

Chapter 9

Thomas Alexander Stokoe at School on the Mainland Brigham Young University 1961-2, Utah State University 1962-65, Utah Shakespearean Festival Summer 1965, and Southern Illinois University 1965-66.

BYU, September 1961 – August 1962

Arriving in Provo at the greyhound bus station, I asked directions to 41 East 400 North and walked to the house. I met Tauivi and later Paovale Mulitalo. We would be roommates along with eight others. Tauivi and I shared a room. Paovale had his own room and the rest were two to a room. Roommates included Buddy Younggreen, Frands Peterson, Richard, Max, Phil who was crazy about cars, a guy from Texas who said he killed and ate rattlesnakes, and Verl who years later would teach school with me at Skyline High School.

The roommates were lots of fun. A roommate would come home and say, "Heh, I met this girl today and she would like three guys to quadruple date with her and her three roommates tonight. Who would like to go?" This was the first date I had in Provo. Paovale was the one who lined it up. So Paovale, Tauivi, myself and one other roommate went on this foursome date. All eight of us piled into Paovale's car. My date was a good looking girl from Oregon named Martha Loader who was 6 feet tall in flats. She sat on my lap and I had my arms around her waist. This was a neat experience as I had never had a Caucasian girl sit on my lap before nor put my arms around her waist. I thoroughly enjoyed the moment. I was 5' 11" so the entire evening I tried to stand and sit as tall as I possibly could. This was my first date ever with an American Caucasian girl. It was a fun evening.

I went to my first BYU dance with Tauivi, Paovale and some of the roommates. I couldn't believe what I saw. Here in this huge dance space were several hundred girls standing waiting for boys to ask them to dance. There were dozens of beautiful looking girls all over the place. Couples were rocking and rolling, doing the cha cha and twist and just having a great time. To me this dance was incredible and the presence of so many good looking girls was astounding.

Registration was huge. It was in the field house with class signs all over the place. You stood in line for a particular class and signed up for it. I wanted to sing in a choir so I auditioned by singing some scales and a few phrases for a guy named Pixton or Picton who was a graduate assistant in the vocal music program. I was placed in the Oratorio Choir under the direction of Dr. Halliday. With my registration all squared away I was ready to begin classes.

The first thing I noticed about classes at BYU was how much harder they were than CCH and how large the classes were especially the religion classes. Tauivi and I had a political science class together at 7 am. When the weather changed and snow fell, Tauivi would look outside our bedroom window and upon seeing snow would say, "Let's not go to class today, there's too much snow." So we would skip our 7 am class.

I decided to audition for the first BYU theatrical production of the year which was "Time Remembered" directed by Dr. Preston Gledhill. I was cast as Lord Hector, an eccentric old Englishman. Next was, "Solid Gold Cadillac" directed by Morris Clinger. I was cast as Cliff Snell. I remember what professor Clinger said as we gathered as a cast for our first rehearsal. He walked into the room and said, "Congratulations. You have been selected as the cast for this play from 235 who auditioned."

Playing the female lead in "Solid Gold Cadillac" was a senior or graduate student named Lynn. She was a cute girl and very dynamic on stage. In one scene involving just her and I, we were arguing. I was a member of the board of directors and Lynn was going to expose to stockholders the crooked goings on by directors. She made her accusation and my response was, "May I remind you Mrs. Partridge, you have no witness." Every time we rehearsed this scene and I had to say this line, because she was so cute and dynamic, I couldn't look her in the eyes, so I would drop my eyes and look down below her waist.

One night at rehearsal, after I had said the line and dropped my eyes, Dr. Clinger came up and said, "Repeat." Lynn said her line and I said, "May I remind you Mrs. Partridge you have no witness," and dropped my eyes. Dr. Clinger yelled, "Can you see it, can you see it?" "See what?" I said. "What you are looking at." Well, what I was unconsciously looking at was her pelvic area, a foot below her navel. "This was not a purposeful intention. It was just that I could not look her in the eyes. From that night on in rehearsal I never looked down again.

