

# Our Family Links

The Groberg/Holbrook Family History Association Newsletter

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## A GATHERING PLACE

For more than a century now, members of the extended Delbert V. Groberg family have felt as much at home in Island Park, Idaho as the native moose and beaver. Shortly after their marriage in 1903, Delbert's Uncle George and Aunt Clara Brunt took a trip to Yellowstone. On their way, they camped in the Island Park area near the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. They immediately fell in love with the location and determined that they would return as often as possible. That there was not a direct road route between Idaho Falls and that part of Island Park at the time did not deter them. The Brunts and their friend Doc Mack would drive their cars onto the train going from Idaho Falls to West Yellowstone. The train would let them out at a cattle loading area called Trude Siding. From there, the friends would drive where they could and hike where they couldn't. Eventually George and Doc Mack bought property on the banks of Henry's Fork and built cabins. According to family lore, they were the first two cabins in that area of Island Park.

While Doc Mack foresaw and exploited the location's commercial potential, George had a different vision. According to his grandson and namesake George Brunt, George wanted a retreat where his family could gather, recreate, and be good influences on each other without interference from other more worldly influences. George also expressed the hope that in so doing, his children's children's



Son George Earl, father George and grandson George in front of the Brunt family cabin in 1955.

children would all come to know and love each other. In order to make that dream a

reality, George took his family to the cabin every summer. The Brunts often included their nephew Delbert and his siblings in those annual gatherings. When his children started to get older, George bought and subdivided a large block of land in the area. Over time he sold (and in some instances gave) the subdivided lots to his children as they married. After they were grown and married, Delbert and his sister Maude Groberg Neeley also acquired property and built their own family cabins in the area. (See



Carrying on the Brunt legacy at Island Park, Delbert and Jennie gather at their own cabin with children Mary, George, John, son-in-law Achim Fritzen and grandchildren from the John and David Groberg families circa 1970.

For more on George Brunt you should all get and read **George Bunt: Young Pioneer of Eagle Rock**, a novel by Connie B. Otteson (with a whole lot of help from Mary Jane Fritzen). The book is included in the Idaho History curriculum taught in Idaho schools.



One of the many family gatherings at the George and Clara Brunt cabin

story about first DV Groberg cabin on Page 2). Many of George and Clara's grandchildren have done the same.

Though George and Clara and even the generation after them have all since passed on, George's dream of a place and occasions where his



Clara and George on their wedding day in 1903

# THE FIRST GROBERG CABIN by David, Dick and Joe Groberg

David Groberg, with assistance from his brothers Dick and Joe, built the first Groberg cabin. Here are their memories of that event -- first from David:

As I recall, in 1961 an arrangement was made between Ray Henderson and Dad to settle a debt Ray owed to Dad. The arrangement was that Ray Henderson would give Dad a lot in Island Park near his own cabin and help supervise the building of a new cabin for the Groberg family. Because I had just graduated from BYU and was entering University of Utah in the fall, I had a summer free and also a great desire to learn how to build a cabin. Dad, in his wisdom, saw an opportunity to keep his older boys occupied with something worthwhile and useful as well as helping them learn some building skills. Thus, he made the decision to go through with a cabin building project.

In June of 1960, Lorraine and I and our first daughter, Kimberly, moved into John and Jean's old apartment in the Avalon Apartments in Idaho Falls. I was so excited to be building a cabin that I went up to Island Park immediately to begin the process that I hoped to complete before I had to enter the University in the Fall. I was so full of enthusiasm that I felt pretty undaunted by the task of clearing the land of several large Lodgepole Pine trees. I remember I left as many trees as I could, including some in the front and back porches and also trees very close to the house. They, of course, had to be cut down later. I had a small tent that I stayed in during the week and went back to Idaho Falls on the weekends to be with Lorraine and Kim. The Brunts and Nixons also owned cabins in Island Park, so I stayed with them some of the time. I remember fishing a lot and cooking my own fish while I was working on the cabin.

