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Chapter 1: The Early Years

John P. Livingstone

Born the eighth of fourteen children, Dale Thomas Tingey grew up on a farm in Centerville, Utah, about eight miles north of Salt Lake City. His father, Wesley Earl Tingey, was a heavyset man, about five feet eleven inches tall and weighing approximately two hundred pounds. He served as bishop of the only ward in Centerville for twenty-five years and then became counselor to the stake president before serving as stake president himself for ten years. He farmed part of the land that his father, Thomas Tingey, had owned. Thomas had come to America from Bedfordshire, England, with his sister and his parents, Henry and Ann Young Tingey. They had joined the Church in England in 1849 and that same year left for America with about 250 other Saints, all of whom survived the crossing, on the Nova Scotian-built ship *Zetland*, arriving in New Orleans the day before Christmas in 1849.[1] It was the second Latter-day Saint immigrant voyage for that ship that year.[2] The first crossing was led by Orson Spencer, and the immigrants suffered from cholera after arriving in the United States.[3] The second crossing had no such trouble. After staying in St. Louis, Missouri, for just over three years, the Tingeys set out for Salt Lake City by ox team with the Moses Clawson company on 6 May 1853.[4] After living in Salt Lake City for three years, they moved two miles north to Bountiful. Henry continued the tradition of raising vegetables as he had done in England, where he had run a garden seed business with his father and brother.

Henry was in the Davis County Cavalry and was involved in the actions taken against Johnston's Army in 1857 when U.S. President James Buchanan sent an army to Utah to monitor the Latter-day Saints. Federal judges appointed to Utah territorial posts after a failed statehood application were intimidated by the deference Latter-day Saints showed Brigham Young and other Church leaders. Feeling that these leaders were running a powerful shadow government, several judges abandoned their appointments and returned to the East, complaining that the Mormons were in rebellion against the United States. In a move later viewed as hasty and poorly planned, Buchanan activated army units to cross the country and secure Utah. Latter-day Saints moving back and forth across the plains heard recruits boast of planned atrocities that were later reported to Utah citizens. As the army approached and moved through the mountain passes into the Salt Lake Valley, the Tingey family was evacuated south with thousands of others into Utah Valley until army intentions were clear and Brigham Young ordered a return. They lived in the "Provo bottoms," first in a wagon and a tent, then in a small hut, before returning north to Bountiful after military threats did not become military action.

Henry was also involved in the police action to put down the Morrisite uprising in June 1862. Joseph Morris was an English convert who felt he was called of God to "preside over and set straight the LDS Church, whose leaders had gone astray."[5] Followers gathered in Kington Fort in Weber County. Later some dissenting Morrisite followers defected from the group but were kidnapped and returned to Morris's Fort. This resulted in a gun battle when Henry and others in a posse were sent to make arrests. Two of the posse were killed, and another standing immediately next to Henry had a bullet go through his hat but sustained no injury.[6]

Henry's son, Thomas Tingey, was barely nineteen when he married fifteen-year-old Alzina Call, daughter of the late Josiah Howe Call and Henrietta Caroline Williams Call, on 27 December 1863 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. When Alzina was only ten years old, her father and Samuel Brown had been ambushed and killed by Indians as they returned to their home in Fillmore after the October general conference of the Church in Salt Lake City. The two men had purchased military capes from army personnel while visiting in Salt Lake, and the Indians may have mistaken

them for soldiers.[7]

Thomas and Alzina moved into a small adobe home near Thomas's parents, who had moved north from Bountiful to nearby Centerville some time earlier. In time, they had twelve children: eleven sons and one daughter. As his father had done, Thomas later entered the principle of plural marriage. He married Thurza Amelia Randall, daughter of Alfred and Margaret Harley Randall, on 2 November 1882. It was said of the two wives of Thomas Tingey that never a word of discord was heard between them.[8] Thurza died on Alzina's wedding anniversary, 27 December 1910. Alzina cared for Thurza's two surviving children, Thurza Amelia and Gilbert Randall.

Dale's father, Wesley, was Thomas and Alzina's tenth child, born on 26 November 1882 in Centerville, Utah. He stayed there all his life and followed in the footsteps of his forefathers by growing produce on his small farm. Wesley was not only a farmer but a respected Church leader. For years he held responsible Church positions in Centerville and the surrounding district. Dale felt that his dad was virtually the mayor of Centerville: "He would take care of the needy and the widows, and we would help him."[9]

Dale was Wesley and Ivy's sixth child of the twelve they bore together: eight boys and four girls. Dale came into the world on 5 May 1924. The family knelt in prayer twice a day, before breakfast and dinner. Like most Latter-day Saint families, each family member took a turn offering the prayer. They enjoyed a vacation each year, usually going up Weber Canyon and having a get-together with all the Tingeys who could be there. The entire clan would camp in tents. The children would play in the river while their parents visited and reviewed the year's activities of their various families.