Opening night arrived. We were performing on stage in the Joseph Smith building. The play got underway and all was going well. Then it came to this scene and Lynn's line. She looked at me fair and square in the eyes and said she was going to expose to the stockholders the crooked goings on by the directors. I looked into her beautiful eyes and blanked out. I couldn't remember my line. Suddenly, out of desperation I remembered and said, "May I remind you Mrs. Partridge, (and dropping my eyes to her pelvic area one foot below the navel I said), "May I remind you Mrs. Partridge, you have no supporter!" Then being the good actress she was, she looked down at her pelvic area and said indignantly, "Well, I should hope not!" Lynn was a great girl and a great person. I believe she may have married a fellow by the name of Russell Carr.

My next play was "The Lark" directed by Dr. Harold I. Hansen. It seemed that students in the theater department had high regard for him and I believe he was the department chairman at that time and founder of the Hill Cumorah Pageant, which my beloved wife Diane once was a member of the cast. My role was that of the Inquisitor and I was to condemn Joan of Arc to death. I was having a little trouble memorizing my lines so Dr. Hansen assigned the assistant director to work with me on memorization. The assistant director was Miss Nevada and her name was Nancy. I went to her dorm for five straight days and we sat outside on the grass under a tree working on my lines. Nancy was a beautiful girl and had been introduced to the BYU studentbody at the opening assembly of the school year in the Field House.

In "The Lark" were Ivan Crosland, Carolyn Pearson, Blaine Quarnstrom, Cliff Cabanilla, Tony Feliz, and others. The actor who played Cauchon was outstanding and so was Ivan Crosland. I auditioned for the musical, "The Boyfriend" directed by Max Gолightly and was cast in the chorus but had to drop out

because I obtained a part time job working 80 hours a month. I was a custodian and my boss was brother Jacobs. His son, David Jacobs, had the romantic lead in "Time Remembered."



"The Lark" by Jean Anouilh, I played the Inquisitor and condemned Joan of Arc to death. I am standing 4th on right. This BYU production was directed by Dr. Harold I. Hansen in 1962.

During the summer of 1962 I was cast in "The Man Who Married A Dumb Wife" directed by Dr. Max Golightly. It was in this play that I met AnnaLue Allred and fell in love with her. AnnaLue was a gorgeous blonde and had nice calf muscles. She was interested in getting married but I wanted to finish college. Basically, I had nothing to offer her: no profession, no money, no job, no house or apartment, no car, no savings, no completed education with a degree, no teaching certificate, no money to pay for tuition, no security, nothing. I didn't want to be a liability and have her parents pay for my schooling, a place to stay, transportation and food to eat. I didn't want to be dependent upon her parents for anything. AnnaLue was a very nice girl. She ended up marrying Bob White, the lead man in "A Man Who Married A Dumb Wife." Bob was a nice guy.

My year at BYU had been a great one for acting and individual theatrical growth as well as fun socially. BYU is a great place to go to school. One can cross from one building to another and say hello ten times just because you look at persons and they look at you, so you mutually say hello even though

you're complete strangers. BYU is a very friendly campus. When I went later to graduate school at Southern Illinois it was the exact opposite.



Lord Hector in "Time Remembered" fall, 1961. My first play at BYU.



Singing in the BYU Oratorio Choir, 1961-62. Next to me is a guy named Orton

I auditioned and was admitted to the BYU Oratorio Choir. Approaching Christmas 1961 the choir was preparing for a special Christmas concert with the BYU orchestra. Director, Dr. Halliday, announced a recording session with the orchestra at 7 am. He clearly indicated there must be no mistakes that this was a one- time recording non- stop all the way through. We were preparing a work from Handel, beautiful classical musical pious and spiritual.

The basses had a solo section that was high in pitch. We had to come in on cue singing “Help! Help! Baal! It was so high that I literally had to yell “Help!” The choir was large with some 80 or so members and likewise was the orchestra. We warmed up vocally prior to commencing, Dr. Halliday reiterated “no mistakes”, and we got underway. About 10 minutes into the recording the bass solo came up. There were approximately 20 basses in our section and in rehearsals we would really boom this solo.

