

Personal History of Velma Howe Wald

Written in 1962

I was born in the little town of Provo, Utah Co., Utah, on January 22, 1898. I was my Mother's last living child. The second of eight children, Orvil Hill Howe, died of pneumonia at age 2 ½ years. The last three, Fordis, Martha, and Olive died within 10 days after birth. Doctors were not able to handle the R.H. factor in the early 1900's.

I was very fond of my two older brothers, John William Jr. and Leonard Jackson. It seemed that the more they teased me and played tricks on me, the more I loved them. Will would tease me until I would cry and then hold his hat and tell me to cry a hatful. Len once had me put my tongue on the frozen pump handle and Mother had to put warm water on it to keep from pulling the skin off. I wanted to shoot Len's gun once and when I did it kicked back and knocked me across the room.

My older sister, Ada, was very protective. I felt at times she was almost too protective. I was offered a ride to school in one of the first automobiles to come to our town, and Ada wouldn't let me go. She was afraid. I don't think I have ever forgiven her for that.

I have had the usual childhood diseases--measles, mumps, (I had mumps again along with my youngest child) and chicken pox. The older children tried to get me to look at myself in the mirror when I had measles, and they had laughed so at me that I wouldn't. I have wished since that I had taken one little peek.

I was very impressed with my first grade teacher, Ida Coombs. She had a way with little ones that made me love her. In fact, Mother thought I loved Ida as much as I did her. My seventh grade teacher, Nat Wilson was wonderful. I also remember James Clove, J. Morrel George, and Bess Bars in High School. The one who left the most wonderful impression was Amos N. Merrill, School of Education, B.Y.U. He was a great inspiration to me.

For the most part, my childhood was happy, although we had very little of the material things. Our house was small but very clean and neat. We had a small farm not far from our house, where Father raised fruits, grains, and chickens. This did not support

us entirely. Father was a carpenter by trade. In the summer, work was plentiful, but often in the fall, he left for Salt Lake City, Tooele or surrounding mining towns where carpenters were needed.

There was always a great deal of work for us to do because we raised most of our food. We hoed weeds, rode the horse for the cultivator and the hay, milked cows, fed and cared for them and some horses, fed chickens, churned butter in an old dasher churn. We also made soap. It was often my task to clean lamp chimneys and fill the lamps, so you can imagine how happy I was to see the house being wired for electricity. This also eliminated the tiresome task of turning the washer.

Being the youngest, it was often my responsibility to do many things usually delegated to boys, such as: Take the cows to pasture and bring them back at night, bring in the coal and wood and fill the reservoir for warm water. Mother and I often planted and cared for a garden--just the two of us. We picked the fruit and prepared it for canning. If Ada was not working, she helped with this. In the fall there was always a fat hog to butcher and the meat was cured and prepared for winter. After this event, I was often sent to many poor families or old people with some of the goodies Mother knew how to make from the meat. In fact, no one near us ever went hungry if my mother knew about it. There was always something to share with those who needed help. I was also sent many times to the Bishop's Store House with butter and eggs and other produce. We paid tithing with what we had.

Mother made all our clothes except stockings and under shirts. We always had a new dress for the 4th of July and one for Christmas. We wore very simple gingham dresses to school and in cold weather we wore last years wool dresses with aprons to keep them clean. Mother was about the most thrifty person I ever knew. She could make us look nice with so little money. She sold milk and butter to buy the material for my graduation dress and then made it herself and I looked lovely. Another time, I remember, I wanted to go to the class dance at the Y. and I had no dress. So Mother took my summer dress, washed and dyed it, and I went to the dance and had a wonderful time.

Even though there was lots of work to do, my wonderful Mother always arranged for me to have an hour or two each day to myself in the summertime. This was usually spent spinning tops, playing marbles, guinea or playing in the hay loft. It was such a thrill to find a nest of eggs, for often a hen would choose the hay loft instead of the nest made for her. And then there were the pleasant evenings when we would sit on Father's knee and sing, "High On The Mountain Tops", "God Moves In A Mysterious Way" and many other favorites. I have often thought this gave me my first love of music, for in later years I studied vocal and sang many solos in and around Provo. We had many other

pleasant evenings with our friends, pulling candy and playing games. I think the most pleasant times of all were our picnics in the canyon and our trips to Grandfather's in Heber. We would hitch old Brownie to the surrey with the fringe on top and take our lunch to the canyon or take the whole day and go to Heber to see Grandfather and Aunt Margaret as we called Grandfather's second wife.

We picked and packed fruit to earn money to help defray school expenses. After the 8th grade in the old Parker School, I attended Provo High School for two years and then was able to go to the B.Y.U. for three years. This gave me one year of college, or what was called then a Normal Certificate. I taught school, continuing my studies with extension courses and summer school. After five years, I was able to enter the A.C.U. at Logan as a Junior. I was not happy at Logan and so I came back to the B.Y.U. to graduate.

It was while I was at Logan that I met the man I was destined to marry. I liked this clean, fine looking, intelligent young man very much, and I shall never forget the sinking feeling I had when he told me he was not a Latter Day Saint. After three years we decided to get married.

It was a great worry to me to take this step knowing that I may never realize my girlhood dream of a Temple marriage; and knowing too that my parents were unhappy about it. However, my Father said he would never say "No" to me, and after I made my decision, he said I was not to worry about it--that Ferd was too clean and fine to reject the Gospel indefinitely. I received other excellent advise. The principal of the High School where I was teaching was in the Bear River Stake Presidency. He could see that I was worried and he called me into his office to talk to me. After telling him why I was troubled, he advised me to marry this man because he felt that he was a fine young man and would eventually be a Latter Day Saint. Never had advise from a good religious man been so timely and welcome.

This proved to be good advise, for I now have four fine children and ten grandchildren, twin boys among them. Leonard has served a foreign mission, Fred a states mission and Oletta along with her Mother has served a stake mission. My husband and I have been married in the temple and our children are sealed to us along with the little boy, Gordon, whom we lost with leukemia when he was 2 ½ years old.

This all took about 25 years and there were times when I despaired ever getting to the temple, but I kept on hoping and praying and we are now a united happy family and have done some temple work for my husband's people as well as others we do not know.

We have had some wonderful trips together. We have been east as far as Boston and up the coast of Maine; many trips to Minneapolis where Ferd's sisters live, west to California and up the coast to Seattle and Portland, north to Canada, and into the beautiful Canadian Rockies. The highlight of our trips together was our tour of the continent of Europe and our week in Norway with our missionary son, where we made contact with some of Ferd's people and secured many names for our temple record.

We hope to do some more traveling in a year or two when we both retire, me from teaching, which I have done since the family grew up, and Ferd from his position as Electrical Engineer for the Utah Power and Light Co. Of course we expect to see our daughter, Lorna, through school, who is a Junior in the University of Utah now.

We, like our fathers before us, will probably never leave much in a material way to our children, but we hope they will gain from their parents, home life and church experiences a profound testimony of the Gospel and a desire to live the Gospel always, for indeed this is the only way to true happiness.