

History of Otmar James Gornichec

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April 20, 1914 - February 29, 2008



Otmar James Gornichec was born on April 20, 1914 in Tržič, Slovenia. His birth name was Otmar Ferdinand Gorničec. He was the third child of Dušan and Antonia Gorničec. He had an older brother named Otto and an older sister named Anna. His father, Dušan, immigrated to the United States prior to his birth, and his mother was living with his grandmother, Anna Virant. When Otmar was six years old, his mother immigrated to the United States, and she brought Anna and Otmar with her. His brother, Otto, had died before they left Slovenia. They reunited with Dušan and moved to his home in Youngstown, Ohio. His father taught him to be a barber which he did for the rest of his life. Four younger siblings were born in Ohio. They were named Robert, Freda, Joseph, and Frank. Otmar's mother died when he was twenty years old, and shortly after that he joined the CCC and moved west. Otmar worked for the CCC in California, Montana, and Utah, and he began using the name, Jim. In Price, Utah he met Margaret Forsyth, and they were married on January 17, 1937. Together, they raised four boys starting in Price, and then Spring Canyon, Orem, and Provo. They were named James, Richard, Barry, and Roger. In Orem he started a barbering

business and was self-employed for about twenty years. Jim also helped organize and manage the Utah Barber's Guild, and he was chosen to be on the State Barber Examining Board which he did for twelve years. His final working years were spent with Clegg Construction while he maintained a barber shop in his home. After retirement, he and Margaret moved to Washington, Utah, and they spent the next twenty-five years living in that community and traveling. Jim continued to cut hair in his home. In 2007 they returned to Orem, Utah for assisted living, and Margaret passed away. About a year later, Jim Gornichec passed away on February 29, 2008 and was buried with his wife at Orem.

Tržič, Slovenia

April, 1914 - October, 1920



View of Tržič, Slovenia

Tržič is an alpine village in a valley nestled among the Julian Alps of northern Slovenia near the Austrian border. According to a local legend, the people who

lived in the first Roman settlement of Forum in Lubelino above the valley were forced to flee when a dragon within the mountains grew so large that it caused a massive earthquake and landslide that destroyed the Roman village. People moved to the valley, and by 1492 there was a thriving community. That year, Tržič was given the status of a market town and allowed to hold weekly fairs which helped to promote its growth. In the year 1811 there was a major fire that destroyed many buildings on the left bank of the river, Tržič Bistrica, that ran through town. As a result the new buildings had firewalls, iron doors, and window coverings. At the time that Otmar was born in Tržič, the country of Slovenia was part of the Austria-Hungary Empire, and there was a large community of Austrians living in Tržič. This was the second largest kingdom in Europe until 1918 when it was conquered during World War I. After that Slovenia became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.



Map of Austria-Hungary Empire in 1914

Otmar Gornicec's story begins with his parents, Dušan and Antonia Gorniček. Otmar's father, Dušan Gorniček, was born in Koprivnica, Croatia¹ on July 16, 1884. Otmar's mother, Antonia Teresa Ehrenbrandtner, was born in Bludenz, Austria on December 14, 1891. Dušan is pronounced "*Dooshun*". How they met is not known, but perhaps they met in Zagreb, Croatia. The capital city is about 120 miles southeast of Tržič, and about 62 miles west of Koprivnica. Dušan and Antonia were married on May 1, 1913 in Zagreb. Dušan was 28 years old, and Antonia was 21 years old. They lived on Maksimirska Cesta (Road) number 23 in Zagreb, and Dušan worked as a barber. It appears that they started having children prior to their marriage. Their first son was named Otto Gorniček, but his actual birthdate is not known. Dušan had a brother named Otto, and perhaps they named their son after him. Then, on March 13, 1913, in Zagreb, they gave birth to a baby daughter that they named Anna Adelia Gorniček, possibly named after Antonia's mother.

Shortly after Anna's birth, Dušan decided he would join his father and brother in America who had immigrated a few years earlier. He planned to work in America to earn enough money to bring his wife and children. In the meantime, Antonia, Otto, and Anna, moved to Tržič, Slovenia from Zagreb, Croatia to live with Antonia's mother, Anna Virant Ehrenbrandtner, and her grandfather, Ferdinand Schneider. They shared an apartment on the second floor of a building near the outskirts of town.

In October, 1913 Dušan said good-bye to his wife, who was pregnant with their third child, and immigrated to the United States to join his father, Franc Gorniček (who was a locksmith), and his brother, Emil, who were living in Cleveland, Ohio. According to the passenger manifest, Dušan boarded a ship named the R.M.S. Caronia in Liverpool, England on October 7, 1913 and arrived at the New York Port on Ellis Island on October 15, 1913. This ship happened to be the same steamer

¹ I have found a short list of Gornicec names at the Koprivnica Cemetery called Pri Svetom Duhu.

They are:

Miroko Gornicec d.1885

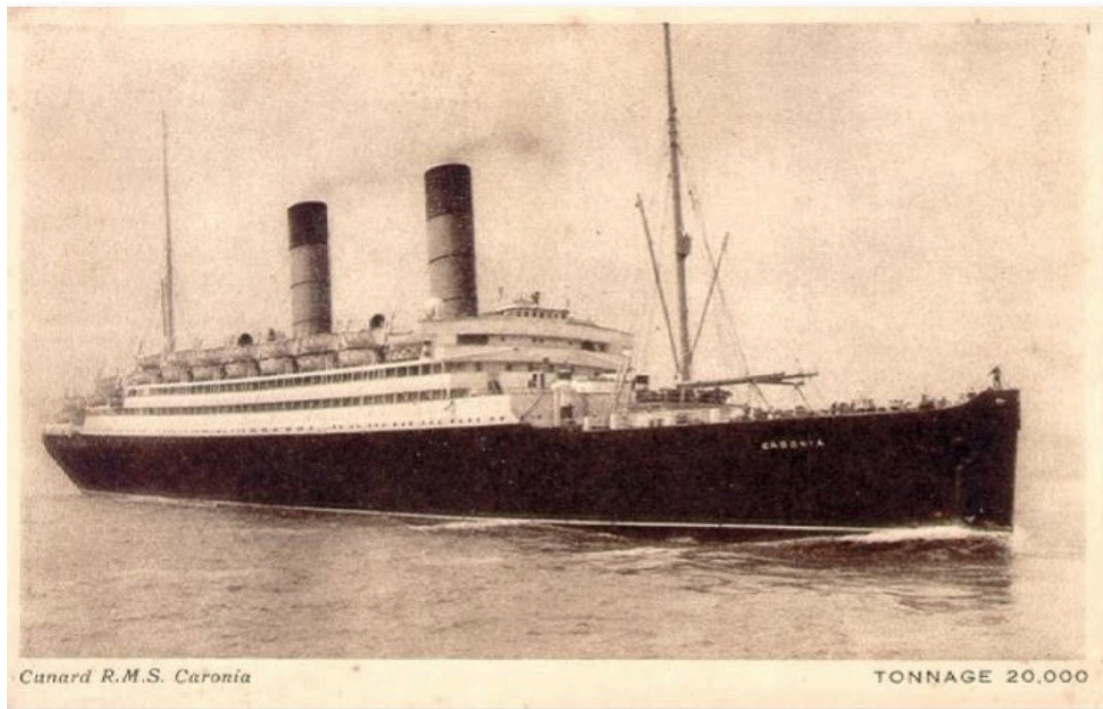
Regina Gornicec d. 1894

Dragutin Gornicec d. 1901

Rosalija Gornicec d. 1939

Ana Gornicec d. 1960

that was the first to warn the R.M.S. Titanic on April 14, 1912 at 9:00 a.m. of icebergs and field ice.



Cunard R.M.S. Caronia

The ship's manifest provided additional information about Dušan Gorniček. He was described as a 29 year old married man, about 5 ft. 8 in. tall with gray eyes, a barber by trade, and previously a resident of Koprivnica, Croatia, where he was also born. He was married to Antonia Gorniček of Tržič, and he was on his way to Cleveland, Ohio with about \$40 in his possession. He reunited with his father and brother in Cleveland. Perhaps he planned to send for his wife and children as soon as he could, but several things happened to prevent that.

First, about six months after Dušan immigrated to the United States, Antonia gave birth to their third child, a son, born on April 20, 1914. He was given the name of Otmar Ferdinand Gorniček. The Gorniček name is Croatian and possibly originated in Mursko Središće that is located in northern Croatia along the Mur River that forms the border between Croatia and Slovenia. It is a place name that refers to a small hill or promontory. The name "Otmar" was of Germanic origin

from “Audemar” which was composed of the elements ‘aud’ meaning “wealth, fortune” and ‘mar’ for “fame”. He may have been given the name Ferdinand after his great-grandfather.

Then, shortly after Otmar was born, his older brother, Otto Gorničec, died when he was just 2½ years old from diphtheria. This is a bacterial disease that causes inflammation of the mucous membranes and damages the heart and nerves from toxins in the blood. This disease is now rare through immunizations.