(WESLEY TINGEY PEDIGREE CHART)

Dale's mother, Ivy Gladys Parsons Tingey, was his father's second wife. The death of Wesley's first wife, Mae Ann Croft, on 19 November 1909, followed the birth of her second child, William Wesley Tingey, eight months earlier. Ivy had come from Southall in Middlesex, England, where she was born on 26 August 1893. When she was hired to care for the little ones, Virginia May and William, she fell in love not only with the children but also with their father. Ivy and Wesley were married in the Salt Lake Temple on 19 August 1914.

Ivy was dark-eyed and shy, but she always maintained that she had an "English temper." She couldn't bring herself to pray or speak in sacrament meeting, which was frustrating to her husband, the bishop, but would do so in her Relief Society meetings and at home. She was always tending to the needs of the children and felt that her attention to them was her most important responsibility. She loved to sit down with her family or neighbors and just talk. Emma, Wesley and Ivy's fourth child, but first to be married, spoke fondly of her mother's very long, very black hair and clear complexion.[10] She also remembered a time when Mother had brought home a candy bar for each child, but one had gone missing. Emma was blamed for the loss, but Dale later confided that it was he who had been the culprit.

Everyone learned to work in the Tingey household. The children started weeding and gathering vegetables at six or seven years of age. By the time Dale was nine, he was "foreman" of a large crew of weeders. He said he worked hard to be the fastest weeder so that he could maintain his status as what he jokingly called "weeder leader." Entire days would be spent removing a seemingly endless array of spurious growth that threatened the carrots, onions, beets, and other garden vegetables that were the staple of the Tingey farming operation. Farming was the main family activity. Should a child ever be found doing something else before chores were done, like reading, Dale's father was upset. "He didn't feel that we had enough time to read. He figured that if we had time to read, then we'd better get out there and catch up on the weeding and other duties."[11]

Once they achieved an acceptable proficiency at weeding, the children graduated to hoeing. Learning to wield a common garden hoe meant a feeling of greater responsibility and importance. Next came the wheel hoe. Each promotion seemed to build confidence and a general feeling of accomplishment in each child. Nelson "Nelts" Clayton was the hired hoeing foreman. It was Nelts who encouraged Dale to follow through with his ambition to learn to fly. As

a result, he had his student's pilot license when he was fifteen. Within the next year he earned both his automobile driver's license and his private pilot's license.

Often, Father Tingey would go around the dinner table asking each child if they had done their chores. When one of the nine boys would say no, he would tell them to go finish before they could eat. He would say, "The animals get taken care of first, and you take care of the work before [you eat]." The Tingeys did not buy a tractor until Dale was fourteen, and that was a great day; "everyone wanted to use it rather than work with the horses or by hand," he said.[12]

Junior high school started in eighth grade in Bountiful, Utah. Dale loved sports, but he was hindered in his athletic opportunities by the incessant after-school need to get the farm chores done. But having fun wasn't hampered by work at home or at school. A favorite pastime for Dale and his friends was pushing flowerpots out of second-story school windows. "They would land and smash all over the sidewalk," he reminisced.[13] Apparently, the principal was determined to catch rule breakers, but that just fired the boys to further pranks. Often they would catch sparrows out at the farm, bring them to school in their pockets, and let them out during class.

Girls began to attract Dale's attention too. His first love was Kathy Thompson. He said he was so shy that their relationship "didn't amount to much." But when the Centerville students started high school at Davis High in Kaysville, he became a little braver with the girls. Dating Rosalyn Pack their junior year was fun, but his shyness kept their feet on the ground. Being voted into the junior class presidency really helped break down some of the shyness. Boxing also became a frequent activity. Dale did quite well until "a Golden Gloves boxer came down from Ogden and beat up on me very severely. I decided then that I didn't want boxing as a long-term career." Dale was also on Davis High's football team. Being the third-string quarterback meant playing only when games were not very close, but the travel and the fun at games made high school a great time.[14]

In spite of school sports and social activities, farmwork still came first. Pigs, cows, chickens, rabbits, and vegetables kept the family busy and healthy. Mother's penchant for cleanliness and tidiness meant there were lots of jobs to do at home to keep a teenage boy out of trouble. Her fastidious British upbringing never flagged. She wanted everything clean, upright, and proper and even in later years insisted that everyone stand whenever the Queen of England appeared on television.