I listened intently to the music and when I thought it was the cue yelled as loud as I could “Help!” I was the only bass who sang, a Tom Stokoe solo all by himself. I had jumped the gun and ruined the whole recording. Dr. Halliday was mad. You could see it on his face and hear it in his voice. I caused some 160 people to start the recording all over again. When the bass solo arrived, I didn’t sing, just mouthed the words. This episode was one of my “most embarrassing moments” at BYU and clearly indicated that musically, I needed help.



Wooden Tin Man at the Scera Theatre, Orem, 1962

One of my roommates, Buddy Youngreen, was in theater and directed two plays I was in “Peter Pan” and “The Wizard of Oz.” I was Smee in Peter Pan and the Tinman in Oz. We performed at the Scera Theatre in Orem. At the end of “Oz” we stood in the foyer for the kids to meet us. Little kids came and tapped on my tin costume and asked me if I was real. I was in a total of 6 plays 1961-62. Buddy was “Cosmo” the BYU mascot. Throughout the year Tauivi kept saying, “Buddy you are Cosmo. I can tell by your movements.” At the unveiling at the final BYU assembly of the year, Tauivi was right.

Utah State University, Logan - September, 1962 - May, 1965

Academically, I didn't do well at BYU and was told by Dr. Ballif, the Dean of Foreign Students, that I no longer could stay at BYU and be enrolled in classes. To stay in school a student had to have at least a 2.0 GPA and my GPA for the 2nd semester at BYU was 1.8 something. Being in plays and working 80 hours a month crimped my study time. Play rehearsals were from 7 pm - 10 pm Monday through Friday, and 9 am – 12 noon on Saturdays. I worked Monday through Friday, 2pm – 6pm. More academic focus and dedication was needed. So, I left BYU and went to Utah State in Logan graduating in 1964 with a 2.8 GPA, even getting a 4.0 in one quarter. I took classes in order to qualify for graduate school and got A's and B's, passed the graduate school entrance exam, and commenced working on a master's degree in speech and theater. During my entire stay at USU, I worked 20 hours per week and also had play rehearsals 7pm – 10pm, Monday-Friday and Saturday morning 9 am - 12 noon.



Roommates - Tom Wallace, Mick, Tom, Dick Cutler



My Logan Apartment at Utah State University

AnnaLue and her mother drove me to Logan. They helped find an apartment for me. They paid the first month's rent. I arrived at Utah State University with just \$1.35 in my pocket.



With a friend



AnnaLou Allred



Orlando in Shakespeare's "As You Like It", 1963, Utah State University

I completed all my classes for my master's degree, wrote a 147 page thesis requirement; my chairman told me to make changes and revamp it during the summer of 1965 and wrap it up. Carolyn Ormond had typed the first draft for me. She was a nice girl and most helpful. I got a scholarship offer to act at the Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City for the 1965 summer. I decided to go play Shakespeare. I abandoned the thesis never to touch it again. In the meantime, my chairman who was an alcoholic, died.

Utah State University was good to me. Rejected by one Dean of Foreign Students I was welcomed by another at Utah State in September of 1962. I arrived in Logan with \$1.35 to my name and a small bag of potatoes. I had been accepted prior to coming to BYU so my status was fine. Annalue and her mother had kindly found me an apartment in Logan at 432 North 400 East and I had paid the first

month's rent. The house was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Lewis who had a son named Max, and four students rented upstairs – Larry from Vermont, Dick Cutler from Wisconsin, Tom Wallace from Pennsylvania and myself. Later in life Tom Wallace would undergo a sex operation, become a female, and assume the name Michelle. Jane from the Soviet Union who stayed with us for three weeks in October 1990 said, "What a sacrifice!" Tom later sent me a Christmas card which said, "Went to Fiji on vacation. The men of Fiji are wonderful!"

