

# Our Family Links

The Groberg/Holbrook Family History Association Newsletter

Issue 19, Fall 2013

## The Blairs Gather to the Valleys of the Mountains

**Doris Laurentzen**, Bob Blair's maternal great grandmother, was born in Kiel Germany on October 28th, 1829. Doris read in the newspaper about the missionaries being in Denmark and about their belief in Revelation. When she read about being gathered to the valleys of the mountains, her mother told her to be still, saying that will come, but not in our day.

Erastus Snow came and brought the Gospel to me, she said, and I believed it at once and was baptized in 1853, but it was 10 years before I could emigrate. I left on the 15th day of April 1863. Took a steam boat to Germany and then to England. From there we went by sail boat, the John Bright. There were 900 Saints on board. We were four weeks on the sea, arriving in America the last of May.

The middle of September we landed at Salt Lake City, stopped on Emigration Square for three days. Saw the foundation of the Temple and President Young's house.

One thing I will never forget. The third night I was there, I heard such wonderful music. I had heard the kings music but never heard anything to equal this. It was someone singing "O Ye Mountains High" at 1:00 AM in the morning.

We went North and came to Brigham City, had dinner with Apostle Lorenzo Snow, then went on to Hyrum. [We arrived] 20th of Sept, 1863 and I have lived here ever since, so happy. We had a little log house. I remember while crossing the plains one day there was a stampede. A girl from Norway was run over. Three people were killed. I saw so many buffaloes.

**Isaac Blair**, Bob Blair's fraternal great grandfather, was born in Trobridge, England, 1820. At the age of 18, in London he was listening to an LDS street meeting. He



**Children of Isaac and Ruth Blair**  
**Seated: William, Ruth B. Evans, Isaac, Rosa B. Knowles, Samuel**  
**Standing: Henry, Isaac Jr., Albert Edward.**

was attracted by a beautiful soprano voice. It proved to be the voice of the lovely red headed Ruth Suddery. The occasion resulted in a close friendship. They were later married in London in 1850. Soon after, Isaac and Ruth joined the LDS church. Their greatest desire now was to go to Utah. They had no funds for such a journey but worked hard. Isaac was a weaver and also worked in a gas factory. They were finally able to borrow the money for their pilgrimage. It took six years for them to pay it back. They experienced most of the hardships of the immigrants. They rode in crowded cattle cars to Omaha, arriving in SLC in the fall. Isaac and his son, Samuel, got a job getting lumber for the railroad. Later, he drove a six mule team freight line to Montana and he was a railroad section boss for four years.

By 1875, Isaac was out of debt and decided to homestead a farm in Lewiston, Utah. Here he built a nice house for his family and farmed his land for many years. When Isaac's son Albert Edward (Bob's grandfather) was 20 he met the lovely Sarah Rachel Stocks in Lewiston. They were married October, 1886 in the Logan Temple.

A daughter later wrote, "Albert worked very hard to support his large, growing family. He was a good hunter. One time he and his older sons went deer hunting, expecting to be gone a day but was gone three days and two nights. It was winter with cold winds and drifting snow. Mother Rachel worried. She kept a fire lit for a signal and called out as loud as she could. The dismal howl of the prairie wolf and

the coyote added only gloom to the long nights. When the hunters returned they were almost exhausted, hungry and nearly frozen. Father (Albert) said the reason they didn't come home the first day was because they had located deer tracks which encouraged them to go on tramping through the snow all of the next day. They finally located the herd, killing seven deer. He said, "I had to go on, because my little family was hungry and needed that meat."

**Marguerite Green**, Bob Blair's mother, was a committed, vivacious and very talented woman. She was born in Hyrum, Utah and raised in Pocatello, Idaho. She later graduated from UC Berkeley in Spanish and Italian and moved to Santa Barbara in 1921 to teach Jr. High School. While there, she became the driving force of organizing get-togethers, dinners and other socials as well as insuring that members attended Sunday School and other meetings. In 1926, she married another Mormon transplant, Wallace Blair. He became the first Branch President in Santa Barbara. The fledging branch met in the Blair home for some time.

Marguerite taught in the Santa Barbara School system for 40 years. She was the chairman of the language department and founded the United Nations Youth. She was a leader in the annual Santa Barbara Spanish Days Celebration. She was also a fine pianist and accompanied her husband, who had a beautiful tenor voice.

