

Readings presented at the Will and Irene Redd Reunion

July 30-31, 2004, at Torrie's in Grassy Lake, Alberta

These readings were prepared, using real events and thoughts and conversations remembered; and writings in Mom's journals. The assignment was to do a dramatic five-minute presentation, based on the lives of Will and Irene. Only where I have used quotation marks are the words Will's or Irene's. (Barbara Redd MacPhee).

June 1970 - Today, Barbara unearthed my going away dress. It was such a long time ago, 93 years ago that I wore it. Sacred ceremonies at the Logan Temple, which sealed Will and I for time and eternity. It was as if I were in a marvelous light, all through the session and the sealing. (Beverly has the dress, as it became Gertrude's at Mom's passing.)

And here are some old journals of mine.

July 1910 Raymond — Well, my father has made a mistake this time. When I asked him if I could go to the Lethbridge Fair with Will Redd, father said that if I were going with Will Redd, I had his father's permission.

I did go, and we had a grand time. Then, on the way home, Will and I were designated drivers, as the other two couples were engaged and wanting to snuggle. We sat high on the driver's seat, Will handling the high spirited horses expertly.

It was late, and the road long. The horses jogging along and harnesses jingling lulled me to sleep.

But I woke with a start when Will planted a firm kiss on my cheek. Whispering that he had been thinking of me ever since that night before he left for his mission, when I told him I would be praying for him.

These returned missionaries think every girl should fall for them. Our family always prayed for the missionaries. That was all I meant. I certainly will not be asking father's permission to go out with Will Redd again. The fresh thi

December 1910 Rexburg - Will just left for Raymond, Canada, to spend Christmas with his family. He stopped over on the way home. We had such a grand time. Visited all of the family, sing-songs around the piano, teaching him how to roller skate. He is such a cut-up, all of the family fell in love with him.

January 3, 1911 Rexburg — Early in the fall we became engaged, then we, the Smellie family, moved back down to Rexburg. On his way down to University of Utah, after Christmas, Will stopped in. He had decided to study medicine. We had a lovely time. I can't believe it, but the ring is still sparkling on my finger. We plan to be married in the fall, and then go East where he will take medicine. Father says that I may go to school, too. Two life-long dreams come true. I always wanted to go to university, and to marry a returned missionary.

January 23, 1911 Rexburg —

Letter from Will. Very bad news. His father died, suddenly from quick pneumonia. This changes everything. Will must stay to settle his father's business, and to help his mother. He wants to be married in June, after the crops are planted, as he will need to be in Raymond for the spring and harvest. (Each child was given a copy of this letter. Barb)

July 16, 1911 Victoria, British Columbia —

We are here, spending our honeymoon. Had to delay our wedding for a month as I contracted typhoid fever. Several of my dear friends, boys and girls died from the fever. Father gave me a priesthood blessing, and for some reason, Heavenly Father let me live.

We are so divinely happy. Soul-mates forever. Will bought me a leather bound copy of Elizabeth Browning's poems, and we have read, QUO VADIS together.

Had some fun along the way. Stopped to have lunch at a little restaurant. I was wearing my Merry Widow Hat, with the big brim. When they brought our order, I bent over to eat my food. I guess my hat concealed Will's plate, and he waited patiently for his food to arrive. I was hungry and ate quickly. Raised my head, and the hat, which revealed Will's food. It was delivered, but my hat hid it. I waited, then, while he ate.

The boat ride from Seattle to Victoria was like paradise, and also the train ride over the mountains to Calgary. But the bed bugs in the hotel at Calgary were not much fun at all. The hotel was made of new wood, and the bugs came out of the wood. Or so we were told. (In 1911, Calgary was a bit of a frontier cow-town of wooden building, many made from green lumber, hence the bedbugs.)

April 1916 - It is late. Will has not come back yet, from helping that young father from England. They come here not knowing how to harness their horses. Will is so willing to help them, but sometimes I wonder if it will always be my lot to be home to nurse babies crying with ear ache, while Will is gone to help others. Tonight he is teaching a young Englishman how to harness up his team of horses.

October 1923 - (Date is approximate.) We have successfully completed our fruit project of the Raymond branch of the United Farm Women of Alberta. We would take orders for 2300 dollars worth of fruit and then had it shipped into Raymond. Everyone was so thankful to receive it. Back home in Utah and Idaho, we had been used to our own lovely home-grown fruit. But in The Raymond Mercantile would not bring fruit in. Thought it would not sell before it spoiled.

