

Eric Walz History 300 Collection

# Darwin Dinsdale – Growing Up in Rigby Idaho

By Darwin Dinsdale

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## Box 6 Folder 10

Oral interview conducted by Jocelyn Peterson

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Brigham Young University – Idaho

JP: This is Jocelyn Peterson and I am interviewing Darwin Dinsdale, and it is September 23<sup>rd</sup> around three o'clock in the afternoon. We'll go ahead and get started. May I ask when and where you were born?

DD: I was born in Anis, Idaho. That's three miles north of Rigby here, and I was born the 27<sup>th</sup> of March of 1935.

JP: When did your family move to that area in Idaho?

DD: My grandfather Robert Dinsdale moved to, moved there from Lavel, Idaho, about two miles away, in 1895. My father was born in 1890.

JP: So he was in his forties when you were born?

DD: He was forty-five.

JP: How about your family? Can you describe your family to me a little bit? How many brothers and sisters you had.

DD: Three sisters, I'm the only boy. We lived three miles north of Rigby, there where we all grew up and attended Anis Elementary School through the eighth grade. We lived on a little farm that was fifty-two acres. We farmed with horses; we spent, you know, all the whole family helped with the farm. It was a family-type farm. We were not rich people so all the neighborhood there wasn't people, anybody in the neighborhood who owned enough machinery to farm a farm. So it was like a neighborhood family. We all worked together to farm our farms and so we were a very close-knit neighborhood. Wonderful childhood to grow up in, we didn't have any money, but no one needed it.

JP: About how many families were involved?

DD: Oh Gee Wiz...

JP: Did it cover a huge area, a small area?

DD: Oh probably a mile. Each way there's a...we traded with different neighbors, we traded work with different neighbors so maybe twenty-five families that we traded work with from time to time, on different occasions. And my father was a man who worked on the Railroad for seventeen years before he started to farm and so he took over the family farm after my grandfather got older and that's how we come to live on the farm and grow up there. We had a wonderful childhood, milked cows, had chickens, raised beef stock, we raised potatoes, grain, hay, peas, those types of crops you know; had a large garden always for food; raised a lot of our own food, most of our own food.

JP: Pretty self-sufficient then.

DD: Everybody had to be really because nobody had much money. We used to sell our milk from our milk cows and then we would trade milk for butter and cheese and that sort of thing to the creamery. We'd trade wheat for flour to the elevators, grain elevators and that. And we'd get, I remember germ aid mush and oatmeal mush, and that sort of thing, and we used to call it mush instead of cereal. We'd get that from the grain elevator, we'd trade our grain for that. And so we didn't buy those things, we sold eggs to the old Broulim's Super Market which was on the main street in Rigby and it was just a little tiny store then. And it was Charlie Broulim that owned that. His son Dick Broulim owns these other Broulim's supermarkets now.

JP: So it was like a market type of thing where community members could bring in produce to sell?

DD: Right. There was a lot of the produce that was bought from the local farmers and that. And a lot of it wasn't, you know, a lot of it was commercial that he sold there. It was just a little town, you know, a little country town that was a nice place to grow up in and be a part of. And people kinda lived pretty good, I think better than today in some respects.

JP: Oh really, can you elaborate on that?

DD: Well today we, everybody wants money to do things. Then, we lived more family-oriented life, of course we do now here, but we didn't have to have much money to live. Today, why it's a lot more commercialized than it was back then. I enlisted in the military, my father had me deferred from the farm, or, deferred from the military for a couple of years because he was sick, he was real sick. And we didn't expect him to live, but he did for quiet a while. And so I didn't go to high school. I worked, I was on my own practically when I was fourteen and so I worked and had jobs, how would you say it, uh anyway I received men's wages when I was fourteen years old, from then on.

JP: What did you start doing?

DD: Just working for all the farmers around. I irrigated for them, I shoveled their grass out of their ditches, and milked cows for them, I did all kinds of farm labor-work for farmers in the community. And it was farmers as far as three or four miles away you know.

