



MABEL VICTORIA ERICKSON

John Eric Erickson had established a furniture store and carpenter shop in Sandy, Utah and was doing quite well. When he was married to Ida M. Bengtson they built a nice home and later had a boarding house. Because of the financial panic of the mid 1890's John lost his business and had to sell all that he had. In 1896 they moved to Salt Lake City and he again went to work for Dinwoody's Furniture Company, where he had worked prior to his marriage. He received \$2.00 for a 10 hour day, six days a week. They moved into a small house and later into a duplex at 353 East 5th South. Their family consisted of Ester, Hazel, (Linnea had died at age three, and Richard at five days) and Hilmar. It was in this duplex that Mabel Victoria Erickson was born on November 5, 1897. The Salt Lake City Library now stands at this location.

In the Spring of 1899 the Ericksons moved to Farr West, Weber County, Utah about 8 miles from Ogden, to care for Mabel's maternal grandparents, Carl Eric Bengtson 75, and Anna Brita Anderson Bengtson, 78. There was a large brick house on the farm. Mabel's father took care of the farm and her mother took care of everyone else. Her father and grandfather had differing ideas about farming so the Ericksons bought a 40 acre farm with a 4 room house about 3 miles closer to Ogden. It was still close enough to care for Ida's aging parents.

When Mabel was an infant: and took Hilmar with her next but a short time when she was left immediately and entering Mabel out of the cradle. Ida many babies were being stolen her mother had put her to sleep in a cradle door for a short visit. She had been there prompted by the spirit to go home. She the house, saw a large Indian squaw taking nearly froze in her tracks as she knew by the Indians who would darken their skin with dye and then sell them to other tribes as slaves. They especially looked for babies with dark hair and eyes. The squaw set the baby back in the cradle and left the house. Ida was thankful she had listened to those promptings.

When Mabel was a little over three years old her brother, Leon, was born on February 28, 1901. She'll never forget the day he was born:

"I came walking into the kitchen, the range door was down with a basin of warm water on it. Sitting beside it was a large woman, a stranger to me, holding a tiny baby and bathing him in the warm water. I was completely mystified until the woman, Mrs. Swensen, a midwife, told me this was my own baby brother and that my mother was in her bed resting. I don't remember my reaction. They didn't believe in telling children at that time when a baby was expected, so it was a complete surprise to me."

One of Mabel's earliest recollections is of a time she was playing with her cousins, Gerda (pronounced "Yerda") and Vern (Laverne) and brother Hilmar in her mother's bed at her Grandfather's home. All at once Hilmar put his feet in the air and looked at his legs, which were all broken out in a rash. He gave a loud cry for his mother and then yelled, "Minna ban, minna ban." Swedish, for that is what was spoken, for "oh, my legs, oh, my legs." When his mother came in from the kitchen and took a look at them she said he had measles.

In the Springtime between 1901 and 1904 John added onto their red brick home, building all around the existing rooms. Mabel was fascinated to watch her uncle, William Lund, who owned a brickyard at Five Points in north Ogden, and his brother Otto Lund lay the bricks. They were such fast bricklayers it seemed like magic to the little girl. John remodeled the upstairs of the Lund home at Five Points in exchange for the brickwork. When the remodeling was finished they had a large kitchen with a pantry, a small bedroom for Hilmar and Mabel, a large bedroom and a dining room and parlor. The front porch led into the dining room, down the front hallway to a door which opened onto the parlor and a stairway. The second floor had three bedrooms and a playroom for Mabel in the dormer on the north side of the house. The playroom connected to the closet of the older sister's room which made handy access for Mabel to dress up in her big sister's clothes.

Since her father was a cabinet maker by trade he made some lovely furniture for Mabel's playroom. There was a three foot high cupboard with a full glass door to show off her dishes, a red table with benches on two sides, and a trunk with a removeable till insert. They also purchased a hardwood rocking chair, which Mabel kept until the 1930's when it was left outside near the garage in Gridley and got broken. Mabel recalls; "How I loved that playroom. I wonder if I really appreciated my father's love for me. I knew that none of the children I knew had a playroom for their own. I just took it for granted, but shared it with others if and when I had other girls to play with."

Each year the family took a trip to Lagoon to celebrate the "Swedish Mid-Summer's Day." The Swedish people from Salt Lake City and Ogden and some from other parts of Utah would gather at Lagoon in Farmington County each June 24th. The Ericksons looked forward to taking a big wicker basket filled with delicious food with them in the surrey to the train station. John would leave them there while he took the horses to a livery stable to be cared for until their return. Mabel always worried that he wouldn't get back in time to catch the train, but he always made it. They would catch the "Oregon Shortline." It was always very warm but their mother wouldn't let them open the windows because she was afraid they would get cinders in their eyes.

When they arrived at Lagoon and entered the large gates leading to the park, there was always a crowd to meet them and exchange greetings. The families would parade past the skating rink and other attractions until they came to the bowery where hundreds of picnic tables and benches were ready. They found friends and relatives and spent the day picnicing and visiting. The children found their friends and scampered off to the small zoo and to the concessions. Mabel especially remembers the MerryGo-Round, the Shoot-The-Shoots, and the Fun House. Uncle Adolph Benson (he changed his name from Bengtson to Benson after coming to America) would bring loads of soda pop for all the children; that was quite a treat. What a good time was had by all! After the picnic and several rides on the concessions, there was a Swedish Program which included a large group braiding the Maypole. This was very colorful and the braiding took many intricate steps to achieve. The dancers dressed in different Swedish costumes, showing off the dress of their part of the country. Mabel recalls, "oh, it was a great day in our lives. And then it was time to depart for the train ride to Ogden, then waiting for Father to get the horses and buggy and the seven mile ride home. What a joyful day for all!"

One day when Mabel was about 5 years old she and Hilmar heard the buggy coming. Mother and Ester had been shopping in Five Points and Ogden where they exchanged butter and eggs for groceries. As they drove Prince through the gates Mabel and Hilmar rushed to greet them because there was usually some candy for the children, but Ester said, "We have a great surprise for the family, but you can't see it until after we are through supper tonight." She carried one big package into the house and her mother carried another. Curiosity is a good motivator and dinner was prepared, eaten, and the dishes cleaned and put away in record time. They all went in to sit around the dining room table with the packages in the middle. Ester unwrapped the mystery. It contained a small graphophone with a cylinder on top and a small horn and handle. They had also bought three fragile cylinder records. Ester explained this was Edison's first talking machine and that they could hear the human voice by putting the records on the machine. She then carefully assembled the parts and put a cylinder on. She was careful to just touch the top edges for it would blurr the recording since they were made of wax. She wound it up and placed the needle on the record. It was the first recording they had heard. All at once a song came forth "Uncle Josh -- And the girls they do say, Uncle Jos-o-way, Ye're old but you're awfully tough, Ha ha ha ha, Ye're old but you're awfully tough. Ha ha ha ha." well, they all laughed with him and thought it was great fun. The next record was "oh Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight." (Chosen by their mother in remembrance of her brother, victor, who ran away to sea. They didn't see him for 10 years, until they met him in "Castel Garden" in New York just after they immigrated to America in 1883.) The third record was then savored. It continues to be a favorite of Mabel's, "The Lost Chord." What an experience for the family. It was truly a miracle!

Even Mabel had times when she got into a little trouble. When Leon had just learned to walk and Mabel was about five years old, they were playing outside on a hot summer day. Mabel thought it would be nice to take Leon to the neighbor's and show him off. The Holley's live across the Plain City Canal and the only "bridge" at that time was a huge fallen tree thrown across the canal, making a narrow foot bridge. The canal was full of water, but fear never entered their minds; so they went a-visiting. Before too long they heard their mother's voice calling to the Holley's asking if they had seen her little ones. Since their mother was afraid to

cross the bridge Alice Holley brought the two of them safely back to their mother's side. Mabel recalls: "I don't remember her scolding us, but I never repeated the performance."

Once when Uncle Charley and Aunt Anna Beckman with their children came to visit, Mabel took her cousins, Gerda and Vern, up to her play room. Each took some dolls and had a bedroom for her "house." The family had just put in telephones and one of the workers gave Mabel a broken phone to play with. This was a prized possession. The children strung string up as high as they could reach for telephone wires. Gerda and Vern used some empty spools for their receivers, and they had fun making believe telephone calls to one another. The good times ended and the cousins went home. This was before the days of electric lights in the country and it was just dusk as the hired man, Harry Armstrong, who had his room across the hall from the playroom, came rushing upstairs to get ready to go someplace. As he reached the top of the stairs his neck came in contact with the string wires and nearly threw him downstairs. Mabel remembers: "What a scolding I got for leaving the strings up, endangering people's lives. He gave me a thorough lecture. I don't know whether my folks ever knew about this, but I never again put up telephone wires."

