

*Five True Stories
of Faith and Courage*

*Every
Life
With
A
Purpose*

By
Cecile James Scribner

Every Life With a Purpose

Cecile James Scribner



Cecile James Scribner, born in Rock Springs, Wyoming, was educated in the field of Human Development and Family Relations at Brigham Young University. She served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia. Cecile and her husband, Douglas M. Scribner, are the parents of eight children. Despite her busy life as a mother and homemaker, Cecile is an accomplished dance choreographer and producer of stage plays and dance festivals. She and her family spent three years living in Edinburgh, Scotland where she held various positions of Church leadership. Though *Every Life With a Purpose* is her first published book, the stories it contains have already had wide distribution and have been the source of considerable interest and inspiration for people of all faiths.



“Hello, Cecile. It’s Ilene.’ ‘Oh,’ I paused, ‘Rochelle’s gone, isn’t she?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Oh, how can we live without Rochelle, any of us?’ ”

So begins the story of Rochelle, a talented and beautiful seventeen-year-old girl who suddenly suffered a blood chemistry breakdown.

“Watch the door carefully Richard; Cheril could grab the handle’ ... He was holding the baby and doing all he could when in a flash it happened. The car door was opened and Cheril was gone.’ ”

Lucie is the story of a young mother struggling with little children but approaching her role with creativity and faith.

“Bill and I have realized that each child has a potential — has heights he is meant to reach. Benjamin’s potential is different from our other children ...’ ”

This is the inspirational story of Benjamin, a Down’s Syndrome child and his amazing parents.

“In his panic, Captain Howard had forgotten his own son who was asleep in his hammock. He ran to him and cried, ‘John, wake up, the ship is going down! Be brave.’ ”

In *Roots for Strength* an ancestor, John Howard, becomes orphaned at age ten.



These stories and Cecile’s own, *Wings for Joy*, really happened.
They give hope to every person that life has a purpose.

ISBN: 0-9620033-0-1

Library of Congress Number: 87-051602

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First Printing May 1988 By
TOOELE TRANSCRIPT-BULLETIN PUBLISHING CO.
TOOELE, UTAH

Second Printing May 2019 by
J Mart Printing
Spanish Fork, Utah

*“Every Life
With A Purpose”*

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“*Every Life With A Purpose*”

INTRODUCTION:

It was the beginning of a new year, January 1, 1981. Doug and I and our seven children had been traveling across the Great Salt Flats of Utah headed toward our home in Northern California. Light wisps of snow swirled about the van, lulling the children to sleep. There was time for me to think and remember. In the previous eight months we had made the round trip between California and Utah five times. The first was in April when the *extended family* gathered together to celebrate Mama’s Eightieth Birthday. Dad turned eighty just twelve days later so the two events were combined into one party— a most joyous occasion! However, this particular trip was much harder, for we were returning from Mama’s funeral. Lucie Howard James died suddenly from a stroke after eighty years of remarkable living.

I was very tired. Most of the night before was spent going through memories in their old rambling home, particularly looking for a watch my Father had given her on the day I was born. We finally found it in a little dish full of straight pins and other small knick-knacks so typical of my mother. Now, with a long trip ahead of us, I had to get some sleep. One of the boys was in the front seat talking to Doug to keep him awake as he drove out of the Salt Flats and into the rugged mountains of Eastern Nevada. I drifted into that *half-awake, half-asleep* zone and dreamed. Yet, the dream seemed so real that I thought I was awake. It seemed that a policeman was behind us with his flashing lights on, and that Doug was speeding through a small Nevada town. I kept trying to wake up so I could warn him to slow down. It was a terrific struggle when, suddenly, I popped up.

We weren’t going through a small town at all. We were skidding at fifty miles per hour on black ice. I screamed, “*Wake up!*” and Doug called back, “*I am awake . . . it’s ICE.*” The van was swerving from one side of the road to the other. With each swerve he corrected and then sometimes overcorrected. In a split second we were off the road, through two roadside markers, and onto the dirt shoulder, skidding at high speed. There was a culvert ahead of us, but no chance of turning aside. The ground below was an eight foot drop, so the van flew through the air for thirty feet, hitting hard on its right front corner. The impact threw us

again into the air until the van came down on its top, literally crushing it until there was no rear window space left to be seen. Then we rolled onto the side, still traveling forward, with dirt and rocks flying through broken windows. Finally the van skidded to a stop.

Fear went through me like I have never known before. It couldn't be possible that all seven of our children were still alive. But which ones could I live without? For a few seconds we tried to orient ourselves to the situation. The doors were jammed so we had to crawl upward through broken glass. Inside, the van was a total disaster with car furniture broken, paper and clothes all over, and extreme confusion mixed with tears and blood from little children.

Doug got out first. Then, one by one, I started handing children out to him. With each child I remember thinking, *"Thank goodness Christy is okay—and so is Spence, Jimmy, and Russ. Gina is all right, and Scott . . . but where is Craig?"* All I could think was, *"Oh no, not Craig—please, not Craig."* His legs were sticking out of a corner, but I couldn't seem to uncover the rest of him. I practically flew out of the broken window and with blurry eyes cried, *"Doug, I can't hear Craig."* His arm was lying still, visibly through the torn metal roof, and all I could think was that he had been cut in half. It was an awful moment. I was expecting the worst but, at the same time, praying for a miracle.

A hurried glance through another broken window revealed some blankets where I thought his head should be. I dug beneath them and Craig looked up through tears and said, *"Mom, I'm stuck!"* He was alive! Exerting all their strength, Doug and our oldest son Russ lifted and pulled the jammed car seat until Craig was released. He literally flew from his spot, boosted himself up through the broken window and ran.

We were so glad to be alive, we hardly noticed that the temperature was below freezing. With help from some wonderful people who stopped and gave us warmth, we were taken to a clinic in Wendover. From there, a two hour ride in a large ambulance with sirens blaring took us back to a Salt Lake City hospital. Miraculously as it was for all of us to be alive, the medical examinations were even more amazing. Though we were sore and bleeding, not one of us had a broken bone or even a cut bad enough to require stitches. A realization that the van could have caught fire, trapping us all inside, didn't even occur to us until the next day.





An overpowering thought kept running through my mind during the long ambulance ride. *“Surely, each of these children must have some special purpose to fulfill.”* And I wondered, *“Have I done everything possible as a Mother to prepare them to achieve that purpose?”* Just two days earlier I had spoken at my Mother’s funeral and had referred to her as a *Master Mother*. In preparing my thoughts, I realized that she accepted her role as a Mother with pride and honor. She approached it with as much skill, knowledge, preparation, dignity, and desire for success as any other person could do in a professional career outside the home. After delivering these remarks, I wished I had followed more closely in her footsteps. It seemed like, even if I tried, I had already lost too many years with my older children to have much more influence for good. However, after the accident this thought would not leave me: *“It’s not too late! Don’t EVER give up on your children. They need you and you need them.”* After realizing that my husband and children were still alive, I felt a happiness that was just as intense as the fear I had felt only moments before. God had given me a second chance to become a better mother. The shock of the accident motivated me to seek my Heavenly Father’s help in searching out, learning, and practicing those things which made my own mother so successful.

In today’s society, there are serious issues facing Christian women everywhere. Moral principles are being challenged. There are pressures that tend to tear them away from their greatest opportunities. Many are choosing not to devote their energy and creative abilities toward their families but are pursuing other careers. Because I am fortunate enough to have the personal histories and writings of both my mother, Lucie Howard James, and her mother, Drucilla Sears Howard, my own experiences have taken on new meaning. I feel the strength of three generations helping me to confront life’s challenges. I have also gained strength from dear friends like Rochelle, Benjamin, and their parents who have faced and met great crises in their lives. I hope their inspirational stories will help other mothers and fathers as well. Just knowing that every life comes with a purpose can bring perspective and faith. Acting on this knowledge can truly bring lasting happiness.

“ROCHELLE”

“Rochelle”



Rochelle Barlow
Born: July 31, 1966 Died: March 24, 1984

ROCHELLE

(WRITTEN BY CECILE J. SCRIBNER, 1984)

Last Saturday night Rochelle Barlow died. She was just seventeen. Only three weeks earlier Rochelle had been a picture of health, but she apparently contracted meningitis, went into a coma and never recovered. My son Russ and I flew from San Francisco to Eugene, Oregon and drove on to Corvallis to attend her funeral. As the plane droned past Mount Shasta and over the Oregon border, I recalled the phone conversation and events that occurred five days earlier. A phone call can bring joyful news and every so often fearful news. This particular day was one of anticipated excitement. It was 8:00 in the morning on the day of Russ' Eagle Scout Court of Honor when the phone rang:

"Hello . . ."

"Hello, Cecile. It's Ileen."

"Oh," I paused. "Rochelle's gone, isn't she?"

"Yes."

"Oh, how can we live without Rochelle, any of us?"

"I don't know," her mother calmly replied, "but I know Heavenly Father has called her home."

The news didn't dampen our joy of Russ' Court of Honor, but simply let us celebrate knowing that every experience in life is precious. We had joy in the reunion of family and friends but every so often during that day of celebration we contemplated Rochelle's passing. Life holds so many unanswered questions, but somehow we were assured that God's love is very great.