Ray was a good teacher and helpmate in the building process. He helped with every aspect of the building including making the rough plans to getting experts to do the plumbing, electrical, windows, roofing, carpet laying, and fireplace. Mack's Inn had a lumber company at the time, so Ray hauled all the materials in his truck up to the cabin site. I provided the labor which I loved doing. We poured the footings, framed, covered the joists with a

plywood floor. I built the doors out of knotty pine and plywood with large hardware latches. They were very heavy and began to sag over time and had to be repaired. Dick and Joe also came up and helped with some of the labor. (They will remember more about what they did.) I know they came and helped me cut and sell firewood. I also remember how Dick



Powells, Squires, and Jennie and Emily Groberg enjoy the cabin in 1997

designed and built a simple free-standing closet rod with knotty pine sides. It was well used and lasted for years. The footings and cabin pad sunk unevenly, so a marble would roll from one side of the cabin to the other. Later we had to jack the cabin up and level it. That was just one of many projects to "maintain and improve" the cabin. It kept us busy on projects for years and years: replacing the stairs, rebuilding the front porch and covering the back porch with a new roof, frequent repairing of frozen plumbing, winterizing, installing new sinks and cabinets etc. etc.

The cabin was a great asset for our family during the time we were raising our children while living in Idaho Falls. The beautiful natural surroundings were always so refreshing and inspiring. We loved to go on walks to see the wild birds like Ospreys and the thousands of wildflowers.

The children will remember the wild strawberry and huckleberry pies we made. We had lots of rubber boats and inner tubes for floating down the breathtaking Big Springs and seeing the moose right beside us in that crystal clean water. In the summer, Mack's Inn also had a live theatre production company who put on great musicals that we would all attend.

Many wonderful fresh fish meals were enjoyed in that cabin along with good music and conversation with family and friends.

Dick added the following memories: David was definitely in charge. Ray Henderson was helpful and gave Dad a lot. We tried to get other lots nearby but were unsuccessful. Other trade people also owed Dad money so we used them as much as possible. I have 3 specific memories of events there. The first, I was left in Idaho Falls to take an old truck to Boise Cascade and pick up a truck load of lumber for the cabin. The brakes didn't work well and it was a scary trip, especially in the mountains, but I made it even though I was late. The second was after we had the trusses all put in place, a storm came and knocked them all down. We thought they were braced tightly but they were not. I think it took at least a day to put the trusses up originally but only a few hours

to redo them. The third was a roofer who slid loudly off the roof. I was on the other side of the cabin but heard his scream. I thought oh, no and ran over to him. He was back on his feet and headed back to the roof like it happens all the time. When we didn't know how to do something we would find another cabin and see how it was done and then do it in the same way. I remember that David was the brains and that Joe was also creative and I was a laborer. Just tell me what to do and I will do it. It was an enjoyable summer.

And finally Joe added: I was there, but low man on the totem pole. I remember that Grandma and Grandpa and the younger children were on an automobile trip to (I believe) the eastern part of the U.S. and we wanted to impress them by having a cabin standing in the forest when they returned. I think they came back by way of



Groberg girls improvise entertainment on a wet day at the cabin in 1980.

Island Park, however, and surprised us by showing up a day or two before we expected. I distinctly remember that I was working on something near the window on the second floor, when I saw our car (I think a big brown Oldsmobile) wending its way through the forest. While we weren't as far along as we had hoped, we were certainly pleased to show them what had been built and I think they were impressed and maybe pleased, too.

## MAKING ROOM FOR MORE GENERATIONS

By the year 2000, the nearly 40 years of family enjoyment had taken quite a toll on the old DV Groberg cabin. Those charged with the cabin's care and upkeep (including DV himself) determined that the cabin was unsafe and either needed extensive remodeling or needed to be sold. In finally deciding to sell and use the proceeds to buy a new cabin, factors the trustees considered in addition to the safety concerns were the current cabin's distance from the river and the limited

acreage of the property in relation to the ever expanding Groberg family.

According to Joe Groberg, they came across a cabin in their initial search that met the size and location criteria, but the owner wanted to sell it leaving all the furnishings and other items that had accumulated over time in the cabin's cupboards, closets and garage. Because the owners had used the cabin to do a lot of entertaining, Joe and the other trustees felt that most of the included furnishings



A snowy winter's day at the new Groberg cabin.

and other items would not be what was really wanted or needed in a Groberg cabin. Accordingly, they passed on the property. However, after a period of further fruitless searching (and with the encouragement of their wives), the trustees looked again at the "entertainment" property. They offered the owner less than his original asking price, making it clear that they were not interested in the furnishings. Joe said that in the end "we got a good deal." To pay for the new property, the trustees applied the funds received from the sale of the old cabin and Delbert and Jennie's trust paid the difference. The unwanted furnishings were ultimately sold at a big garage sale done with the assistance of the Mix family (among our many Brunt relatives in the area).