Then, when Otmar was just two months old, the world erupted into war all around them. The Archduke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophie, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were assassinated on June 28, 1914 by Serbian nationalists in Sarajevo. The Austria-Hungary Empire declared war on the Kingdom of Serbia, and soon, most of Europe was involved in the Great War, later known as World War I. Immigration to America during the war was significantly reduced.

Antonia and her children, Anna and Otmar, continued to live with her mother and grandfather in Tržič for the next six years. Anna and Otmar remembered that their apartment had a yard with space for a garden. They grew cabbage, parsley, carrots, potatoes, onions, lettuce, and beets. They also had fruit trees, flowers, and a couple of goats for milk. They would often hike into the mountains to pick wild raspberries. They remembered that the ovens for baking bread were outside the house, and it was Otmar’s job to help carry firewood for the stove that was situated against a wall, the oven on one side, a range attached to it and the firebox underneath it. They washed their clothing in the river. They used chicory roots as a substitute for coffee and lard instead of butter. Winter provided plenty of snow which meant sleigh rides. Anna and Otmar would play with Grandmother Virant’s dog, Prince, and they would cut Great-Grandfather Schneider’s hair.



Anna Virant and her dog, Prince

Anna and Otmar remembered going to school. They walked to school carrying knapsacks with books on their backs. The school was just one room with benches, and the students were separated by age groups. They remembered being taught the German alphabet and the multiplication table.

Otmar's family belonged to the Catholic church, and most of the people in the community were Catholic. The Austria-Hungary Kingdom was ruled by the Habsburg family who had occupied the throne of the Holy Roman Empire for centuries and made Catholicism the state religion. The parish church, Our Lady of

the Annunciation, was built between 1808 and 1815. This was the primary place of worship in Tržič, and it was likely where Otmar was christened, and where his family attended Mass.



Photo of "Our Lady of the Annunciation" Parish Church taken about 1928

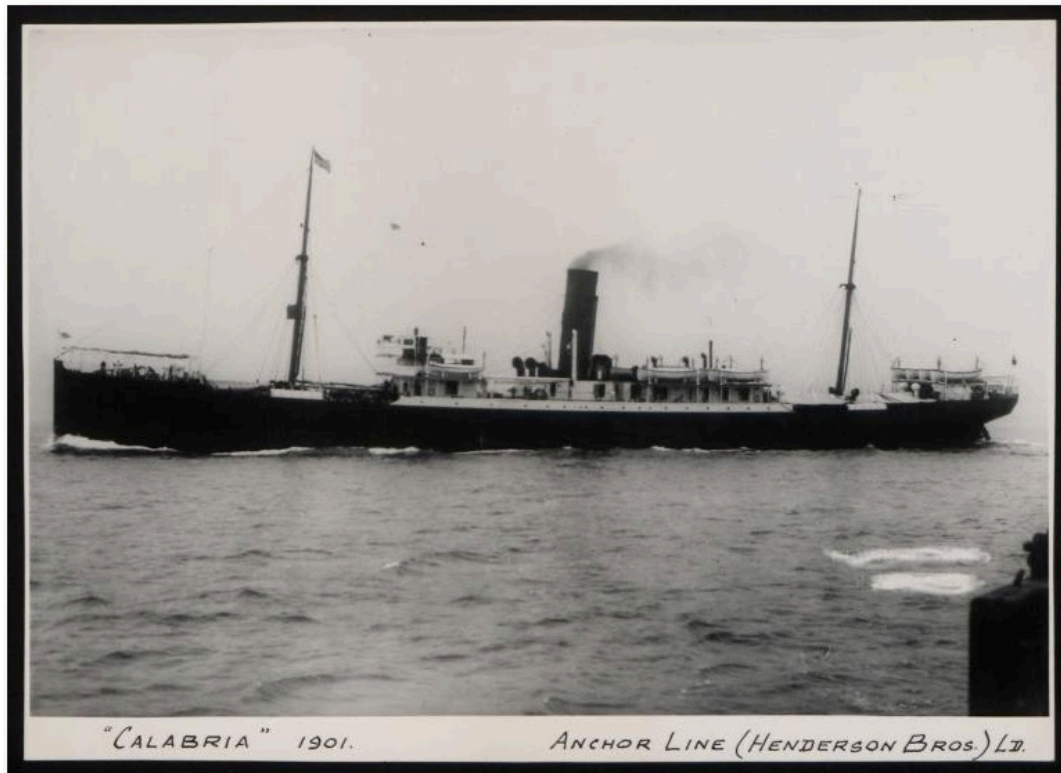
Christmas and Easter would have been important holidays, as well as St. Gregory's Day in March and St. Michael's Day in September. On the eve of St. Gregory's Day, the children of Tržič would participate in "letting light down the water." The children would build small model homes, place a candle inside each of them, and release them on the Tržič Bistrica to float down the river to welcome the longer days of summer. In September they held a festival called Cobbler's Sunday. This festival has been held annually for over 500 years and celebrates the work of the shoemakers in Tržič. It's very possible that Anna and Otmar would have enjoyed celebrating these festivals.

Meanwhile, in America, Dusan was struggling to save enough money to purchase a home and bring his family over. The United States remained neutral for most of the war, but was finally pushed into joining the Allied Powers and declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Then on May 18, 1917, the U.S.

Congress passed the Selective Service Act that required all men ages 21-30 years to enlist with the armed services for a period of 12 months. Then in August, 1918, the maximum age limit was raised to 45 years old. In accordance with the new law, Dusan registered with the Selective Service on September 12, 1918. He was 34 years old. His registration also indicated that he lived with his brother, Emil, at 1656 Poland Avenue in Youngstown, Ohio. He was self-employed as a barber. He was of medium height and build with blue eyes and light hair. He indicated that he was a non-declarant, which meant that he had not yet committed to becoming a citizen of the United States. It is not known when Dusan and Emil moved from Cleveland to Youngstown, Ohio, but at least this record tells us that they were there by the summer of 1918. By this time, their father, Franc Gorničec, had passed away.

Another obstacle that delayed Dusan's family from immigrating to America was the 1918 flu pandemic, or "Spanish Flu". From February, 1918 to April, 1920 the pandemic infected about 500 million people worldwide, and may have tilted the outcome of World War I in favor of the Allied Powers. Fortunately for Dusan, the Central Powers started to surrender to the onslaught of the Allied Powers, until, finally, Germany signed the armistice on November 11, 1918, and the war was over. Dusan did not have to serve in the military, but the pandemic continued to affect the world for another year and a half.

In 1920, Dusan's family received word that he had saved enough money to purchase passage for them to immigrate to America. The time had come for Otmar to say good-bye to Tržič and the beautiful Alps. He traveled with his mother and sister to the port of Trieste, Italy. On September 25, 1920 they boarded a freighter, the S.S. Calabria.



S. S. Calabria

The captain of the ship was very kind to them. When the ship stopped in Portugal he made sure they received fresh fruit. During the voyage he carried Otmar around and played with him. With the stop at Portugal the voyage lasted a little over three weeks, and they arrived at Ellis Island, New York on October 17, 1920. After seven years apart they were reunited with Dusan. He brought them to his home in Youngstown, Ohio.

Youngstown, Ohio

October, 1920 - October, 1934



Youngstown, Ohio in 1930

Youngstown, Ohio was named for John Young from the state of New York. He surveyed the area in 1796 and later settled there along the Mahoning River. The name "Mahoning" is said to derive from the Lenape language meaning "at the licks" which refers to the many salt licks that attracted deer to the area. Coal was discovered in the early 1800's, and by 1835, private companies saw that it was important enough to build a canal that would connect the Mahoning Valley to the Erie Canal. By 1856, railroads replaced the cargo boats, and the coal industry brought several immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and Wales. By the early 1900's Youngstown had established large steel mills along the Mahoning River, and several immigrants from Eastern Europe, Italy, and Greece moved into the area. Tens of thousands of Croats settled in Cleveland, Akron, and Youngstown looking for employment. This included the Gorničec family.



Dusan and Antonia Gorničec with Otmar and Anna

The Gorničec family was reunited in 1920. Antonia, Anna, and Otmar arrived at Ellis Island on October 17, 1920, and Dusan brought them to his home in Youngstown, Ohio which was located at 1656 Poland Avenue. He shared the home with his brother, Emil, who was not married, although he may have been divorced. Dusan was 36 years old, Antonia was 29 years old, Anna was 7 years old, and Otmar was 6 years old. Anna and Otmar had no memories of their father, and this was the first time they had met him. Dusan was a stern man, and because of this Otmar never had a close relationship with him. Anna and Otmar had grown up speaking and learning the German language, so this was a very foreign experience to them. It would have been very challenging to now answer to their father, attend school, and learn the English language. They must have missed the natural beauty and quiet of the Slovenian mountains and forests. Their new home was situated alongside the Republic Steel Mill, and the family was exposed to the noise, lights, and smoke of this busy steel mill almost constantly.