Brothers and sisters can have a great influence on one's life. Mabel's eldest sister, Ester, nearly 12 years older, was almost a second mother to her. She made the clothes for the family and since Mabel was her baby sister she made many for her. Ester would also take Mabel along when she went bicycle riding with her friends. Mabel had Ester for her Sunday School teacher when she was six and seven. They had pamphlets of the Old and New Testament stories which Ester had bound for her. These are still in her possession. As Mabel listened and learned the scripture stories she would take her pamphlets home and teach her dolls after Church each Sunday. She listened carefully so she could explain the lessons to her dolls and teach them the songs she had learned. This helped her retain the messages.

Mabel and Hilmar went to a school 2 ½ miles from their home. often they would walk. Sometimes they rode Hilmar's buckskin, Prince, to school, tie him to the school yard fence so he could graze and then they could ride him home. When they took Old Whitey he would jump the fence and return home to the barn. The children would have to walk home from school but the family would have old Whitey to use on the farm. If they walked by the railroad track it would cut ½ mile off the distance. Sometimes they would catch a ride with the man who checked the rails. He had a three wheeled cart, two wheels on one track with a bar to the third wheel on the other track. Mabel and Hilmar would sit on his tool box behind him and away they would go. It was great fun for them and a quick way to and from school.

In the winter they dressed warmly with union suits, panty worsts, a sweater and petticoat under a wool dress with wool stockings, leggings and overshoes. Mother, an excellent craftsman, would knit the stockings from raw wool which she had washed, carded and spun into yarn. She then dyed the yarn and knit the stockings.

One day the children noticed an Indian encampment of several Wigiups about two blocks from school. It gave Mabel quite a scare since she had nearly been stolen by a squaw when she was an infant. Their school teacher took them to visit the Indians and see the beaded

moccasins and gloves they were selling. Hilmar and Mabel would run past the camp each day during the three weeks the Indians were there.

The family would put time and energy into preparations for holidays and celebrations, Fourth of July, Decoration Day (now memorial Day), Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Washington's Birthday. They usually got new dresses for these occasions and had a grand time.

One special 24th of July day when Mabel was 7 years old, the Parr West Ward had a very impressive parade with all the young girls on a Queen's Float. There were three tiers with the youngest around the bottom, where Mabel was. Hazel was on the next tier and the queen of the float had a throne on top. All the girls wore white dresses with red, white, and blue sashes, their hair in ringlets with ribbons, and white long stockings. The float was a hayrack trimmed in red, white and blue bunting and flags, even the horses and harnesses were decorated.

There were pioneer wagons with women and children in pioneer dresses, aprons and sunbonnets. Some were without shoes. One wagon had women doing household chores such as churning butter, carding wool and spinning wheels. There was also a float with just the faces and heads of children showing and a banner announcing "Utah's Best Crop." There were many men on horseback wearing buckskins and quite a few Indians. The climax of the parade came when the float with the young girls neared the end. An Indian in all his regalia came riding swiftly by the float and grabbed one of the little girls from a tier and stole her away. Everyone was frozen in fear. Later it was learned that the stunt was part of the fun since it was the girl's father dressed as an Indian that had taken her.

Mabel had been taught all about baptism by her mother in Swedish. She had learned that at baptism all sins were forgiven, that at 8 years old one became accountable and could comprehend the meaning of this sacred ordinance. She had also listened carefully to her sister, Ester, at Church and learned that after baptism "we were not to commit sin, if we did we would be punished for them unless we sincerely repented of them."

On Sunday, November 5, 1905 at Fast Meeting in the Farr West Ward, it was announced that Mabel Erickson and Amy Rawson had turned 8 and were to be baptized at the Thomas Farm. The farm was little over a mile away and had a reservoir fed by a flowing well. There was a large fire heating the parlor when the crowd arrived for the baptism. The girls were taken into a bedroom where they changed into white clothes, then were taken to the reservoir in a white top buggy, well wrapped in blankets. It was sunny, but cold. Upon arriving the girls were baptized by immersion by George A. White in the deep water. As soon as they were out of the water they were wrapped in blankets, taken to the house, and dressed again in their Sunday clothes. When the girls came into the parlor all the family and friends were there. Mabel was confirmed by Joseph Stephenson, a counselor to Bishop James A. Martin. Of this important event Mabel states: "And so I was now officially a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It was impressed on my mind that I had given a solemn promise to obey his commandments and I've always tried my best to do so."

The following winter the family moved in with their grandparents to care for them and be closer to school. Because they still kept cows and stock on their own farm Hazel and Hilmar would drive down there to milk and feed them. Just after Mabel turned 9, Hilmar met her at school one day to tell her that Aunt Anna Beckman was dead and Mabel should hurry home with him. Their folks had stopped by their farm while he was feeding stock to let him know and give him instructions. A thunder and lightning storm came up in the night and the Beckman's house was struck by lightning around 4 a.m. The house caught fire and Uncle Beckman got the family out and to the Lund's 4 blocks away. Aunt Anna was pregnant and went into labor. The baby was saved but Aunt Anna died.

"I remember feeling so sorry for my cousins and wondering how I would feel or what I would do in that situation." Ester made black dresses for Gerda and Vern, as the custom was that everyone wear black. Nearly all their clothes were destroyed in the fire. On the day of the funeral everyone gathered at Grandfather's house. The women had black dresses, and hats with black veils and the men wore black crepe bands on their hats and sleeves. A large black affair was placed on the front door. Black hearses, carriages and horses were in front for the mourners. Mabel rode with her mother and cousins. It was a most solemn occasion with many tears.

When it was all over the Lunds took Leonard and the baby while the rest of the family came to live with the Ericksons. That made a drastic change in their day to day living. Besides the Erickson family of five children, there was Grandfather, in his eighties, a cousin Aloff Malmstrom from Midvale, (John's widowed sister's son who was learning the carpenter trade) and the Beckman family, Uncle Beckman, Gerda, 10, Vern, 8, and Ira, 2½. At that time there was no electricity on the farm. They used coal oil lamps, washing boards, cooked with wood or coal, used flat irons, and bathed in tubs. "We did have a bit of a luxury there as father had a six foot tub which we used to bathe in, where most people used a wash tub."

All the children went to school and took lunches. Ida baked eight loaves of bread each day. When Mabel was eleven she learned to mix the bread. She put the breadpan on a chair so she could mix it as the table was too high for her. She mixed it each night and Mother or Hazel molded it into loaves and baked it every morning. This became her job. She was also assigned to wash all the dishes with Vern and Gerda. They would heat the dish water on the stove, filling one pan with soapy water to wash and one with rinse water. "In the summer it wasn't bad, but in the winter when it was dark, how I hated to take that pan of dish water outside and empty it. But we lived through it all."

In the following summer Uncle Adolph Bergtson came and took Vern home with him where she could help Aunt Lydia, and when school was about to start Aunt Emma Lund brought Leonard to visit and left him with the Ericksons.

On October 10, 1909 Grandfather Carl Bengtson died. This was a great loss to Mabel as she loved him very much. She had spent a lot of time at his house because it was closer to school and would listen to her grandfather and his friend John Groberg tell stories about their experiences as sailors on the North Sea. They would discuss the Kings of Sweden, Denmark and Norway and ask Mabel to sing Swedish songs to them.

On May 24, 1912 Mabel graduated from 8th Grade. At that time most did not pursue their education, but Mabel wanted to go to the Academy to become a teacher. She was fortunate to have many good teachers in school and she listened attentively and was a good student. She also studied and took music lessons from Mrs. R. P. Hunter in Ogden. These lessons were paid for by exchanging 3 or 4 pounds of butter each week which Mabel churned. Beginning in the 6th grade Mabel taught music to the 4 lower grades as most of the teachers had little or no training in music. There were eight students in her 8th Grade class and she alone graduated. The exercises for the district were held in Ogden Tabernacle and Mabel wore a white dress Ester had made for her with much embroidery, a hat, long white gloves and black velvet slippers. "We all had to cross the huge stage to receive our diplomas. Most schools had several students, but when it came my turn, I had to cross alone. It seemed miles long across that stage to receive my cherished diploma. I think I was too excited to remember anymore, except the words of the speaker when he admonished us to 'Hitch your wagon to a star and keep going until you reach your final destination.' Those words have always stayed with me. My day was full! OH, so full!"