"There must be a reason. There has to be purpose," I thought.

I realized that we could only rely on faith to carry us through the next several years of loneliness—loneliness of no longer hearing Rochelle's music, seeing her magnetic smile, or simply enjoying this short, blonde, energetic girl's spirit. Over the short years of her life we had witnessed one accomplishment after another flow from this sweet tempered daughter of God.

As Russ and I drove into Corvallis, we arrived at the same time as many family members. It was a touching scene in the funeral home: the love of family and friends being tearfully expressed, many beautiful bouquets of flowers, a closed casket, and two groupings of pictures. On one table stood a huge picture of Ileen and Elwood and their ten children just recently taken, and on a second table was a row of 8x10 pictures of Rochelle from about nine months of age to the present. As loving friends and family walked by, the comments were many:

“Look at her thick blonde hair, and see how it darkened in her teens.”

“Have you ever seen such a contagious smile?”

“My, what beautiful teeth.”

“And this picture with her lips closed. She can’t hide her smile even when she tries.”

“She is absolutely beautiful.”

One picture especially caught my attention and a flood of memories poured in. It was a black and white picture of Elwood, Ileen and Rochelle as a baby, taken when Rochelle and her parents were living in Los Altos, California. My son Russ was born just one month after

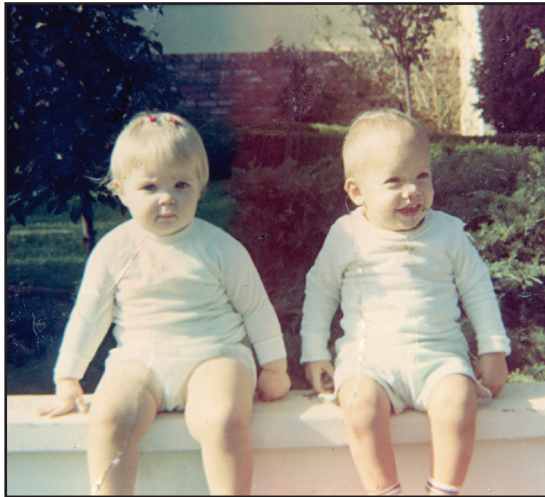


Rochelle and our two families became very close. It was a natural friendship - we had so much in common. Almost all of our roots went back to Utah. Ileen and I were both the youngest of large families. We both had a hard experience with our first pregnancies. Our husbands both worked for the same company. We all were members of the same church. We only lived a few blocks from each other, and now both couples were experiencing the joy of a first baby.

An early marriage friendship is often one of the best and ours with Elwood and Ileen has remained as the years have gone by. I cared as much about Rochelle as I did about my own son. Ileen and I often baby-sat for each other, had dinners together, or just spent an evening here and there in each other’s company. Rochelle and Rusty were always together and were like two peas in a pod - except for one major difference. Rochelle was twice the size of Russ. She was a round, rosy, healthy butterball while Russ was short, skinny and bald, but healthy nevertheless. Even as a baby, Rochelle was an early bloomer, and it is a little depressing when you’re comparing your first child to an early bloomer.

To look at the pictures of the two of them when they were young brings back memories that just won’t quit; splashing in the tub together, playing in plastic miniature swimming pools, sitting on top of a parked car and smiling for a *posed picture* balancing on a white wooden fence, playing with toys in those first *walking stages* while prejudiced parents all sat around and watched, acting as if nothing else in life was worthy of any attention. We shared historic moments in life with each other.





Christmas 1969 - Los Altos, CA
Christine (Barlow), Rusty, Rochelle, Gina (Scribner)

“Rochelle’s first tooth came through today!”

“Oh really! So soon? Rusty’s been drooling so much, I’m sure he’ll get a tooth any day now.” (He did too, just four months later!)

Every new event was historic and was shared together: rolling over, sitting up, crawling, laughing out loud, taking a first step and talking. I have to admit I was jealous when Rochelle was starting to talk at sixteen months of age - not just babbling, but real words! It was a long eight months while we waited for Rusty’s first words to appear. By the time he was two years old, we heard a *“Da Da.”* It was definitely a real word. Finally when Rusty reached two years, I made a major decision. It wasn’t worth my trouble to compare him with Rochelle because every one knows that *“boys are slower than girls!”*

Rochelle continued to set an unbelievable pace in development. She had an aptitude for speaking early in front of an audience. She had confidence that was almost unnatural for such a little tyke. At the same time, she was never arrogant. She was pure delight to be around. Her early aptitude in music only spurred the rest of us on to introduce music to our own children. We all gained from the example she set. It was Rochelle’s development of music that caused me to believe in Rusty. I had long since accepted the fact that he would just take longer and so the fact that he was learning music more slowly didn’t really bother me.

When Rusty and Rochelle were six years old we moved our family to Santa Rosa and thus parted with dear friends. Not many years later they made the move to Oregon. However, while they were still in Los Altos we would visit— not often, but enough to keep tabs on the progress of each other’s families. I’ll never forget walking into their home on one of these visits and seeing a big new organ. My first thought was, *“Why does a family need an organ of this caliber?”* I had no more questions when I heard Rochelle play, and couldn’t believe that an eight or nine year old would actually get up and practice for two or three hours every morning before school. She looked like a little doll sitting on this big over-sized instrument

with three keyboards. Her talent was no longer enviable, it was awesome. We were long past trying to compare our other children with her. I was very aware that we were witnessing the development of a child prodigy. In every other way she was just *good ol' Rochelle* who giggled and played around like any other child.

Whenever Ileen and Elwood visited us or we visited them, it was fun to hear the kids goof around on the piano. Rusty and Rochelle kept in contact over the years, but just barely. It was more a case of Rochelle writing every now and again and Rusty “. . . *going to get around to it!*” Nevertheless, he did keep her picture displayed in his room. In fact it was the only picture of a girl that he had up until his senior year of high school. (Boys are slower but they eventually start catching up!)

Another memorable visit was when Ileen and Elwood stopped at our house overnight. We left all the kids home to play and go to sleep while we went to a nice quiet restaurant to visit. In those next hours we heard the most unbelievable description of Rochelle's life during the previous few years. Right after they moved to Oregon, Ileen made contact with a renowned organ teacher named William Fawk who lived in Salem. He listened to Rochelle and even though she was only ten years old, he accepted her as a student. During that year Ileen and Rochelle drove to Salem for lessons (about an hour and a half each direction) every single week. She continued her heavy schedule of practicing for two or three hours each day without fail. Her parents didn't demand this kind of performance from her. She put the demands upon herself. Rochelle gave her first concert just six months after lessons began.

Mr. Fawk said of Rochelle, *“It's still a great mystery to me when a girl this size and age comes along. Of all my students, she has accomplished the most for this very young age. There is no one in the United States that has ever done this kind of thing.”* She was conscientious in other areas as well - helping to care for eight brothers and sisters and keeping a high grade point average in school.

When she was still eleven years old, Rochelle, her parents, and Mr. Fawk traveled through several countries in Europe where she performed, playing on beautiful organs in old historic buildings. She gave concerts in England, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and Germany. She could barely reach the pedals, and in fact, couldn't reach them on some of the organs. They weren't built for a small eleven year old girl! Lovely pictures were taken of her as she performed in old churches and thrilled audiences with her recitals. Tears of pride came to our eyes as we heard her parents unfold this story. They as well, were humble and grateful just to be her parents. They were very aware of her great ability, but didn't want her life to be void of normal experiences. They were in somewhat of a dilemma as to how they could best guide her.

Rochelle, however, seemed to be able to fit in both the development of her great talent and the nurturing of friendships. There were probably many people who thought she was *just* a terrific person with a magnetic personality!

Our last visit with Rochelle and her family was just one and a half years before she died. We had the urge to spend our summer vacation renewing some old *early marriage* friendships, a good share of which were in the Oregon/Washington area. So, off we went.



Our first stop was with Ileen and Elwood in Corvallis, Oregon. We knew we were in for a great time as soon as we saw their big, humongous barn! By this time, they had nine children and we had seven, plus Grandpa, with us. Whoever the house couldn't hold, the barn could. It had a top story, a bottom story, and hidden corners, a staircase and even cubby holes for horses. The top

floor was big enough for a barn dance or a basketball game. Our kids never wanted to leave. They matched up in ages all the way down the line - it was some of the most fun we'd had in years. Then that first night we had a treat.

I began, *"Rochelle, we drove all this way just to see if you can really play this organ."*

The kids joined in.

"Please play for us." "Come on Rochelle, we want to hear you." "You better get this over with. My Mom will never give up asking."

We had never witnessed anything like it. Rochelle's feet seemed to be playing scales as fast as her fingers were flying over the keys. Several of us in our family play the piano somewhat, and as we watched her read the music in front of her, it looked like an impossibility to read so many rows of notes all at once. We knew we were in the presence of greatness and yet the surroundings were simply a farm house with a big barn, a couple of horses, a family that romped and played and ate just like we *ordinary folk*.

Rochelle definitely had been given a gift of music that was unusual, but without perseverance on her part and support from parents and family, the gift would have lay dormant. We stood in appreciation of the gift and also of the sacrifice that was made for its development - and even more, we appreciated their willingness to share it with us. It's a humbling feeling to stand in the midst of greatness. It took all the kids a little while to gain their confidence back.

