

**Memorial Service  
James Elmer Baird  
Eulogy by Barbara Lewis  
November 26, 2002**

James Elmer Baird was born on January 23, 1915 in Rigby, Idaho. He was the third child and second son of Asa and Winnifred Kirkman Baird. They chose the name of James in honor of James Hyrum Baird, father of Asa.

As a child growing up the family moved many times. First from Rigby to Shelton, to Idaho Falls, to Riverside, to Blackfoot, to Wapello to Basalt to Firth, back to Basalt and then again to Firth.

As a young child of about 2-3 the family lived in Shelton. The home had a lot of shade and fruit trees. This is where the children were allowed to play. One day Wayne was suppose to be raking leaves and Vera tending Jim...well Jim got in the way of Wayne's raking and Wayne came down with the rake on top of Jim's head. The teeth made a deep gash in grandpa's head. Blood spurted out and Vera stood screaming, "You've killed him!" His mother came running out, took him away and washed the blood from his face and hands and bandaged his head with a white rag.

I think that the family had many such adventures as this. His father's brothers lived with the family and tried to teach the young children many things...play with snakes, worms and caterpillars and try and scare your mom! I don't think Great-grandma appreciated this kind of help in raising her children.

When attending school he usually had to walk with his brothers and sisters. There were times in the winter that his father wouldn't let them go to school because it was too cold outside. Other times his father would hitch up the sleigh and take them to school. The children would take their lunch to school in buckets. Most of the time their lunch was a sandwich made with homemade bread and butter and an egg along with a homemade cookie or piece of homemade cake. Sometimes there would be a tomato, an apple or other vegetable that was in season.

Grandpa grew up working and working hard. There was always a chore to be done whether it was in the garden weeding, splitting logs for firewood or helping build "something". It seemed that all fall and winter was spent cutting and packing wood to the house so that they could have some source of heat in the winter.

Grandpa graduated from Firth High School. In HS he participated in anything that was musical. When they had a musical production grandpa was the one with the lead part. He had a beautiful singing voice. During his latter HS

years and after, when he and his brothers wanted to go courting they would have to catch the train to Blackfoot so they could attend the dances and meet girls. If they missed the train at the end of the evening they had to walk home. Grandpa said many times he was running as fast as he could to make that train.

It was at one of these dances that he met Betty Jean Hudson. Their first dance was to the song: "Red Sails in the Sunset." It became their song. On the night of November 18, 1936 Grandpa came home and into his parent's bedroom and told his mother that he was getting married in the morning. He went to bed then got up and caught the 8 o'clock bus to Blackfoot and was married on November 19, 1936. I am sure there is more to the story but we have never heard it!!

Soon after they were married Jim and Betty moved to California where Grandpa worked at Construction. They returned and lived in Firth and then Blackfoot where grandpa became a building contractor. They lived in Blackfoot most of their lives.

Their son Richard was born in November 1937 in Blackfoot. He was followed by Lana in June 1941. Jim and Betty had 3 more daughters, all who were born stillborn.

Early in the marriage Grandpa worked at the Air Base in Pocatello and then he switched to building homes in the Blackfoot area. He helped his own father build his home in Firth. We can travel around the area here in Blackfoot and point out some of the homes he built...Dr. Dean Packer's home, homes in the Bagle subdivision and his home at the end of Baird Lane. Along with home building he built apartment buildings, potato cellars, the Ranger Station on the way to Island Park and the Latrines at Buttermilk Landing. (We children were always told to be grateful for them!)

But the most important thing that he built was the cabin. This was the one that affected the lives of all of us. It was our "CABIN". It was here that we learned fishing—**Rule**: don't tangle the lines or grandpa will lose his patience. **Rule**: don't stand up in the boat or lean over to get your fish with the net, you let grandpa do it unless he tells you to get it, or you may fall out. **Rule**: you gut your own fish. **Rule**: you are quiet when fishing or you scare the fish. (This was most difficult for me.) and **the most important Rule**..don't cast out your line when someone is right behind you...they will yell really loud, and use words you never hear at your house, when the hook is caught in their head.

At the cabin we learned how to snowmobile. Grandpa never once yelled at me when I drove the snowmobile up the tree or when we drove crazy. We also learned to chop wood, feed squirrels, play Yahtzee, and this is where grandpa would try and teach us kids how to play poker without our dad finding out!! (I never did figure out how the game works.)

Later in his life he opened Baird Cabinetry shop. He loved to work with his hands. I love seeing his work. My Grandpa and Grandma Allen had him come to their home and do their cabinets. So our family was blessed to see grandpa Baird's handiwork at both our grandparents' homes.

Grandpa was a member of the Elk's Lodge in Blackfoot. He was active in them as long as I can remember. I don't know what he did but knew it was important to him. Lana remembers attending the Elk's Father-Daughter Night with her dad. He always made her feel elegant and grown up when they went. Later as she grew up she went with her parents to the dances and enjoyed that. Grandpa became Exalted Ruler and we were all impressed even though as children we didn't know what that was...it just sounded important like he might be a king or something like that.

He loved horses and had a ranch outside of Blackfoot. If you ask the grandkids they will all tell you about GreyCloud, Streak and Sal. GreyCloud being the famous one. Three of us remember being bucked off of him and grandpa making us get right back on to "show GreyCloud who was boss". We did get on, but we all knew who the boss was: GreyCloud and Grandpa! I remember another horse "Barbie" that he always told me he named after me and that she would be mine when I got older. One winter she ate some frozen potatoes and died. I remember crying and crying and wished that it had been GreyCloud instead!

I remember helping at branding time...I'm sure that Mike, Jim, Greg and Alan thought it was cool but Ann and I thought it stunk..., Joan went back and forth on her feelings first cool then stinky...then cool. Ann and I always found a way to make it in the house and help grandma.

Grandpa loved the outdoors. Whether working hard or playing. He loved snowmobiling, golfing, horseback riding, fishing, and camping and sunsets. You always knew where you would find him at the end of the day...sitting out on the porch watching the sunset.

He attended the Dick Baird family reunions at Redfish Lake. He would bring his pickup with the camper and stay the week. Daniel would ride with him from Blackfoot to Challis and over to Stanley, praying hard that grandpa would stay on the road. Grandpa liked to head in interesting directions when he was pointing and exclaiming over something, forgetting that he was driving. He would take any great-grandchildren who wanted to fishing. Mike was his fishing buddy. Those two would disappear for hours. When this happened no G-grandkids would go along. When we were at the beach we would find him sitting under a tree just watching or sleeping. He laughed at the whole group and their antics. The great-grandkids would bring him fish to examine that they had caught in their little nets and he would exclaim excitedly over every one. The largest being

maybe 1-2 inches long. He enjoyed the campfire dinners especially Mike' peach cobbler.

He golfed right up to the last few years. When he started falling out of the golf cart when the driver turned corners cracking his ribs or hurting his hip, he knew it was time to quit. Both his children Dick and Lana and most of his grandchildren carry on his love for golf.

His past few years were spent living in Portland with Dick and Darlene. He loved the beauty of Oregon but didn't like the cold wet winters. He liked having Mike and Greg's families nearby. In March he moved Boise where he lived near Lana, Ann and myself. We visited him often, bringing him fudge cycles, candy and homemade treats. He passed away on Friday evening November 22, 2002 at the age of 87

We are all grateful for Grandpa.. the things he taught us and what he shared with us. He was a Father, a brother and a friend. He will be missed. We love you.