Howard Elmer Gibson was born 27 May 1883, at Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah, the 4th child of William Moroni Gibson and Harriet Woolf.

According to the history, “For Heaven’s Sake,” of the James Perkes’ Family written and researched by O. D. Perkes, M. D., Howard’s father, William Moroni Gibson, came from England with his mother, Elizabeth Gibson, and grew up in Belleville, Illinois. His mother was a corset maker and his natural father was a wealthy Englishman, Richard Roberts. Elizabeth Gibson remained in Belleville, Illinois, and let her son, William, come west with the James Perkes family to Hyde Park, Utah. Evidently, Elizabeth Gibson never came west, because according to the history, when years later William made a trip east to market his sheep, he went to his boyhood home in Belleville, Illinois, and placed a headstone on his mother’s grave.

The James Perkes family and the John Woolf families were neighbors in Hyde Park, Utah. William Gibson married Phebe, daughter of John Woolf, 8 March 1869, when she was 18 years old. 4 years later, on 23 Nov. 1874, William took her sister Harriet as a plural wife. Harriet was 2 years younger than Phebe and was married at age 21. The story is told that when Grandfather came home with a second wife, Phebe, he first wife, rolled up his clothes and told him and her sister to live elsewhere; but other histories said that “William and the Woolf sisters functioned very well as a model plural family.” Phebe bore 5 children and her sister Harriet had 9. William truly loved his wives and 14 children.

William and Harriet Gibson’s children were (6 boys and 3 girls): John Willard, born 3 Dec. 1875; Harvey, born 4 Dec. 1877; Lois Bell, born 3 Sep. 1879; Howard Elmer, born 27 May 1883; Willis Henry, born 28 March 1885; Andrew, born 12 June 1887; Pearl LaVeda, born 18 Sep. 1889; George Wesley, born 10 June 1893 and Tressa Valera, born 24 June 1895.

William Moroni was a tall, nervous, and energetic type of person, who also had a lot of good English pride, which has been handed down to his posterity.

William and his family moved to Franklin, Idaho, where he was a landowner, sheepman and sawmill operator. Times were hard and his was a large family for which to provide.

Howard attended school with the other children in Franklin, Idaho. He has told the story of going to school horseback with no shoes on his feet. There were several big boys in town who would laugh and make fun of his black feet when he would ride in. He rook it as long as he could and one day got off his horse & shipped the daylights out of them, after which they left him alone.

Several years later, when a teenager, Howard got a job and stayed with his sister, Lois Bell Gibson Jensen, and her husband, Charles, in Cove, Idaho, just out of Franklin. It was while he was living there that he became acquainted with Elsie Kingsford. They courted for 2 ½ years, then were married 7 Sep. 1910, in the Logan Courthouse in Logan, Utah. Howard was 27 and Elsie was 22.

During the time of his courtship to Elsie, Howard and 2 of his brothers, John and Harvey, homesteaded some land in Grace, Idaho. Howard’s land was north of Grace, where he had built a 1 room house near Alexander Point. Consequently, on 10 Sep. 1910, the newlyweds put all they put all they owned in a wagon and moved to Grace, Id. The house was not finished inside, but they lined it halfway up with boards, & packed dirt in by the bucket to fill the space & keep out the cold wind.
There was no water on the farm and it had to be hauled 2 miles from the North Extension and Central canals and from Bear River in wooden barrels. Howard would fill the barrels and after jolting the 2 miles, they would be only half-full when he arrived. He had 2 horses, “Flax” and “Flo”. He had plowed about 20 acres with a hand plow, so in October he borrowed a drill from his brother, Harvey, and planted fall wheat. As soon as the fall work was done, he and his brothers, John and Harvey, went together to the canyon for firewood and posts to fence their land. They would ford the river where the water was low and go up Nelson Canyon, cut and lead their wagons (or sleigh, if snow was on the ground), and head home. It was a hard day’s work.

For the first few years, until Howard and Elsie got their house better winterized, they spent some time during the winter in Franklin at the Gibson Farm up Cherry Creek. The 3 oldest boys were all born at their grandparents’ home (William Richard Kingsford and Eustatia Day Kingsford) in Franklin, Idaho. The 5 girls were all born in Grace, Idaho, delivered by Dr. John Hyrum Hubbard. Elsie said there never was a kinder, more dedicated man; he would hitch his team to his little buggy and go night or day, far or near, to deliver a baby or doctor someone who was ill.