Without money how could I attend Utah State University? I visited the Dean of Foreign students and explained my situation. He was most helpful. He immediately telephoned the Dean of Fine Arts who contributed some scholarship money toward my tuition. The Dean of Foreign Students sent me to see Mrs. Merla Clark in "The Hub," a fast food place in the student union building, to get a job. She hired me. Then the Dean of Foreign Students made a phone call to the Comptroller's Office and sent me to get a loan for the balance of my tuition. I would pay off the loan by the end of the 1st quarter. I couldn't afford textbooks so I stood in the book store reading them.

I was blessed. I now had an opportunity to continue my college education. With my \$1.35 I bought a dozen eggs. Eggs and potatoes would be my nightly meal. The job at "The Hub" worked very well for me. I worked an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon and the 8 am – 11 pm shift on Saturdays. Mrs. Clark was a very nice lady. In the mornings she would send me upstairs in the elevator to bring down trays of hot freshly baked donuts. I would stop the elevator between floors and eat 2 or 3 donuts then release the elevator, go down and put out the donuts on shelves. Then I would mix the orange juice and fill the big container in the middle island and drink a couple of glasses. Donuts and orange juice was my daily breakfast. Next, I would bus dishes, wipe tables, and run dishes, trays and silverware through the dishwasher.

In the afternoons I would replenish items on the shelves for students – salads, soups, sandwiches, jello, and other accessories. Whenever I went into the big cooler I would eat a sandwich and jello. This was my daily lunch, then, I would go and bus dishes, wipe tables and do dishes. Thanks to this job I had breakfast and lunch. On Saturdays, there were two of us that worked the shift and we would fry hamburgers and French fries for the customers as well as ourselves. Joe Shriber and I worked Saturdays. Eventually when I got into plays, I was able to go to rehearsals from 9 a.m. – 12 noon then go to work. A nice lady named Gretchen was also one of our bosses.

It was Gretchen who told me of a fortuneteller in Logan. The fee was \$3 and she used cards. I never thought anything of it, but after a year of hearing about her, and that some of the things she told Gretchen came true, I decided to go and get my fortune told. I called and set an appointment.

The lady was pleasant. She never asked anything about myself. We sat at a table and she shuffled a deck of cards and spread them. She then told me about things currently in my life and things that would occur in the future. When the session was over I wrote down everything she said that I could remember. These are things that came true:

You are dating a girl with brown eyes who likes you. This was true. I was dating such a girl at the time and she did like me. She was a nice girl. Her name was Joann Korth from Tremonton.

Your roommates are jealous of you. Probably because I was dating girls and none of them were. Also, the previous year, before AnnaLue and I broke up, she used to come to Logan and visit me every other weekend. She stayed with Marla and her roommates. Marla and I worked together at The Hub. My roommates had made comments about how attractive AnnaLue was. She had been runner up to Miss Sacramento.

You will attend a funeral with lots of people. This came to pass. All American, Wayne Estes, our star basketball player who led the nation in scoring, got electrocuted one block from where I lived. The field house was jam packed with students at his funeral memorial.

You will receive an offer from a man back East. I had applied for a graduate assistantship at several universities. Two months after my fortune telling session, I got offered one from Dr. Bradley, Head of the Speech and Theater Department at Southern Illinois University at \$250 per month. This sure beat working at The Hub at 80 cents an hour.

You will go on a vacation and I see police present. Be careful. About six weeks later, Tauivi would call me up and invite me to go to Asuza, California for spring break. Upon arrival at his folks home his mother said go pickup your brother he is at such and such a bar. We went inside the bar to get his brother Sydney. We were there for about ten minutes. When we exited, the trunk to Tauivi's car was wide open and stuff had been stolen. The police arrived.