My daughter, for one, said, *"Wow, I'll never touch the piano again!"*

And Russ, *"Well, I don't think I'll be playing the piano tonight. . ."*

But soon Ileen and Elwood's other kids started playing and my kids joined and Rochelle was just *ordinary* again as she and the others came out with a good old version of *"Chop Sticks."* Soon we were hearing *"Fur Elise," "The Entertainer," "The Pink Panther"* and other favorites.

The kids spent the next day playing around, riding horses, rolling in laughter. Soon we heard a high pitched voice.

Every Life With A Purpose

“No. . . Nooo . . . I’m ALL WET!”

“Hurry, fill the bucket.”

“Come on, you’re on my side.”

“Forget the balloons, fill the other bucket!”

We stepped out to see the most unbelievable water fight I have ever witnessed. The kids had definitely gotten to know each other again. What a wonderful visit it was, even though it ended with one of our sons falling out of the barn and breaking his arm! Even that could not dampen the fun and love that had been rekindled by our two families. Russ took great pride in finally being much taller than Rochelle. She had stopped at about 5’1” and he had gone on to 5’9”.



The last year had made a real difference. She never did grow tall enough to reach the organ pedals very well but this was just another challenge! She could have developed self-pride, but she didn’t. She was fun, playful, as full of mischief as the next person and a joy to be around.



1982 - Scribners visit Barlows in Corvallis, Oregon. Russ (no longer Rusty) in back with hat, Rochelle next to him (green shirt)

In his own words, Russ said,

“I don’t remember much about Rochelle in Los Altos, except playing on the teeter-totter in her backyard and singing ‘I’ve Been Working On The Railroad.’ After we moved I didn’t hear from her until she sent me a letter three or four years later. It was a silly letter and didn’t really sound like her. She sent another letter right after that apologizing for it and hoping to become friends again. Even though I was not actually the recluse that my mother portrayed me as being, I was still glad to have a friend to write to and sent a letter right back (no matter what my mom says). We corresponded a couple of times before she left for Europe. As for the European tour, she downplayed it in her letters, which was just like her! We didn’t write after that for some reason, and I didn’t hear from her again until we went to visit her on the trip through Oregon. To be honest, I was more than a little nervous about meeting her at first, but after a while we were talking like we had known each other all the time. It was great, even though I never could get her to call me ‘Russ’ instead of ‘Rusty.’ I’ll remember that visit for a long time to come.”

Except for a few letters, and two birth announcements — a boy for them, a girl for us — and an exchange of some pictures taken at their home, we didn’t hear from them again until Elwood called early one Tuesday morning in March. . .

“Hello, this is Elwood.”

Something in his voice made me say,

“Elwood, what’s happened — is something wrong?”

“Well, we felt it was important since we love you so much and know you love us, to have you join us in some prayers.”

“Oh no, what is it?”

“It’s Rochelle.”

“No, not Rochelle. Is she ill . . . what’s the matter?”

I felt sick in my heart as I held on to every word that described the events of the last three days. Rochelle had come home with a headache, and like many mothers would do, Ileen gave her some Tylenol. She felt a little better and went on a date that night, but wasn’t feeling well again when she returned home. Ileen gave her some more Tylenol. When Rochelle showered in the morning, she collapsed and then complained about her muscles aching horribly. Then when Ileen looked closely at her, there were spots about the size of quarters appearing on her body, like blood vessels breaking under her skin. More appeared practically before her eyes as she checked her. She was taken to the hospital and was given antibiotics. She was checked for meningitis, but it proved negative. Finally, it turned out to be a breakdown of her blood chemistry. Even as they looked back, the doctors all agreed that the right steps had been taken in her behalf. No one had delayed too long in taking any action. Had they known the disease at the beginning, they still would have gone the same route.

By that night, the disease had progressed so fast that Rochelle had kidney failure. She was taken to a bigger hospital in a larger town where more sophisticated help could be given to her. The disease had spread via her blood stream causing a breakdown of her whole vascular system. Her cells couldn't retain liquid, causing her whole body to swell. A drug had to be given to her to prevent the blood pressure from falling so low it would kill her. Huge doses were given to her, much more than they thought any body capable of receiving. The drug did bring her blood pressure back up, but the side effect was very damaging. It starved her appendages and her bowels as well. If enough oxygen didn't get to these appendages, she could risk losing them. They were already starting to darken.

As the doctors looked back, they realized that irreversible damage had probably taken place in these first three days, but Rochelle had a healthy body which had been kept free from tobacco, alcohol, drugs — she was clean, pure and moral and her body and spirit fought for two and one-half long weeks, even though the abuse it suffered from this dreadful disease was more than one could describe.

After about the fifth day, Rochelle seemed to be on an upward sweep. It wasn't too late to pray for a miracle and many fully expected that would happen. We knew the Lord in His power could replace dying limbs with new and vital life, could make a bad kidney like new, could take a body that was swollen, black and blue and totally beyond recognition, and restore it to full beauty and health. This and more would have to be done for Rochelle. The doctors were now talking of possible amputation.

“Rochelle without fingers or toes?”

We couldn't bear the thought. A few years earlier Rochelle had been given a Patriarchal Blessing which told her she would develop many other gifts besides music. But then, hadn't she already? Besides being a dynamic girl and high academic achiever, she was in a singing group and also could swim laps. She had become a member of the Future Business Leaders of America, the Student Senate, was a finalist in the Miss Teen Pageant, went to Outdoor School, worked at Waremart, maintained a 3.94 G.P.A., and was a finalist as a Presidential Scholar (a scholarship presented in Washington D C . by the President of the United States to two students from each state). She could have qualified either by an artistic or academic entry. Her wide circle of friends spoke for itself as to what kind of friend she was. Every person was made to feel important in her presence.

Also in her blessing she was told that she would suffer the same kind of pain that the early pioneers had suffered. It did not seem possible for any one person to endure as much physical abuse as had taken over Rochelle's body within the past five days. It seemed as though every blood vessel in her body had broken, for she was a mass of black and blue and her parents had to bring a picture of her to the doctors so they would know what Rochelle actually looked like.

According to her parents, she seemed to be in a coma, but not entirely. They occasionally got glimpses and slight movements from her eyes or a slight twitter from a limb that indicated she was well aware of her situation and fighting with every last breath. They never left her except

for a bit of sleep. Her situation became so bad that one fear followed on top of another. Her skin was so tender that it would come off when bandages were removed from her body, and they wondered if she'd have to be taken to the Burn Center and treated there. Her gums were so tender that when a tube was inserted in her mouth, her front teeth came out as well. Every day was a continual threat of amputation, and a decision would have to be made soon. More kidney trouble occurred and new tubes had to be inserted, but this time when they tried to put a tube in a vein in the ankle, they only found dried-up blood. In the end, there was probably not an organ in her whole body that was not abused by infection and disease.

In my mind, Rochelle's story was rapidly turning out to be Ileen and Elwood's story. How they managed to withstand this total destruction of their beautiful daughter's body was without comprehension. They prayed for help, then for hope, then for strength to face what seemed the Lord's will. When Rochelle seemed to pick up, they prayed for miracles as hundreds of people were now doing as well. The prayers for miracles finally changed to prayers of making the right decisions concerning the possible amputation. They acted on revelation from their Heavenly Father when they realized that the decision wasn't theirs to make, it was Rochelle's.

They went to her bedside and explained to her what kind of future would be hers if she lived. She would have no limbs at all, for they were now black past knees and elbows. She wouldn't be able to live without kidney dialysis machines, and there were many other possible problems. They let her know that if she desired to live that way, they wanted her, no matter what. They told her that they could not bear to start cutting off limbs, for they weren't even sure these diseased limbs were causing the other infections that were taking over her body.

They said, "*Rochelle, we want you and Heavenly Father to make the decision because we can't.*" They were at peace, somewhat.

The next day, Rochelle's life-support machines suddenly seemed to go haywire; the nurses rushed in, sent for her parents, and in just a short time she was gone. They searched for errors in the machine settings, for it seemed as though they had failed Rochelle. There was nothing to indicate any such rapid change in her.

Ileen assured them, "*There's nothing wrong with the machines. Heavenly Father has called Rochelle home.*"

One of the nurses, though not of her same faith said, "*I believe you're right.*"

The machines were checked thoroughly, and Ileen was right. There wasn't anything wrong with the equipment. It turned out to be a spiritual experience for Ileen and one that helped her and Elwood accept Rochelle's passing from one home to another. Rochelle and Heavenly Father had made the decision. They could live with that.

After all the tubes were removed and machines taken away, Ileen wanted to just hold Rochelle, but she couldn't. When she tried, she knew Rochelle's tortured body was an empty shell that no longer held her beautiful spirit. If ever the resurrection was important to anyone, it was important to Ileen and Elwood. They knew that they would see Rochelle again in a perfected,

lovely body - even more radiant than they had ever seen her yet. Her spirit may have been very close still, but it no longer existed within her body that had known excruciating pain and destruction for two and one-half weeks. It must have been somewhat of a relief to her sorrowful parents. No child can hurt without a parent hurting just as much, if not more. They would have gladly taken the pain from Rochelle and put it on themselves if such could ever be. The one thing they knew was that Heavenly Father was near and heard their prayers. They knew that they had not been left without Heavenly help, for as each day went on they seemed more able to bear the crises. In fact they became a strength to the hundreds of people who were praying for Rochelle.