Mabel's 8th Grade graduation picture holding diploma

Service in the Church came to Mabel at a young age as she was the secretary of Religion Class in 1911 then librarian. She joined the MIA and was the organist and a teacher and, later, a Sunday School teacher. "I took these things seriously and worked hard at my preparations."

Before the Easter of 1914 Mabel and Hilmar spent many days preparing the house for a special occasion. Besides Easter Sunday they were to celebrate Hilmar's 19th birthday and his girlfriend was coming for the celebration. Mabel and Hilmar wanted to wallpaper the dining room. In to accomplish this task, the years to be scraped off. Their parents bought new linoleum, polished furniture and put house was decorated with colored eggs, a special Swedish sponge cake was made and many refreshments ready. Around noon of Hilmar's birthday the mail came containing a letter from Box B, Salt Lake City; that meant a mission call. It was the first time any of the Bengtsons or Ericksons had been called on a mission. Hilmar was called to go to Sweden and was to leave the latter part of May. Their party was a real success with

much to be thankful for. World War I had begun in Europe just the month before. Luetta Randall, who had received a diamond ring from Hilmar, and Mabel were allowed to go to Salt Lake to attend his first meeting as a missionary where President Joseph F. Smith spoke. They saw him off at the depot after his three days training.

They received a letter from Hilmar while he was in Montreal waiting to sail up the St. Laurence. The missionaries had been scheduled to sail on a certain ship when the president received a strong feeling that they should not take that ship, so cancelled passage and made arrangements on the S.S. Virginian for the following day. That night the ship they were to have taken collided with another ship in the fog and both ships sank. How grateful everyone was that the mission president had heeded the warning from the Holy Ghost.

Before long the United States was involved in the war and the missionaries were ordered home. Hilmar completed his mission in Des Moines, Iowa. In July 1916 he arrived home during preparations for the 24th Celebration, walking by the Church where Mabel was helping. How proud she was to have her brother there! She excused herself and walked home with him to greet their folks.

Mabel had longed to attend Weber Academy for over two years, but because money was so tight and her mother in poor health she was unable to. She took music lessons preparing herself to become a music teacher and took classes part time, but she still wished to attend the academy and be a school teacher.

While the family was attending the Mid-Summer Day at Lagoon and Mabel was walking around the concessions with her cousin Ruby Sebeck and Ruby's fiance, Arvid Johnson, she found a man's wallet. Upon opening it she learned it belonged to a mining man in Salt Lake, and contained some important looking papers and quite a bit of money. Mabel asked Ruby and Arvid to return it to the owner, which they agreed to do. The next Monday she was so surprised to see Ruby and Arvid crossing the field from the railroad track coming to their house. They had found the owner of the wallet and he had insisted on paying their way to Ogden so they could present Mabel with a \$25.00 reward for returning his wallet. This was just the amount needed for tuition at the Academy.

Mabel worked the summer in the cannery at Five Points and saved money for clothes and supplies. Her mother arranged to supply Ester, who was married and living in Ogden, with butter and eggs in return for Mabel's rooming with them. She was within walking distance of the school and could go home on weekends to see her family and help with Saturdays cleaning chores, and also continue to teach Sunday School and play the organ for Church. She was kept busy and happy.

"Mother always liked me to make lemon pies early on Sunday mornings so they would be ready and fresh for Sunday dinner. Mother baked sweet buns and coffee cake for Saturday. They were delicious, and how we enjoyed them. I usually made some cakes.

"We always had lots of canned fruit, pickles, chow chow, catsup and chili sauce which we canned in the summer. Apples, carrots, potatoes, parsnips, etc., were kept fresh in the root cellar. We were able to buy fresh meat during the summer as a meat man brought his meat around twice a week in a covered wagon filled with ice to keep the meat fresh. We could buy enough beef steak (round and sirloin) for 25-50¢ a meal, and a roast for \$1.00. In the winter we killed hogs which we had raised and pickled them in brine. We didn't have electric lights, washers, irons, or running water until I was around 16. We did have a pump in our kitchen. So was our life. Things were done the hard way. Of course, that is the only way we had and we accomplished it."

In September of 1916 the County Superintendent of Schools phoned Mabel one morning and asked about her schooling and teaching experiences. Then he asked her if she would like to become a substitute teacher. She said she felt she would like to try. She was assigned to visit the County Director of lower grades, Jennie C. Neals. Mrs. Neals would visit the schools throughout the county and Mabel would take over her classes in Plain City. It was a great student teaching experience. She also substituted classes in Pleasant View, North Ogden, Harrisville, Farr West and West Weber. After Christmas the superintendent of schools gave her a third grade in Slaterville to teach until the end of the school year. The following year she taught first, second and third grade in themarriott School. Then she was assigned to teach third grade in Plain City until the schools were closed because the Spanish Influenza Epidemic started.

During these years of teaching Mabel was called to be the Young Ladies President. She was very surprised at the call but willing to serve. The bishop had selected her counselors, Laura Brown and Lillian Tomelson, both in their 30's with several children. Mabel was 19 and unmarried. Mabel felt the need for more spiritual guidance and while in Salt Lake for a convention she went up to the Bishop's Building and asked the Church Patriarch, Hyrum G. Smith for a patriarchal blessing, which he did right then. It has been a wonderful help and guide to her throughout her life.

"Whenever I have been worried or sad and felt that I had no one to turn to, I've read my patriarchal blessing and prayed for guidance. oh, how it has helped me and guided and comforted me. I relied on the Lord to guide me in my problems. I have felt his guiding hand over me many times in many things. And I know he has guided me with wisdom to take care of my affairs."

One evening when Mabel had walked to Church for MIA a young man from another ward was visiting. She was somewhat surprised to see him because she knew his family and she thought he was on a mission. When the evening was over he asked if he could give her a ride home. After accepting, the young man drove past her house saying it was a nice night for a little ride. He drove near the Hot Springs and turned onto a barren stretch of road. Mabel got a very queasy feeling. When he stopped he threw the lines over the dashboard and got hold of the bottom of her dress. Mabel reached for the whip and gave the horses a good lash, which started them running. The young man struggled to get hold of the lines. Mabel kept the whip and told him in no uncertain terms to take her home.

"When we stopped at my home I quickly got out, not allowing him to help me, and told him not to bother to ask me out again. I learned later that he had been sent home from his mission for misconduct. I recalled a book I had read where a knight was trying to seduce a young woman. He had broken into her bedroom and she ran to the balcony. She told him if he took one step nearer she would throw herself down from the castle. Her virtue meant more to her than her life. So it should mean to me. I was taught to hold young men at arm's distance. I always had fun associating with young men, singing and dancing, and often groups of young people would come to our house to play games and sing. I was never a wall flower and never lacked an escort. once while a group of us were walking home from MIA a friend said, 'You go out with so many young men, you'll never know how to choose one to marry.' I replied, 'I'll know when the right one comes along.' And I said to myself, 'I'll pray about it when that time comes, which I did, and my prayers were surely answered."

1917 TO 1923

In June 1917 Mabel, 5' 2½", 120 pounds, brown hair and brown eyes, decided to take an adventure. She had been teaching and saving her money and planned to go to Nevada to visit her sister, Hazel. Hazel and Fred Hutchings and their family began a homestead in Taber Creek, Nevada, about 15 miles from Metropolis in 1912. It didn't prove very profitable for them, but they continued to live there. Mabel had never been out of the state of Utah and missed her sister so she planned a surprise visit. She took the train to Metropolis, stayed overnight in the hotel, and unexpectedly ran into her brother-in-law on his way out of town for a month business trip. He helped her catch a ride with a neighbor out to their homestead. In the middle of nowhere was a two room tar-paper shack where Hazel and her four small children lived. Neighbors would haul a few barrels of water to them every few days. Hazel was delighted and overwhelmed to have her sister to visit.

Two days after Mabel's arrival the Ward Teachers arrived for a visit, Harry Storey and Randolph Fife. Mabel recalls, "I thought Brother Fife must be a married man, as he looked quite mature and wearing a mustache." They stayed and chatted for quite awhile. After they left Hazel said, with a twinkle in her eye, "Seems as if we have some new ward teachers." When asked why she continued, "I believe they just wanted to meet my sister." Hazel informed Mabel that Randolph was not married. He was 5'9½" tall, had blue eyes, light brown hair and weighed about 160 pounds.