At Utah State I got involved in the Theater Department taking theater classes and being in plays:

- # Orlando in "As You Like It" by William Shakespeare, director Professor Floyd T. Morgan.
- # Bassanio, "The Merchant of Venice" by Shakespeare, director Floyd T. Morgan.
- # Hortensio, "The Taming of the Shrew" by Shakespeare, director Floyd T. Morgan.
- # The Villain, Chandos Bellingham, in "After Dark," director Floyd T. Morgan.
- # Charles Condomine, "Blithe Spirit," director Floyd T. Morgan.
- # President of the Medical Faculty, "The Imaginary Invalid" by Moliere, director Floyd T. Morgan.
- # Pelleas, "Pelleas and Mellisande" by Maeterlinck, director Vosco Call.
- # Captain Vere, "Billy Budd," director Vosco Call.

Even though theater was my minor, I had far more credits in theater and speech than in history. It has proven a good combination for me as a teacher.



Utah Shakespearean Festival

Summer 1965

I was interested in acting at the Utah Shakespearean Festival for the summer of 1965 so I applied. I had graduated in 1964 in theater and had finished a year in graduate school. My theatre professors at Utah State University, Thomas Morgan and Vosco Call, wrote letters of recommendation for me and I



Lynn Rudner played Beatrice. I played Benedick in "Much Ado About Nothing." Director Fred Adams.

was accepted as a member of the Shakespeare Company receiving a room and board scholarship. I would be the first actor from New Zealand to act at the Festival.

The three Shakespeare plays were going to be, "Much Ado About Nothing", "The Merry Wives of Windsor", and "King Lear." I read the plays very carefully and had a burning desire to play Benedick in "Much Ado", Ford in "Merry Wives", and the Doctor in "King Lear." I knew the talent at the Festival would be excellent and very competitive and that I would be fortunate to be cast in just one of these roles. None-the-less, I set my heart on competing and doing my very best to achieve them. The effort would require insightful character and line study, correct interpretation, and total commitment to rehearsal.

I wanted a quiet, isolated place to rehearse where I could project the lines loudly and not be heard nor disturbed. So I went looking for such a place and by accident found the ideal spot in the middle of the Logan city dump from 4-6 pm. The setting was similar to an amphi-theatre with surrounding low hills on three sides and the dump situated at the bottom of the hills. There was no flow of vehicles entering and exiting and there was complete solitude except for the occasional chirp of birds from nearby trees. A road existed passing through the very center of the dump. I liked the spot. This is where I would rehearse.

In the late afternoon, I would drive my car to the dump, park in the very middle, stand on the roof of the car, and rehearse Shakespeare until my voice was tired. The roof was my stage. I usually rehearsed for one and a half – two hours every other day. There was no one present at this time of day. It was totally peaceful.



King of France in "King Lear" at the Festival. I'm 5th from right with a goutee. Director Mike Addison, theater professor at University of California, Riverside.

One day I was rehearsing King Lear shouting, "And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law, then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill kill!" when a farmer came running across the way with his pitch fork, stood by a barb wire fence, and stared at me. I kept on rehearsing putting my whole heart and soul into my performance. He listened to me for about ten minutes then left, probably wondering who this idiot was,

standing on top of a car, reciting from Shakespeare in the middle of the Logan City garbage dump. I rehearsed randomly from Shakespeare plays.

The car was an old 1950 Pontiac that a friend had given to me. It had four bald tires. One day I arrived at the dump, ascended upon the roof of the car, and commenced rehearsing Shakespeare aloud. It was slightly overcast and soon it began to snow then snow like crazy. I kept on rehearsing loving every minute of it as the snow piled upon my head forming a crown for King Lear, and covering my wind-blown body with a white costume. I spouted Lear's speech, "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!" Soon the entire landscape was blanketed white with snow. The exhilaration of rehearsing Shakespeare outdoors during a snow storm was tremendous. I rehearsed for two hours then descended off the roof and started the car. The tires spun and no matter how hard I tried the car wouldn't budge. It was stuck in the snow, in the middle of the Logan City garbage dump.