For me, I don't know why Rochelle wasn't taken sooner, but perhaps the only way any of us could *let go* of such a gifted girl was to realize that there are things worse than death. Thinking of Rochelle without the ability to express her music was even more painful than losing her. Near the end, we were all able to pray for her death, which would again give her freedom to express her many gifts from God.

There have been a few times in my life when I felt I was in the presence of greatness: one was when shaking hands with a Prophet of God, another was as I stood at my dying mother's bedside, and a third was the time I heard a great pianist play, "*Oh Divine Redeemer*" as if he knew the Redeemer personally. Now as I heard over the telephone the voice of friends expressing their thoughts about the loss of their daughter, I felt it again. I know we have ever so much more to learn about Rochelle in the eternities. But this time, I felt the presence of greatness in Ileen and Elwood. People who become great in others' eyes are often those who go through the *refiner's fire*. After witnessing this experience, my life will never be the same. My emotions reached a peak at the funeral when ten weeping teenage girls sang this beautiful song written by Jamie Glenn.



WALK TALL, YOU'RE A DAUGHTER

*Right now I have a prayer deep within my heart,
A prayer for each of you there is a special part
That you remember who you are and He who lives above,
Please seek for Him and live His way; You'll feel his love.*

*Walk tall, you're a daughter, a child of God.
Be strong, please remember who you are.
Try to understand, You're part of His great plan,
He's closer than you know,
Reach up, He'll take your hand.*

*Long before the time you can remember
Our Father held you in His arms so tender,
Those loving arms released you as He sent you down to earth
He said, 'My Child, I love you. Don't forget your great worth.'*

*This life on earth we knew would not be easy.
At times we lose our way — His path we may not see.
But please remember always, please, that you are not alone;
He'll take your hand. He loves you! He will guide you home.*

*Walk tall, you're a daughter, a child of God.
Be strong, please remember who you are.
Try to understand, you're part of His great plan,
He's closer than you know,
Reach up, He'll take your hand.*

Indeed, Rochelle's life had real purpose and the positive influence she had on others will continue for generations.

It is now February 2009—almost twenty-five years exactly since Rochelle died. Just last month, Doug and I met Ileen and her family in Bountiful, Utah, for the wedding reception of her youngest son Devin. She has been blessed with a beautiful family and posterity. Her trials these last twenty-five years did not begin and end with Rochelle's death. She is truly an amazing individual. I don't recall the exact dates of these events, but Ileen herself is a survivor of cancer (twice). Elwood also fought cancer for over ten years, but finally succumbed to the disease in 1996. While he was in the middle of this fight, their house (by the big, humongous barn) burned right down to the ground. He was working hard with his sons to finish the rebuilding of their home when he died. Ileen, in the meantime, started working with Hewlett-Packard in Corvallis, Oregon, where Elwood also worked, and she still is working there today. One of her sons, who recognized the greatness in his mother, nominated her a couple of years ago to be a candidate for Mother of the Year in Oregon. She was chosen for that great honor. Then the great honor and privilege of National Mother of the Year (2007) was given to her. I can't think of anyone more deserving of such an honor or anyone better to represent all mothers in the United States—she has exhibited greatness her entire life. Ileen has been through the hardest trials a mother can possibly go through—and out of those she has emerged as a positive, energetic, caring, warm and kind individual. She always had all of those qualities, but great trials can turn some people very bitter and hateful. Not Ileen. She has kept her faith and hope alive and continues to be everything a mother should be. Most important now she is a grandmother of many grandchildren, with many more to come!



January 2009 - Cecile and Ileen

Every Life With A Purpose

My life has been blessed by knowing this family. And as I get older, (which I am now), the reality of the next life is vivid—not because I'm anxious to get there or even think I will be there any time soon, but it's vivid because I have so many relatives and friends on the other side. What a pleasure and joy it will be to see them all again.



2008 - Ileen and Elwood's children and some of their spouses



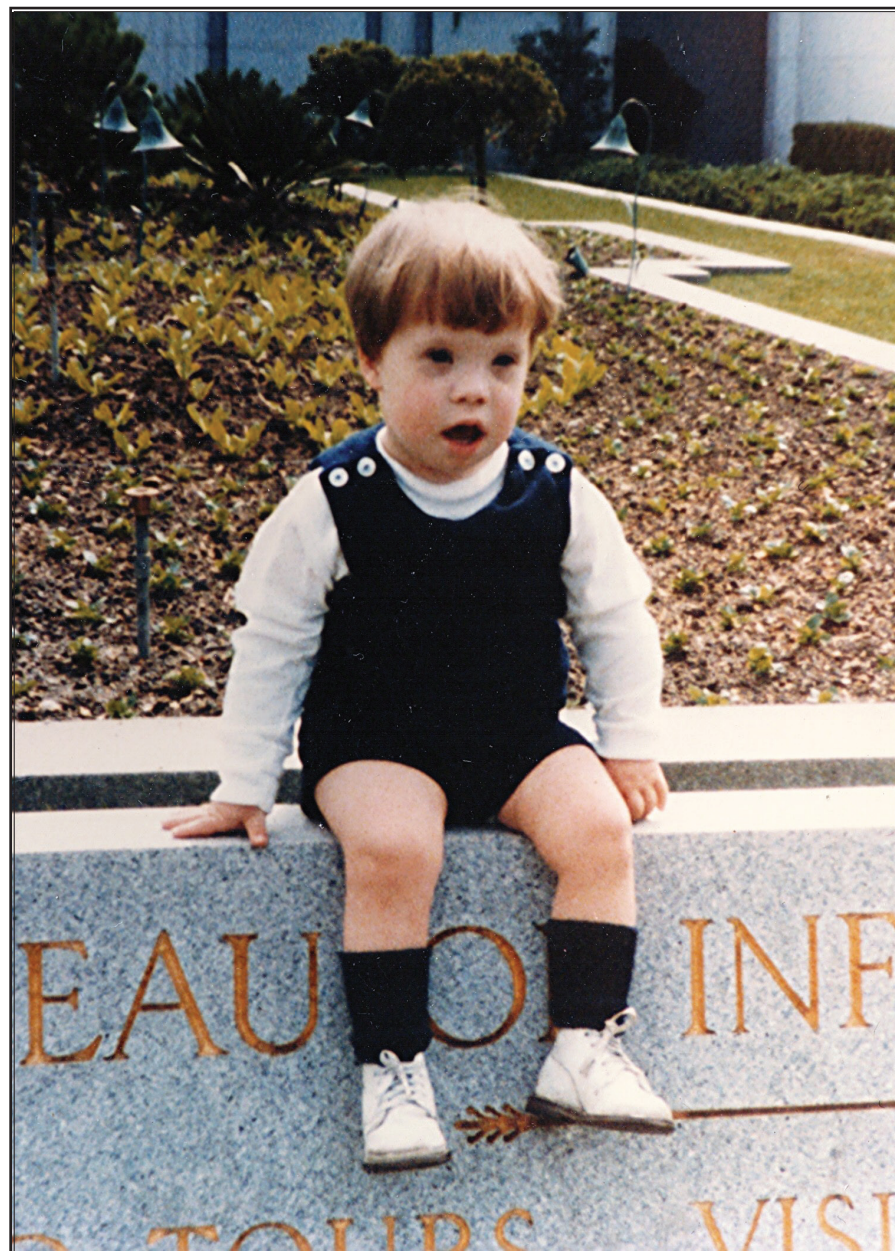
January 2009 - Ileen Barlow with her girls



1988 - Elwood and Ileen Barlow

“BENJAMIN”

“Benjamin”



*Benjamin Reid Ashton
Born: 13 May 1978
Died: 9 February 1983*

BENJAMIN

(WRITTEN BY CECILE J. SCRIBNER, 9 FEBRUARY 1983)

It was July 21, my birthday, and Doug had a wonderful gift planned for me. We were to drive from our home in Santa Rosa down the San Francisco Peninsula to the Circle Star Theater in San Carlos. The two other couples going along were our friends, Ralph and Mona Lisa Hoyal, and Bill and Pat Ashton. Actually we were taking the Hoyals and Pat with us and meeting Pat's husband Bill at the theater as he had been working in Palo Alto all that week. When we picked up Pat, we could tell that she was just bursting to tell us something. She had spent the last three days attending a Church Education Week and was full of excitement. Though I don't recall her exact words, they went something like:

"I've had the strangest experience. As I was listening to one of the lectures, the strongest impression went through me, and I knew that contrary to our plans, our family was not yet complete. There's another baby waiting to be born into our family. It's going to be a boy, and I feel like he's going to be a great missionary."

This had not come as an idle thought for Pat, but as personal inspiration. How we responded, I don't recall, except I knew that none of us doubted the strength of her impressions. We all seemed to know that Bill and Pat were going to have another little boy.