JP: Did you walk?

DD: I rode a horse. I grew up on the back of a saddle-horse, so I had a horse. Most of the time, later on when I was fifteen, why I bought an old car for ten dollars and fifty cents. I drove it. It wasn't much of a car. It was an old 1929 Model A, coup, with a rumble seat. So anyway that's how I grew up. Like I said we used to graduate from the eighth grade, so I graduated from the eighth grade. I started high school but I just, I had too much work to do and so I didn't go to high school, I only went about a month or so, or a couple of

months I think it was. And the principle, Tom Andrus, was so good to me. We were friends until he died really a short time ago, just a wonderful friend.

JP: Just a couple years ago he passed away?

DD: Yah, he arranged for me to take my school in just half days so that I could work. He did everything to keep me in high school. And he and I were close friends the rest of his life. Anyway, when I was nineteen, my father got so he could run the farm and so I enlisted in the military, and I was a military policeman, I went through the...

JP: In which branch?

DD: The army. And I went through the military police academy in Camcorden, Georgia.

JP: What year was that?

DD: 1954. It was 1954, 55, I don't remember for sure now. But anyway, I went through that academy which was the real thing, it was a military academy because it was at the Provo marshal general's post, and so that was his pride and joy, that police academy. I went through that and it was a wonderful experience there and I enjoyed the military. Then after two years my folks' house burned down and so I come home to help them on leave and then my enlistment and that was up and so I got out of the military.

JP: After how many total years?

DD: All together with the reserves and everything why it was six years, but they worked with me and let me serve my military time as I could. And that because of my folks' need and that. So then after I was home for, what, a little over a year, Deane and I married. And she was going to Rick's college and we used to dance a lot, and in fact my older sister and I used to be dance directors in our ward and that so we love to ballroom dance. And my wife loves to ballroom dance and I love to dance with her. And so anyway we enjoyed that and after we were married why, we had three children, three boys. And I was farming and working for wages full time also. And so I worked nine hours a day, six days a week, and milked a bunch of cows and I run a small farm, and rented some farm besides the one we had. And it wasn't a lot of fun for my wife 'cause I worked almost night and day, but I had a bad back and it hurt. When I was fifteen years old in a potato warehouse, and she knew that and so she insisted we go to college and so I didn't know any different because I didn't really know what college was all about. So I went and took the entrance exam and went to Idaho State University and went into electronics, engineering.

JP: Can I interject just a little bit? So you got married and you had three boys and then you went to college. (Darwin nods head yes.) So as a college student, after working on the farm, you had three sons as a college student and your wife was going to school at the same time?

DD: No, she was helping to raise a large garden to feed our children. And I worked for a real estate outfit in, Marshall Real Estate in Pocatello, and we raised a large garden and I had, actually, three part-time jobs with them and I'd work eight sometimes ten hours a day besides carrying twenty credit hours, times twenty-two credit hours. And my wife helped me. She'd had Ricks College training and so she helped me with that until I could get caught up and it took over two years for me to really get where I felt like I had caught up. So we worked together. I told the Dean there that, or I asked him if it was possible to get her name on the diploma also, and he just laughed. But anyway, he said, "there's a lot of wives need that." But anyways it was neat and we had a wonderful experience in a college ward there. I had become inactive in the church because I was working night and day and because I didn't know much about the church. All the young men that I chased around with went on missions but me and so I was essentially inactive. I'd go once in a while but I was essentially inactive.

JP: Were your parents members?

