

Hart Family History

By Robert Hart

Harry Hart was born February 14, 1905, in Hoboken, New Jersey, to Henry and Louisa Borski Hartwigsen. His father was a German seaman who immigrated to America along with a brother and several sisters over a period of years. His mother was born in Hoboken to parents who immigrated individually from Germany and married in Hoboken. Henry Hartwigsen had a small boat he operated in the Hudson River moving freight from the larger ships that docked in Hoboken. Harry's cousin described Hoboken in the early 1900's as "a mile square of Hamburg transported to the Jersey Shore". The Germans worked on the docks and the ships.

In 1914, additional land was opened for homesteading in Idaho. Henry Hartwigsen was a romantic and adventuresome type that decided he was going out to Idaho to homestead, although he knew nothing about farming or ranching. Henry came to Idaho, staked out a homestead on the bench northeast of Pocatello, built a small house, and sent for Louisa who arrived by train with their children Dora and Harry. Times were tough and it was not easy to make a living on a homestead, but they decided that Idaho was home, and they would stick it out. They eventually got into the dairy business with some milk cows and delivering milk into town.

Harry grew up in the hills of Idaho as a farm lad, learning to tend livestock, raise crops, and hunt.

He rode a donkey to Tyhee to school where he graduated from the eighth grade. He worked for a short while in the railroad shops, but decided the life he wanted was as a rancher. A friend and Harry started roping goats for sport. What started out as some fun, would eventually become the means of additional income to build the ranch. In 1927, Harry entered his first professional rodeo in Cokeville, Wyoming. Florence Richardson was born November 12, 1909, in Inkom, Idaho to John and Fanny Francis Richardson. One sister described their childhood on the farm as "milking cows, hoeing the garden, picking berries, and picking apples". Florence attended grades 1-10 at the school in

Inkom and then had to move to Pocatello to finish her last two years of high school, graduating in 1928. The only way she could afford to live in Pocatello was to work cleaning the rooming house her grandma owned and let her have a room in. During her high school days, she met the cowboy Harry Hart from north of Pocatello. Harry and Florence were married on August 8, 1929, in Soda Springs, Idaho during the Henry's Stampede Rodeo. The first years of their marriage were during the



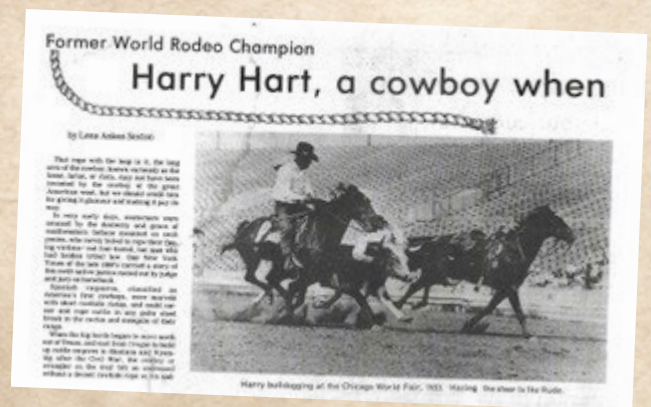
Depression years, and they lived with his folks. In 1935, they bought a place on Ballard Road and moved an old house onto a foundation they poured themselves. In 1937, they bought a home on the corner of Ballard and Hawthorne roads where they resided until their passing. They raised five children: Harry Richard born 1930, Laurel 1931, James 1941, David 1944, and Robert 1948.



Rodeo was a means for Harry to earn some extra money. His professional career as a calf roper and steer wrestler lasted from 1927 until 1948. He shortened the family name from Hartwigsen to Hart when he started rodeoing. During this time, he went to major rodeos throughout the United States from the east coast to the west. In between rodeos, he would go back to the ranch to fix fence, put up hay, and other ranch chores. In 1933, he performed at the rodeo at the Chicago World's Fair. In 1934, he went to London on a ship to perform at a rodeo before the Queen of England. For 13 seasons between 1930 and 1945 he went east to Madison Square Garden in New York City to perform, missing only the World War II gas rationing years of 1942 and 1943. In 1939 he had an exceptionally good year and won the world championship in steer wrestling and was third in the all-around cowboy standings. He earned over \$7000 that year, a small fortune for the time. He managed

to accumulate a 2000-acre ranch on the east bench and another 160 acres of irrigated land on the Tyhee flat.

When the rodeo years were over, Harry “retired” to the ranch where he had a herd of 125 Hereford cows and started to dry farm wheat on lower bench ground. In 1956, he drilled a well on the bench and the following year put a half section under a pressurized irrigation system. It was a big investment for the time, but he managed to have it paid for in just three years. He enjoyed the quiet life of an Idaho rancher and farmer until he passed away on January 5th, 1981.



Harry started with nothing when he came to Idaho as a boy of nine and worked hard to accumulate a ranch that would provide security for both his parents and his family. He was always generous to those who needed help because he knew what it was like to be poor.

Florence Richardson Hart spent her years as a wife and mother. She was an active member of the LDS church and taught primary school for over 20 years. She loved flowers and raised a beautiful flower garden next to her home for many years. She passed away on October 1, 1984.