The next day at Church Mabel noticed Randolph's mustache was gone and he was very nicely dressed and seemed to be a bit different from the others. Harry and Randolph both walked Mabel home from Church and Harry got a date with her for the Fourth of July Dance. Randolph's horses were in Idaho, but he did dance with Mabel several times. Several days later Mabel and Hazel had gone to the Montgomery's to dinner as they had picked wild gooseberries. While they were sitting on the porch getting the berries ready for some pies, Randolph rode by on a spirited horse, tipping his hat to Mabel. Mr. Montgomery turned to Mabel and said, "You're going to marry that fellow." She told him he was as crazy as a loon and that she had no intention of marrying anyone from Nevada. When Mabel left Nevada after a month's visit she and Randolph corresponded until he returned to Ogden in the fall to work in the UP Shops. Then he called her and they met each other in Ogden and went to a show.

Randolph began working in Magna and Mabel didn't hear from him because he had contracted small pox and was put in a hospital so he wouldn't give it to the family. He couldn't even write letters so he asked his sister, Iretta, to let Mabel know what had happened to him.

Mabel was still Young Ladies MIA president and she got Mr. Peterson, the school superintendent, to be a speaker at their regular Sunday night meeting. Randolph took her and afterward she introduced him to Mr. Peterson. When he heard the name Randolph Fife he said, "I remember this young man. I was principal of the school on 21st St. when he went there. He was sent to my office one day for being late. He was so sincere and gave the best excuse I'd heard. He told me they had run out of hay for their cows and he had to get hay for them and it had taken more time than he had expected, but it had to be done, and it was up to him to do it. So knowing his mother was a widow, I was glad to know a young man was so concerned for the family needs." Mabel was very proud to be with him.

After Thanksgiving they began keeping quite steady company. Mabel was teaching at Marriott School near Ogden. At Christmass time he came to Farr West to visit and brought Mabel a lovely mirror, comb and brush set, and at New Years he came up in his own second hand car, a 1915 Brass Band Ford (it had a brass band around the radiator). In February they had attended a show in Ogden and Randolph asked Mabel to marry him. She said yes. That April Randolph went back to Nevada, figuring he could make more money out there during the summer. He did come back to Ogden in June, bringing some people with him. How they teased him because he drove so fast. They knew there must be a girl he wanted to see. He came to Utah again in August and bought an uncut diamond and took it to a jeweler to make it into an engagement ring. However, it wasn't finished before he had to go back to Nevada, so he made plans with Iretta and James Lindsey to invite Mabel for dinner when the ring was ready. when she came to dinner a week later the table had an especially festive look and Mabel wondered what all the fuss was about. After eating James said, "Now we come to the important part of this dinner. I've been commissioned by Randolph to give you this gift. You may look at it, but I'm to be the proxy and do the honors." He then handed Mabel the velvet ring box. She was very surprised to see a beautiful diamond in a tiffany setting. James took it out and slipped it on her finger and kissed her. Mabel said, "It was a thrilling moment knowing my loved one had planned this lovely occasion for me."

Wedding plans were made. Mabel had a cedar chest made by her father containing the following trousseau: eight pairs of pillow cases, six pair with six inches of fine knitted lace from her mother, one pair with wide crocheted lace, one pair embroidered by Mabel, two dresser scarfs, hand embroidered by Mabel, a crocheted bed spread, a luncheon set, a dozen dish towels, six hand quilted pieced wool quilts, a 9 x 12 woven rug made by her mother and several table cloths.

Mabel's wedding dress was made by her sister-in-law Luetta. It was a two piece fine white wool serge. The skirt was box pleated and the waist length jacket was edged in white silk military braid with a white satin collar and covered buttons.

At this time the great epidemic of Spanish Influenza swept the country. It was so devastating that all the schools, churches, and public places were closed. Randolph's uncle Barnard Stewart approached Randolph with an employment opportunity as foreman of his ranch on the upper Provo River in Summit and Wasatch counties. The previous foreman and his wife had both died suddenly of the flu. Randolph knew it was a great opportunity to make a start in life so he came to ask Mabel what she thought of it. She told him she had been taught to go where her husband felt he could make a good honest living. They decided to be married in December. Randolph quit his job in the shops and went up to the Stewart Ranch.

Because of the epidemic the temples were closed, but Randolph had spoken to the authorities and they assured him that as soon as the flu subsided and the temples were opened they would be able to be sealed. They both had their recommends. They went on with their wedding plans but because of the flu no parties could be held. Randolph nearly 27 and Mabel, 21, were married December 4, 1918 in Mabel's parents home in Farr West, Utah by Bishop Chugg. John Eric Erickson and Ester Yorgason were the witnesses. Randolph gave Mabel a corsage of red carnations, his favorite flower. They enjoyed a lovely dinner there with those present and packed up Mabel's things in their car and left the next morning for Ogden. Randolph's mother had a nice dinner for them and they added Randolph's things to the car and went on to Uncle Barnard's in Salt Lake for yet another dinner and final instructions before going up to the Stewart Ranch.

After a long day of travel they arrived at the Ranch around dusk. Mrs. Cherry, the temporary cook refused to let them in for fear of the flu, but Randolph very pleasantly told her, "Well, we're coming in." Mrs. Cherry served dinner to them and several cowboys and the following morning after breakfast she was excused of her duties and left. Then Mabel was the foreman's wife and cook of the ranch. It was a busy time for both. There were some 500 head of cattle, 50 horses and lots of pigs. Buying, selling, branding, feeding, etc. kept them busy.

In February the temples re-opened and they traveled to Salt Lake where they were met by their mothers. on February 25, 1919 they were sealed for time and all eternity.

In March they remodeled the rock kitchen, making it a clean, well organized and pleasant place to be. That summer there were up to 10 men working on the ranch. Mabel baked 16 loaves of bread each day, churned butter, skimmed the milk and prepared the food. They ate a mutton a week, or a veal a week besides the cured pork. That summer was a happy time with many visitors coming to see them at the ranch. Mabel's father came up and took charge of building a new house in front of the rock kitchen. The new log house was to have a fair sized dining room, a large living room, two bedrooms and a bath. The upstairs was left unfinished for several years. They had hopes of finishing this project by the second week in December just before their first child was due., They had bought all new furniture and had ordered carpets from Sears and Roebuck in Chicago. The work was progressing on schedule, and they had just plastered inside the house and kept fires going to help with the drying.

One November 19, 1919 Mabel had cooked a big noon meal for a dozen men since it was roundup time. All the cattlemen ran their cattle in the hills above the ranch from spring to fall then brought them down to the Stewart Ranch where each rancher collected his own cattle

and branded the calves. They had a girl who helped them during the summer, Aurelia Frost, planning on being the nurse and they called her to come when labor pains began after the noon dishes were done. The doctor they had planned to use from Kamas, 15 miles away, was out of town so they called a Dr. Snow from Park City, 30 miles away. He wasn't too keen about coming since it was 190 below zero and there were frozen slippery roads to travel. Randolph got some men to move the bedroom furniture into the rock kitchen and put the dining room furniture into the new house where the plaster was still drying.

The doctor arrived about two hours after their healthy baby boy was born. They named him Randolph Erickson Fife. The doctor took proper care of Mabel as did the nurse. Mabel wrote in his baby book, "It looked like our first son received a cold reception, born: November 19, 1919, 190 below zero and was brought into this world by Nurse Frost and Dr. Snow, but he entered a very welcomed home and parents. A prouder father never lived. We were very well settled in our lovely new home by Christams 1919."

On the Stewart Ranch were four summer homes and four of Randolph's uncles and their families spent their summers at the ranch. Barnard, Charles B., Samuel W., and William M. There were many parties with much entertaining and visiting. Randolph often sang at the ranch parties and he sang his first solo in the Church at Woodland. In October 1920 Randolph's mother, Elizabeth Stewart Fife died in Ogden, Utah.

In the spring of 1921, when the mud was up to the hubs of the wagons, Dr. Danningerg from Kamas drove the 12 miles up to the Ranch to help deliver Randolph and Mabel's second child, a daughter. Gwendolyn Victoria Fife was born at 11:00 p.m. on April 8, 1921. The nurse that attended, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, was a bit forgetful and slow, but took good care of the baby. Randolph's pet name for Gwendolyn was his "Dolly Dimples." She had two beautiful dimples in her shoulders, and little dark eyebrows. She was a most delightful and vivacious child, though she didn't walk until she was 14 months old. She saw her cousin, James Lindsay walking about, she stood up, walked half way across the room, up a step and down the hall before her mother caught up with her.

Randolph was receiving very good wages for those days of \$150.00 a month. Eggs were 85¢ a dozen, if you could get them, sugar was \$28.00 for 100 pounds and they paid \$13.00 for a 60# can of honey. Because of the ranch work and distances the Fifes were unable to attend Church every Sunday. They planned to go as often as possible and became acquainted with the people in the surrounding area. Their evenings in the winter were spent reading the standard works, Church books and magazines. They subscribed to "Literary Digest" as Randolph especially enjoyed poetry.