I trudged through the snow to a nearby farm house and asked the farmer if I could use his phone. I phoned one of my roommates, told him where I was, and he came and picked me up. Two weeks later we returned to the garbage dump to pick up my car. It wasn't there. So we went to the Logan police department. They said the car had been impounded and gave me the address of the impound location. The guy at impound said, "So that's your car. Well, it may seem a little different now than what you are accustomed to, but let's go take a look." I looked at the car. It had bullet holes through the windshield, bullet holes in the body both left and right side, the trunk of the car had been blasted with a shot gun, and one rear tire was flat. Other than that the car was fine. The engine started up, I paid the impound fee, put the spare tire on, and drove it home.



*Mr. Ford in "The Merry Wives of Windsor", Utah Shakespearean Festival, 1965. I'm in the basket.
Director Thomas Markus theater professor at the University of Santa Barbara, California.*

Understandably, my car stood out in a campus parking lot. People would pause to stare at it. The girls I dated loved it; they said I had automatic, wind shield air conditioning. Some called me Elliot Ness, the star of the TV series, "The Untouchables", which was about the mob and machine gunning rival gangsters in cars.

I continued rehearsing Shakespeare in the middle of the Logan City garbage dump standing on the roof of my bullet riddled car. What better stage and place of peace and solitude to rehearse some of the world's greatest poetry. When I left Logan I gave the car to a grateful friend.

The month of June arrived and it was time to go to Cedar City. I arrived in Cedar City excited to play Shakespeare at the Utah Shakespearean Festival. The company was welcomed enthusiastically by the Festival founder, Fred Adams. We stayed in college dorms and ate at restaurants downtown. My roommate was Howard Jensen who had portrayed Hamlet the first year of the Festival in 1962. He was a talented actor as actors would be at the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

On the morning of auditions, four actors were going to drive into the desert to warm up and invited me to join them. We drove, stopped, and exited the car. Three of them rehearsed lines aloud from plays. The fourth actor was the most interesting. He produced a bottle of whiskey. He proceeded to gargle, spit, and run through voice and diction exercises, repeating the process several times. He said whiskey tuned up his throat and his enunciators preparatory for auditions. I chuckled at his ritual. He didn't drink, only gargled, spat, and exercised. I did nothing. There was no garbage dump with a bullet riddled car to stand on. I was ready.



"Much Ado About Nothing". I played Benedick who is being serenaded.

At 9 am auditions for “Much Ado” commenced, with “Merry Wives” at 2 pm, and “King Lear” at 7pm. The next morning the casts were posted. I looked anxiously for my name: “Much Ado About Nothing” directed by Fred Adams.... Benedick: Tom Stokoe. “The Merry Wives of Windsor” directed by Thomas Markus.... Ford: Tom Stokoe. “King Lear” directed by Michael Addison.... France: Tom Stokoe.

I was pleased with my good fortune and stroke of luck. Mutual casting by the three directors for repertory strength had produced the outcome. I could have been cast in minor bit roles. I had obtained the two major roles I wanted and France as my minor role was a good one. My garbage dump rehearsals had paid off – the car rooftop, the snowstorm, getting stuck, the bullet holes, Elliot Ness – my preparation as an actor to perform at the Utah Shakespeare Festival was totally worthwhile, every single minute.

As the acting company of the 1965 Utah Shakespeare Festival, we never dreamed that in thirty five years a prestigious Tony Award would honor “our Festival” as the Best Regional Theatre in the land. As I reflect upon that outdoor stage against a building brick wall, acting facing the western sky, how beautiful were those moments creating and living three plays of William Shakespeare. Time moves on but the wonderful memory of preparing and acting in the 1965 Utah Shakespearean Festival will stay, and the artistic accomplishment of all involved, be a shining star for all of us.

I saw the 2010 production of “Much Ado” with David Ivers as Benedick. He and Beatrice were absolutely magnificent, a brilliant production, the best I have ever seen. That production made me wonder how I ever got cast in the 1965 repertory company let alone play the role of Benedick. The quality of acting today at the Festival compared to 1965 with basically college students is far superior and certainly befitting a theatre deserving of the Tony Award.