Her daughter, Carolyn, became a member of the Tabernacle Choir and the Primary General Board. Her son, Robert was a BYU Professor and the Mission President who opened the Baltic Mission.



**Wallace Blair**  
1895-1949



**Marguerite Green**  
1897-1974

Editors note: Like the Blairs themselves, all of the update and family history information they have submitted is fun, fascinating, and prolific. Unfortunately, space limitations in this newsletter format do not allow us to provide more than a Cliff Notes edition. For the unabridged account (including Dell's narrative explanation how "semiology is not discrete"), email your request to [tomgroberg@gmail.com](mailto:tomgroberg@gmail.com) and I will send the full 9 pages.

# The “Wonderful Blairs”



**Julia and Bob Blair**

Grandpa Groberg called us the “Wonderful Blairs” because “We wonder what they’ll do next!” These past years, however, we’ve been predictable. At least, Bob and I. We’re pretty much boring “Stay-at-homers!” Sure love your visits, everyone! And we’re doing well.

On August 17th, we celebrated our 59th Wedding Anniversary. The shocking thing about this is that we have five children in their 50’s, two sons in their 40’s and one daughter almost 39!

We’re grateful for each other and for our 8 children, 8 great in-laws, 33 grands and 3 greats! Our total with in-laws is 56. Our family members are our best friends and confidants. We can call on them at anytime and we are blessed by their care, attention and goodness.

This summer we celebrated the 20-year anniversary of our being called to open the Baltic Mission. We’ve thought much about the miracles and uniqueness of missions and of our mission family. You are set-apart, and suddenly you have a “set-apart” life. You have a new name, new friends, new home, new language, new schedules, and new leaders. We leave everything and everyone behind as we missionaries come together wherever we’ve been called. We come to know each other well. We give everything we have as we work together, pray together, laugh together, weep together, study together, and walk together with marvelous and amazing people whom we probably would never have met had it not been for our mission call. It is an intensely personal experience. The heart-breaks and deep disappointments which we experienced on our missions

prepared us for challenges we continue to have; The joy and understanding that we experienced help us understand the wonder of God’s greatest Creation “Man,” and the importance of life, love, family and faith.

Blair missionaries have served in: Finland, Baltics, Ecuador, Bolivia (2), Germany, Switzerland, Taiwan (3), France (2), Argentina, Montana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Minnesota, Italy, California LA and Boston.

## **Bruce and Margaret Young**

Bruce has now served as bishop for 4 ½ years. He is starting his 31st year of teaching at BYU. This past summer, he took up hiking so he could participate in the Young Men’s High Adventure—a 26-mile hike to King’s peak. He did the hike—though the young men couldn’t summit because of lightning. He also continues to develop his scholarship.

Margaret and a friend from her ward went on a 5,000 mile road trip this past summer, raising money for the film Margaret is doing and also presenting firesides. The film, called Heart of Africa, began (without anyone knowing what lay in the future) when Bruce and Margaret were called to serve in the MTC. You can see a “teaser” for the film at this site: [www.heartofafricafilm.com](http://www.heartofafricafilm.com).



**The Lifferths**

Kaila and Noah have three children, Gabby, Alex, and Oliver. Kaila is getting a master’s degree in music education at Indiana University, Bloomington. Her minor is singing. The big news from her is that she was cast as Annina in La Traviata at IU. She will perform in April 2014.

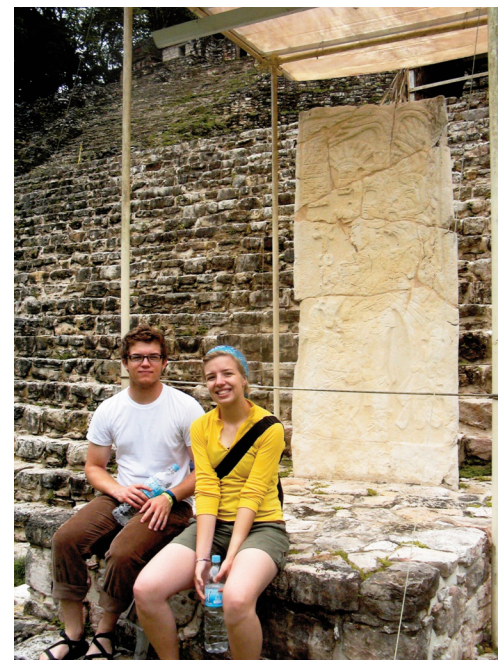
Rob completed his associate’s degree in University Studies at Utah Valley University and is continuing to build the creative writing club there. He plans on pursuing an MFA. He competes in slam poetry and has published his writing in various literary magazines.

