

Developing a Developer (Delbert V. Groberg)

By Mary Jane Fritzen, a daughter

Delbert V. Groberg, a Realtor, developed the Linden Park area of Idaho Falls. He built his business from scratch to support his wife and growing family.

Delbert was born in Idaho Falls on Feb. 14, 1906. His mother, Maude Brunt Groberg, had come with her parents to Eagle Rock when she was a small child. Dad's father was born of Swedish parents. Dad's mother died when he was 3 years old and his father died the next year, so Dad and his brother were reared by his aunt and uncle on a farm in Weber County, Utah. With family here, he often visited Idaho Falls.

While living on the farm, Delbert entered his best potatoes in the county fair. When the winners were announced, to his disappointment there was no award on them. Holding back his tears, he thought, "I'll take them home and we'll eat them." But an official patiently suggested that they submit his entry to the state fair, so he did. In about two weeks he received a letter containing a blue ribbon and a check for first prize in that category. He learned not to be discouraged by intermediate judgments—it's the final that counts.

After high school, Dad served an LDS mission in the Eastern States, then attended BYU, where he met Jennie Holbrook. In 1929, he moved to Idaho Falls to work at his uncle's dairy and Jennie taught school at Ammon. They were married in 1930 in the Salt Lake Temple, and made their home in Idaho Falls. Their first home was the duplex of his Grandma Brunt, who had died in 1929. Their first child, Mary Jane, was born there.

Dad recalled, "I didn't have any resources. Now I was on my own. Jennie was helpful in encouraging me to do the things I really wanted to do and I admired how well she did everything—piano, organ, readings. I really respected her."

Dad's political career began about this time. He had accepted the nomination to run for Justice of the Peace in the Republican primaries. The opponent won. Another friend urged him to put his name on the Democrat ticket for the final election. He did and won over the one who had defeated him in the primaries. For two more two-year terms he was elected Justice of the Peace.

Those were depression years. He was friendly and gifted in business. He recorded: "We got a new 1930 Chev sedan and it cost \$650. That was 18 months at \$35 a month. Before we got it paid for, we went to the garage to ask them to take it back—we owed \$250. They said No, they had too many they'd taken back. When we got it all paid out, we traded it on a house. That was our start in the real estate business. I had been in the insurance business. We traded the car for down payment on a house (420-6th St.) and got an old car to boot. Julia was born while we lived there.

"Then we built the house on 10th Street, where John was born. Adolf Johnson drew a sketch of the plans, and promised Mom she could have all the cabinets she wanted. It was a three-bedroom home, full basement, garage, fireplace. The price would be \$3390 including lots of cabinets." Four more sons were born there—David, Dick, Dee and Joe.

"When John was about ten years old we moved to the house on 12th Street during the second World War. We lived there almost 25 years. Before we moved out we remodeled the kitchen. That cost more than

we paid for the house.” Beth, Lewis, Gloria and George were born while the family lived there. At that time John left on his mission and Julia was married to Bob Blair.

Thus began the next generation, who live in many regions. Mom and Dad lived all their married lives in Idaho Falls. Both died in 2004. Their posterity was about 300. Three sons—Richard, Joseph, and George—and one daughter, Mary Jane, and some of their families live in Idaho Falls.

Some contributions of Delbert V. Groberg to Idaho Falls

He founded the D. V. Groberg Company in 1929. It began selling insurance, then added real estate, development of subdivisions and condominiums, and real estate appraising.

In the depth of the depression, with optimism for the future, he built a fine new house for his growing family. It encouraged people.

When work was scarce, Delbert did not complain, but quietly researched the titles to the city lots of the banks of the Snake River, thinking the information would be needed when, as hoped by many, a temple would be built there.

He served as president of the Idaho Falls Real Estate Board, Idaho Real Estate Association, Idaho Realtor of the Year, and vice president of the National Association of Realtors. His fascination with real estate found its fullest expression in the art of appraising. He was the founding president of the Southern Idaho Chapter of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers.

He and his sons have built many homes, stores, offices, and condominiums. One project is named Elizabeth Court after his grandmother Brunt, who, with four small children, crossed the ocean from New Zealand to raise her family in Zion. Condominiums now occupy the lots where she lived beside the river 100 years before.

Delbert’s interests have been boundless. He joined with others to found the KID Broadcasting Corporation, and helped found the Bank of Commerce. He became a community leader, serving as president or chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Selective Service Board, and United Way. For 20 years Delbert chaired committees that celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States and the U. S. Constitution. In 1987, radio commentator Paul Harvey announced: “Bonneville County in Idaho is a place to go for a major celebration.” The Idaho 7th District Bar Association chose Delbert for their Liberty Bell Award.

From 1975 to 1980 Delbert served as president and Jennie as matron of the Idaho Falls Temple. After their release, Delbert published *The Idaho Falls Temple: The First LDS Temple in Idaho*. Jennie and Delbert also published 12 volumes of the life and works of George H. Brimhall and helped finance the Brimhall Gallery at Brigham Young University. BYU awarded them the Presidential Citation and Medallion.

Their posterity at that time included seven sons and four daughters, 64 grandchildren and 52 great grandchildren.