The fun was yet ahead of us. We tried to act like we were unconcerned, but all of us were peeking down the theater row so we wouldn't miss Bill's reaction as Pat told him the *good news!* You have to know Bill to understand why we wanted to watch his reaction. He's definitely a strong leader in his home and big decisions like this don't get made without his consent. Bill's reaction might best be described as *controlled shock*. Though we couldn't hear his whispered response, it must have been something like *"Forget it, Pat. Steven is only seven months old, and we are NOT going to have another baby!"* After the show, Bill came out smiling like the subject had never been mentioned. Funny, but I don't even recall what show we saw at Circle Star that night!

In October of that same year, the six of us left again for a weekend *away*. This time we went north to the Mendocino Coast and had a truly marvelous time. Doug, Bill and Ralph served together in a Bishopric (voluntary positions of church leadership) and the weekend proved to be a wonderful release from pressures - not just from church work, but from the normal pressures brought on by employment and by our combined fifteen children. Pat was already two months pregnant — and not the least surprised! The big surprise was to find out a few months later that Mona Lisa and I were also expecting babies, on the very same day (just

exactly nine months after our trip to Mendocino) and just two months after Pat. Even today, we hardly dare return to the Mendocino Coast!

Pat and I had each lost our first child, so she was expecting her seventh, I was expecting my eighth and Mona Lisa her fifth. We were all experienced, but experienced or not, you can't seem to take away the fears that every expectant mother feels. Pat would often say to me,

"I don't know how you do it with all the physical problems you've had with your children. I don't know if I could stand not having an absolutely perfectly formed child."

My children had been born with problems - several with progressive myopia, one with a diseased kidney, another with poor hearing, another with a cleft soft palate, and one with a large hole in his heart. Yet we had worked through these problems and found that life was just as happy, or even happier, for us as for anyone else. Nevertheless, I heard what Pat was saying. I wasn't offended by such a comment, but in fact knew that she admired me for having gone through the trials. Then she would say,

"Life's been too easy. I haven't been given any big tests yet."

"Don't think like that," I would say, *"You still have a lot of life ahead of you. Besides you have had trials, but have faced them in such a way that they didn't seem hard for you."*

"No, I haven't really been tested yet," Pat answered. *"Perhaps this is my time."*

As her pregnancy got to the later months, she voiced her concerns more frequently. *"Well, I've thought a lot about all the problems I could face. I think I am emotionally prepared to take almost anything — anything except a Down's Syndrome child."*

"Why, Pat?"

"Well, perhaps because that particular problem is so visual to everyone and so permanent."

I never tried to say otherwise because I agreed. I too felt that a Down's child would be one of the hardest. Maybe it was only five times, but it could've been as many as fifteen times that Pat mentioned her fear of having a Down's Syndrome child, and not just to me, but to other friends as well.

Benjamin was born the day before Mother's Day in May 1978. Were we surprised he was a boy? Of course not. The name had already long been decided upon - Benjamin Reid - a name with family and religious significance. Bill called us that Saturday afternoon and indicated that everything had gone okay.

The next day I was enthused to go to church. I was giving one of the Mother's Day talks, and with Pat's baby here safe and sound, I was feeling great. Just as I was getting ready to leave the house, the phone rang.

"Hello?"

“Hello.”

“Pat, is that you?”

Silence.

“Pat, something’s wrong.”

In a barely audible voice, Pat said, “Down’s.” That was all.

“Oh no, Pat, are you sure?”

“Yes.”

After I hung up, I thought my heart would break for her. Perhaps no one would believe me, but I honestly wished it had been me instead of Pat. Many of the things I had experienced had possibly prepared me for such a moment, had it been me. I knew Pat’s fears and all I could think was, “Oh no, not Pat. Please don’t let it be true.” I gave my talk, thinking only of a dear friend, a mother of a Down’s Syndrome child. At the moment, it didn’t seem like a very nice gift for Mother’s Day.

Together, Pat’s mother and I went to the hospital that night. Benjamin was a healthy, beautiful child, but Pat didn’t even want to look at him. She was a pool of tears, and none of us knew what to say to give comfort. We talked about him clinically, not as a real person, and discussed such things as, “*These kinds of children can grow up to be as old as thirty,*” and “*This for sure completes our family.*” There was rejection, and all we could tell her was to take one day at a time.



Pat and Benjamin
1978

“Let’s not worry about thirty years from now,” we encouraged. “Tomorrow you’ll have a baby that needs love and attention like any other baby, and the next day and the next, he’ll still be just a baby.”

I couldn’t think of too much to say, but I clearly remember saying the words, “*I don’t know why, Pat, but I have a strong feeling that in a few years you’ll have some spiritual lessons to teach all of us.*”

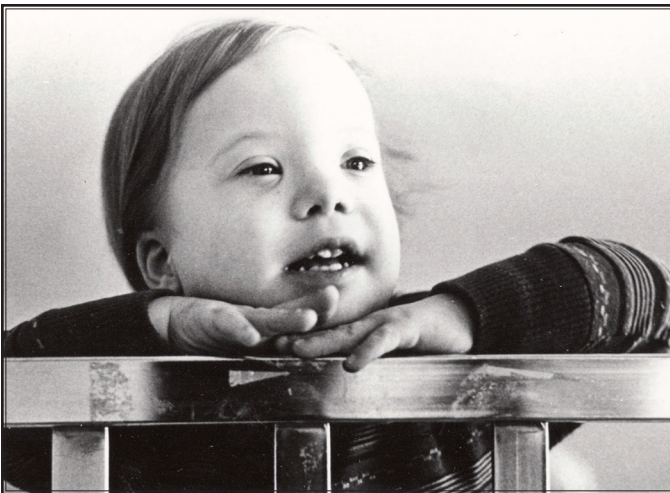
Within a week, a miracle happened. Pat’s feelings of rejection were gone. Her and Bill’s acceptance was complete. It wasn’t years, but only a matter of days before Pat was teaching us all some spiritual lessons about life. The first lesson I learned from her I will never forget. She said, “*Bill and I have realized that each child has a potential—has heights he is meant to reach in this life. Benjamin’s potential is different from our other children, and we must strive to help him reach it and fulfill his destiny just as we do for the others.*”

From then on, we all were like bystanders watching a drama as Bill and Pat worked with Benjamin. We all loved him so much. His brothers and sisters were crazy about him. He had the most wonderful smile and happy eyes of any child I've ever known. You truly felt rewarded when he smiled for you. I silently wondered if Pat ever thought about that first impression of hers before Benjamin's conception, about his being a great missionary. Perhaps she excused the idea or perhaps she felt that his destiny could only be filled in the next life when his spirit would no longer be surrounded by a somewhat abnormal physical body.

Two months after Benjamin was born, I had Spencer, named after our great church leader, and a month after that, Mona Lisa had Mark. Mark was a beautiful child, just like all of Mona Lisa's and Ralph's other children, and Spencer was by far my most robust, healthy baby. Both had different personalities, but they, like Benjamin, were able to bring out untold love from parents, brothers and sisters. We all enjoyed our babies so much.

Bill and Pat's next big obstacle was to complete their new *dream house* in the Santa Rosa foothills. What seemed to happen in short order to us, must have seemed like an eternity to them, but soon after Benjamin's birth, they moved in. Then came lesson number two. Here Pat had everything her heart could desire: a new house, fresh wallpaper, a beautiful blue carpet with *matching everything*, and all of it paid for. But somehow none of these material things mattered compared to the new meaning of life that Benjamin had aroused in their family. Certainly they would've traded everything material if he could be normal and healthy, but that wasn't meant to be. That isn't how Heavenly Father helps us to grow. It isn't how He polishes the rough spots to make us smooth, for God gives us problems to face so we can become stronger

by learning how to overcome them. We all understood this principle of the Gospel.



Six months or so went by, and of all things, Bill was transferred back to Palo Alto, a hundred miles south of Santa Rosa. We couldn't believe they were actually going to leave us. We thought they'd think twice and never leave their dream house, but leaving the dream house was the easy part. They had long before realized that happiness is with each other and not with things.

Except for one, they had a child the same age and sex as each of ours, and it was traumatic for each of our children to be separated from a close friend. No one will ever know how I hated to see them go. Life has really not been quite the same for me. Yes, we've all made new close friendships, but each friend fills a certain niche that can't be replaced by another. It was the telephone calls I missed most. Oh yes, we can still phone, but not every day and not for an hour at a time. We could always get our kitchens cleaned plus get a good conversation in every

day or so. Our paths had been so similar over the years that we had conversations to last a lifetime. The constant inspiration of watching the family grow with Benjamin was going to be missed most of all.

We all accepted Benjamin's potential as being different, but were surprised that he was so intelligent. They had to work incredibly hard to teach him things, but he did respond. In fact, he memorized numbers and simple phrases before Spencer did. Lesson number three was learned. I realized that we don't even come close to reaching our own potential or developing that of our children. I often wondered where Spencer's development would be if I spent the time with him that they spent with Benjamin. In watching them, I often felt like I could do so much more in life if I had the energy to apply more effort. I admired Pat so very much. In fact, she was unreal sometimes - it was so marvelous to watch her with her youngest son.

When Benjamin was two and one-half years old, another phone call came. This time it was to tell us that Benjamin had leukemia of a type that might be impossible to cure. My mind went quickly back to the time of his birth when we were afraid that he would live thirty years as a Down's Syndrome child. Now the greatest fear of all was upon us — that he might not even live to be three or four years old. We all wanted him to live, and what followed was one of the most tenacious fights for a life that I have ever seen.