DD: They were, but they were not active. And so, my mother thought she was active, she'd go once or twice a year. And so after I was down at Idaho State University for a time, I guess after about the first year, why some of the students, married students there in the third ward, student ward that we had there, they were all returned missionaries and they were younger than us. So they decided that they were going to get me to be active in the church and the bishop came to me one day and said, I need to have you go listen to Paul Dunn up at the church institute. I didn't have any idea who Paul Dunn was. And I said, I don't have time, I have all these jobs, I'm really, really tied up, I just really don't have time. He twisted my arm really hard, and I said, I didn't even call him bishop, I called him Richard, I said, I, Richard, I really don't have time for this. I said, I tell you what I'm going to do with it, with yah, I'm going in and I'm going to clean up, 'cause I was working on our car and I was all greasy, I was putting in a new transmission. And I went in and I cleaned up and went with him to listen to Paul H. Dunn. Well Paul H. Dunn taught me more in the forty-five minutes to an hour that he talked than I had ever heard before, about the church. He made me hungry for what's in the church. So I started to become active, and I became active and I've been active in the church ever since. So anyway, that's part of my conversion story. But my wife, I always knew where she stood. She was always solid and honest and straight forth. She was very, very honest. And she was a Relief Society President and I was inactive, pretty hard right? I've been a bishop now so I understand some about how hard it was for her to do that, but fortunately she stuck with me and we got it done.

JP: That's great, Wow! You've answered most of my questions that I have, just right here.

DD: We moved to Las Vegas, Nevada on our first job out of school.

JP: After you were done with school?

DD: Right. And then we moved, I was there for a couple years and then we moved back to Idaho, we moved back to Blackfoot, and I worked out at the site.

JP: At this time you are an electrician? Is that the degree that you got?

DD: Actually I was an electrical engineer, but I worked in electronics. And then when I got a job back here in Idaho at the site, why...

JP: The INEEL?

DD: Right. Didn't have two e's in it then. Anyway, so we, in fact it was the Department of Energy then, it was called, it was DOE. But I worked for five different companies working for the same people in the same lab.

JP: I worked there over the summer. So I know what you mean.

DD: Oh. But anyway I worked in research in electronic assessing devices and related processing electronics and data acquisition for how many years? Probably fifteen years. Then I managed electric vehicle testing lab for nine years and worked in research there. Before I managed that lab I traveled back and forth to Japan and Germany for quite a few years. Spent twenty-five percent of my time in Japan and Germany on a project that I was offered to coordinate as an engineering coordinator. So I was a project engineer on those things. In fact the manager of that project, I had worked with him for years, he grew up in Swan Valley. He was the sharpest electrical engineer I've ever met, his name was Jim Coleson. And I worked with Tom Pieper, Tom Pieper, he spells his name P-I-E-P-E-R. He had seven doctorates; I worked in research with him for at least seven years, right with Tom, and Jim Coleson. And they were tremendous problem solvers. Tom Pieper's first doctorate was in Physics, then the rest were related engineering subjects, you know. And so I did mechanical, I did electronics, and I did electrical engineering, I covered all three of those fields, so I managed, or I "coordinated" is a more accurate term the projects and did all of the calibrations and stuff like that on equipment and found facilities in Canada and all around the United States. We had, Like in Northwestern, in Richland for example, that had the flow facilities to study the calibration and the related electronics and the research that we had done in harsh environments, and so that's primarily what I did.

JP: That's great. Going back to your college days a little bit, and in regards to the college students, you have an incredible work history. You were working so much, you had a family. Is there any advice that you would offer college students now as far as how to do better at time management, or just feel free to, just looking back on...

DD: Could I quote Richard L. Evans? He was asked that question one time, about that advice he would give to young people. And he says, "I can describe that in three words. And the first one is work, and the second one is work, and the third one is also work." If you have a good work ethic, and try to be honest with people and don't ever compete with anybody. Competition breeds contention. Don't compete with anybody; don't ever

try to compete with anybody, no matter what it is. Just cooperate, the job gets done better, and you gain more friends, and when you get down they'll help you. There's no contention. I learned that earlier in my life from my father, and it really works.

JP: Can we go back to your father just a little bit? You mentioned that he worked on the railroad? Do you remember any stories of the area? Where did he work on the railroad?