Julia is finishing her degree in psychology at UVU and has developed her talent as a photographer. She works in the photography studio at Target, but has also begun photographing weddings and engagement portraits.

Michael now lives in Indiana with Kaila and her family and works full time. He has a rare gift for getting along with children and is adored by his niece and nephews. He is a nature lover. He and Margaret had several trips to the cabin, which led to wonderful conversations, and lovely walks. He reveals his delightful sense of humor often.

## **Dell and Kathleen Blair**

Kathleen is the RS president in the 16th branch (an inner-city branch in Salt Lake, many folks transitioning from prison, rehab and other difficult situations) Also she has received some medical attention recently and is still recovering from some surgical interventions. Dell works with Dad on our iPhone and Android apps as well as pushing forward code and content for a virtual bilingual high school. Daniel teaches some motion-capture classes at the U, Adam continues his work in neonatal lung development research along with his continued studies. Cierra and Ben finished another leg of their education, Cierra BS in Physics, Ben MS in something like biomedical engineer-

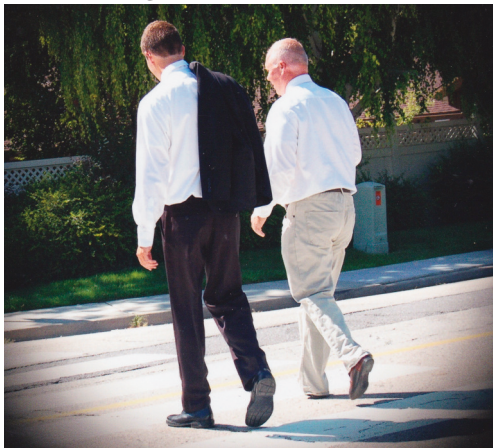


**Adam Blair and Cierra Block at Bonampak, Chiapas Mexico**

ing or materials science. They moved to London to continue school and just to go somewhere more exciting than the Wasatch front.

### **Bob and Christy Blair**

Bobby and Christy have moved to Denver for a Sabbatical year. Amanda is going to school in Logan and Justin in Las Cruces. All are doing well.



**Bob and Austin Blair**

### **Janette and Kevin Lambert**

This past year has been quite eventful in terms of health issues for Kevin. First he had back surgery, then he was hospitalized for an infection in his blood, and then after a test, which was done after he recovered from his septicemia, he had open-heart surgery for a quadruple bypass. The rest of the year has been recovery time. He is back to work and maintains a limited outpatient practice. His patients were sure glad to get him back. We are grateful that he is alive! Jenette works at the Veterans hospital in the outpatient Mental Health clinic where she works as a case manager. She loves her work, the veterans she works with and the excellent VA MH staff. Aly is in Graduate school at the U and has completed her masters in Organic Chemistry and continues towards her PhD. She is working in her lab in developing a delivery system with Nano-particles for the treatment of macular degeneration. Jenny is studying at SL Community College. She is still trying to decide between studying art



**Jenette Lambert**

and science as she is gifted at both. She is leaning towards an associate in Art, then transfer to the U where she would like to study Geology. She had a fun summer, taking a class in Indian flute making and working as a dog.

### **Lisa and Mark Sabey**

The Mark and Lisa Sabey are moving in many different ways and to different places. Brian moved up into married life with Diondra Elizabeth Darcey (we call her Dia). It is the best move we could imagine. David moved to Las Vegas to teach 7th grade for a second year. Josh moved up to become a senior in college, writing creatively whenever he has time. Matt moved back from his mission in Taiwan and quickly moved to Provo Utah to continue his education. Rachel moved to New York and is working hard on dance with her dance partner, Brook. Daniel is preparing to move in one year to BYU and move on in his life. Mark and Lisa are continually moving up in age. We can't believe how old our children are!

These past few years have been years of learning. We've learned that pride creates enmity in contrast to humility. (We've learned this through experience.) Humility creates unity and enables Zion. We've



**Brian and Dia engagement photo.**

learned that our brains are wired to change—that our choices and thoughts literally shape our brains; that the second year of teaching is much better than the first; that life is about becoming better and more compassionate people and not about performance or success. Finally, we have learned that things work out, but it takes a lifetime of patience and even more sometimes.