In July of 1922 they took a trip to Ogden and visited their families taking Mabel's mother on a ride through Ogden Canyon. They went home by way of Salt Lake dropping her mother off at a friend's house. A few days later they received a call that her mother had taken sick with a gall stone attack which hadn't troubled her for many years. It became so severe that an operation was necessary and she died on July 31, 1922 in Ogden, Utah.

Their third child was born at the Stewart Ranch on October 31, 1922. Their second daughter and another precious jewel was named Helen Josephine Fife, as she was born on her Uncle Joseph's birthday. The weather had become cold but they kept fires in the fireplaces and Mrs. Jensen, a lady in her fifties, took good care of Mabel and little Helen Joe. She was another beautiful child, calm and good.

Randolph's uncle, CB Stewart, had moved to Los Angeles a few years before and each summer when they returned to the ranch everyone heard him extol the wonders of California. The Fife's got California fever and wanted to see this fabulous place. They had also decided that when their first child became school age it would be time to leave the Ranch. They finished the fall work and took an exploring vacation to California. They left all their furnishings in the house and little Randolph put all of his toys and stick horses safely in the barn until their return. They gave Uncle Barnard plenty of notice.

In November 1923 they packed up their 1921 Ford for the long trip. They had bought a new mattress that fit in the back of the car making a bed and play spot for the children, Randolph almost 4, Gwendolyn 2@ and Helen Joe 1. They put suitcases between the seats and strapped containers for gas, oil, and water on the running boards. They had been warned of the poor road conditions and long distances between gas stations. They took 50 pounds of sugar, some crab apple jelly and other eatable items. There were only dirt roads between Provo, Utah and Victorville, California, which took them six days to travel. They would usually stop and pitch a tent since there were few hotels on the way. They did stop in St. George to see the temple on Randolph's fourth birthday. He asked his daddy what that was. His daddy said, "A temple where people get married." Randolph wanted to get married right then. When his daddy asked who he would marry, Randolph's reply was, "Mama."

CALIFORNIA

After arriving in California and looking around, the Fifes decided Los Angeles was too large so they drove to Long Beach where they got a cabin on the beach. They spent Thanksgiving there as it took them two weeks to locate a furnished house. Randolph went to a plastering school to improve his skills. They did a lot of sight seeing and touring. Mabel's father came from Utah to spend the winter with them. High pressure real estate agents had many fine lots to look at and the Fifes finally decided on one in Garden Grove near some pepper fields. Randolph did the plastering for two houses in Buena Park in exchange for the lot. It was 2 blocks from the middle of town, close to schools, had sidewalks and curbs, and was about 50 feet by 150 feet. They rented a cottage nearby while Randolph and his father-in-law built their home from January to March 1924. It had 5 rooms and they soon added another room. They bought enough furniture to get by. John Erickson built a agatelegged dining room table before he went back to Utah.

When they were moving in a neighbor said, "I see you're from Utah, are your Mormons?" When Mabel said, "Yes," she added, "If you tell people around here they will laugh at you." To that Mabel said, "That's ok, we don't mind." It wasn't long until they had many friends.

The hoof and mouth disease struck southern California and jobs were hard to come by. Randolph applied in as many as fifty different places and finally got one as a carpenter for Standard Oil. They wouldn't hire him permanently because, in giving him a health test, found he had a heart murmur.

Now comfortably settled in their new home their fourth child and second son was born. Calvin Barnard Fife was born August 22, 1924. When Calvin was about 2 weeks old Mabel had given him a bath and put him and Helen Joe down for a nap. She was suffering with headaches and stepped outside to get some fresh air. In a few minutes she felt impressed to go inside the house. She heard the baby crying and saw a 2 year old neighbor boy standing on a chair by the crib. He had been biting the baby and there was blood on the coverlet and on his hands and face. She took the boy outside and told him to go home, picked up the baby and washed out his wounds with boric acid water. He had several deep bites, one going nearly through his nose. Then Randolph came home they took Calvin to the doctor who assured them they had done the right thing and the baby would be alright.

In 1925 Randolph found some work in the Imperial Valley and worked there, coming home on the weekends. They took a trip there and went sight seeing in San Diego. on the way home all the children broke out with chicken pox. Just as they were recovering a neighbor boy visited them and exposed all the children to whooping cough. When one would cough it seemed to start the rest and then the vomiting began. Mabel recalls, "It was quite a seige, with all four of them sick, an experience I wouldn't care to repeat."

Randolph had a great gift. It seems he could see a thing done and then duplicate it. He liked to work on big buildings as it was more challenging and the work lasted longer. He was hired to work on the El Tejon Hotel in Bakersfield in 1926 and was working with a man that was putting the ornamental plastering on the entrance ways. Randolph had no tools for that type of work so he asked the man if he could borrow some. Using the lent tools he would watch and duplicate the man's plastering techniques, thus he learned the art of ornamental plastering. The man he was learning from quit the job for some reason but he recommended Randolph to finish the project.

In April 1926 the Fifes took a trip to Gridley, California to visit Randolph's brother Will. The country was beautiful and attractive with fresh cherries and strawberries. While there they bought a 10 acre ranch and also bought a 3 acre lot with Will. Will was planning on building a home on the east 1½ acres. When they returned to Garden Grove both suffered bouts with the flu. In order to get the needed rest the family went with Randolph to San Bernadino and spent a month of the summer camping in the city camp ground and enjoying the open air and sunshine. When Randolph came home from work one day in July he said, "Shall I take a job in Huntington Beach or shall we go to Utah?" Mabel replied, "Lets go to Utah." They hadn't been back since they left in 1923.

They left the next week in their Hupmobile, taking cans of soup and beans to warm near the car's engine and a bag of oranges to quench their thirst. They visited family and friends in Sandy, Ogden and Salt Lake. Randolph got work doing some ornamental plastering on the U.S. Reserve Bank in Salt Lake for a month. They returned to California on the northern route

and stayed a few days in Metropolis, Nevada to visit Mabel's sister, Hazel. Helen Joe, who was around four said, "Heavenly Father must have liked sage brush 'cause he made so much of it." They drove on to Gridley and stayed there for several weeks helping will with the plastering on his new home. Then they rented a place in Oroville for a few weeks while Randolph plastered a new nurses home there. They arrived back in Garden Grove just before Thanksgiving after being gone four months.

Mabel Elizabeth Fife, their third daughter and fifth child was born in Garden Grove in April 19, 1927, another beautiful girl.

It was decided that the R.W. Fifes would make the move to Gridley the next Spring. Randolph went to Gridley and built a combination laundry room and double garage with a bath on the lot by his brother's. The laundry room doubled as a kitchen and the garage doubled as a living room and bedroom; there was an attic for the girl's bedroom. The family moved up to Gridley on February 25, 1928, Randolph's 36th birthday. Mabel bought a new White Electric sewing machine. They also bought an electric Kelvinator refrigerator. (There were only three others in Gridley at the time.) They had enough money to put in the foundation of their home.

They became acquainted with the people in Gridley and were put to work in the Church. They attended the Gridley Branch of the Sacramento/ Gridley District of the California Mission. Randolph was called to be an assistant to the Sunday School President and Mabel was called as a counselor in the Primary.

Most of the plasterers in the Butte County area had gone to seek work elsewhere so Randolph was able to find work, even though it was during the depression. They planned to build a white stucco home with eight rooms, a basement and two baths. Randolph got his contractors license. In 1930 Mabel was called as Primary President of the Gridley Branch and Randolph was a counselor to the Branch President.

It seemed they could save enough money to buy the materials needed for the next project on the house, so when Randolph was out of work, he had materials on hand for the next phase of their home. Often they wondered if this was a crazy time to build a home, but somehow wages were collected and money came in as it was needed. Randolph watched several furniture stores close out and took advantage of their sales, so they had new furniture all paid for in cash. It took three years to build, but when their home was finished, it was paid for. They always paid their debts when due. This was sometimes very difficult to do, but somehow they managed it.

They moved into the upstairs of their new home and then completed the living room and the downstairs bath. Mabel was also the Branch organist and Church History teacher. Their third son was born on November 2, 1932. They named him James David Fife. Mabel's leg was thrown out during the delivery and she suffered quite a bit from it until Randolph's brothers, chiropractors, came for a visit and adjusted it.

In August 1933 Mabel's father, John Erick Erickson, died in Salt Lake City.

