point of these memories is not to be precisely correct but to write down memories as I remember them. As we get older we all come to realize childhood memories are colored by childlike perceptions.) Grandpa Bona had some outbuildings and horses were kept there. He saddled a horse and Grandma lifted us up to him and he would take us around the yard. We were not old enough to ride a horse on our own yet. A dog lived with Grandma and Grandpa but he stayed outside and got yelled at if he bugged us too much. On this and other trips, we went to see Grandpa Bona's mother in Spanish Fork. She lived at 129 East 600 North in a white house with a big porch. She liked to keep a shawl around her shoulders and had a little white dog that lived with her. She was very kind and her hair was very white. We approached her with a kind of reverence because all the other adults treated her like she was fragile and might break at any moment.

I perceived early on that Phyllis Bona ruled the kitchen. Her food tasted good and it came fast. God help you if you said you were hungry! Action was taken immediately to alleviate that! Unless dinner was already "in process," then you simply had to wait. Corn on the cob in summer. Sinkers and tomatoes. Toast and jam or jelly. Eggs, eggs and more eggs. All until you were entirely full and bulging with your hunger in remission. In the early 1970's, in a way I can barely hope to convey, people still cooked, families were large and cold cereal and soft drinks were a rare luxury for the offspring of Judy and Jerry. We did not eat cold cereal in Star Valley, WY or Preston, ID. We ate oatmeal or corn meal or pancakes. But Grandma Bona had cold cereal! She had Squirt and Dr. Pepper! And she had the corner store. Opulence? Damn right it was. Grandma Giles served cold cereal for breakfast occasionally but she poured the bowls and took the cereal off the table and it was not sugary cereal, more like Grape Nuts. Grandma Bona, on the other hand, well she pulled out bags of cold cereal and you got to pour them yourself. It was a refined sugar paradise. No wonder we had so much energy to round the block 25 times after breakfast.

Neither of my grandmother's culinary skills would have qualified as gourmet on that island called Manhattan. Their food did not pretend to epicurean pretense and thank heaven for that or children would not have eaten it. It made such an impression on me that I find myself longing for Phyllis' sinkers or Golda's bread. And the smell coming from that stove top and oven live still in a part of my brain that brings pleasure just thinking about them.

About 1973 Keith and Phyllis moved from Benjamin to great grandma Bona's house in Spanish Fork (great Grandma Bona having passed). There grandpa flood irrigated his lawn from little ditches that seemingly went all around town. He would put a dam in front of a little culvert and spread the water out into the yard. The same thing happened over in Provo where Dad's aunts, my great aunts, lived. Mostly in Provo it seemed like the irrigation water ran down the edge of the street in deep curbs. When we were real young it was fun to splash around in the water in the yard in our underwear or diapers but the real fun started when we got a little older – stick races. We each chose a stick and threw it in the ditch and raced them through culverts, under bridges and streets. We raced them for several blocks. Then we would pull them out and do it all over again. Needless to say, this was a warm weather, summer time activity. And it

brought such joy to little boys. I do not recall getting bored with our stick boat races which must mean the adults dragged us away from it when they got tired of supervising us. Supervision might be too strong a word because they were never running along the ditch with us. I will tell you one thing; Keith Bona knew what was going on across several blocks of Spanish Fork when his grandkids were involved. Though he seldom seemed to us to leave the friendly confines of his front porch, he was quick to be there if anything out of the ordinary occurred. He either had a vast network of spies or he was watching us and we were unawares, or both. As an aside, I must point out that where Aunt Hazel lived in Provo was the same neighborhood where great grandpa David Franklin Giles lived and traded horses and cattle before packing up all his stuff and moving with some son in laws to Caribou County Idaho. My grandpa, David Charles, has memories of that part of Provo.

Another memory regarding Grandpa Bona involved driving up into mountains on dirt roads and coming to a camp where he was watching hundreds of sheep. I was very small. He had two horses and a little sheep wagon. We threw rocks into a little lake and visited. I remember that place because I watched others skip rocks there. Grandma came along and took some food and stuff up to sheep camp. We left and I felt melancholy leaving Grandpa up there. I felt lonely for Grandpa, up there all alone.

Aunt Leona had white hair and a kind face. I do not remember her husband. Aunt Leona's head moved back and forth in her old age. She didn't have a tick but rather her head bobbed up and down slightly. She and Aunt Edith would come over and have visits with Grandma in the kitchen. Edith did not have white hair – it was reddish and I thought she was very young comparatively. Early on, these kitchen affairs involved brewing up a pot of coffee and lots of fast talking. Later, when grandma started going to the temple, the coffee stopped. I vaguely remember an episode or two involving decaff and the bishop not accepting that and the kitchen gang's unhappiness with that decision. Later the coffee pot went away permanently but the conversations with her sisters went on. Only much later did I realize that Edith and Leona, knew and dearly loved our mother when she was a youth and that was why they were so interested in us.