Republic Steel Mill in Youngstown, Ohio

Otmar said that he cannot remember his childhood as being a happy one. However, his mother did try to carry on some of the traditions of her country and her family. She baked delicious cakes and cookies from recipes that had been passed on to her. Anna and Otmar would take the baked goods in their wagon to sell them. She also made sure that Anna and Otmar had music lessons. Anna played the piano, and Otmar played the violin.

Dusan was a barber by trade. At one time he also owned a machine shop and he and his brother, Emil, invented a gun and a combination lock. When Otmar was about ten years old his father stood him on a stool and taught him how to cut hair. From that time forward Otmar spent more time at the barber shop than in school. Authorities would be sent to take Otmar to school. He would attend for a while, but then he would start missing school to work at the barber shop until the pattern repeated itself.

Dusan and Antonia began having children again. Four more children were born starting in 1924 when Otmar was ten years old. His younger brother Robert was born April 7, 1924. A younger sister, Fredericka, or Freda, was born July 4, 1925.

Another brother, Joseph, was born September 23, 1926, and his youngest brother, Francis, or Frank, was born November 9, 1927. Dusan had decided that they needed to change the spelling of their last name to make it easier for people to pronounce it correctly. Gorničec became Gornichec, and everyone in the family started using the new spelling. Child bearing was hard on Antonia, and her health began to rapidly decline. These were trying times as she took ill, so Anna and Otmar helped take care of her and the younger children.

In April, 1930, Otmar turned 16 years old. He bought a Ford Model T car. He moved to Cleveland, Ohio and lived with his relatives, John and Stephania Cross, and he worked in Cleveland. Stephania Cross was an older cousin to Otmar who was born in Croatia and immigrated to the United States. She became like a mother to all of the kids. It's not difficult to imagine that as Otmar became a young man that his relationship with his father was becoming too contentious, and it was better if he moved out of the house.

In 1933, he drove his car to the Chicago World's Fair as well as the Niagara Falls. He drove across the border at the falls into Canada and was stopped at the border when he tried to return because he wasn't a citizen of the United States. He had to call his father who had to drive to the border to claim him. He slept in a park near the falls for nearly a week while waiting for his father to arrive and explain the situation to the border patrol.

On March 11, 1934 his mother, Antonia, died at only 43 years of age. Otmar was almost 20 years old. His mother was buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Youngstown. After her death Otmar stayed home to help his father at the barber shop, however, wages were very low. This was at the height of the Great Depression. Otmar decided that to earn more money he would join a new federal program called the Civilian Conservation Corps.



Calvary Cemetery in Youngstown, Ohio

Civilian Conservation Corps

October 4, 1934 - March 11, 1937



The Civilian Conservation Corps, also known as the CCC, was a work relief program that operated under the Federal Government and was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. Only single, unemployed men ages 17-28 could apply to the program. The maximum number of those enrolled was over 500,000. It was estimated that during the 9 year period from 1933 to 1942 over 3 million young men participated. The program provided them with food, shelter, clothing and \$30 a month. The participant would receive \$5 and the other \$25 was sent to support his family. Otmar's father was ill and not earning a wage, so Otmar sent all \$30 to his sister, Anna, who was now married and living at 2518 Hunter Street in Youngstown, Ohio. She was taking care of her father and four younger siblings. The record indicates that \$25 was initially allotted to Miss Claire Knott who lived at 144 W. Wood Street in Youngstown, Ohio. It is not known what relationship Otmar had with Claire Knott. Two months later the allotment was directed to Otmar's sister, Anna Hudach. Otmar supplemented his CCC income by providing haircuts as the company barber for which he was paid 25 cents a cut. This money he was allowed to keep. Otmar worked in California, Montana, and Utah.

On October 4, 1934, Otmar presented himself at Fort Knox, Kentucky to take the Oath of Enrollment for the CCC. He was described as 5 feet 8 inches tall, 153 lbs., with blue eyes, brown hair, and a light complexion. Otmar was 20 years old. The record also states that his previous occupation was as a barber for 11 years. Perhaps this indicates that he continued to work as a barber while living in Cleveland, Ohio. He spent one week at Fort Knox for reconditioning. He was assigned to Company 593.

On October 11, 1934 he traveled with his company to CCC Camp Nine Mile #2 F-37 near Alberton, Montana. This camp was located along current Interstate 90 about 30 miles west of Missoula, Montana. They arrived on October 13th, and then from October 14th through October 17th they assisted in fighting a forest fire burning in that area. He was not paid for his time traveling or for his time spent fighting the forest fire.

They left Montana on October 18th and arrived at Sanger, California on October 20th. His company was assigned to the CCC Camp Kings River F-359, and Otmar

was given the job of fitting pipes. He did this work from October 21, 1934 to June 1, 1935. He was paid \$30 per month for this service.



Kings River Canyon, California

While he was working for the CCC in California, Otmar's fellow employees said his name was too hard to remember. They told him he looked like a “Jim”, and from that time forward he would be called Jim. He must have been willing to accept that as he officially had his name changed to Otmar James Gornichec a few years later. Eventually, he would also name his first son James, and both of them would be known as Jim. It is amazing how much influence a nickname can have on a person's life.

On June 2, 1935, Jim's company was transferred to Glacier Park, Montana, and they arrived there on June 5, 1935. They were assigned to the CCC Camp Sherburne Lake GNP-13. Lake Sherburne is within Glacier National Park not far from the U.S. and Canadian border. It was a beautiful area to spend the summer and fall. Jim was given the job of assistant truck dispatcher which he did until October 23, 1935.



Lake Sherburne, Glacier National Park, Montana

On October 24, 1935, Jim's company was transferred to Price, Utah and assigned to CCC Camp Price SCS-3. This is where he would spend the greatest amount of time, and it would also be the last area where he would work for the CCC. From October 26, 1935 to June 26, 1936 he was given the job of Camp Mechanic. From June 27, 1936 to September 27, 1936 he was assigned the job of truck driver. Finally, from September 28, 1936 to March 11, 1937, he served as Kitchen Police, or KP duty. This would have involved cleaning the kitchen and mess hall, serving food, and dishwashing.



Photograph of a CCC Camp in Utah

Jim's final year of service, from March, 1936 to March, 1937 was filled with life changing events. He took the entire month of April, 1936 to return to Ohio to attend his father's funeral and help his family. In May, he had to have his appendix removed and spent two weeks in the Price City Hospital. But most importantly, he fell in love, dated for several months, and got married. He was honorably discharged from the CCC on March 11, 1937 after serving for two years and four months.

Price, Utah

March, 1936 - December, 1942



Price, Utah

Price, Utah is located along the Price River that flows from the Wasatch Range to the Green River in the northwest corner of the Colorado Plateau. The area has an arid climate as it lies in the rain shadow of the Wasatch mountains. It was settled in 1879 by LDS families looking for land they could farm, but it quickly became a central community that supported several mining towns in the mountains and canyons in the surrounding area. The community and the river that flows through it were named for a Mormon Bishop from Goshen Utah, William Price. He explored and wrote about the region in 1869. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built a line in 1883 to support the coal mines around Helper, Utah. This brought more employment opportunities and a diverse population to the area. By 1930, Price was a vibrant community with several stores, schools, churches, businesses and administrative buildings. The Civilian Conservation Corps established a camp about half a mile from Price in October, 1935 for the purpose of soil conservation and erosion mitigation. Jim Gornichec was part of the first group sent to Camp Price, and his main responsibility was that of camp mechanic.

While Jim was working at Camp Price he met a young lady named Margaret Forsyth and their courtship began. Margaret shared the story that she and a few of her girlfriends would go to Camp Price in order to flirt and play card games with the young men there. As a young woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints she was criticized for going to the CCC camp to be with “those boys”. It was in February, 1936 at a table playing cards where Jim and Margaret first met. They could not stop looking at each other. Jim was 22 years old, and Margaret had turned 23 years old in December. She was about four months older than Jim. They began spending all of their free time together.

On March 30, 1936, Jim’s father, Dusan Gornichec, passed away in Youngstown, Ohio as a result of acute alcoholism. It is not difficult to imagine that his time since his wife had died was filled with pain and loneliness, and he had turned to drinking to numb those feelings. It is not known if he had a drinking problem prior to his wife’s passing, but it was well known that he had a reputation as an angry man which may have been influenced by alcohol. Jim returned to Ohio to attend his father’s funeral, and he stayed for a short time to pay off the funeral expenses and some other obligations. His sister, Anna, wanted him to stay in Ohio, but he explained to his family that he was returning to Utah because he had found the girl he was going to marry.