Joe provided the following additional information regarding the current cabin: After we purchased the cabin, it was decided that it would be the best place to fulfill one of Grandma and Grandpa's principal objectives for establishing their trust: making family records available and useful to their descendants. The thought was that part of the cabin could serve as the D.V. and Jennie H. Groberg Family Center, a place where children, grandchildren and great grandchildren could learn about their heritage and make plans to preserve it in their families. For that reason we decided to build an addition to the cabin which was begun in the fall of 2001 and finished the next spring. On April 22, 2002, a letter was sent to all the children and grandchildren of Delbert and Jennie Groberg explaining the reason for the addition and inviting them to "combine a family vacation with a visit to the Family Center."

Consistent with George Brunt's early vision, the 2002 letter further states: "We don't think there is a better place to have wholesome recreational activities than Island Park, Idaho. Grandpa Groberg's Brunt relatives have had a long association with that area. While you are at the cabin we hope you will become better acquainted with them. Also, Grandpa Holbrook, Grandma Groberg's father, loved to fish in this area. He always caught fish even when others couldn't."



With DV and Jennie looking on in background, the Blair family engages in some wholesome recreational activities at the new cabin.

## A BRUNT CABIN WITH A RICH(ARDS) HISTORY

In 1999 George Brunt (the grandson of George and Clara Brunt) purchased a cabin on the banks of Henry's Fork that was built and originally owned by the Stephen L. Richards family. While serving as an Apostle during the Presidency of Heber J. Grant, Elder Richards made the cabin available to the First Presidency and Quorum of the 12 for annual retreats. The property included a guest house (where President Grant and his wife would stay) and a "bunk room" over the garage with 12 single beds to accommodate the apostles. According to the lore passed on to George with the purchase of the cabin, it was on one of those retreats that those assembled leaders received inspiration and worked out the details of the Church's first general welfare program as it was later announced to the Church membership in an official proclamation at the April 1936 general conference.

On a lighter note, another story passed on to George involved an occasion when President Grant was instructing the Apostles to be more cautious in all of their public speeches because in that day of increasing media technology, their comments were more likely to be recorded and more closely scrutinized. As an example, President Grant said, "Though we all enjoy Brother Richards' stories about how he can walk out on the porch here, throw his line in the river and pull out a 5 pound rainbow trout, even such good-natured stretching of the truth can insight skepticism and criticism." As the story goes, Elder Richards, without saying a word, grabbed a fishing rod from a closet, walked onto the front porch, threw in his line and within minutes pulled out a 5 pound rainbow trout. President Grant is said to have responded, "Brother Richards, the Lord must really love you."



Today these young cousins build relationships with each other around the cabin's fire pit. In years to come we will see their names on the cabin's missionary map with other DV and Jennie descendants who have gone forth to help build God's Kingdom on earth.

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George H. and Bonnie J. GROBERG

(from the January 30, 2010 Church News) George Holbrook Groberg, 57, and Bonnie Gay Jensen Groberg, seven children, Castlerock Ward. Idaho Falls Taylor Mountain Stake. Brother Groberg serves as a counselor in the BYU-Idaho 1st Stake presidency and is a former bishop and counselor, ward Young Men president, branch president and missionary in the Southeast Asia Mission. Prediatrician. Born in Idaho Falls, Idaho, to Delbert Valentine and Jennie Holbrook Groberg. Sister Groberg serves as a counselor in the ward Young Women presidency and is a former ward Primary president, counselor in a ward Relief Society presidency, ward choir director and ward Young Women camp director. Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Joseph Elwood and Gloria Marie Winther Jensen.

### WELCOME NOLE PRISBREY: THE NEWEST OF THE 5th GENERATION

Nole Hebrick Prisbrey  
March 2, 2010 6:24pm  
8lbs 2oz 20" head to toe  
Happiness & Love,  
Landon, Kristina & Corgan