Grandma Bona's brother Ralph had a finger cut off and liked to tell us that something in his nose ate it off when he picked his nose. He liked to quote poetry and my favorite was the "Cremation of Sam McGee." He had a verbal flourish for the dramatic that emphasized the "*The artic trails have their secret tails that that could make your blood run cold.*" I do not remember the other poems he quoted. He had a bright and pleasant personality. Grandma's brother Frank lived in Benjamin in an old and dusty home with a big barn in the yard. There were harnesses and all the old trappings necessary to pull implements by horse team. Frank looked to me as aged and weather as that barn. He rolled his own cigarettes from a can of red tobacco he carried in his shirt pocket. At the end of his cigarette rolling endeavor, he would lick the paper and stick it in his mouth. Grandma seemed totally at home in that old dusty house and looking back I can see she had spent many an hour in just such a house in just such a setting. We would visit for a while and then leave. Frank was very quiet and most of the talking was done by Mom and Grandma.

Leaving the house in Spanish Fork brought such emptiness to me when we would drive away. Grandma and Grandpa would wave goodbye and would disappear into the distance and I would turn around in our big station wagon, face the front, and cry softly to myself.

## **Reflections on our parents**

Sunday evenings Dad would read to us. During the rest of the week Mom would read to us. Mother was a devoted reader to her children and I loved that experience. When we lived in Havre the family reading mostly changed to Sunday afternoons. We read the biography of Pres. Kimball on Sunday afternoons in the big living room in the house on Shepherd Lane. Pres. Kimball was outspoken about the consequences of sexual sin and his biography talked about that but I remember these big gaps in Mom's reading some chapters where the book just didn't make sense. I later realized Mom was skipping over the explicit parts so the younger kids would not ask questions. When we were young Dad used to read from a book called "*Roads to Everywhere*" or "*Roads to Anywhere*." It was a red book and I would dearly love to have a copy of it. (I've looked on Amazon and other corners of the internet without success.) I remember Dad reading the story of the last wolf in San Juan river country of Utah and Colorado. I remember him reading to us about that massive grizzly bear Old Ephraim who was killed up Logan River canyon and who has a statue in his honor in Montpelier, Idaho. He also read us book about E.L "Dick" Romney who was football and basketball coach (I believe) at the Utah Agricultural college in the 1920-1940 era. Listening to Dad read that book I thought the "AC" [ag college] and Logan, Utah were about the center of the college athletics universe. Dad also told us stories about his Dad and his Grandpas. Grandpa Chandler in Idaho would walk anywhere and everywhere and had a lady friend after his wife died. He never drove a car but drove a tractor later in life. He died after an accident involving a tractor he was driving. Dad also told us stories about his Dad having a man jump up onto the running board of his model T while parked in a field with a girl. When he turned on the lights a figure was crouched in the light at the end of his headlights. As he started to pull away the man rushed the car and Grandpa had to drive crazy to get his off those running boards.

Mom always told us stories about her Grandma who joined the church in Switzerland and sailed for Utah at the age of 8 I believe. Elizabeth Hauser and her brother, age 6 coming across the Atlantic under power of sailing ship is unfathomable (it's like un without fathom) to me.

The vehicles that Dad and Mom owned could fill a small volume and you could make tear water tea at the end of reading it. That is, both the crying and the laughter, would fill your cup. Going to Wayan the back way over dusty roads in the back of the old Dodge truck with blankets tied to the stock rack and going to Cardston in the back of the Nissan with a little camper and Brandma Bona in the back are evocative memories. The vehicles that used to make the trip from the house on Shepherd Lane to Havre take a whole chapter in themselves. Gehrig and Jeff Lammerberding rolling his car and walking away. Lib and I doing 360's in the little white Toyota and 2 wheels but never rolling and the blue pickup that stopped every time we went through a snow drift and Keith would jump out and dry off the coil before we could go again. I remember Mom's utter toughness on -30 below night in the blue, church owned, station wagon, standing in the middle of the road and waving down a car when our engine seized up. I was 19 and scared to death because we had Lib or Spud with us and no heat. We got a ride into Big Sandy where Dad came

and picked us up. The white and brown striped station wagon that died on the Havre viaduct and had to come down a single lane road, in reverse, on red lights for the other way – yes that really happened and I can still here the horns honking at me to this day. It took 3-4 red lights. When I did get it parked and the grain elevator at the bottom of the viaduct, I stepped out. I never set foot in it again. Mother can tell you my tone of voice when I called to report.

I do have to say the Dad handed me the keys to the Plymouth Valiant in Sept. of 1984 and told me to drive it to Logan and come home for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I happen to also know he took the last payment he and Mom were due on the house in Florence and gave it to USU to pay my (expensive) out of state tuition for fall and winter and spring quarters. He owed Grandpa Bona some money for a septic tank and so I believe that there were some discussions with Phyliss and Keith about paying my tuition before paying them. When I returned from a mission, that I had not saved a dime for, Dad took me to Al Carlson's car lot and we selected a Dodge Colt. As I got ready to drive the car off the lot Dad told me, "Sorry son, this is the last thing we can do to help you get through college. I have to help you siblings now." I stand in awe to this day of what they have done for all of us, finances being the least important thing.