It was the same with the green vegetable project. But we got so many names on a petition that Brother Allen was convinced to bring in green vegetables. He had been determined that people would not buy them, either. That cabbage, celery and lettuce tasted so good. And it sold like hot cakes.

July 1933 - (On a trip to see her parents in Idaho.)

“I sat down and shed tears, bitter tears, almost as I would for a lost one, in my father's raspberry patch, when I thought of the poor little fruit-famished children of Alberta, and prayed that some means of distribution could be found to distribute the waste.

I wished I could be transformed into some kind of carrier with wings to take fruit to them. I would fly forward and back until you were all supplied, and I was exhausted.

I wished so hard that it almost seemed as if I were really doing it, but I came out of my reverie and was still sitting there and the raspberries were still dropping, watering the ground with their brilliant juice, and my bitter helplessness to satisfy your thirst was still making me almost angry.””

No date, but, likely, during the terrible drought years of 1930’s.

Rain and the need for it filled Mom’s life as they planted and prayed and waited for the crops to mature, and for the harvest. She wrote poetry from time to time, and here are her thoughts about rain:

RAIN

The prairies have always been thirsty.

Rain, you are a heavenly wall around me

You are school for our loved ones,

You are a glorious thing,

You are almost love and life itself,

You caress the toil worn hands,

You make maiden’s hair shine,

Rain you are the soul of our living,

You are God’s steward for the children of the prairies,

Come, console our hearts,

Light our hearths again.

Merne Laycock Livingstone remembers Mom saying, ““When the wind blows, don’t bother to clean house, get busy on some sewing, or things that will stay done.””

In those days the windows were so poorly fitted, that fine soil would drift onto the window-sills and nearby furniture when strong winds blew. Then, sometimes, we had to open our windows on hot windy days as we attempted to cool the house. Consequently, as Mom said, some cleaning was useless.

Mom used to tell us that she did the jobs that did not show. We never could figure out what those jobs were, as we did the dishes daily, and washed the floors and dusted on Saturdays, and helped with the washing and ironing, if it was not done when we came from school. Children are sometimes very thoughtless, unobservant, and unappreciative.

Mom had very high standards in her house keeping. No clutter on the cupboards, floors washed,

waxed and shined each Saturday. Furniture and mirrors polished, linen tablecloths and napkins ironed to a sheen. Dad's white shirts starched and ironed with special care. Decorative vases and candlesticks cleaned and dusted, with crisp white doilies in place. Rugs out onto the porch for sweeping, or vacuumed when we had a vacuum.

When it was my turn to clean the living room areas, the job included picking flowers from the garden and placing flower arrangements on the dining room and library tables, on the little table in Mom's bedroom, and on the center table in the front hall.

Sunday morning the house was spic and span, ready for any company which might be invited for Sunday Dinner.

November 1944 Raymond — (Will died, November 9, 1944.)

““The darkness enfolds me, I struggle to remember that my love has gone on before me. I have no strength. My desire is to see Will again, to be with him. To follow him.””

I wrote this poem, a shadow of the deep love Will and I have for each other. I have always felt that we choose our eternal companions before we come to this life. For me there was just one love, and now he is gone. I struggle against this enfolding darkness.

““There is a law existing in the universe

Which God consecrated and called love

Though other values lose their worth

Love conquers, giving life new birth.

Louis Brandley's Story

After Will died, Irene, who had very poor health, was bed fast, and seemed to have no desire to carry on with life. She asked me for a blessing. As we arrived to give the blessing, Dr. Madill, our town doctor and good friend of Will and Irene, said, ““She's had a heart seizure-another will take her.””

I asked her if she wanted to live, and she replied, ““I don't now. Will has been in my arms all night. He wants me to go with him. But I have Phillip.....””

Mom did stay. Our uncle, Dr. Ulrich Bryner, diagnosed pernicious anemia; and later, our new, young Dr. Harris Walker, examined Mom, and diagnosed very low thyroid.

As these conditions were corrected, her strength increased and her health improved.

She not only stayed to finish rearing Phillip, who was fourteen when dad died. But about ten years later, she came to live with her daughter, Barbara, following John's death, and helped her to rear her five daughters.

The Lord moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform. Our dear mother lived, and continued to contribute her wisdom, and her example of faith to her family until just before her 92nd birthday. She died Wednesday, October 12, 1943 at Cardston.