Jim returned to Utah at the end of April, and just in time to ask for Margaret’s hand in marriage. She had taken a job in California and was moving there. She did go to California, but only stayed for about a month. Originally, they had talked about Jim joining her on the coast at the end of the summer, but on May 16, 1936, he suffered from appendicitis. He was admitted to the Price General Hospital on May 18th and had an appendectomy. He stayed in the hospital until June 1st, and he was able to return to work on June 6th. Margaret returned to Utah to be with him. Their courtship continued throughout the rest of that year. During that time they went dancing at the Silver Moon Dance Hall, went on picnics, and watched movies.



Silver Moon Dance Hall in 1933

On December 24, 1936, Christmas Eve, Jim gave Margaret a diamond engagement ring, and they set their wedding date for January 17, 1937. They had a small gathering of family and friends for their wedding which was held at the home of Margaret's father, John Forsyth.

Jim knew that his marriage to Margaret would render him ineligible to continue working for the CCC. His contract was ending in March, and so he started making plans to transition to the private sector. He continued to live at Camp Price after his marriage, but he stayed with his wife on the weekends. In March, they moved in together to a one bedroom apartment that they rented.

In February, 1937, Jim traveled by train to Salt Lake City to take his barbering exam. He had an opportunity to work for Charles Atwood in his barber shop in Price, Utah, but he needed to pass the exam first. He successfully passed and obtained his barbering license. The Atwood Barber and Beauty Shop was located at 7 W. Main Street in downtown Price. Charlie Atwood was active in the business community, and he probably encouraged Jim to get involved. By 1938 Jim had filled a couple of positions with the Price Junior Chamber of Commerce. This

group was also known as the Jaycees. The Jaycees worked to provide young people, ages 18-40, with tools to succeed in business development, management skills, and community service. Charlie Atwood was also probably responsible for getting Jim involved in the Carbon-Emery Fish and Game Association. Jim was an active member of this association for several years, and he served on various committees until 1948. He enjoyed fishing and hunting which he picked up while living in Price. He hunted deer and fowl, and he enjoyed fishing at Scofield Reservoir and near Strawberry Reservoir with the Forsyths.

Meanwhile, back in Ohio, the year 1938 was a difficult year. Since the death of Dusan Gornichec in 1936 the younger children had moved in with their oldest sister, Anna, who had married John Hudach and had a child of her own. They lived in an apartment that was part of John Hudach's parents' home. This was located not far from where Dusan's home had been on Poland Ave. On April 29, 1938, Jim's uncle, Emil Gornichec, died when only 49 years old. Then, on July 23, 1938, Jim's younger sister, Freda, died when she was just 12 years old. The remaining children at this time were: Robert ("Bob") Gornichec, age 14; Joseph ("Joe") Gornichec, age 12; and Frank Gornichec, age 11. Anna was likely getting overwhelmed with parenting her younger brothers in addition to her own 3 year old son. She was also pregnant with her second child. Bob Gornichec soon moved to Cleveland, Ohio to stay with his relatives, John and Stephania Cross.

In Price, Utah, Jim and Margaret had a growing family. On July 31, 1938 they welcomed their first child. Margaret gave birth to a son, and they named him James Forsyth Gornichec. They called him Jimmy for the rest of his life. Jim took his responsibilities as a father seriously. Every night he would give Jimmy a rub down, and the little guy loved it. With all of their boys, Jim would change diapers, bathe them, help prepare meals and feed them.

In the summer of 1939 they had a scare. Margaret was bit by an infected tick and became ill with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. This is a bacterial infection that causes fever, headaches, upset stomach, and rash. Without treatment it can even be fatal. Margaret was admitted to the Price City Hospital in July. On Sunday, July 23, 1939 Margaret received a blood transfusion from Sergeant William Grady of the CCC camp where Jim used to work, and she was able to recover. All of the men at the CCC camp had been inoculated for this disease, but

Sergeant Grady was the only one immediately available with the correct blood type.

In June, 1940, Jim's brother Bob moved from Cleveland, Ohio to Price, Utah to live with Jim and Margaret. He was 16 years old. He got a job with the local newspaper, the Sun-Advocate, as a paperboy. That August he enrolled as a Sophomore at Carbon High School. He participated and excelled in athletics, mainly football and basketball. He likely helped around the house and watched his nephew, Jimmy. Jim and Margaret probably attended his games to watch him play. Margaret seemed very willing to host her brother-in-law, and they remained close to Bob throughout his life.

In 1940, Jim decided to become a citizen of the United States. Perhaps he was encouraged to do so by his wife, or by his boss, Charlie Atwood, or by his membership in the Jaycees. He was likely supported by all of them. On September 18, 1940 he was one of sixty-six other immigrants who took the examination to determine his eligibility for citizenship. This usually involved a personal interview with a representative from the Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. They would have tested his knowledge of U.S. History and Government, as well as his ability to speak and write in English. Out of the original sixty-six people who applied for citizenship that year in Carbon County only thirty-five were approved, and Jim was one of those who successfully passed. On May 14, 1941 Jim went to the Carbon County Courthouse in Price, Utah and was sworn in as a citizen of the United States by the Seventh District Court Judge Fred W. Keller. Jim had just turned 27 years old.



Carbon County Courthouse (1912 - 1960)

Judge Keller would have had the applicants repeat the Oath of Allegiance. At that time the Oath went like this:

"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, State, or sovereignty, and particularly to Yugoslavia of which I have heretofore been a subject; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So help me God."

Returning to September 16, 1940, the U.S. Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act which required all men ages 18 to 64 to register for the Selective Service. This was the first time in U.S. history that a military conscription was enacted during peacetime. War had already begun in Europe, and Germany was advancing on several fronts. The United States was not yet involved in the fighting, but was actively supporting the Allies. The country knew it was only a matter of time before the U.S. would enter World War II.

In accordance with the law, Jim Gornichec registered with the Selective Service on October 16, 1940. His draft card contains wonderful information about him. In 1940, Otmar James Gornichec was 26 years old and married to Margaret Gornichec. They lived at 603 East 2nd South in Price, Utah. Other sources indicate their home was a 2 bedroom, 1 bath single family unit, and it had a basement. The home was built in 1938, so it was still quite new when they moved into it. Jim was 5' 9 ½" tall and weighed about 149 lbs. He had blue eyes and brown hair with a light brown complexion. He worked for Charlie Atwood in Price. The draft card also has a nice example of Jim's signature.



Margaret and Jimmy at their Home (1940)

Margaret was pregnant again, and on December 21, 1940, she gave birth to her second child, a boy they named Richard Forsyth Gornichec at the Price City Hospital. Their Christmas holiday in 1940 must have been a very happy one. Imagine that their Christmas was similar to the setting of the movie, "A Christmas Story". The movie was set in the year 1940. The home was heated by a coal

burning furnace. The family decorated a live tree with large, electric light bulbs. There was a Christmas parade to kick off the season with characters from “The Wizard of Oz”, and “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves”, and the arrival of Santa Claus. There were Christmas window displays in the businesses and homes. In fact, in Price, Utah, the Jaycees were responsible for the holiday activities, and Jim was given the task of accepting applications and judging the window holiday displays for businesses and homes in the community. Certainly, Jim and Margaret would have spent time with her family during the holidays.

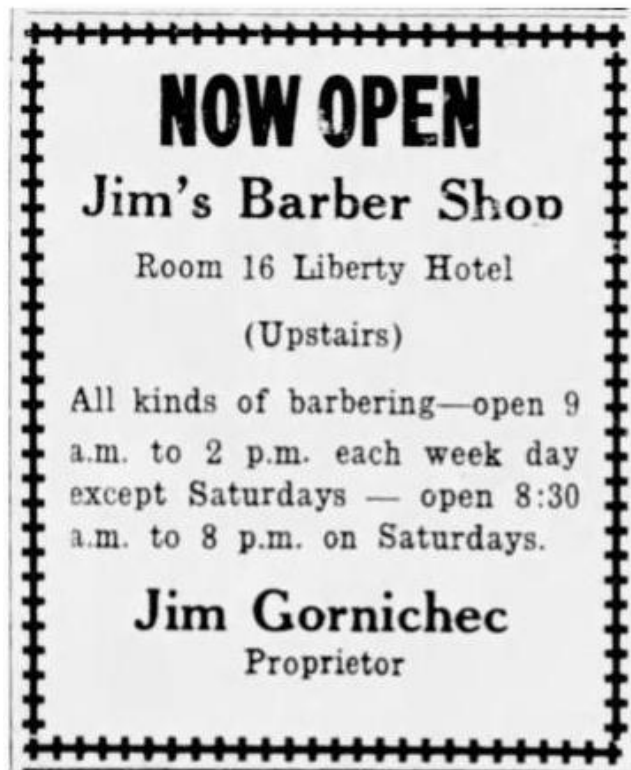
Margaret came from a large family. She was one of eight children, five boys and three girls. In order they were: Sterling, Jack, Harold, Helen, Margaret, Clyde, Darlene, and Richard. Perhaps Margaret named her second son after her youngest brother. The family lost their mother, Elsie Clyde Forsyth, on December 6, 1933 due to a ruptured appendix. She was only 51 years old. Margaret was 19 years old when her mother passed away, which must have been a difficult and emotional loss for her. In 1940, most of the Forsyth family continued to live and work in Price, Utah. Jim was very well accepted into Margaret’s family, and he grew close to them. They would go camping and fishing together, celebrate holidays and birthdays together, and enjoy summer reunions.