### **Jim and Traci Blair**

We are delighted to have 2 missionaries serving: Amber in LA, Spanish Speaking and Kristen in Boston. They both inspire us weekly. Their Monday emails are like hot rolls on Fast Sunday or Chocolate milk after a long run—so good.

Lauren spent 4 weeks at the Jacob School of Music in Bloomington, IN. We visited her and the Lifferths on the last week of the camp. We walked the campus, went to several concerts and tried to capture the Lifferth's pirate ship by riding their half-pipe high enough to board the vessel from the air. Lauren just started her senior year at Timpview and is thinking a lot about violin and college. We also took a quick trip to Arizona State to have a lesson from a teacher there and especially to hang out with the Powells.



**Sister Amber Blair**

Sophie is seriously into Cross Country. She is a Varsity runner and a loyal team member. She plays the Viola, guitar, ukulele, indie groove-shark songs and lately, lots of piano. About her favorite thing in the world to do is jam on guitar with her teammates. Sophie is a sophomore at Timpview.

Our family has had a big year: Amber to the MTC on March 6; Kristen to the MTC July 3; Indiana with all but our missionaries; Cedar City with the Sabey; Denver to welcome Justin home, lots of camping, hiking, rafting, swimming, running, biking, grilling, mowing, smoothie and mountain man making. We are thinking a lot about how to be the kind of member-missionaries we hope our daughters would like to have in their wards and branches.



**Sister Kristen Blair**

### Ben and Gabby Blair

This year has been a big trans-oceanic one for the Ben Blairs: Ben, Gabrielle, Ralph (16), Maude (14), Olive (12), Oscar (8), Betty (7) and June (3). We just moved back from France, in July, where we have been living for the past 2.5 years. We lived in a very rural town in Normandy, and the kids attended a local French school. We now live in Oakland, a stone's throw from the temple.



Ben and Gabby Blair Family in France.

We initially moved to Normandy because Ben's and Gabrielle's work was strictly online, and we loved the idea of an extended international stay before our oldest was in High School, and thought, this was our window! Gabrielle writes a blog (designmom.com) that has grown enough to demand full time attention. I have been working with Jim at K12 (a provider of online curriculum), but since January 2013, have been focused on a video series with our kids. The series is called "Olive Us" It has been a really rewarding project for our

family to work on together. Geoff Groberg composed and performed the theme music. Here's a video that introduces the series (and our kids!):

<http://www.ulive.com/video/meet-olive-us>

We are still getting acquainted with Oakland, but so far, we love it. Ralph and Maude are in High School. Olive is in Middle School. Oscar and Betty in Elementary, and June is starting Preschool.

This past year, we all learned what escargot tastes like. We're divided, though, on whether it's yummy or not.

### Carol and Dan Madsen

Quite an eventful year for the Madsen clan, Daniel, Carol and girls moved last year from Tucson to Las Vegas and will be moving next year from Las Vegas to England for 2 years while Daniel (a radiologist in the air force) heads the surgical squadron at RAF Lakenheath, so if a place to stay is all that's keeping you from visiting England, now you have one.

Our 5 girls, (two in high school, two in elementary school and one in preschool) are growing up fast. Next year will be a big change as our oldest will graduate from high school and our youngest will start kindergarten. Whatever will I do? We have

enjoyed our time in Las Vegas and even taken trips to Death Valley, Santa Barbara (to visit my dad's childhood home and my Blair grandparents graves) as well as gotten to visit family more frequently.

Personal injury events:

Lindsey (17), got a stress fracture in her leg from running

Kimmer (14), got stung by a sting ray in the ocean off Coronado

Rachel (10) did not make the soccer team she tried out for but practiced with them anyway to "assure her placement" next year.

Grace (7) had surgery from breaking her arm doing a back flip on the trampoline

Jane (4) deeply offended that all the girls go to school everyday without her.

If I had to share something I've learned this year it would be related to vulnerability being the cost of true relationships and the greatest joy, recognizing your need for others and for the Savior and seeking that genuinely in our own weaknesses. I've loved the book *The God who Weeps*, and *Falling to Heaven*, as well as the TED talk on the power of vulnerability.



Carol and Dan Madsen family.

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