Some people said that perhaps this was best, that this was the way Heavenly Father was going to take him since he wasn't really a normal child. Normal? Why, little Ben was as normal as anyone else on this earth who is busy fulfilling his potential. He had more to do, more love to give and more life to live than many *normal* people.

Just as others would have done for their child, Bill and Pat fought and prayed and hoped for Benjamin's recovery. They decided to provide the best modern medical knowledge coupled with their prayers and fasting to keep him alive. Doug and I empathized with this decision of theirs because we were going through a similar experience. Our four-and-a-half year old son, Jimmy, was about to go through open heart surgery and, perhaps like Bill and Pat, we wondered ourselves if the Lord was using this opportunity to call our son *Home*.

As much as we all tried to come up with the right answer, we all found ourselves praying, fasting and doing all in our power to keep these two little boys with us. After Jimmy's successful surgery, I left intensive care long enough to call Pat. She was the first one I wanted to tell because I knew she would feel what I felt. Together we knew we were doing what the Lord wanted us to do - to fight for our children's spiritual and physical welfare. It is the right thing for a parent to do. If, after all this, a child is taken, then we at least would have the peace of knowing we had done everything possible. I did call Pat that night, and we were both so happy. I thought about us after the phone call, "*We've come a long way since our college days together. Who would have guessed where our lives would lead us?*"

Pat and Bill were already into chemotherapy with Benjamin, which is a process where the effects of the cure can be worse than the disease. It was a hard decision to put him through it, but it seemed that there really wasn't any other decision. They felt they had to try.

Every Life With A Purpose

The year of chemotherapy with Benjamin was a year that only Pat herself can fully describe. The pain of bone marrow tests, the agony of trying to get Benjamin to eat, the fear of death time and time and time again, the extreme triumph as each fasting and prayer and blessing resulted in another day or another month of keeping their little boy alive.



*Pat and Bill Ashton with their six children:
Becky, Billy, Elizabeth, David Benjamin, Steven*

Twelve doses of chemotherapy were needed to complete the treatment, but after each dose, there was the fear that the slightest cold or tiniest sliver could cause an infection so severe that immediate hospitalization would be necessary. They didn't escape any of this. I remember so well a visit to the hospital to see Benjamin. He was so thin, so fragile, so tiny, but nevertheless, he produced a smile for us. We wanted to take Pat away for lunch and give her some relief, yet when we did, Benjamin cried to have her back. She spent so much time in the hospital that she memorized the routine perfectly and even caught the nurses a couple of times when they had made mistakes that could've cost Benjamin his life.

As the chemotherapy killed the leukemia cells and as our hopes got higher, it was all too soon realized that Benjamin's heart was severely damaged from the treatment. Pat had to give him several doses of medication every day for the rest of his life to counteract the damage done to his heart.

I don't know how other families were affected by Benjamin's life, but in our home there was never a personal or family prayer offered without mention of him. *"Please bless Benjamin that he won't be sick anymore."* Children's prayers are pure and uncluttered. They pray with great faith, fully expecting miracles to happen. They seem instinctively to know that God lives and is personally listening to them.

I'm sure many children's prayers played a big part in what followed. It was a miracle! Full remission! Benjamin had fully recovered from leukemia!

Another miracle occurred while Benjamin was in the hospital. He was a missionary! It was early in his treatment when he and his mother met Stan. Stan was a fine young man who worked at the hospital as a biochemist doing medical research. He would regularly come to the children's cancer unit as a volunteer to visit the children and entertain them. Somehow he was particularly attracted to Benjamin's serene spirit.

One afternoon most of the children were gone on an outing when Stan arrived, so he decided to spend the time visiting with Benjamin and Pat. Pat loves a good conversation and she asked, *"How come a good-looking fellow like you isn't married yet?"*

Stan answered, *"Well, I haven't found the kind of girl I'm looking for."* With that, Pat quickly asked, *"What kind of girl are you looking for, Stan?"*

After Stan's description of a top-notch girl, Pat said with a twinkle, *"Well, there's only one place that I know where you're going to find a girl of that caliber. Try attending the local singles branch of our church."*

Several months later I got a phone call from Pat. She first of all gave me some news about Benjamin, and then added, *"Stan is going to be baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ!"* Not only had Stan taken up Pat's challenge and attended church, but he had met with the missionaries and had been converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Stan's story is one of several. I've never questioned that Pat and Benjamin together served as great missionaries. His brave little life paved the way for her to touch people's lives in a way that would have been impossible otherwise. Over that year, Pat and her husband, Bill, had seen death many times in the hospital and had been a comfort to those who needed it. Benjamin's life had already reached a height that others who live a whole lifetime never achieve.

When the chemotherapy was over and Benjamin was having bone marrow taken out for one last time, Pat said, *"I can't stand to see him go through this pain."*

Bill answered, *"Well, look at it this way - you'll never see him go through it again."*

They knew that if the leukemia ever reoccurred, they would not put their young son through chemotherapy again. However, they didn't regret that they had done it this first time, for they had seen miracles! Their prayers and their children's prayers had been answered over and over again, and they had learned that life is so fragile, it is to be revered.

Their good friend, Stan moved to Utah where he continued his medical research. He met a beautiful girl with all the traits he had earlier described to Pat. She was a returned missionary who had developed the inner peace and qualities that had first attracted Stan to the Gospel through Benjamin and Pat. A year after Benjamin's release from the hospital, Stan returned to Bill and Pat's home and brought his bride-to-be to meet his little friend.

Every Life With A Purpose

Benjamin's weakened heart left him unable to cope with illnesses very well, and the day Stan arrived, Benjamin was sick with the flu. He had caught the flu on Sunday, and had worsened on Monday. By Tuesday night they took him to the hospital. His little heart gave out thirty minutes after they had arrived. He was pronounced dead on February 9, 1983.

That last year of Benjamin's life was truly a blessing to the family. They lived every day knowing that Benjamin's whole life had been a miracle. Though not a very strong boy, he was able to go back to school and to grow in knowledge and skills.

Every time we phoned, our first question was, "How's Benjamin?" Every time, Pat would answer, "Oh, he's just doing wonderfully." His beautiful strawberry blond hair grew back and his smile was always as big as ever. He was a pure delight for friends and family to be around. All of us lived in the shadows of the miracles that had surrounded his very existence. All with whom he came in contact were immediately blessed with a greater knowledge of God and His existence.

Heavenly Father never leaves us alone at times of grief and sorrow. It can't be looked upon as mere coincidence that Stan and his fiance came to stay with Bill and Pat prior to their being married in the Temple or that this same brief visit occurred on the same day that Benjamin died. Bill and Pat were very aware that God does move in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform!

I can't say that this is just Benjamin's story. It is also the story of great parenthood and spiritual growth. It is a story of children whose continual prayers went up for their little brother and friend. In fact, it is a story that demonstrates the truth that every life has a purpose in God's eyes, and that birth is never a mistake!



*Pat and Bill Ashton with their five children
Bill, Becky, David, Steven
Bill, Pat, Elizabeth*

In many ways it is my own story for our lives are made up of relationships with those people who greatly affect us along the way. It's the story of hundreds of people whose lives have been touched by a little boy who lived just short of five years. I feel blessed that my path crossed with his, and I feel that his spirit may be much older and wiser than mine.

February 9, 2009 - Twenty-six years after Benjamin died.

It's amazing to me as I get older (I'm nearly sixty-eight years old), that our time here on earth is so quickly passing by. People have come into and out of my life and have left me a different person than I would've been without their presence. Is this the way Heavenly Father meant it to be? He who sees us from the beginning to the end must himself hope and pray that we will make it through the trials until the whole picture is then illuminated before us. Pat Ashton is one of those people who has had a huge impact on my life.



She only lived thirteen years after Benjamin died. And through most of those years, she was fighting breast cancer. When it finally took her life, it had gone into brain cancer. Through those years, we had many fast and prayer days. Just as with Benjamin, we saw miracles.

Miracles don't happen to convince someone of God's power, but they come as a result of someone's faith. Critics of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would say that its members use doctors, medicine, hospitals, etc. just like anyone else does. So. . . *"Where are the miracles? The days of miracles are gone!"* Even some loyal members of the church respond the same way, *"Where are the miracles?"*



Cecile and Pat

Real miracles are sacred experiences. And those who have taken part in or witnessed such occurrences would not dream of exposing them to scorn or ridicule by telling about them to unbelievers—or particularly to a large audience that might include skeptics or critics of the faithful. Even if I were to tell all of the miracles that we witnessed with Pat during those years (or with Benjamin and some of the instances with my own children), perhaps some of you who are reading this might say that we have just imagined it to be a miracle. But I know that most of you

weren't there, so you might not believe it to be miraculous; but for myself, I have no doubt that there was heavenly intervention. Perhaps, my small amount of faith helped, but the person of faith was Pat. She should never have lived as long as she did (medically). *"But she died anyway,"* you might say. And so did Benjamin. And so will we.

I know it's not how long we live, but how! I learned this from my Uncle Alan, who I never actually met. Before he succumbed to tuberculosis in the 1930's, he said these very words to his sister (my mother). And we often heard those words from her mouth as we were growing up.