The 1965 Utah Shakespearean Festival Repertory Company



Southern Illinois University, (September, 1965 - February, 1966.)

With an assistantship in the Speech and Theater Department at Southern Illinois, I left Cedar City at the conclusion of the Utah Shakespearean Festival and headed for Carbondale, Illinois in a car I had purchased from a friend of Tauivi. Arriving, I searched the housing bulletin board on campus and with a few addresses, made the rounds searching for a place to stay.

I knocked on the door of a large two-story house and a fellow in his forties opened it. I asked if there were any vacancies in the house and his first response was, "You are in theater aren't you?" I replied affirmatively. He said, "I can tell someone who is in theater by the way they speak." There was a room available and I took it. All told there were ten guys in the house, all from different parts of the country. Skip, a baseball player was from Chicago. Bob was the one who opened the door. He had gone to acting school with Julie Harris and Marlon Brando. He said he had never made it in theater because he was 6' 4" and 240 pounds, too big to be a leading man.

One roommate was doing a science project with quail and had about thirty baby quail in a cage under his bed. Another was from Texas who always fried 2-4 large onions every day. He said they were good for his health. Another named Marty came home drunk one night so the roommates threw him in the shower to sober him up. George, with a slight hunch back, was from St. Louis. Murphy was good at fixing cars and he put new brakes on my car. I got along fine with all the room mates. They invited me to go to bars with them and I declined. They knew I was a Mormon. They persuaded me to accompany them one night and said they would protect me from any alcohol drinking. They were true to their word announcing to people in the bar that I was a Mormon and not to offer me any alcohol. A couple of the roommates smoked paiotie.

At a meeting of graduate assistants, Dr. Bradley informed us that half would teach beginning acting or speech classes on campus. The other half would teach classes at the Job Corps in Fort Breckenridge, Kentucky which was an hour or so away. The university had a contract to provide them with instructors. I was assigned to the Job Corps to teach two classes of history. Most of the students were African Americans with a couple of Hispanics and one Caucasian.

The first day of teaching, the students asked me where I was from. I told them originally New Zealand and Samoa and that I now lived in Hawaii. They were very interested in Hawaii and Samoa and asked me all kinds of questions, especially about Hawaiian and Samoan girls and romance. I told them if a Samoan girl was interested in a boy, she would kick his leg under the table, meaning "I like you, let's get together." Or arrange to meet him under a coconut palm in the moonlight. They thoroughly enjoyed my stories. I did the Maori haka and sang a couple of island songs. I must have won them over because they were very respectful and attentive in class, and whenever they saw me walking across campus, they would wave and call out "Heh, Mr. Stokoe!" I enjoyed teaching at the Job Corps.

We usually left early in the morning from Carbondale and drove in university vans to Fort Breckenridge. We would teach during the day, sleep over in one of the military barracks, teach the next day and drive back to Carbondale in the afternoon.

I enjoyed the camaraderie with the graduate students. There must have been around twenty five of us all working on graduate degrees in Speech or Theater. A few were married; the majority were single. One guy was named David and had been an extra in the movie, "How The West Was Won." John Gedritis had taken martial arts and his hands were registered as a weapon.

Christmas break arrived. I received invitations to go to St. Louis, Chicago, Nebraska and Massachusetts to spend the Christmas break with roommates or friends. I declined all as I had a 30-40 page research paper due in a class immediately we returned from break. It was the unhappiest Christmas I ever spent being alone in the house working on my research paper. I did get invited by the bishop of a ward to spend Christmas day and New Year's Day with his family. I accepted and enjoyed being with them and watching the football bowl games on New Year's Day.

I would leave Southern Illinois at the end of the 1st semester. I was not happy there. I had not finished my Master's thesis at Utah State so I had a feeling of dissatisfaction academically. This left me with the option of starting a new Master's degree at Southern Illinois, which I did not want to do, or doing graduate work toward a higher degree at Southern Illinois on the assumption I would finish the Master's degree at Utah State. I was dissatisfied with all options. I wanted to return to Utah, so I left and returned to Logan.