During the summer of 1941, Jim was offered a position selling coal at the tipple and stoking the furnace for the Spring Canyon Coal Company. A tipple is a structure used to transfer coal from minecarts or conveyor belts to transports, usually a railroad hopper car. The tipple often contained screens that would sort the coal pieces by size. The tipple might also be part of a coal preparation plant that washed the coal to remove soil and rock prior to loading. This work opportunity was made possible by his brother-in-law, Sterling Forsyth, who was employed with the Spring Canyon Coal Company as a billing clerk. Sterling was living in Spring Canyon with his wife and two sons.



Spring Canyon Coal Company Tipple and Plant, 1925

Although he started working in Spring Canyon, Jim and his family continued to live at their home in Price. Jim decided to quit barbering with Charlie Atwood, but he still had a clientele, so he set up a barber shop at a hotel in Price and continued to cut hair while also working at the tipple in Spring Canyon. Jim advertised in the Sun-Advocate newspaper, and this advertisement was posted in the paper on December 18, 1941.



This meant that Jim was probably working a swing shift for the Spring Canyon Coal Mine and barbering. The decision to work at the coal mine may have been made, in part, due to the essential nature of coal mining which kept Jim from being drafted into the war. The war effort needed coal, and production at the mine would soon double. Of course, the United States declared war on Japan shortly after Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. Jim would continue working at the coal mine and barbering for the next year.

In April, 1942, Jim turned 28 years old. His home was still in Price, Utah while he worked at Spring Canyon and cut hair at the Liberty Hotel in Price. His household included his wife, Margaret, who was now pregnant with their third child; their oldest son, Jimmy; their second son, Richard; and Jim's younger brother, Bob, who was a Junior at Carbon County High School and would start his Senior year in August, 1942. In September, Bob was selected as co-captain of the football team and he played as the starting quarterback. His team played seven

games that season, and the Carbon County High School Dinosaurs had six wins and one loss.



Jimmy and Richard Gornichec (1942)

On September 28, 1942, Margaret gave birth to a son. They named him Barry Forsyth Gornichec. In November, 1942, Jim was offered the position of lampman for the coal mine and was eligible to move into a home at Spring Canyon. As the lampman he was responsible for the maintenance and repair of the lamps the coal miners depended on. Throughout December and January the family made the move from Price to Spring Canyon.

Spring Canyon, Utah

January, 1943 - July, 1949



Spring Canyon, Utah in 1948

Spring Canyon is the name of the canyon located in the mountains about 15 miles northwest of Price, Utah, and it was home to several coal mining camps including: Peerless, Storrs, Standardville, Latuda, Rains, Mutual, and Little Standard. Storrs was established in 1912 by mining magnate Jesse Knight. He purchased 1,600 acres in Spring Canyon and organized the Spring Canyon Coal Company. He had 60 homes constructed and named the new town after his mine superintendent, George Storrs. Mr. Knight was a Mormon, and he banned saloons and gambling houses. By 1914, there was a schoolhouse and church built for the miners and their families who were mostly Mormon. By 1924, Storrs had a population of about 1,000 people, a hotel, a heated swimming pool, well-built homes with steam heat and electric stoves, stores, and offices. In 1924, the town officially changed its name from Storrs to Spring Canyon, and it can be confused with the name of the canyon or the coal mine. From 1924 to 1943, 1,000 tons of coal per day were mined, and in 1940, the Spring Canyon Mine was ranked as the

fourth largest coal producer in Utah. During World War II, over 2,000 tons of coal per day were being mined.

From the start of 1943 through the summer of 1949, Jim and his family lived and worked in Spring Canyon, Utah. Bob moved with the family for a few weeks, but he was not happy about the distance from Price and taking the bus to school. He moved in with a friend, but he dropped out of high school before reaching graduation. In June, 1943, Bob was inducted into the United States Marine Corps. He had turned 19 years old.

Jim worked as the lampman at the Spring Canyon Coal Mine from November, 1942 until 1947. He returned to the tipple as a mechanic from 1947 to 1949. During their time in Spring Canyon, Jim built a room attached to their home where he could continue barbering. He also had permission to build a garage. He made these home additions using railroad ties which were free. He poured a concrete floor in the garage and added a monkey stove, hot water heater, and a laundry room.

Jim participated in many church activities with his wife. They were made dance directors for the M.I.A. or Mutual Improvement Association for the LDS Church. Jim began receiving lessons from the Stake Missionaries and was starting to show more interest in the church. Jim and Margaret would also spend time with the Forsyth's, especially Sterling and his wife, who were very active in the church.

The summer of 1945 brought about the end of World War II. Germany surrendered in May. The Allies warned Japan to surrender in July, which they refused. Atomic bombs were used against Japan on August 6th at Hiroshima and again on August 9th at Nagasaki. Japan formally surrendered on August 14, 1945, and the war was over. Many restrictions were lifted across America. In August, 1945, Jim applied through the Utah Tax Commission office in Price, Utah for a new driving permit. This may have coincided with a trip that he and Margaret planned. They took their three boys on a road trip to Ohio to visit with Jim's family. Jim had also rebuilt a car during his time at Spring Canyon, and even drove the car in the Labor Day parade at Price. The Labor Day celebration in 1945 was a big event as it was a celebration of the end of the war. Jim had to have tires for the car shipped from Cleveland, Ohio, as there was a shortage of tires in Utah.

Jim's brother, Bob Gornichec, returned from his military service to live in Spring Canyon by January, 1946. Bob lived with Jim and Margaret after he was discharged from the Marines, and he had plans to attend school. However, Bob didn't stay in Utah for too long. He turned 22 years old in April, 1946, and he moved to Hawaii sometime during that year. On December 16, 1946, Bob married Jeanette Tsuruko Nakama in Honolulu.

During the summer of 1947, Jim's brother, Joseph Gornichec, traveled from Ohio to stay with Jim and Margaret at Spring Canyon. He had been living with John and Stephania Cross in Cleveland, just as his older brothers had done before him. However, something tragic occurred to Joe in Utah which may have changed his mind about staying there.

On July 8, 1947, Jim and his brother, Joe Gornichec, were involved in an automobile accident with a pedestrian. It was a Tuesday morning as they drove from Spring Canyon to Price. Each man was driving his own vehicle. Jim was in the lead as they headed south on the highway from Helper to Price. About three miles north of Price they came upon a tourist camping site. Two young children were standing by the road. A four year old girl and her brother were waiting to cross the highway as a truck passed them going north. The girl suddenly darted across the road without looking to see if the traffic was clear. She ran into the path of the car being driven by Jim Gornichec. Jim turned hard to the left and narrowly avoided hitting the girl. Joe, however, was not so lucky. He turned to the right, but the girl had turned back and the collision was unavoidable. His car struck the girl and she was thrown about 20 feet. The accident occurred at 8:45 a.m. It is difficult to imagine their feelings of helplessness and sadness as they knelt by the bruised and battered body of this little girl, or trying to convey their apologies to the parents who must have rushed to the scene as it unfolded. The family was returning to their home in California after a trip to the Midwest, but their little girl would now be returned home for burial. It is known that both men stayed at the scene while an ambulance arrived to take the girl to the hospital in Price and a State Patrol Officer questioned everyone involved. It was reported that Joe was visiting his brother from Cleveland, Ohio. Joe was 20 years old at the time of the accident. This incident probably served both men as a reminder of how fragile and precious life really is.

In 1948, Jim and Margaret decided that Utah Valley was the place to be. They purchased a lot on the hill that forms the boundary between Orem and Provo. Margaret also became pregnant with their fourth child. On March 5, 1949, Margaret gave birth to a son at the Standardville Hospital near Spring Canyon. They named him Roger Forsyth Gornichec. In April, 1949, Jim started hauling railroad ties from Spring Canyon to Orem and began building a three bedroom home. He covered the ties with an asbestos siding. Jim also purchased barbering equipment from Charlie Atwood with a loan secured by Sterling Forsyth. He was able to pay off the loan quickly. The family moved to Orem during the summer of 1949. Jim looked for a place he could set up a barber shop, and he found a room to rent from Reed Clegg. The Clegg family became important friends over the years to Jim and Margaret.