As the Tingey children grew older, Father paid them to work on the farm and gave them each a small piece of land to start their own little business. This income allowed Dale to pursue flying during his high school years. Some time on most weekends was spent at the flying club in Salt Lake City. Costs were cut to a third since everybody in the club chipped in for maintenance and gas. He loved it. Flying was more than just a unique form of transportation for Dale. Flying over the Great Salt Lake provided a refreshing view, and being a pilot gave the young man an exhilarating perspective that would later significantly affect his life. And it didn't hurt that he could get places much faster in an airplane. Starting out in a rented, single-engine Aronca Chief was fun. It was small, but it flew. And that was all Dale cared about.

Church activity was strong in the Tingey family, and conviction and commitment grew with Dale. The family developed a closeness that never left them. Gospel devotion was never doubted at the Tingey home. Dale was impressed while still a young man with Joseph Smith's account of his vision of the Father and the Son. He secretly wished he might someday have a similar experience. He came to believe the Lord would help him with anything he had to accomplish. He was honored to hold the priesthood and took very seriously the assignments he received.

Helen Clark, a new flame his senior year, made him feel like he was really in love. She lived just a few miles up Highway 89 in Farmington, and they went on many dates together. Helen was a beautiful, black-eyed girl who continued to write to him after he joined the military. Dale appreciated her support and felt that her letters were a helpful factor during the lonely times of Air Force life.

Just before Dale joined the military, a visit to the patriarch resulted in a veritable prophecy regarding his life's work and assignments in spreading the gospel in the world. He was amazed that someone who didn't even know him could just open his mouth and, with the guidance of the Spirit, give him a patriarchal blessing. With shaking, trembling

hands that Dale would remember forever, the humble patriarch reached out to bless the young pilot, offering counsel that would guide his young life.

Following graduation from high school, Dale spent a semester at the University of Utah before joining the military, as most young men did in those days. Wartime social fashion held that those who would not sign up were seen as unpatriotic duty shirkers, but Dale avoided that classification when he enlisted in the Air Force in 1943. Of course, his flying experience was not overlooked, and he soon skipped the basic training and was in the rear seat while instructors went through acrobatic loops, spirals, and turns to see if the young man was prone to airsickness. Those who couldn't handle the maneuvers without getting sick were simply "washed out" of aircraft training. Dale did his best to keep any nausea hidden, sometimes stealthily bending over and vomiting into the baggy pockets of his Air Force pants. But the rigor and discipline of Air Force training gave him confidence and poise. The strictness was good for him, as were the book learning and physical exercise. Dale and his training group were sent to the University of North Dakota, where they were given general education classes that added up to a year's worth of college. He loved it, but he felt like the military was not a career that would allow him enough initiative and challenge. The strong Tingey family work ethic made Air Force life seem too predictable and easy after a while, and Dale would have nothing to do with getting lazy. He wanted a life and a wife. And he knew that hard work would not get in the way of his goals; rather, it would bring them into being.

Dale's flying abilities, previous aviation experience, and affable personality caused superiors to recommend that he be pulled out of his group, which was headed overseas, and that he become an instructor for veteran pilots who were being converted from flying heavy bombers to piloting single-engine fighters. Near the end of the war, it seemed that everyone wanted to fly fighters and be like cowboys of the sky. Bomber pilots had to fly twenty-five missions before they could return home and be retrained to pilot single-engine fighters. And in America, there was an excess of pilots as fighter aircraft caught the romantic attention of young men anxious to help in the war effort.

Because of his previous interest in flying, as well as his upbringing in a well-disciplined home, Dale did well in the military. And he loved it. He was assigned to Luke Field, Arizona, and was there for close to a year. He was used to working hard and getting along with people, but he felt that most of the Air Force men just wanted to bum around and get women.

September 1946 saw Dale honorably released from the military and back in college at the University of Utah. To his delight, the university gave him full credit for the courses taken at North Dakota University. He lived at home and commuted, much of the time on a motorcycle that he and his friend Spencer Hatch had purchased together.

A few months later, Dale had a frightening accident. The motorcycle spun out on some gravel, and he ended up with some serious road rash on one leg, the motorcycle being damaged beyond repair. This meant more time in Salt Lake City and less time commuting. Dale moved in with three friends in an apartment above Deseret Mortuary, where they would retrieve bodies after hours for the owner. Living above the mortuary made for a few fun pranks. Having a friend lie in a casket and sit up unexpectedly while the others showed young women through the facility always drew a dramatic reaction.