I was Charles Condomine in "Blithe Spirit", Utah State University, 1964. L-R Dede de Corsia, Patricia Hansen, Tom Stokoe, Julie Ann Farrer, and Gary Seaman.

Back to Utah (February 1965 - April, 1965)

It was the middle of a quarter and besides, I had no desire to take classes being I had finished all my class work for my Utah State Master's degree, I had no desire to work on the thesis, and my chairman was dead. I checked at my old residence and Mrs. Lewis said, "Yes, your room is available." I checked at "The Hub" and Mrs. Clark said, "Sure, we would be glad to have you come back and work."

I walked into the Theater Department office and Vosco Call said, "Are you back?" I said yes. "Good. Do you want to be in a play?" I said yes. He said, "I'm doing Billy Budd and I want you to be Captain Vere. Rehearsals start tomorrow night at the old Lyric at 7pm." So, I was happy. I got my old place back, my job back, and I was in a play. I felt at home.

Each spring, recruiters made the rounds to Utah State seeking graduates to work for their companies or school districts. I interviewed with the Los Angeles School District and was offered a job. This meant in August I would need to go to Los Angeles and commence my teaching career.

Being that I was not registered as a full time student taking university classes, the Hawaii Draft Board sent me notice that I would be drafted into the army on August 14, 1966 and to report to Fort Douglas on the campus of the University of Utah at 9 am.



Elvira my 1st wife, Charles, and Ruth my 2nd wife in "Blithe Spirit."

After "Billy Budd", Professor Morgan cast me as Hortensio in Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew." When that ended, I left Logan and went to Salt Lake City and found a place to stay with some guys living in a house by the University of Utah. I got a job as a painter with a cantankerous German who got upset with me for dripping paint on the leaves of bushes while painting the eaves of a house. He fired me. I think Tauivi may have left Salt Lake by then but I was still in touch with Paovale, Dave Tanner and Foalima and we entertained together. I believe it was during the summer of 1964 that the five of us entertained at the Hawaiian restaurant on Highland Drive.

I worked as a window washer at the Hotel Utah for a summer washing interior and exterior of windows. I got a free meal as part of the job. The food was good. This was either the summer of 1963, or 1964. One day my boss, Mr. Fetzner, said to me, "Tom, tomorrow at 10 am you will wash President McKay's windows." At 10 am he took me up to the apartment and introduced me to Abbie, the cook and housekeeper. She showed me where President McKay prayed each morning by the window next to his bed and told me to avoid standing on that spot. I started washing windows inside and out being sure they were spotless by washing them 2-3 times.

A group of young adults came into the apartment and sang to President McKay and then left. I can't recall exactly but they may have sung Happy Birthday. He had recently got out of the hospital. I finished with the bedroom window and went to the living room windows, climbed outside and hooked onto the safety latches. No one was in the room except President McKay sitting on the couch. He stood up, and gripping his walker, stumbled toward me and said with a big smile, "Can I help you?" I replied, "No thank you, President McKay, I can get it." Then he stumbled off into his bedroom leaning on his walker. This was the only time I had ever personally met a prophet and spoken to him. It was a very special experience. I had the honor and privilege to wash a prophet's windows.

The Green Bay Packers came to Utah to play an exhibition game and stayed at the Hotel Utah. I recall seeing these tall, big athletic guys walking along a hallway dressed in suits. Some said hello to me as they passed. They looked very impressive. Also, on a day during the summer, L. B. Johnson, President of the United States, came to Utah and entered the Hotel Utah around 2 pm. Security personnel had come to the hotel early morning checking things out in preparation for the president's arrival. I was standing upstairs on the second floor looking down at the main entrance when the president entered. I noticed that the eyes of the security men were constantly scanning the crowd.



I was drafted in August 1965 into the U.S. Army. My acting days had come to an end. For the next two years I was simply Private then Specialist Stokoe and all the fun I'd had on stage was just "Time Remembered."