Orem, Utah

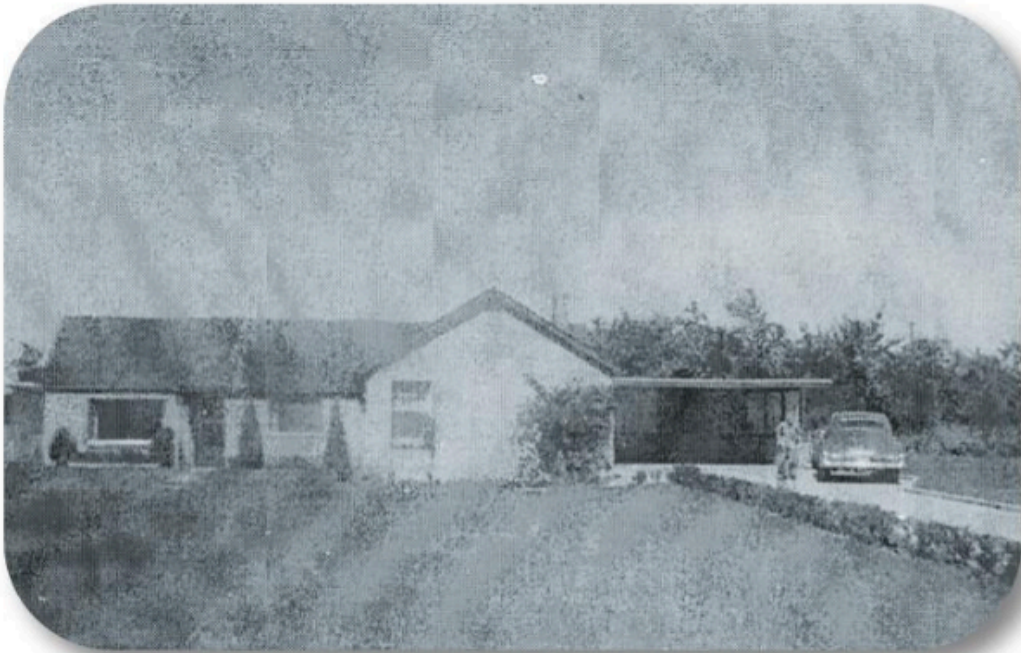
July, 1949 - January, 1962



SCERA Theater in Orem, Utah (1941)

Orem, Utah is situated in Utah Valley north of Provo City and along the foothills of the Wasatch Range. Before Orem was incorporated in 1919 the area was used primarily for farmland and orchards. The south side of Orem was most frequently called the Provo Bench as it was on the hill overlooking the city of Provo. The northern part of the current city of Orem was called Sharon, which was a reference to the birthplace of the Prophet Joseph Smith in Sharon, Vermont. When it was decided that a new city was needed in 1919, they named it for Walter Orem, a wealthy businessman from Salt Lake City, who owned the railway between the Salt Lake Valley and Utah Valley. During the Great Depression, a group of people from Orem organized the Sharon Community Educational and Recreational Association, or SCERA. They successfully developed and built community resources that helped make Orem a desirable place to live.

The lot that Jim and Margaret purchased was on the bench where Orem and Provo meet. The home that Jim built still stands to this day, and the current address is 1926 S. 375 E. Orem, Utah. Jim and Margaret moved their family from Spring Canyon to Orem on July 10, 1949. Jim finished the home and did all of the landscaping including a rock wall and sprinkler system. It was a half acre lot with cherry trees and peach trees. Jim and Margaret planted a garden and raised chickens. Margaret said it was a lovely home with plenty of room for their family.



The Gornichec Home in Orem, Utah (1959)

The family lived throughout the 1950's in their new home in Orem. As they started the new decade, Jim was 35 years old, Margaret had just turned 36 years old, Jimmy was 11 years old, Richard had just celebrated his 9th birthday, Barry was 7 years old, and baby Roger was about 10 months old. These were good years for the family, even though Jim struggled at first to make his barber shop successful. Margaret wrote, "It was August (1949) before Jim opened the barber shop, and it was really rough going for a while. It was quite some time before Jim came home and said, "I made five dollars today." There were times when we were tempted to go back to the coal mines, but we put that temptation in back of us and stuck it out. The boys were making friends. Jim was meeting so many new people and forming lasting friendships and the same with me. He started building a clientele for the barber business that lasted for years." By 1955, the barber shop had a large clientele, and Jim had hired an additional barber.

Jim became interested in electronics. Margaret wrote: "In the early part of 1950 Jim decided to take a correspondence course in Electronics. He was very interested in television and it seemed that at this time T.V. was the coming thing. He studied every night and got good grades. He had to build a radio plus a

television set. He received his diploma from this school which was based in Chicago. He repaired T.V.s for a good number of people. His service charge was \$3.00. One good thing about it, we never had to call a T.V. repairman.” This may have been one way that their son, Jimmy, acquired an interest in electronics as well.

Jim continued to enjoy hunting and fishing. He and Margaret took their boys on many fishing trips. Jim built a boat from scratch. It was a Cabin Cruiser, and he used the best material on it.

Jim decided to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He had participated with Margaret for several years, attending church and accepting callings. On October 28, 1951, he was baptized by his brother-in-law, Dick Forsyth. He was confirmed a member the following day by their ward bishop, Dean Buckner. During their time in Orem, Jim served as Secretary in the Elder’s Quorum and as a Boy Scout Commissioner.



LDS Temple in Manti, Utah

Jim and Margaret raised their four boys in the Church, and they participated in Primary and Scouting. On January 27, 1954, Jim and Margaret and their sons were sealed together in the LDS Manti, Utah Temple. Margaret said, "It was a happy and beautiful day."

Jim started to become very involved in the Barber's Union. Margaret wrote, "During these years Jim had become interested in the Barber's Union. It was not a strong organization at this time, and Jim told the members that if they did not get hospital insurance and a few other things that he would not join. They, in turn, put him in as secretary. In this capacity he soon found out that there was corruption in the national organization, so he persuaded the local members to pull out of that and organize one for the state of Utah and keep the money in Utah. This became known as the Barber's Guild. He was their first president and so many times took leave from his shop in order to go to other parts of the state to organize other locals. He also got them a good hospital insurance plan. It was about this time that he was appointed by Governor George D. Clyde to the State Barber Examining Board which met every three months to conduct State Exams and consisted of three men. He served on this board for twelve years."

In 1956, Jim Gornichec's family was able to be together. First, in July, 1956, Anna Hudach, Jim's sister, and her husband, John, and two of their children traveled from Ohio to Utah to stay with Jim and Margaret. At the same time, Bob Gornichec and his wife, Jean, and daughter, Toni, traveled from Honolulu to stay with them, and they all had a great time. Then, in August, 1956, Jim and Margaret flew to Ohio for a Gornichec family reunion. It was the first time they had all been together since the funeral of their father, Dusan, in 1936. The reunion included John and Anna Hudach, Jim and Margaret Gornichec, Bob and Jean Gornichec, Joe and Zdenka Gornichec, and Frank and Marguerite Gornichec.



A Gornichec Family Reunion (1956)

Margaret enjoyed spending time with the Gornichec family, and they accepted her with love and affection. Margaret wrote: "Jim's family are very special people; so kind and considerate and they do love each other very much. They are lots of fun to be with, and all of them are talented and capable of doing so many things."

Jim and Margaret's sons were growing up. Their oldest son, Jimmy, graduated from Lincoln High School in Orem on May 25, 1956. He attended Brigham Young University for a short time. A year later, on September 20, 1957, Jimmy was married to Reighlyn Shields, and then he was sent to Korea after joining the Air Force. Jimmy served for a year in Korea and then was transferred to Nebraska. Jim and Margaret's first grandchild was born to Jimmy and Reighlyn Gornichec in August, 1959 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Richard Gornichec graduated from Orem High School (formerly Lincoln High) on May 29, 1959. He then spent six months with the National Guard. On November

