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Category: **Document**
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Date:

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MY MEMOIRS

RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE

IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY

Written by Walter Edward Clark

Chapter III

THE INFLUENCE OF A MOTHER

In appraising a man's potential we are inclined to overlook the mother's side of the family, but in some cases it may be the dominant factor in determining character. I do not remember ever seeing my grandfather Randall. History records he was forced out of the Carthage Jail at the point of a bayonet and heard the threats of the mob to slay Joseph Smith. The Journal History reports Alfred was selected to go from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 under the direction of Heber C. Kimball, and had two wagons loaded, ready for the trip. At the last moment he had the misfortune of breaking a leg. Brother Kimball said, "Well Alfred, since you cannot go, we can surely make good use of the wagons, provisions, and oxen..." His reply was, "Take them Heber. I will earn more and meet you in the Valley next year."

I well remember my grandmother, Margaret Harley Randall. She and an older brother joined the Church. An elderly lady in Pennsylvania for whom Margaret and a sister worked left the girls $100. Margaret used her portion to get to Nauvoo where she worked for Alfred Randall and was often in the presence of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She and Alfred were married (she as the second wife) January 29, 1848, at Winter Quarters by Brigham Young. They arrived in Salt Lake Valley September 24, 1848.

Alfred filled three missions, made several trips east to bring emigrants to the Salt Lake Valley, helped build houses, saw mills, and the Ogden woolen mill. Margaret was small, active, energetic, sociable, and a good cook. They lived in the Salt Lake 17th Ward and were in the historic "Move of 1858" going as far south as Provo. For short periods she lived in "Over Jordan," Bountiful, and West Jordan. In 1862 Alfred bought her a home in Centerville.

She knew poverty. She was without flour for a three week period. They dug roots and made shoes and coats of canvas. From 1871 to 1901 she was president of the Centerville Relief Society. She studied obstetrics and officiated at sixty births. It is said that she deprived her own children to give to the needy. To her children she would say, "Maybe we won't need it." The last two years of her life were spent in our home in Georgetown. We took the Semi-Weekly Deseret News which carried a sermon of one of the General Authorities. She encouraged me to read the sermons. She deceased April 5, 1919 at the age of ninety-six.

My mother was exceedingly independent and willing to make the most of circumstances without complaining. She underestimated her talents and capacity. She did have a vision of what training, education, and following the instructions of the Church leaders could accomplish in producing a well rounded and useful individual.

Her high ideals and methods of obtaining them were misunderstood by all except a few friends. In poverty, she would occasionally buy celery, oranges, sweet potatoes, and items considered luxuries. To her children she would explain, "Someday you will be away from home and I want you to know what these items are and how they are used." My brothers and sisters wanted to go to a small circus in Montpelier which everyone else in town was attending. Her advice was, "Wait until you can go to a good circus." I had been to Ringling Brothers Circus in Salt Lake City and could reinforce her point of view. In contrast, she encouraged me to ride a horse to Montpelier (12 miles) to hear William Jennings Bryan lecture. I remember that he said that the daughter of a rich man had a poor chance for a good marriage.

A funeral for an unpopular person was held at an inconvenient date for Mother to attend. To me she said, "I must go. There will not be many present." the "must" help the unfortunate and unpopular had a lasting effect on me.

Another remark she made to me had a similar effect: We made a trip to Utah in a carriage, stopping in Syracuse to visit her sister, Margaret Ellen Baird, in Centerville where her brother Melvin and sisters Mary Wooley and Thurza Tingey lived, and in Morgan where some Randalls lived. Aunt Wealthy and children were in Georgetown to satisfy the legal conditions for Father to prove up on a homestead entry of land (160 acres of the Nounan pasture.) We had the key to the Farmington home on main and first north street and stayed there as our headquarters. I do not remember the exact time or length of time that we stayed, but think that it was not over two weeks. In Farmington, Uncle Joseph cared for the team. On our return, in Logan we left the team at a livery stable and our carriage in the yard. Rhoda and Maurine remember that our watermelons (a rare and precious fruit to us) were stolen, but I remember that I was putting hay in a sack to feed the team at noon without having asked for it. Mother saw me and said, "I hope I am not teaching you to be dishonest."

Mother's greatest desire for her children, next to Church activity, was an education. In four eonsecutive years she had a child graduate from B.Y.U. I, the oldest, was the fourth. Maurine graduated in 1923, Rhoda in '24, Bryant in '25, and I in '26. Her other child, Melvin had attended Utah State Agricultural College in Logan one half year before being drafted into World War I. We seldom if ever read a book she had not read first, and we read only those that had her approval.

She was very exacting as to the company we kept. I remember Maurine crying because Mother would not let her go out one evening with a friend. There was no sleep until we returned home. One Sunday I went to a neighboring town to play baseball. All Mother said was, "Do you consider that an appropriate activity for the Sabbath?"

One Sunday I wrote the word "pork" on the back of a coat of a girl who was on the obese side. That was the nickname of her father. I am not sure it was that or some more rowdy action that resulted in my being sent home from Sunday School. I remember Mother's reaction. She said, "You can stay home until you decide to be a gentleman." I did not stay home many weeks.

I escorted a young lady home one evening. On my return home Mother made a statement in the form of a question: "Have you considered what kind of relatives you would have if you married that girl?" She did not command or scold, but challenged me to analyze and decide. I have heard her say, "I wish they (the Church authorities) would preach 'prepare for marriage,' instead of 'get married.'

Mother followed in the footsteps of her mother in not letting the left hand know what the right was doing. One morning I left the house to chore at 4:45 instead of the usual 5 o'clock and met Mother coming in the house. I asked,

"Where have you been?" We never knew when she would return from a home of sickness. One evening she went to a home where there was an invalid child. The mother said, "You are an answer to my prayer." A young mother, in expressing apprehension to me for Mother's help said, "My child

died in your mother's arms." I did not even know there had been a death.

When I graduated from the eighth grade a neighbor suggested she frame the certificate. "Not yet," was her reply. When asked for a contribution she could not afford, to help construct a cemetery monument, she replied, "I propose to build living monuments."

Her entire life was one of service to her own children as well as others. She moved to Paris when the younger children were attending Fielding Academy and later rented a large home in Provo and kept borders to help her children through school. In the fall of 1923 Mother returned to Georgetown and kept house for Melvin, while Violet and I went to Provo. In the 1924-25 school year, she and Rhoda had two rooms in front and Violet and I had the back two rooms of a house owned by B.Y.U. From November, 1930 to June, 1933 she kept house for me, cared for my six and three-year-old sons, as well as prepared dinner for my hired men. Then she lived with her daughter, Maurine, in Riverton, Utah. Maurine's husband was absent, filling his second mission in the Tonga Islands as Mission President. At the time of her death she was living with her daughter Rhoda in Salt Lake City. Thoda was an instructor of nurses in training at the L.D.S. Hospital. Mother had a heart attack and dropped dead on the sidewalk on the way to a meeting on October 16, 1938. I cannot recall ever seeing Mother eat a meal in bed except following childbirth.

The things she enjoyed most--music, literature, association of educated friends–were denied her. She was a teacher and friend to younger people. Her goal was to have and rear a respectable, capable family, and her children were her constant concern. Her life was one of sacrifice and devotion.