DD: He worked from Las Vegas, Nevada, up through this area. He worked for Billie OK who owned the grain elevator systems in the area. Way, way back. He worked for Avril Harriman who owned the Union Pacific Railroad, or owned most of the stock in the Union Pacific Railroad. And he worked on the water service and bridge and building. Instead of the plumbing, they called it the water service, and he did that for three years. And the other fourteen years was on bridge and building, where they build timber tressel bridges, the old timber tressels. 'Cause when he went to work there it was 1900's, in fact it was just before 1900. It was about 1898 when he went to work there. So he was eighteen, about eighteen, seventeen or eighteen when he went to work for the Union Pacific Railroad. He was married twice, his first wife and him lived up...well he was a professional wrestler along with it and so he lived kind of a rough life and they ended up in divorce. Then he married mom, mom had never been married. He married her later, there was let's see, I can't remember the year they were married, but anyway they were married. I had two sisters, actually three sisters, one only lived a few days, before I came along, so you get the time frame there, when they were married. But anyway, mom was one hard working person that gave her whole life to her family, and like I say, we lived a good life.

JP: Do you remember any specific traditions that your family had growing up, maybe around holidays or on Sundays?

DD: We met with family members a lot and played games a lot. All the cousins and stuff like that on their lawns you know, the inexpensive stuff to do. And we'd always have big meals and stuff when we'd go to our relatives to enjoy each other's company and that, and we'd go fishing. Our vehicles and that, were not all that reliable because we didn't have very good vehicles. But we'd drive out North of Rexburg and through the old windy road that used to wind through the sage brush and puncher tires. We'd have to stop and fix tires till we got to Kilgore, and then we'd go from Kilgore, up West Campus Creek and camp. And the mosquitoes were so thick...and the range cattle were out there and my father loved to, he was quite an athlete and so when he felt like it, he'd go out and play with the old range bulls and get them to chase him and so on. There's all kinds of stories like that, so many stories. And I was kind of his shadow growing up, as a boy, and so I'd go fishing with him and we'd go out along those creeks and there was no fish limit then and so we'd go out and fish and come in and we'd have small brook trout but they... we'd have fish fries, and they were great. But we enjoyed those, even the mosquitoes the way they were.

JP: Could you tell me a little bit more about how you met your wife? She was going to Ricks, and you were living here.

DD: Actually I knew my wife most of our lives, because I used to go to all the school dances, even though I didn't go to high school. I chased around with probably fifteen different young men. I was the last one to be a bishop. Out of all of them they were...well no, no there was one, one of my cousins was not a bishop, he got killed early in his life, but he'd gone on a mission, he and his wife both. And so, they were married eleven months when he got killed, when they both got killed, the same car accident. But other than that, why, I was the last one to be a bishop out of the group. And so we had a really, really, nice bunch of young men to chase around with and she had quite a few girlfriends that she chased around with, and they were really nice girls and that, and I dated, I think I dated most of them if not all of them while we were chasing around. Because we didn't date seriously, we'd just go to dances and stuff, and just enjoy the time, and so when we were in our crowd of young men, we might take a girl one night and one of the other guys would take her the next night, the next dance night. We followed the bands, the local orchestras that played.

JP: They were orchestras?

DD: They were orchestras that played for all of the dances and that because this was the big band era, see. So we had all this beautiful music to do Samba Americana, Waltz, Tango, all of those modern dances, see. We could even do the Charleston pretty well. We thoroughly enjoyed it, I love to dance. And so it was one of those things that we did a lot. And then I knew DeAnna all through her high school time along with her other girlfriends. I didn't date her 'til later on after I'd come back out of the military. It was the first time I had dated her and it was really a...I went to a, a buddy of mine had asked me to go to a Rick's, to a dance, they used to have dances quite often up there. So anyway, he wanted me to go with him. I was just back from the military and didn't really want to go dancing much then and I didn't want to date or anything. And so anyway, but he was an old friend and so I finally agreed to go with him and we went to the dance. And I thought, just back from the military, why, you know I know DeAnna and so, she's a really good dancer and so I danced with her quite a bit that night and then I took her home from the dance. And I thought, well she won't be too much impressed with me but well, this is probably good. And so I took her several times and realized I liked her quite a bit and so things kind of progressed and later that fall, why, we got married. This was probably a year from the time I started dating her.