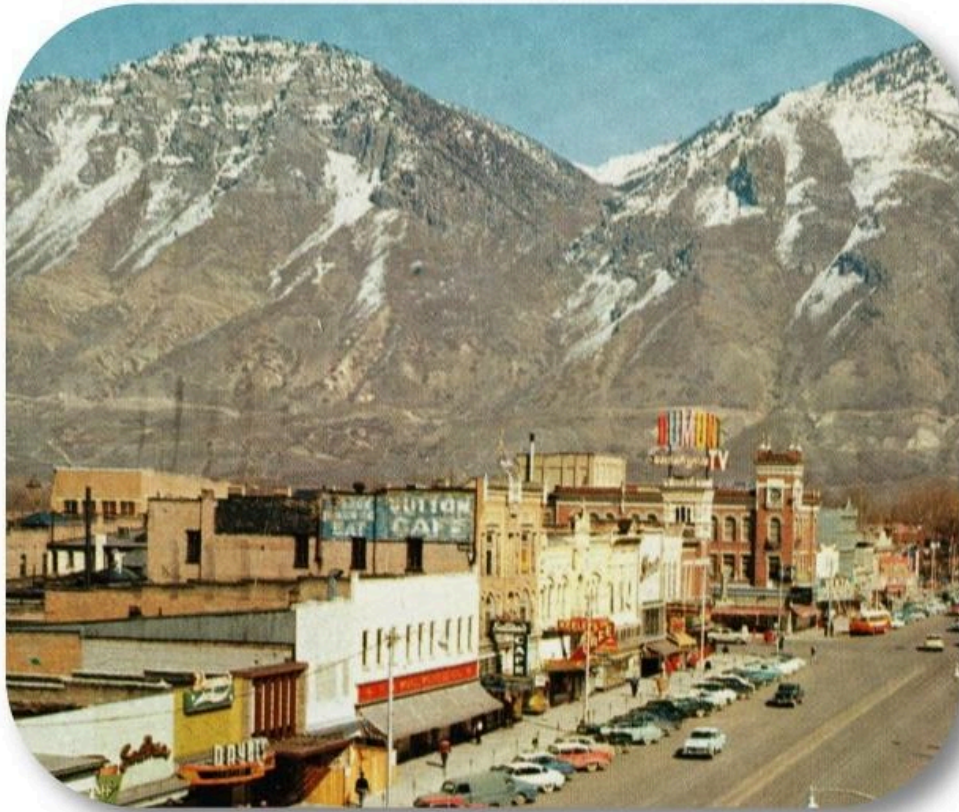
4, 1960, Richard married DeeAnn Clegg, who was the daughter of Verlin and LaBerta Clegg. This brought the two families even closer together.

Barry Gornichec graduated from Orem High School in May, 1960. After graduation he spent six months in specialized training for the Army Reserve at Fort Ord in California near Monterey Bay. After he returned, he may have completed an assignment with the 3rd Battle Group in Provo, Utah, but that was the extent of his military service. He chose to complete barber training and started helping his father at the barber shop.

Jim continued working on their home. He built a partial basement, added two bedrooms, and a double carport. However, in the fall of 1961, Jim and Margaret decided to sell their home in Orem. They purchased a smaller home on a smaller lot in Provo. The address of their new home was 879 North 750 West Provo, Utah, and it was not very far from their home in Orem. Jim needed to do some extensive remodeling before they could move into it. On January 10, 1962, Jim and Margaret, along with their two boys, Barry and Roger, moved from Orem to Provo.

Provo, Utah

January, 1962 - February, 1979



Downtown Provo looking towards 'Y' Mountain (1961)

The city of Provo is located in the scenic Utah Valley at the feet of the Wasatch Mountains and along the shores of Utah Lake. It was named Provo by the early Mormon Pioneers for a French Canadian Fur Trapper, Etienne Provost. They also called it the Garden City because of the numerous gardens and fruit orchards grown there. Mt. Timpanogos towers above the valley to the north of Provo, and “Y” Mountain announces the presence of Brigham Young University that was founded in 1875. In January, 1962, Jim and Margaret moved their family a short distance from Orem to a home at 879 North 750 West Provo, Utah.

Shortly after they moved, their son, Barry, married Nola Muir on June 8, 1962. This left only Roger at home. Margaret explained that with the new location of their home that Roger was now able to be with his friends both at school and at church. This may or may not have been the reason to move, but it was a nice benefit. Roger was entering Junior High School and starting to play basketball. Margaret found that she had too much time on her hands, so she decided to find

employment. She worked at Albertsons Grocery Store from March, 1962 to October, 1970.

During the summer of 1962, Jimmy and Reighlyn moved in with Jim and Margaret. They now had two children. Reighlyn had a second son who was born in 1961. Jimmy had received a transfer to Japan, and he left in July to prepare everything for his family. Reighlyn and her boys stayed with Jim and Margaret for about five months before flying to Japan.

Grandchildren arrived throughout the 1960's and 1970's while Jim and Margaret lived in Provo. Richard and DeeAnn had a daughter in 1961, a son in 1965, and a daughter in 1969. Barry and Nola had a son in 1962, a daughter in 1965, a daughter in 1970, and a son in 1979. Jimmy and Reighlyn added a son in 1963, a son in 1967, a daughter in 1970, and a daughter in 1972. Roger and Kris had a son in 1974, a daughter in 1976, a son in 1980, and a daughter in 1984. The last three grandchildren arrived after Jim and Margaret had moved to Washington, Utah. All together, Jim and Margaret had seventeen grandchildren.

Jim and Margaret's son, Roger, had grown tall and was an integral player of the Provo High School Bulldogs basketball team. He played as a member of a championship winning team his Senior year, and he stood about 6 feet 4 inches tall. Roger graduated from Provo High in May, 1967. That fall he enrolled at Dixie College in St. George, Utah, and he continued to play basketball for the Dixie Rebels as a forward. Jim and Margaret had become empty nesters.

In October, 1968, Jim and Margaret took a trip to Hawaii to visit Bob and Jean Gornichec. Bob and Jean had a successful nursery business, growing and selling all kinds of plants and flowers. Jim and Margaret were very glad they went when they did, because just a little over two years later Bob died from a sudden heart attack.



Trip to Hawaii, 1968

In 1969, their son, Jimmy, and his family moved back to Orem, Utah from Michigan where Jimmy had been stationed at Wurtsmith Air Force Base. Jimmy had decided to leave the Air Force in the hopes of starting his own business. He arranged a plan with his father to build an electronics repair store in Orem. In 1970, Jim purchased a commercial lot about a block south of his barber shop, and he started building a store that would house both the barber shop and the electronics store. He used his home as collateral for the business loan. They called it J & J Electronics, and it was located at 354 N. State Street in Orem, Utah. They had a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Chamber of Commerce in November, 1970.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for J & J Electronics, 1970

Jim and his son, Jimmy, worked hard to make the T.V. repair shop a success, but it turned out differently than they hoped. Both men worked other jobs to help make ends meet. Of course, Jim continued to cut hair, but the long hair styles of the Seventies meant that barbering was very slow. They advertised for J & J Electronics regularly in the Orem-Geneva Times newspaper, but their last advertisement was printed on December 22, 1971. They may have continued operating the repair shop in 1972, but by the end of that year both men had quit the business. By November, 1972, Jim found that he needed a regular paycheck, so he decided to find full time employment. He was offered a job with Clegg Construction. In 1973, their son, Jimmy, had moved out of state and left his family and work in pursuit of a new life.

Jim kept the building and rented out part of it for a few years, but by 1976 he decided to sell the property. He kept one barber chair and the sink and sold all of the other barbering equipment. He obtained a permit from the City of Provo to

operate a home business, so he continued to cut hair in the evenings and weekends in the basement of his home. Jim worked full time for Verlin Clegg as a mechanic and handyman. On September 2, 1976, Jim was working at Clegg's when he noticed that the bindings on a truck loaded with lumber were loose. He got up on the truck bed to tighten the bindings when the bands around the lumber snapped and started to roll off. Jim's only alternative was to jump to avoid being crushed by the lumber. When he landed he broke the heel of his foot, and he had to take the next five months off work to heal. At this time, Margaret was working full time at the ZCMI department store.

Perhaps it was this period of convalescence that made Jim and Margaret decide to purchase a 5th wheel travel trailer. It would become an important part of their lives. They first used it after Thanksgiving, 1976, and they spent a month visiting Margaret's older sister at Half Moon Bay, California located just south of San Francisco. They were glad they did as Helen died just a few weeks after their visit.

Margaret took early retirement in February 1977 and quit ZCMI after working there for over three years. Jim and Margaret planned a summer vacation in the travel trailer that would become the trip of a lifetime. In July, Barry and Nola moved into Jim and Margaret's home while the home they were building was under construction. Barry and Nola managed the home while Jim and Margaret were away.

On July 15, 1977 they started their vacation to the East. Margaret wrote a detailed description of this experience in her personal history. In summary, they traveled on I-80 going east. They went to Elkhart, Indiana to visit Joe Gornichec and his wife, Betty. They visited Niagara Falls and Palmyra, New York where they walked through the Sacred Grove and watched the Hill Cumorah Pageant. They spent several days traveling through Canada and touring Montreal, Quebec City, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. They returned to the United States through Maine and drove through Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and into Ohio where they stayed to visit with Jim's sister, Anna and her husband John. They went fishing on Lake Erie, and also visited with Frank Gornichec. They decided to take I-90 west to return home. They drove around Chicago and into Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota. They visited the Badlands, Rapid City, and Mt. Rushmore. The final leg took them

through Wyoming and back into Utah. They arrived home on Wednesday, August 24, 1977. Barry and Nola still needed their home, so they continued to live in the travel trailer a little longer. Jim was known for being a tenacious driver, and he could keep going for hours at a time. He was also a good mechanic and made many repairs to their truck along the way.

In the summer of 1978, Jim and Margaret started looking for property in southern Utah in anticipation of Jim's retirement. He continued to work for Clegg Construction until his last day on December 31, 1978.