There's not a day that goes by that I don't think of Pat (or my nephew Ron who lived about the same number of years). She was one of the best friends a person could have. I won't tell of the many miracles we witnessed together, but I will share the last day I was with her (15 March 1996). She was in a hospital in Los Angeles, and we still lived in Santa Rosa. I visited her for one whole day from 11:00 in the morning to 11:00 at night. This beautiful woman who never seemed to have a hair out of place was now totally bald and swollen from huge doses of chemotherapy. I didn't even recognize her when I first walked into her room. All dignity was torn from her. The miracle of what occurred in those twelve hours wasn't what happened to Pat, but what happened to me. Always before when the situation with her health was close to this terrible point, we decided to fast and pray and every prayer was granted. But this time it was different, and she knew it, and in those twelve hours, I learned to accept it.

I tried to hold her hand, and she said, *"I know you want to hold my hand, but it hurts."* She only had enough breath to talk for about five minutes every half hour. So I waited for every half

hour to pass so we could visit a little bit. At one point, I felt her feet, and said, *"Pat, your feet are so cold."* She didn't have any feeling in them, so said,

"Are they? Then why don't you rub them." It didn't matter to her,

but she knew that I needed to feel like I was doing something for her. I felt honored beyond what I can describe as I rubbed her feet. It reminded me of the scriptures when

a woman bathed the Savior's feet with her tears or when the Savior himself washed the Apostles' feet. Why is this

process such a sacred moment? I'm not sure, but I felt like I was touching someone in a most sacred way as I

tried to warm her feet. And as I did, I thought, *"Pat, who are you, and what do you know that I don't? What has this*

disease taught you? And can you please share it with me?"



In just a few words, I learned so much. During one of our five minute intervals, I said, *"Pat, it's real, isn't it - in just a few days*

you will be with Benjamin and Alicia (her first child who lived only

a very few hours)." She looked at me and said, *"I can hardly wait!"* At that moment a feeling totally engulfed my whole body, and I knew just as surely as I have ever known anything that life after death was real. She would be with them. They were waiting for her, and there would be a glorious reunion. Didn't I know this already? Of course I did—or wanted to believe it with

all my heart. It's the whole purpose of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—it is the reason we go to the Temple and are sealed to our spouse and our children are sealed to us. It's the reason we go to church, learn how to live, and then try to live according to what the Prophets teach us. It's the reason the gospel was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It's the reason we are baptized and make covenants and then make even more sacred covenants in the Temple. Pat's few words, "*I can hardly wait!*" were like a testimony being born by someone who knew the truthfulness of the gospel, knew the reality of God, and who knew that God's promises were going to be hers. She had been through the refiner's fire, and nothing, not even the loss of all dignity, could shake her faith. Her beauty was no longer evident on the outside, but ever so evident on the inside.

At 11:00 at night, I finally kissed Pat on the cheek—we were both crying. I told her (and not in a joking manner) that I'd see her in about twenty years or so. She was ready and willing to leave, and I left the hospital knowing I had once again been in the presence of greatness—the spirit was there in rich abundance. I had work left to do on this earth. Hers was done. She died on the 22nd of March 1996, just seven days after my visit.

One thing is certain. God does not change, and He is a God of miracles. Those miracles come as a result of faith and need and also when it serves God's own purposes. I know what I've experienced and felt and have no need to prove it to anyone. It will be proven to everyone in good time. (MORMON 9:8-10, 15-19)

I think we'll all find out that the greatest of all miracles is death itself, followed by the resurrection and the uniting of our immortal body and spirit – life again and forever with our loved ones, hopefully as a family in the Celestial Kingdom.

“Lucie”



*Lucie Howard James
Born: 2 March 1900
Died: 27 December 1980*

LUCIE - SPIRITED WITH HAPPINESS

CHAPTER ONE

How does one describe Lucie? Where can I begin? Her husband Cecil and each of her six children all visualize her differently. Still, in my own mind, I see her so vividly! In a conversation, I could tell you what she'd say. I've heard her stories so often, they have become my own. I seem to imagine every incident as if it were happening to me. No, I wasn't always there, but I feel like I was. I often dream of her and wake up having had a most enjoyable visit—having lived a moment that never actually happened but one so clear that it could have been true. Somehow, the conversations, situations and people were as real as life. My dreams of Lucie are always of happy times.



Lucie and Jessie - about 1918

It's easy to picture her growing up in Maywood, Illinois, walking home from school with Gordon and Jessie or sliding down the three-story bannister in the house on Congress Street. I see her being courted, though not by as many beaux as her sister Jessie. Lucie always felt that "*Jessie was the pretty one.*" Her feeling wasn't one of envy, but of love and respect. And, in truth, Jessie was beautiful! There was a closeness between the two girls that continued their entire lives. I see a lost love and Lucie heartbroken, but then see her later as a new bride sitting on the hood of a fancy 1925 Model-T, happily posing with her husband, Cecil.

The picture of her as a new mother is especially clear as each new baby came along. I can even imagine her giving emotional support to her own Mother when deaths occurred in the family.

Then there she is as a fifty-two year old mother who was a college student, a party-giver, and a poetess. It's easy to



Lucie and Cecil - 1925

envision her looking up into a grandson's eyes, patting him on the back and saying, "My, you're getting tall and handsome." She spent many hours on her knees planting flowers, as well as hours raking gardens and burning weeds. I see her moving rocks, spreading gravel, but mostly



I see a happy face under a big garden hat! No one who knew Lucie could see a hammock without thinking of her and the hours she spent pushing children and grandchildren to get them to sleep.

On Lucie's walls hung heart-warming mementos: a particular picture of Mary and Jesus by Ferrazza, a small single sepia toned picture of her own mother, pictures of her children as babies and other pictures of them as adults. And then, stretching up the wall beside the staircase (hung with pride) were pictures of each of her thirty-two grandchildren. Every room of her home was decorated carefully by her own hands and each had a feeling of *welcome home* when you walked in. There was the green room, the blue room, the pink and yellow rooms, and an expansive living room with a comfortable *lived in* look.

I often see Lucie on her knees praying, sitting up in bed reading, or at church teaching a class full of teenagers. Most often she is in the kitchen baking bread, golden cakes, and rice pudding. Can any one of her children smell a pot roast and not be reminded of her big Sunday dinners? I see her young, middle-aged, old, but always alive, vital and strong. Mostly, I see her as a woman with purpose! To me, her purpose in life was to give *roots and wings* to her children. She captured the essence of this purpose in a poem written when she was seventy-five. Each stanza is a story in itself . . .



*Lucie, Cheril, Joyce, Alan, Lorna, Cecil, Cecile
Thanksgiving 1950, Provo, Utah*



Lucie and Susie - about 1949

ROOTS AND WINGS

*A Mother's tasks are many
In a home with children small;
At first it takes much T.L.C.
As she cuddles one and all.*

*But there is still a greater need
That many years may take,
And thought and tears and prayers and love
That "trial and error" make.*

*A mother should give roots,
Good roots, both strong and true -
Build character, integrity,
To meet temptations new.*

*Roots of Faith to hold, to guide,
Keep children's heads held high;
Knowing always in their hearts
That Heaven's help is nigh.*

*Roots spirited with Happiness
Acquired along life's way,
A mother's smile, approval
On efforts spent each day,*

*A mother in the home
At close of day to greet,
And baking bread's aroma,
Their hunger pangs to meet.*

*A mother should give wings
That boys and girls might soar,
Do things before unknown
Nor ever done before.*

*Wings sprung from roots
Of well-employed time,
Encouraged in the way
Their talents might incline.*

*Wings and roots, nourished by love,
Both parents in a team;
Roots for Strength and Wings for Joy,
Twice parent blessings bring.*

(LUCIE HOWARD JAMES - 1972)

For the most part, Lucie told her own story. She kept an elaborate journal and its passages add detail to my memories. Her married life began in Rock Springs, Wyoming. In the early 1920's it was a remote and desolate town built next to the huge coal mines that supplied fuel to most of the Rocky Mountain States. It was a barren spot where the wind blew sand in the hot summers and snow drifts during the freezing winters. Cecil, together with his father and brothers, worked in the family business - a construction company, lumber yard, and building supplies store. It was a rugged setting with a humble home, but it abounded in love. Her journal began with the babies . . . *"At first it takes much T.L.C . . ."* In her words:

"There is something irresistible about a newborn. Babies love to be talked to, to hold one's finger, to smile, and soon a new dimension is added to our lives — and this with every new addition. They give us an assurance of immortality. Love is forever. Their looks, their form, their voices, their smiles are ever with us and our love for them increases day by day. Life becomes more meaningful."

"Lois was the first child born in our new home on Young Avenue and arrived just as Dr. Lauzer was coming in the front door. She was a beautiful baby with long black eye lashes framing lovely big blue eyes. She had tiny brown curls all over her head . . ."

And then when another child was born . . .

"We have the most adorable, darlingest, cutest, beautifulest little man child I ever laid eyes on. I was quite silly about the other children but worse than bugs about this one. He has black hair, whiter skin than Richard's and smiley eyes . . . I could rave all nite about my Tommy . . ."