The GI Bill assistance for military men returning to college meant an extra $45 a month, for which Dale was grateful—and gratitude seemed to be an attribute well developed in this young returning soldier. He would always be able to count his blessings and express appreciation for kindnesses offered to him.

He and some college friends decided it would be great to make some extra money over the summer. They pooled funds and bought a surplus army truck for six hundred dollars. Then they went to work to buy fruit that grew plentifully in Davis County as well as not-so-perishable fruit, like oranges from California, and filled their new vehicle. The plan was to take fruit up to the west gate of Yellowstone National Park and sell it to tourists. Fruit sale prices in the park were much better for the young entrepreneurs than they were locally. Beech Adams, Spencer Hatch, and Lyman Clark decided to work as park rangers while Dale drove back to Utah to purchase more fruit. The first trip saw half of the cherries, peaches, and other tree fruits spoil before they were sold. Enterprising Dale discovered that he could sell some of the fruit to the hotels along the highway, not only reducing spoilage but also making good money. They cleared over ten thousand dollars after expenses that summer!

The summer was productive in romantic ways as well. One of the young women who caught Dale's eye was Jeanette Dursteller. She was with a group of college girls who worked at the Big Union Pacific Dining Lodge in West Yellowstone. She was standing quietly away from the others when he saw her for the first time.

Wearing an Indian jacket and moccasins, she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. Her dark hair contrasted with her fair skin in a way that caught the young man off guard, and he was swept away by her beauty. That summer became a deep, wonderful memory that Dale referred to in later years as one of "good clean fun together, no alcohol, no drugs, no sex, no rebellions . . . just happy summer romance."

The group of friends spent their time fishing, swimming, and dancing. Dale knew he was in love, yet a significant conflict arose at the end of the summer—not a problem between him and Jeanette but one that involved another love: flying. Beech and some of the others heard that they could buy surplus military training planes in Canada for $350. Dale would have loved to purchase one of those airplanes, but he had promised Jeanette's father—one of the top salesmen in the world for Singer Sewing Machines—that he would drive Jeanette home at the end of the summer. Jeanette won out over the trip to Canada, and Dale's agony over losing the opportunity for an inexpensive airplane was partially mitigated as he later learned that the aircraft had been destroyed shortly after being brought home. They were parked in a hangar that collapsed in a strong wind. Insurance would not cover the loss because it was determined to be an "act of God." He was sure his plane would have been in the same hanger as his friends' plane.[15]

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[1] Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 50.

[2] *Contributor,* April 1892, 279–80: "It was the intention of Apostle Orson Pratt to have chartered a ship to sail about the twentieth of September, 1849, but he was unable to find one that was suitable, until he had succeeded in chartering the large, new and splendid ship *Zetland,* which had already brought over one company of Saints before. The fare, including the necessary provisions, was £3 7s. 6d. for adults; for children under fourteen years, £2 10s; infants under twelve months, free."

[3] Andrew Jenson, *Church Chronology: A Record of Important Events Pertaining to the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 2d ed, rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1914), 36: "The ship *Zetland* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 358 Saints, bound for G. S. L. Valley, under the presidency of Orson Spencer. It arrived at New Orleans April 2nd, and the emigrants arrived at Kanesville, Iowa, May 17th, having suffered much from cholera while passing up the Missouri river."

[4] Mary Ellen Smoot and Marilyn Sheriff, *The City In-between; History of Centerville*, *Utah* (Bountiful, Utah: Carr Printing, 1975), 302–3.

[5] Robert L. Marrott, "Morrisites," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History,* ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan (Salt lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 795.

[6] Smoot and Sheriff, *The City In-between*, 304.

[7] Smoot and Sheriff, *The City In-between*, 304–5.

[8] Smoot and Sheriff, *The City In-between*, 307.

[9] Dale T. Tingey interview, 24 January 2001, interviewed by author.

[10] Emma Tingey interview, 31 January 2001, interviewed by author.

[11] Journal of Dale T. Tingey, typescript, 3, in author's possession; hereafter Tingey journal.

[12] Tingey journal, 1–2.

[13] Tingey journal, 3.

[14] Tingey journal, 5.

[15] Dale T. Tingey: “Called to Serve,” 4, in author’s possession. This is a short piece, separate from Dale’s journal, but dictated after he remembered the incident with the destroyed airplanes in one of our interviews.