JP: What year was it?

DD: It was October 25, 1957 when we were married.

JP: That was great. Thanks so much for that story. But also I wanted to go into maybe one area of the church, you became more active in college, and Paul H. Dunn influenced your testimony at first. Do you remember any other maybe apostles or prophets that influenced your conversion?

DD: Oh sure. Back then, Richard L. Evans wasn't an apostle, but he had a radio program with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. And I remember Nathan Tanner and President David

O. McKay, he touched me real deeply and all of them after that you know. President Ezra Taft Benson is one that stands out quite a bit in my mind. I can't say that they, how can you make one stand out above the other, because of their position they have their own, how would you say it, anyway, their own mission. I remember things like President Joseph Fielding Smith, when he became, just before he became President of the church, I remember two apostles helping him up to the pulpit that last time before the mantle fell on his shoulders. And I remember how his voice quivered and we could hardly understand him and how his body was wore out; he was well into his nineties. And then the mantle fell on his shoulders and he had, his body was literally restored to him right before our eyes. Well sure, because he had the energy of a younger man, the other apostles had a hard time keeping up with him. And until his mission was over he was here, when his mission was over he was gone, very apparent. President Lee was, Harold B. Lee was one that really impressed me. They all did. I stood over here in the stake center, I had been a bishop for three weeks, and L. Tom Perry asked me to come up, we was at a Priesthood meeting, a stake Priesthood meeting. And he asked me to come up, and he stood there, he towers over you, he's a huge man, and I'm not small, but anyway, he stood there and put his arm around me and attempted to teach me how to be a bishop. I remember what a wonderful experience that was, he asked me, "How long have you been a bishop?" And I said, "Three weeks." And everybody laughed, you know. But anyway it was a very neat experience.

JP: What year was this when you got called to be a bishop?

DD: I don't know, let's see. I've been released for almost three years, I was a bishop for five years, so it was eight years ago. Anyway, but then, what, a little over three years ago we had our young women's camp up in Island Park, and I took my boat and we had another couple of boats and we went to Island Part Reservoir on Thursday of that week. 'Cause my wife and I stayed up there the whole week when they had their young ladies camp, and it was a wonderful camp, they had wonderful leaders, and it was just great. Those kids did rock climbing; they did all kinds of stuff. They were just thoroughly enthralled. We stopped at Jerry Doyle Smith's cabin, they have a cabin up Bill's Highway which is on Island Park Reservoir. And Doyle asked me, he says, "Would you like to meet President Faust?" "Yeah I would." So anyway, he was just a couple of doors down on vacation in somebody else's place there, and so he guided us over to this other person's place where President Faust was, and he interviewed me, I have it on videotape, he interviewed me for a couple of minutes, a short time, and then he talked to the young ladies and then, we have a son, Robert, that was crippled twenty-one years ago really badly in an accident, car-train accident, or pickup-train accident. And Robert, he was not doing well, he had seizures and all kinds of things and of course his speech, he had very little speech then, there's a lot more now. But he, President Faust walked over, put his arms around Rob and gave him a hug and said a few things to him. I don't know what he said. It was for Rob, not for me I'm sure because I can't get the volume right to hear what he said so it was for Rob. But anyway, since that time, Rob has improved. We found a different doctor who was a doctor that, I'd been to a lot of specialists, and I just, this was a young girl, I walked into her office and I thought, how come we're here with this high school girl when we'd done all of these specialists. She knew more about it than all the

rest of 'em. And she told us more in fifteen minutes than we knew before. And put him on a different medicine. I think that's part of the blessing. So he's done better since, and we've seen an improvement. I thoroughly enjoy Rob.

JP: Do you remember, was your father involved with WWI at all?

DD: He was on the train in Rigby, passenger train, going toward Salt Lake to be inducted into the military when the war ended.