The names and birthdates of the children are:

Howard Clendon Gibson            Born 1 June 1911
William Doris Gibson                 Born 15 Nov 1912
Andrew Nile Gibson    Born 13 Feb. 1915
Norma Gibson                 Born 12 Jan. 1918
Fern Gibson      Born 10 Nov. 1919
Eva K. Gibson                  Born 27 June 1923
Ina K. Gibson                              Born 7 March 1925
Myrl K. Gibson                  Born 21 April 1929

In 1913, the railroad came through to Grace and was not far from the house. By this time, the Frank Ballard family decided to go back to Utah, so Howard bought their ranch (160) acres at 8% interest. They moved into the Ballard house, but still had to haul water.

There was a small store and a grain elevator by the railroad at Alexander, Idaho, where they bought their groceries.

Their son, William Doris, recalls, “If I can remember when John Roghaar had a general merchandise store in Grace. He used to drive his white-top buggy each morning to the railroad depot in Alexander, pick up his freight and return to open his store.”

When Howard harvested his wheat crop, he had to have it cut by a machine called a header, after which it was stacked. The threshing machine and the threshing crew then came to thresh the wheat from the straw. Howard and Fred Robinson bought one of the first combines in the valley.

When Andrew was one year old, Howard and Lois and their 3 small sons made a special trip to Logan, Utah, to the Logan Temple, where they were sealed as a family. The next day, 17 March 1916, Howard went back to the temple and did his brother, Andrew Gibson’s, work for him. Andrew and his brother, Willis (who had been married in the Logan Temple), were killed in a snowslide in Franklin Basin 15 Jan. 1915. Howard returned home to Grace in the wagon and a week later Lois and the 3 boys returned to Grace on the train.

Son, William Doris, recalls, “When I got old enough, I can remember going to the canyon with Dad and a favorite team, ‘Bally’ and ‘Chief.’ I can also remember plowing with them.
In the fall of 1920, Howard bought the Elmo Carkins home north of Grace on the highway (it is still standing), and they moved into it in the winter to be closer to school. Then they would move back to the ranch in the summer.

Water still had to be hauled until the town of Grace allowed it to be piped to the house. Howard planted apple trees, built a cow barn, chicken coop, garage and root cellar. His first car was a “Model T Ford, which cost about $500. Lois really enjoyed the car, now she could more easily visit the grandparents in Franklin.

In June 1924, part of the ranch was mortgaged to dig a well, which cost $1,000. How Lois appreciated having water on the ranch, so it no longer had to be hauled in barrels.

During the 1930 depression, many banks failed. Wheat was 10 cents to 25 cents, pigs 3 cents a pound. Howard sold 5 head of 2 year old heifers for $16 a head. There was a $300 note due at the final payment on the mortgage. Howard was unable to come up with the money, even to borrow. So the Utah Mortgage and Loan (Mr. Champ was president and his field man, A. C. Smith) foreclosed on all but 80 acres of the ranch, which was in Lois’ name. Chris Christensen bought the ranch and later sold it to his brother, Heber Christensen, whose son, Reed, operates the land today.

Howard was an avid reader. He liked to keep breast of the news by reading the daily paper, farm magazines, books written by Church leaders, and the Standard Works of the Church. He also loved to read a good detective story once in awhile. He was not an active Church attender, but did study the gospel and encouraged his family to do likewise.

In his later years, he developed a heart condition which really slowed him down. He died 12 Oct. 1956, at his home of a heart attack at the age of 73. Lois also died of heart trouble, 14 Nov. 1968, in the Caribou Co. Hospital at the age of 80.

Howard and Lois were both honest, hard-working, God-fearing people and their children are proud to be theirs. They cherish the heritage and memories left to them.

William Doris Gibson, Son
Information from book JOHN ANTHONY WOOLF FAMILY  Publ. 1986
Typed into the computer Oct. 2002 Kathleen Jardine Woolf  Idaho Falls, Idaho
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