In November 1934 the Fifes attended District Conference in Sacramento. The District President was Alonzo B. Hinkley and presiding over the conference was Apostle Melvin J. Ballard. Mabel was planning on being released as she was pregnant with #7. In the Sunday morning session two new stakes were organized, Sacramento and Gridley, and they sustained Mabel Fife as the Gridley Stake Primary President. The following day Randolph W. Fife was called to be Bishop of the Gridley Ward. Mabel was set apart by Apostle Ballard and in January 1935 Randolph was ordained a bishop by Apostle Steven L. Richards.

As Bishop, his first major assignment was to conduct a funeral for a Sister Francis who had died during childbirth leaving eight children. This was a great trial to him as he had shunned funerals and was so tender-hearted, but he knew he had to do it so he did.

On May 5, 1935 their fourth daughter and seventh child was born on a Sunday morning around 10 o'clock after a long labor. The baby was turned sideways and it took the doctor a long time to get her turned around. They named her Florence Ester Fife.

Randolph had some work to do in Colusa in September of 1936 and had taken Calvin, Mabel and James with him. While there he suffered a heart attack. Calvin, aged 12, was able to get the car to a service station. Randolph was taken to the hospital and Mabel was notified and came to Colusa to bring them all home.

The years were filled with children growing up and going to school, attending June conventions in Utah, and fulfilling Church assignments. Friends and neighbors were always welcome in the Fife home. It became a gathering place after practices, dances and on Sunday afternoons. Everyone loved to go there because they were met with warm hospitality, laughter, and usually a bowl of home made ice cream or popcorn.

Many of the visiting general authorities who visited Gridley stayed at the R.W. Fife home as it was more spacious than most. Randolph enjoyed showing the Utans the wonders of California. Once when Joseph Fielding Smith was staying with them Randolph "let" him pick olives right of the tree. When Elder Smith bit into it he made such an awful face Randolph said, "You'd think he'd just pucker up and die." After his recovery and an explanation of how to cure olives, Elder Smith, at Randolph's encouragement, took some olives fresh off the tree to take back to Utah with him. After Elder Smith gave them to his associates and their puckering ended he would say, "You must have gotten a bad one, here try another. 11

The Church Welfare Program was begun in 1937. The first peaches for the Gridley Ward and Gridley Stake were canned in the Fife garage. A new chapel was planned, and building fund started. Randolph purchased a new electric organ for the church and worked diligently to get all the records up to date.

In the spring of 1938 they bought a lot on the corner of Wilson and Haskell streets and began construction of a duplex. All seven children helped. By the end of the year it was completed and they had tenants. Their oldest son, Randolph had graduated from high school and was attending Chico State College.

In January 1939 as Randolph's health continued to fail he was released as Bishop. He did quite a bit of work in Quincy in the summer since it was cooler up in the foothills. Mabel spent most of her time with him. The children found summer jobs in the fruit.

In September of 1939, Randolph E. was called on a mission to the East Central States. A single house was built beside the duplex and the rent from it was used to support their missionary.

In 1941 Gwendolyn and Helen Joe were attending colleges. During Easter vacation they accompanied their parents and Florence to Utah for General Conference, leaving Calvin, Mabel and James at home. Mabel also attended June Convention. In July the family took a week's vacation to Monterey and when they returned Helen Joe became engaged to Loren Stoddard. As Randolph's health worsened they visited many doctors, interns, and specialists. They discovered a leak in his aorta and there was nothing at that time they could do about it. In November Gwendolyn and Calvin went with their parents on a trip through California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Louisiana to New Orleans where Randolph's brothers, Walter and Joseph, lived. They had several purposes in this trip; to visit their relatives, to see if the chiropractic profession could help Randolph, and to meet their son coming home from his mission. They were in New Orleans over a month and during that time President Roosevelt announced over the radio the attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor and war was declared against Japan. Loren Stoddard was stationed at Hickom Field, Pearl Harbor.

The Fifes arrived home from their trip the day before Christmas and had a very happy reunion with the entire family present. Helen Joe learned that Loren was safe. In January Randolph E. was drafted and on Sunday, January 18, 1942 after attending Church together and enjoying dinner they had a family picture taken. It was the last time they were together as a family.

Gwendolyn left in March to serve a mission in the Central States, Calvin graduated from high school and began work as a carpenter at Camp Beale, Helen Joe completed two years at Chico State College and worked in the diet kitchen of the Alta Bates Hospital, and everyone else worked in the fruit. Their father was now seeing some doctors in San Francisco at the University Hospital each month. They sold their home in Garden Grove in October 1942.

In March of 1943 Helen Joe was married to Loren Stoddard. In April Calvin was inducted into the Army at 18. That summer Mabel worked nights at Libby's peach cannery and her daughter, Mabel, worked the day shift so one of them would always be home with Randolph besides James and Florence. Randolph hadn't been able to work since April of 1942.

Gwendolyn returned home from her mission in October 1943 and was visited by John V. Bushman of Snowflake, Arizona. They had met on their missions and he was serving in the Coast Guard, stationed in Alameda. They became engaged on November 5, Mabel's 46th birthday. Randolph was 51.

"We were expecting John to come on Saturday night, November 13. He was stationed in San Francisco. We had a nice fire in the fireplace and were all home except Calvin and

Randolph, who were in the service. We had spent a beautiful evening awaiting John's arrival. He phoned about 8 o'clock from Roseville saying he couldn't get a bus out until 10. So Daddy thought it best for all to go to bed so when John came he and Gwendolyn could enjoy a short time together. It was around nine so all went to bed. About 10:30 and doorbell rang and Daddy got up and answered it and there stood John in his sailor uniform. He had caught a ride with a truck driver going right to Gridley, so had arrived early. Daddy called Gwendolyn, who hurriedly got dressed and came downstairs. Daddy came back to bed.

"Somewhere around 2 a.m. he got up and went to the bathroom. I got up to see if he was alright. He said, 'Dear, I won't be with you long.' I began to help him to our bedroom. When we got to the door he slumped down. I ran to the hallway and called out for Gwen and John. How thankful I was that John was there. He lifted Daddy onto the bed and began artificial respiration and Gwen ran to call the doctor. The doctor didn't want to come out to the house and I heard Gwendolyn say, 'You've got to come. My father is dying.' The doctor arrived in a few minutes and did what he could, but Randolph had passed on. They came and took him to the mortuary.

"I felt like the whole world had gone out, but I was soon to learn that there were worse things than death. At 7 Sunday morning it was broadcast over the radio that Apostle Lyman of the Mormon Church had just been excommunicated. His wife, Amy R. Lyman, was the general Relief Society President. They had been in our home several times. I couldn't feel that my loss was as hard as her's. My husband went with a clean heart and faith in God. He had been true to the covenants he had made with God in the temple almost 25 years before. My husband had an even temperment, loved children and was always cheerful. I can't really say that I ever saw him angry. He was very thoughtful and kind and was a good nurse. He did like to tease. Sometimes he would really provoke me and then take my face between his hands and say, 'Let me see what you look like when you're mad,' and then he would soon have me laughing. I could never be angry with him. We loved one another dearly. He was a most kind and considerate husband. He made friends somewhat slowly, but they always remained his friends. He liked things clean and orderly and was a very hard worker. He had good money sense and used his money wisely. He made every move and moment count." (Mabel E. Fife)

Calvin was supposed to be on his way from South Carolina to England, but with the help of the Red Cross he was located, notified of his father's death, and given two weeks leave. The funeral was put off until Friday to allow him time to arrive. When he hadn't come by then, they went ahead with the funeral. Randolph's brothers, Will, Isaac, Leland and Walter, and his sister Iretta had arrived. Also Mabel's sister Ester and brother Hilmar were there. The funeral was held in the ward building. Gene Stoddard sang "Smiling Through." The next morning Calvin arrived and a private funeral was held at the Block Funeral Home. Randolph Wilson Fife was buried November 20, 1943 in the Gridley-Biggs Cemetery.

Letter received from Randolph after hearing of his father's death.

"Italy"
Dec. 14, 1943

Dearest Mother,

Just received word of father's death and it surely came as a shock, because the letters I've been receiving for the past few months have told how well he had been feeling. Then to be ten thousand miles away leaves one with a feeling of helplessness. Now that father has progressed beyond us, we can only sing praises for the good he has done.

Father has always been more than a hero to me--he had been my father in the fullest sense of the word. We have worked, played, and worshipped together. His counsel and teaching was always done in such a humble and sincere manner that I will never forget. My greatest lesson on living a full and useful life is the way father lived. I fully believe he lived more in his fifty-one years, than most people live in seventy. His achievements cannot be counted for many years, but they will be many. I mourn father's passing and no one can take his place. The Savior said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) Father led an abundant mortal life and is now placed where he can live even more abundantly.

