

## MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER - PHOEBE STONE RYTTING

by Alta Johnson (Rytting)

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Sent away from home for a few hours on December 9, 1928 to return to a beautiful new baby sister, Donna Mae. Lucy (Sandra), Ralph and myself were so excited. We were all born at home with the exception of our little brother, Douglas. which was born in the hospital.

Sitting on the lawn, at our home in Shelley, where Mother had us watch the storms come in and we would find all kinds of animals in the clouds. She always made storms fun instead of scaring us.

Being tied with a rope as horses, to the lawn mower. to help cut the grass.

As Mother would clean up the yard and house we would come behind her and make houses out of leaves on the grass, in a small covered porch and downstairs in the basement. They sure were neat and a lot of fun. Mother didn't always think so.

Finding a beautiful doll one Christmas morning sitting under the tree. Loved her all my young life.

Mother had us up each morning taking turns practicing the piano - no excuses.

Calling us back if we slammed the door, on our way to school through the pasture after lunch and dishes were done, and have us re-shut it quietly.

With no heat in the house on cold winter nights, except for a heatrola, she would warm bricks, wrap them in towels and put them in our beds to keep our feet warm. Some times she made beds for us on the floor in front of the fireplace.

When we would come home from picking potatoes, covered with mud and snow, she would have the Monkey Stove going to heat the water so we could have a hot bath, then a dish of hot soup. In the mornings we always had to wash in cold water before going to school.

She played the piano for Daddy to sing. They participated in a lot of choirs and funerals. She also played for Mrs. Pinkerton so we could have dance lessons.

We picked welfare peas early in the morning then to the cannery to can them. She always had a beautiful garden and would never stop canning until every bottle was full with fruits, vegetables, pickles, jams, jellies, relish, pie mixes, juices, ketchup, etc. Everything looked beautiful on the shelves. I have always appreciated her for teaching us how to can, cook. wash and clean.

Mother also had the most beautiful flower gardens. Over the years she would change the colors of flowers and shrubs from early spring through summer and into late fall.

People always stopped to admire the beauty. I always said she could make a tinker toy grow and

bloom.

We were called to come quickly with our buckets when the cherries started to ripen and pick them before the birds ate them.

In the fall we were out in our coats and gloves gathering a harvest of vegetables before the frost. Nothing was wasted.

We rode the train a lot visiting Daddy who was working on the railroad in different towns. Mother had us cut the lawn, weed the garden, do the washing and pack up our bed rolls. Where ever Daddy was we would stay with him sleeping in the baggage room. The trains would come roaring through sounding like they would take the building apart but after a few nights we would sleep through the noise. We would go on walks, picnics and swim. When we were dirty and needed clean cloths and a bath we would go home where the process started over again all summer. What fun!

Mother gathered robins out of the hedge after an early spring snow, put them in shoe boxes. warm them up, feed them then turn them loose. One day one got away from her and lit on one of her beautiful goblets, in the china cupboard. it was wonderful watching mother coax the robin out without even a flutter of wings. She loved all living things.

I remember Mother crying one Christmas morning when we found Boogy, our black and white angora cat, dead. She had been our pet for years.

Mother loved beautiful things. We didn't have much money but Mother never went to town or any place when she wasn't dressed up. She said she might only have a dime in her pocket but no one else would ever know.

At night she would take down her long auburn hair, that was so long she could sit on it, brush it, braid it to one side and tie it with a ribbon that matched her night gown. I loved watching her.

During General Conference time in Salt Lake she would wake us up at midnight; we would catch the train and arrive in time to walk to Temple Square, sit on the north balcony next to the Tabernacle Choir and listen to conference. We ate the lunch she had packed for us and then rode a little gauge railroad to Salt Aire, spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying the lake and all the sites, catch the train and arrive back home happy and tired.

She was such a good Mother. I remember so many times when she held Ralph when he was so ill. I'd put my pillow over my head at night to shut out the sounds of him screaming and crying. She also carried Sandra many times when she had Rheumatic Fever.

She was a good cook. Every meal had to be prepared with color. That way she said we would always have a balanced diet. Mother would never put a jar or bottle of anything on the table. Every thing was placed in a bowl or pitcher.

We had an old peddle sewing machine that Grandpa Stone traded an old cow for and gave to

Mother and Daddy for their wedding. She taught me how to sew and one day she even stitched my finger that got in her way.

We had hardwood floors. Mother would mop them, paste wax them, then let us run and slide in our stocking feet to polish them. That was the only time she let us run in the house.

Mother would correct your bad behavior with just a look or a stern quiet voice. She could always tell when we had jumped on the beds no matter how well we replaced the covers. Seemed we left lint on the floor.

When Daddy had a steady job at the station in Shelly and later in Idaho Falls, she would pack a lunch and take it to Daddy. I don't think she ever missed. Daddy worked, during that time, for 10 years seven days a week with no vacation or time off.

She was active in the Church and can still remember her as the President of the Primary. She took part in plays that were put on the old Shelley Tabernacle. In one play she was married to an inactive husband. They were at a party and she wanted to leave. As she got up she said "I'm going to my room, are you coming Jack". You could always repeat those lines to Mother and she would smile. In the play she goes to heaven and I think Jack repents and joins her. Mother remembered poetry and could recite a lot of them.

We used to go to dances at the old tabernacle with Mother and Daddy and they would take turns dancing with us. They always included us which make us feel loved.

Our home was on a corner lot and in the summer time all the neighborhood kids would come and play out in the pasture and around the house, Run My Sheep Run, Red Rover Red Rover, Kick the Can and Hide and Seek. Mother would cook up great batches of donuts for all of us. Some evenings we had candy pulls.

When they had parties at home with their friends, which were many, I would go to sleep hearing their quiet talk and laughter. It made me feel safe. We were also allowed a housefull of friends. Donna and her singing group practiced and prepared decorations for activities and dances. Ralph had an orchestra that spent a lot of time at home. Mother would clear off the piano for Ardene Watts to practice after his mother had heard all she could stand. Our home was always filled with music.

We never had a car all the time I was growing up. With Daddy working on the railroad we were allowed a pass on the train. I remember Mother and Daddy renting a car, just one time, and taking us on a trip to Island Park. What a treat!

Heard Mother crying as she called the doctor the night she had a miscarriage when Doug was just a little boy. Remember going to the hospital with her. They wanted another child so badly.

Mentioning Doug made me remember when Mother and I would take him for a stroll people would stop and say what a beautiful grandchild. She was always so proud when she said that he was her SON.

Always had a wonderful and beautiful Christmas. During the night we would call to Daddy and ask him if Santa had come yet. He would answer "NO" go to sleep. Finally we would get up and start a fire so the house would be warm. Mother would line us up with the youngest first down to the eldest. Doug, Donna, Ralph, Alta and finally Sandra. What a special childhood.

I could go on and on but I will save more thoughts for another time.  
Merry Christmas and Love to All,

Alta