In January, 1979, Jim went to Washington, Utah to work on their retirement home. Jim and Margaret had purchased a lot, and they were building a basement foundation for a double wide manufactured home. Jim lived in the travel trailer while working on the foundation. On February 8, 1979, Jim and Margaret moved from Provo, Utah to Washington, Utah. They put most of their belongings in storage while they lived in the travel trailer which was parked at their property.

Washington, Utah

February, 1979 - February, 2008

Washington City is located in the southwest corner of Utah and along the course of the Virgin River as it flows out of the canyons of Zion National Park on its way to Lake Mead. The area was explored in 1852 by John D. Lee who reported to Brigham Young that land and water were available and that the warm climate would allow for the harvesting of cotton. President Young assigned ten LDS families to move to the area in April, 1857. Their main purpose was to grow cotton. Twenty-eight families joined them the following month, and they laid out the city. They decided to call it Washington after the nation's first President. Flooding from the Virgin River was an annual problem until they built the Washington Fields Dam in 1891, and the area became well known as Utah's Dixie. The community grew, but most people chose to live in nearby St. George. Washington became a retirement community, and continues to attract Seniors looking for warm winters.

In February, 1979, Jim and Margaret moved from Provo to Washington. They had purchased a lot at 94 Jeffs Drive. They used their fifth wheel travel trailer to live in until the manufactured home was delivered. Jim borrowed equipment from Clegg Construction and poured the cement for the foundation and basement. He also made a cement wall along the sides and back of the property. The manufactured home arrived in April, and Jim and Margaret spent most of that month moving their belongings from storage and making their home.

Everything seemed to be fine, until Margaret started experiencing pain in her abdomen and spine. She endured it as well as she could, even traveling to Provo to attend Reighlyn's marriage to Ray Rogers in June, but by June 29th she decided that the pain was too much to manage and she needed to go to the hospital. She was admitted to the Provo Hospital to go through testing, and Jim lived in the travel trailer nearby. He also went back to work at Clegg's to help occupy his time. Margaret stayed in the hospital for three weeks and was sedated for much of the time to ease the pain. Several family members stopped by to visit her and offer her their support, prayers, and a blessing from her brother, Dick. Her doctor had ordered a biopsy and the results were not good. They had found a cancerous tumor on her right kidney, and another cancerous tumor at the base of her spine. She asked her doctor what her next step was, and he didn't offer her much hope. The doctor told her family that she probably had about three to five months to live. They could remove her right kidney, but the risk was too great for the tumor on her spine.

Jim was devastated with this news. He stayed by her side almost every day. The doctors decided to move Margaret to the University Hospital in Salt Lake City. Jim moved the travel trailer to Salt Lake and stayed close to Margaret for the next two weeks. The doctors decided to use radiology to remove the cancer, and on August 6, 1979, she was finally released from the hospital. Her pain had subsided, but Margaret was told that this would probably be the cause of her death and that there was nothing else to be done. They returned home to Washington, and it was just a matter of waiting. Margaret went back to the University Hospital every three months for the next two years, but the cancer never showed up again.

During the summer of 1980, Jim and Margaret lived in the travel trailer that they parked at Barry and Nola's home in Spanish Fork while Jim helped Barry

finish his basement. Jim also returned to work at Clegg's during this time. They spent almost five months working with Barry and Nola on their home and their new business, The Little Acorn.

In 1981, Margaret was fully recovered, and Jim decided it was time to travel again. He planned another big trip which involved more driving than the previous trip East. They left on April 20, 1981 and returned home on June 13, 1981. They traveled to Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, El Paso, Juarez, and Carrollton, Texas to visit Jim and Terry. They stayed in New Orleans for five days. They continued on to Pensacola and Gulf Islands National Park. They visited Orlando, Disney World, Cape Canaveral and the John F. Kennedy Space Center, St. Augustine, then up to Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Washington D.C. They drove up to Hubbard, Ohio and spent three weeks with John and Ann before returning home.

For the next several years, Jim and Margaret worked on their home and planted trees on their property in Washington. They attended weddings for several of their grandchildren and became great-grandparents. They continued to travel quite a bit. In 1982 they traveled from the first of July to the end of August going to Idaho, Montana, Canada, Washington, and Oregon. Then in December, 1982, they flew to Florida for a Gornichec reunion with Jim's family. In the summer of 1984 they traveled to Jackson Hole and Yellowstone as well as Redfish Lake in Idaho. In November, 1984, they flew to Samoa to spend time with Roger and Kris. They spent two weeks in Samoa and Jim built a playhouse for his grandson, Isaac. They had a layover in Hawaii on their return trip and spent a week there visiting with Jean and her boys. Their truck was seeing too many miles, and in May, 1985, they sold the travel trailer. They replaced the truck and trailer with a Chevy Van and Jim built shelves, closets, and a way to make a bed in it. They were both sad to see the travel trailer go as they had spent so much time in it.

On January 17, 1987 Jim and Margaret reached a milestone: their 50th wedding anniversary. DeeAnn and Nola organized two celebrations. The first one was held in February in Washington, Utah. The second one was held in March in Provo, Utah. Margaret said, "Both were very well attended and were very special days...So many relatives and friends we hadn't seen in many years."



50th Wedding Anniversary, 1987

A popular saying attributed to Mae West is: “Getting old isn’t for the faint of heart.” And this was certainly true for Jim and Margaret. Jim did continue to cut hair in his basement barber shop at their home in Washington, but his feet often hurt from standing too much. Still, he had loyal clients who were now “snowbirds” that would drive from Provo to stay the winter and kept Jim busy cutting hair throughout the colder season. It may seem strange to say this, but to get a haircut from Jim was a wonderful experience. He was warm and personal with a pleasant but professional demeanor. He would offer a shave after the cut, and then he would cover your face and neck with hot, wet towels. Then he would put vibrating massagers on his hands and rub your head, neck, and shoulders until you just completely relaxed. You left feeling like a million bucks, but he never charged you heavy prices. He always made you feel welcome and never rushed. Jim was a wonderful barber up until the last year or two of his life.

During his final two decades Jim faced many health challenges, but he and Margaret always seemed to manage well. They supported and relied on each other. Jim had a hernia surgery and a colon surgery at two different times and hospitals. He had prostate cancer, and a foot infection. He had cataracts removed from each eye, and a rotary cuff surgery on his left shoulder. His right leg needed an artery bypass which was followed by a strep infection and more surgery. He started taking heart medication and in March of 1999 he experienced the first of many seizures, some lasting up to an hour. After a year or two of this he intentionally stopped taking the heart medication and the seizures stopped as well. He often felt tired and ready to stop barbering, but he couldn't seem to give it up.

As they got older they saw many friends and family pass away, but two deaths in particular affected them deeply. On March 27, 1998, their granddaughter, Angela Gornichec, died at 28 years old. She was Richard and DeeAnn's daughter with Down Syndrome. Jim and Margaret called her their "Angel". Then in March, 2001, they lost their son, Richard, who had battled diabetes for years. Margaret said, "It was a blow to all of us. The hardest thing in our life. Seems nothing has been the same since."

Jim and Margaret's last years in Washington, Utah were quietly spent at home. They still took short walks together, hand in hand. They went out to eat every Saturday at the Pizza Factory. They knew each other so well that they could predict each other's words and actions. To watch them prepare a breakfast meal together was like watching a well choreographed dance as they prepared the food and set the table. Jim continued to drink Postum each morning as his favorite substitute for coffee. They attended church as their health allowed.

In 2006, Jim and Margaret sold their home in Washington and moved to assisted living in Orem, Utah. This move also brought them closer to their immediate family. Margaret needed help that Jim struggled to provide.

On May 21, 2007, Margaret Forsyth Gornichec died at the age of 93 years old. On May 29, 2007, funeral services were held at the LDS Church at 350 N. 900 E. in Orem, Utah and she was buried at the Orem City Cemetery. Several family members were in attendance, but not as many friends. It appeared that Jim and Margaret had outlived most of their acquaintances. Jim had lost his companion

and sweetheart after 70 years of marriage, and it was a loss that he found difficult to adjust to. He continued with assisted living in Orem, but he had lost his reason for being.

On February 29, 2008, Jim Gornichec passed away in Orem, Utah. He was 93 years old. A graveside service was held on March 5, 2008 with a few family members. He was cremated and buried with his wife, Margaret, at the Orem City Cemetery.



Gravestone at Orem City Cemetery

From his obituary: "James started his career as a barber at the age of 11, finishing his career at the age of 91. He was a barber in Orem, Utah for 35 years and in St. George for another 30 years. He was steady as a rock right up until the end. He loved to build and remodel things and to work in his yard and travel."

These seem like too few words for a full life well-lived. Jim was never wealthy or famous as the name Otmar implied, but he valued hard work and dedication. He always wanted to be doing and moving, and he didn't like to stand still. He was a quiet man and a good listener. He remained close to his sister and brothers as well as his wife's family, and he enjoyed family gatherings. Hopefully, this life

history was able to capture the spirit of Jim Gornichec's life and the love he had for his wife and family.