I have received a great deal of comfort out of reading the scriptures. We know that father has gone to a far happier world; that he will be free from all sickness and sorrow. Think of the glorious reunion he shall have with his own dear mother and father--a mother whom he really loved and a father whom he hardly knew. No doubt as he went into the state of paradise, the Lord said unto him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matthew 25:21)

Many say the gospel cannot be lived, but I know that it can, because Father lived it at all times. He was a good "solid Mormon;" the kind that can be called a pillar of the Church. I shall try to follow his example.

I am truly thankful for the close relationship I have had the privilege to have with my father and wish that the rest of the family could have the same. The day will come when we can be together again, that will be a glorious day--it seems a long way off.

Mother, I know that your knowledge of the scriptures and testimony of the gospel will muffle your sorrow. I realize that you, more than anyone else, will miss Father. I pray that the Lord will comfort and protect you at all times. Never, never hesitate to call on me for anything.

I have never received the first V-mail you wrote nor any letters written after the funeral, so am waiting to hear all about it and will write again very soon. I wish it didn't take so long to receive mail. I'm always a month behind.

It was wonderful that Gwen was home so long as she was. I hope that Calvin was able to be there. I suppose the Uncles came. Please tell me all. My friends here have been most sympathetic.

I am mailing two letters today. The other tells of the steps I have taken to make you more financially secure.

I feel unable to write an adequate tribute to father, but will try to become a living tribute to such an exemplary man. He has truly made the world better for having been here.

In closing I should like to quote the words of the Apostle Paul, which can surely be said of Father. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

May the Lord comfort you and all the family and bless you all with health and strength.

All My Love,
Randolph

After 1943

Calvin stayed until after Thanksgiving and was then shipped to England where he stayed for the rest of the War. In December Gwendolyn and John v. Bushman were married and a month later John was shipped to the South Pacific. Gwendolyn worked in Oakland for the Navy and Helen Joe continued her college classes at Chico State. Mabel E. was in high school and James and Florence in grammar school. In June Helen Joe graduated from college. She received a telegram telling her Loren's plane had been shot down near Siapan and that he was missing in action. She kept busy by teaching nursery school in Berkeley in the summer then teaching Home Economics at Chico High School.

Gwen came home the summer of 1943 to await the arrival of her first baby. She kept house while both Mabels worked in Libby's cannery. James and Florence took care of the cow and yard. Mabel took her three youngest on a sight seeing trip to Sacramento.

The first grandchild was born on October 1, 1944, Daphne Bus made the best of the holidays with Randy in Sicily, Calvin in and, John in the South Pacific, and still no news of Loren.

They were kept busy with school, church and community activities. James enjoyed inviting the GI's home for Sunday dinner, and Mabel E. and Florence had many friends and were involved in lots of activities.

When the School year of 1945 ended Helen Joe took James with her on a trip to Now Orleans. During the two months that they were gone, 10 year old Florence had to take over his chores. With her mother's "help" they were Able to get some milk out of the cow even though they were both frightened Of her.

John came home on furlough in July of 1945 and saw his daughter for the first time. In August Helen Joe got word that Loren had been found in Japan and was alive. Many had given up hope during the fifteen months he had been,missing, but not Helen Joe; she had full confidence that he would return. They were reunited in September. In October the family got a call that Randy had just arrived from Italy by plane and was at Camp Beale no= Marysville. He was home for a few days then drove to Los Angeles to see Norma Berry from St. Johns, Arizona, whom he had met while in Washington D.C. They became engaged while he was with her and she came up later in the month-to meet the family. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple on November 26th.

Calvin returned in March 1946 after being gone over two years. He repaired the car andattended to so many things that were in need of attention. Mabel E. was attending BYU. After attending Primary June Conference, her fourteenth year as Gridley Stake Primary President, she decided to take James, in 8th grade, and Florence, in 6th grade, and live in Provo for the school year. They found an apartment to rent and Mabel took several classes a day. In October Calvin was called to serve in the Western Canada mission. Three Grandchildren were born in 1946.

When school ended they all returned to Gridley. Florence carried a bowl of goldfish in her lap the entire way. only Mabel E. returned in the fall of 47 for her junior year. When she came home for Christmas vacation she told of a new boyfriend, Richard McDowell, from Spokane, Washington. In January they were engaged and after planning a wedding by long distance Mabel E. and Richard were married in the Salt Lake Temple April 1, 1948.

Upon completing his mission in November of 1948 Calvin returned to Moosejaw to see a girl he was interested in, Valeta McCaslin. While there they became engaged and Calvin and his mother drove through the snow in December for their marriage.

In the summer of 1949 Mabel spent 5 days in the Woodland Hospital for a hemorrhoid operation. She recuperated for two weeks at the Stoddards, missing Florence's Bth Grade graduation. In July Mabel was elected PTA President of the 13th District of California which took in 4 counties. That job kept her very busy with meetings every two months with all the district presidents alternating between Los Angeles and San Francisco. When the meeting was in the Bay Area Mabel would stay with her brother-in-law Leland and his wife, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was suffering with cancer at this time. When the meeting was held in Los Angeles she was able to visit with her brother Leon and his wife, Clarita. In October Elizabeth Fife died. Randy and Norma took Mabel with Helen Joe and Dorothy Fife to Burlingame to her funeral. Four grandchildren were born in 1949 bringing and total to 10 with several more expected.

Mabel continued to be busy with the PTA work and preparing for the conventions. After a convention in LA in July of 1950 she took a trip with her brother Leon and his wife to Utah. The convention in September was in San Francisco and she met Leland Fife for dinner at Fisherman's Wharf while there. During the first two weeks of December Mabel had a case of the mumps but she was feeling better by Christmas and had Leland and Don and Betty Fife and family over for Christmas Eve.

In February of 1951 Mabel sold her home to Don and Betty Fife. She, with James, 18, and Florence 16, moved to the single house on Magnolia Street. Leland Fife and Mabel became engaged in February and, in April when the new Gridley chapel on Spruce Street was dedicated, Loren and Joe had an announcement party for some of their friends. Mabel completed her term of office in the PTA in April and she and Leland were married in the Idaho Falls Temple on May 31, 1951. Mabel was 54½ and had been a widow for 7½ years and Leland was 65 and nearly 2 years had passed since Elizabeth had died. They were going to honeymoon in Yellowstone Park, but went to Boise instead because the park was closed on account of a blizzard. They also went to Portland and Eugene, Oregon and down Highway 101 to his home in Burlingame.

Within a month Mabel was called as a counselor in the Relief Society, which position she held for 5 years. They had many friends in the Burlingame area and belonged to a Fushia Club. Leland had over 20 fushias hanging in the backyard and the driveway was lined with them. He also had a lovely rose garden. They attended dinners and meetings for Southern Pacific Railroad employees and in 1952 went to a Railroad Convention in Chicago. They took this opportunity to see the sights going to Niagara Falls, Washington D.C., and New York City.

Florence attended her junior year of high school in Burlingame then finished and graduated from Gridley, living with the McDowells. She then joined James at BYU. Leland and Mabel had many lovely trips together, New Orleans, Catalina Island, Bakersfield, Portland, Los Angeles, to name a few. At age 67 Leland retired as the master mechanic of the Coastal Division for Southern Pacific. This was very difficult for him but his yard work kept him very busy. James was called on a mission to France in 1954 from the Burlingame ward.

In 1955 Mabel and Florence took a trip to Europe. Leland had no desire to go there. Mabel and Florence were gone for two months visiting James in Belgium, and the Stoddard family in Germany. They took in France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, England, and Wales. They were able to attend the dedication of the Swiss Temple. Mabel dropped Florence off in Utah on her way home and when Leland met her at the airport he had a new car. They served 2 years as stake missionaries.

When James returned from his mission he attended BYU and on May 10, 1957 he graduated in Speech and Drama, Florence graduated in Elementary Education and to complete the day Florence married Otto L. Draper in the Salt Lake Temple. James joined the Army Reserve and while serving 6 months active duty at Fort Ord he met Irene Reim. They became engaged and were married April 11, 1958 in the Los Angeles Temple. Mabel now had all of her children married and had nearly 30 grandchildren with several more expected.

Mabel decided to build another house on her lot facing Haskell Street. Randy had furnished the plans and some of the materials and her sons and sons-in-law were doing most of the construction work. Leland's health hadn't been very good since his retirement and the yard in Burlingame was getting to be too much for him. Mabel asked if he would like to live in this new house in Gridley. He was most happy about it, so put their home up for sale. It sold in January 1960 and they moved to Gridley in February. Leland had 10 acres of walnuts with a home and a barn on it in Gridley and while he was working on the barn he fell from a 15 foot ladder, breaking his pelvis bone and an arm, and was in the South Pacific hospital in San Francisco from March 14th to the end of May. He enjoyed Gridley very much but his health wasn't good. He passed away on the 11th of August 1960 at the age of 73. They had been married for 9 years. "He was a very good man, father, and husband, and has joined his queen, as he used to call Elizabeth. He was a very good husband to me." (Mabel E. Fife)

A great tragedy struck when Randy's wife Norma was killed in an auto accident on May 5, 1960. After Leland's passing Mabel spent most of the following year attending to the 5 children. In December 1961 Randolph married Barbara Pickering Seymour adding her three find sons, John, Lew, and Doug, to Mabel's grandchildren.

Mabel continued to serve in the church and serve her family. In December 1962 she had just returned from a trip to Utah and went to a Bazaar in the Gridley II Ward. She planned on Meeting the McDowell's there. A table with several of her friends had 2 empty chairs and Jesse Jensen invited her to sit with them. In a few minutes a gentleman came over and asked her if the other chair was taken and would she mind if he sat there. Jesse Jensen said, "Mabel, don't you know Dave?" And she replied, "No, I haven't had the pleasure." So Jesse introduced them. David L. Roberts was Jesse's daughter, Beth's father-in-law. (Ray Robert's dad.)

Dave worked for a tractor company on Highway 99 and used to stop by to see Mabel on his way home from work. They were good company for each other. Dave had been a widower for 2 years. Mabel and Dave "went" together for 8 years, although Dave said that you had to cut that time in half, as Mabel was gone half the time. That was about correct, too. Mabel visited her families wherever they were or wherever she was needed. She went to Syracuse, NY, Massachusetts, Florida, New Orleans, Oklahoma, Fullerton, Phoenix. Mabel and Harriett Zeitshel spent two months visiting Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

She always kept in correspondence with Dave and he phoned her when she was within calling distance. Mabel told him when they first met that she would never marry outside the Church. Dave was a Presbyterian. They talked much about religion and Dave would attend with Mabel. He also began attending Church when Mabel was out of town.

In January of 1971 Dave was baptised and they decided to get married. On March 31, 1971 Mabel and Dave Roberts were married in the Relief Society room of the Gridley Chapel by Stake President Steven H. Jensen. A reception was held in the Cultural Hall and the newly weds went to Phoenix for a honeymoon.

In may 1971 they took a trip to Disneyland and visited with Randy and Barbara. On June 4 they went to a Little League baseball game and watched the boys play until a fellowshipping meeting began. This was a meeting for new converts to the Church. They arrived home around 9 p.m., and before going to bed Dave said, "Iknew we could be happy, but not this happy." Dave passed away that night in his sleep. "He was very good to me and good for me. I think my life would have been very lonely without him." (Mabel Fife Roberts)

On October 30, 1971 when Irene and James Fife had their seventh child, Nathan, Mabel received her last grandchild, totaling 48, 23 granddaughters and 25 grandsons. Each are healthy, strong, and active, evidence of Mabel's answered prayers.

Whenever Mabel saw something that needed to be done, she was willing to do it. In 1972 she began a "home evening" group for the widows in the Gridley wards. Often as many as 18, between the ages of 78 and 89 years old, would meet in Mabel's home each Monday. They would study the Home Evening lessons and then they began an intenst study of the scriptures. They took three years to study the Old Testament, 2 years to study the Book of Mormon, and then they studied the New Testament. When one or two of the women in the club had a birthday they would have a pot luck luncheon and celebrate.

When Roger and Diana (Randy) Rice had their first daughter, Stephanie, on , 1969, Mabel had her first great-grandchild. As of July,1982 she had 88 great-grandchildren, with more expected.

Mabel's oldest daughter, Gwendolyn contracted stomach and liver cancer in 1976 and died on February 2, 1977. In August of that same year Mabel moved from her home on Haskell Street to a home behind McDowell's on Laurel Street in Gridley. Settled in her new home she received a surprise birthday party for her 80th birthday, on November 5, 1977. She served as Special Interest Rep. in Gridley 1st and 3rd wards.

Mabel's health has been quite good. She did fall with one leg in a sewer sump hole throwing her back, hip and knee out. In 1978 she was diagnosed as being legally blind in her left eye. The following year she had cataracts removed from both eyes, had some trouble with scar tissue forming, but now has 20/30 vision and can even read without glasses. She has worn a hearing aid since 1968.

Mabel moved again in May of 1981 to an apartment in the McDowell's home. She was pulling some withered calla lillies in may 1982 and fell back when it suddenly gave way, breaking two bones in her left wrist. Undaunted she continued with her active life, by visiting Loren and Helen Joe Stoddard for three weeks in Pittsburly, Pennsylvania where they were serving as mission president.

"I've tried to live my religion and let my light shine. our goal for our children was to teach them obedience, love, and faith in our Heavenly Father, and to learn how to earn a living or at least how to work, to pay tithes and do missionary work.

"We taught our children to pray and thank Father in Heaven daily and to bless the food. I read the scriptures to them at bedtime. often when ironing out in our laundry, my children decided that was a time for stories and neighbor children gathered and sat on the floor. I told them the stories of the Old and New Testaments. I guess that's why I became a leader in Primary and Sunday School classes. One cannot teach what one does not believe. I've always read the scriptures and tried to prepare my life for good. I know that God and Christ live and that this is the restored Church. Every part of me responds to these teachings. I still have so much to learn, but I believe in eternal progression, so there's no end to learning. I'm so grateful for all my families, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Excerpts from a letter dated May 1958.

My Dear Family,

I have long wanted to express my love and appreciation for each of you, my children. Now as Mother's Day approaches, perhaps it is appropriate, at least I hope so.

Let me begin by saying I love each of you very dearly, and that each of you were wanted and welcomed in our home...

I have tried to treat you all alike, in that I have treated you all differently, realizing that you were all separate individuals and your needs were different. I hope each of you have realized this. I have tried to meet your needs as far as it was humanly possible for me to understand your needs. However, also being human and having many failings, I realize that I must have failed each of you many times, even though not intentionally, but perhaps through lack of understanding your problems.

But the desire of our hearts, your father's and mine, was to plant in each of your hearts a love of God, help you gain a testimony of the truth of the gospel, and a knowledge that God lives and if we put our trust in God and keep his carnmandments we shall have that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding". (Philippians 4:7) This was our first concern. I'm sure God has been most gracious to us, as each of you have been obedient children and have fulfilled our hopes that you would prepare yourselves to go on missions and work in the Church, be married in the House of the Lord for time and all eternity, and rear your families with that same faith in God.

I hope each of you realize the importance of family prayers in your homes and are holding it. If not, I pray that each of your will do so. I know how much it has meant in my life. How well I remember the sweet influence that it had in my family home. We had family prayers in our home, but not as regularly as we should have done, as your father had to leave so early. However, we always prayed together. And I'm sure if you will each strive to do this you will find the time, at least once a day, to kneel and pray together, giving each child an opportunity of praying...

So I say, please keep the commandments of God and teach these wonderful grandchildren the love of the gospel. Don't, in your pursuit of material things, neglect the spiritual side of life. It is far more lasting and precious.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Also, Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." So please, don't neglect these precious teachings.

I am reminded of a poem I have in my collection. Although it is addressed to "My Son" it is just as applicable to daughters and grandchildren. It goes like this:

To My Son

Do you know that your soul is of my soul such a part,
That you seem to be fibre and core of my heart?
None other can pain me as you, dear, can do.
None other can please me or praise me as you.

Remember the world will be quick with its blame,
If shadow or stain ever darken your name.
'Like mother, like son' is a saying so true.
The world will judge largely of mother by you.

Be your's then the task, if task it should be,
To force the proud world to do homage to me,
Be sure it will say, when its verdict you've won,
"She reaped as she sowed, Lo! THIS IS HER SON."

... May our Heavenly Father bless each of you with wisdom and understanding, that you may enjoy a little of "Heaven on Earth" in your homes with your families. Please, don't think I'm preaching to you, but just trying, in my poor way, to let you know what I feel in my heart.

Your loving mother,

Mabel E. Fife



Front Row: **Randolph W., James, Florence, Mabel**
Back Row: **Mabel, Randolph E., Gwendolyn, Calvin, Helen Joe**