"When Joyce was born, Mother called the doctor in time for him to get there, but when he arrived, he barely had time to wash his hands in cold water. It was June, but the house wasn't very warm. Mother made a coal fire in the kitchen, and we soon had a bouncing, beautiful baby surrounded by admiring uncles and aunts. I thought all my babies beautiful . . ."

One day while the children were playing in the backyard, Lucie heard the muffled explosion of firecrackers and then a cry of pain.

"What is it?" called Lucie as she ran to Lois who was holding her hands and screaming.

"Here, let me bandage your hand — you're being very brave."

Lois was only six years old and even the bandage could not comfort her. Since the wound seemed minor, Lucie decided to take the children for a ride to calm Lois down. It was still morning when they turned off on a side road.

"Okay, here we are. Let's hunt for rocks . . . that's a beauty, Richard. Oh, and that one's wonderful. Just look at the colors . . . Come quickly, this one looks just like an egg . . . Tommy has a big one - let's help him get it in the car."



Lois

“Mama,” Lois whispered as she pulled on Lucie’s skirt, “*my hand is all better. Can I find some rocks too?*”

“*Of course you can. We’ll take the very best ones home, dig a pit in our backyard and put them in. Then we can roast potatoes in our pit.*”

“Mama, look at Joyce,” they all squealed, “*she found a rock almost as big as she is!*”

Hours passed.

“Okay, it’s time to go home,” Lucie told them. “*The trunk’s full and the sun is sinking behind the hills.*”

The car had sunk deep into the sand. Lucie gunned the motor again and again. It sputtered but stuck. They all unloaded the beautiful rocks, put sagebrush under the wheels, gunned the motor again, but nothing happened. Finally, in utter desperation Lucie said,

“*We’re going to have to walk back to the highway. It’s going to be a long, long, long walk. So Lois, you hold Tommy’s hand and Richard can help me with Joyce since she’s too heavy to carry.*”

“*What about our rocks?*”

“*They’ll be okay. It’s more important to get to the highway before dark.*”

Well, it was beginning to get dark when they reached the main road to Rock Springs. They were weary and sad to leave their nice car way out there stuck in the sand. However, Lucie felt that anyone would pick up a woman and four small children — a mistake, for car after car passed them by. Her faith in humanity was ebbing fast when finally a doctor stopped. His words of comfort were,

“*My *%*! woman, what are you doing out here with four small children? Get in!*”

Lucie tried to tell him her name and where they lived, but only wept.

“Okay, son,” as he looked at Richard, “*Tell me your Father’s name.*”

Richard spoke up and *right off* the doctor took them home. Lucie only hoped she thanked him, for she was too upset at the moment to remember. However, the next day, Cecil went after the car and the rocks and they all lived happily ever after!

Several years later when Cheril was only four years old, the family had another frightening experience. Lucie was driving the car with all the children . . .

“*Watch the door carefully, Richard; Cheril could grab the handle . . .*”

He was holding the baby and doing all he could when in a flash it happened: the door was open and Cheril was gone. Lucie stopped the car. They all ran in every direction. At first they couldn’t even find her.

“*Over here, I found her. She’s in the ditch!*” someone called.

Suddenly there she was — her head a mass of blood and her little body limp, unconscious.

“Pick her up carefully, Richard . . . gently now, into the car . . . careful . . . that’s it, you’re doing fine. We’ll find a doctor.”

Tears of fright filled Lucie’s eyes.

“Is she alive, Mama? Will she be okay?”

“I don’t know. The doctor will help us now.”

The doctor lived in a small dumpy house. He had to get wood, start a fire for hot water, and hunt for scissors to cut off Cheril’s hair. Cheril lay on the table motionless with all the children watching over her. You could hear a pin drop. On one side of her head there was a cut about four inches long and five inches wide which the doctor clamped together with nine clamps. He then put a lady’s nylon stocking over the bandages. The tears finally dropped from Lucie’s eyes as she watched and waited.



Cheril

“He’s so slow . . . so very, very slow . . . ”

When Cecil arrived, he decided they had better get Cheril to the hospital as soon as possible. He took Cheril in the car, and Lucie and all the other children drove home in the truck. Lucie’s most difficult moment after 100 miles of driving was when she entered town. She kept thinking,

“Will Cheril be at the hospital or the mortuary?”

She decided to take the children home first. To her surprise, Cheril was home, unconscious but still alive!

“What did the Doctor say?” Lucie asked.

“She’s badly hurt,” Cecil began, *“We shouldn’t hope too much for her life, as the injury was at the control center of the brain. If she does live, she will never see or walk again . . . ”*

The shock was almost too much. They did all they could. They prayed and had a Priesthood blessing given to her. For three days Dr. Lauzer came to see her to change the bandages. One day Lucie saw tears in his eyes as he looked not at Cheril, but at the children standing at the foot of the bed, silent and waiting for a word of hope.

On the evening of the third day, some friends came over. Lucie was talking to them in the front room when suddenly she looked at the door leading to Cheril’s room, and there she STOOD in her long white nightgown . . . she could WALK and she could SEE! Lucie picked her up and took her back to bed. She closed her eyes, and then painfully opened them and said,

“Mama, I have a real bad headache.”

Little by little she improved and slowly her hair grew. It was just a few years earlier that Lucie’s mother had sent her this poem:

A PRAYER

*I would not ask for thee, O child of mine
That thou be shielded from all grief and strife,
Nor that thy pathway ever smooth should be
Nor that the storms and battles of this life
Should ever pass thee by;
Rather would I implore the Giver of all Good
That help be given to thee to rise and stand
Erect and valiant; Courage in thine eye
And strength to meet each test, And in thy hand
The staff of faith; and knowledge that here lies
The secret of thy growth toward God.*

(DRUCILLA S. HOWARD, 1935)

The storms and battles never passed Lucie by as she raised her six little children into adulthood. There was always a rainbow at the end of each storm because of her strength, faith and courage. She understood the need to give “*tender loving care*” to the little ones.



Lucie with Lois, Tommy, Richard and Joyce



Cecil with Joyce and Cheril

CHAPTER TWO

“A Mother should give Roots . . .

. . . Roots spirited with Happiness Acquired along life’s way; A mother’s smile, approval on efforts spent each day. . .”

How did Lucie give roots? Was it on the camping trips? Was it the hours spent listening to recounts of experiences after children’s dates? Was it the letters she faithfully wrote to each of her children when they were away? What about the clothes she sewed at the beginning of each school year or the parties she gave? Were her children impressed by her own testimony given often at church or by the hours and time she spent doing church work and service to others? Did her desire for a college education inspire them to get one? Was it the birthday cakes? Of course, it was all of these. I can’t help but think it was the hundreds of little things that made the children know that Lucie cared about them and was anxious for them to love life and enjoy each other.

Most of her children’s friends were not members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints so, as a parent, Lucie had not encouraged dating in high school. But, the Junior Prom was different! She remembered being seventeen, how she had hoped for a date, and how thrilled she was when she got one. With this in mind, she encouraged Richard to get a date for his Junior Prom.

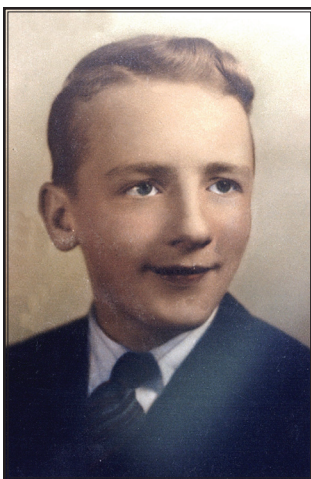
“You do want to go, don’t you, Richard?”

“Of course I do, but maybe I’ll just wait ‘til tomorrow or the next day to ask.”

The night before the prom Lucie finally insisted, *“Richard, if you don’t ask someone, I’ll ask for you!”*

“Mom, you wouldn’t!”

“Well, I know Lois Hatch doesn’t have a date, and she’s a real nice girl.”



Richard

“Yeah, I’d like to go with her alright.” Still he wasn’t too interested in making the phone call.

Finally, Lucie threatened him, *“If you don’t call by 9 o’clock, I’ll call for you.”*

Then he got serious and said, *“But what should I say?”*

“Oh, just ask her if she found the pencil you lost.”

“But I didn’t lose a pencil!” he countered.

Time ticked on. Lucie was doing dishes in the kitchen, but stopped long enough to slip over next door. She called Lois Hatch and said,

“Lois, at exactly 9 o’ clock will you call Richard and ask him if he found the pencil you lost?”

She agreed. Lucie came back, finished the dishes, and then they all stood around watching the clock and watching Richard gather the needed courage.

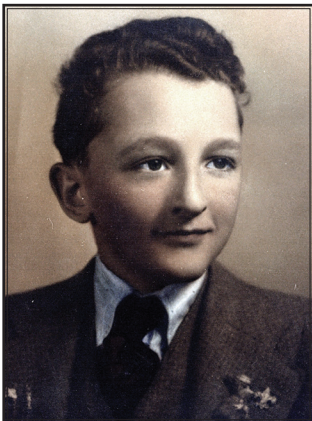
At 9 o’ clock the phone rang. Lucie called out, *“Richard, would you get the phone, please?”*

They all followed Richard as he answered it. His big James voice came bounding out, as he glared at everyone in the room,

“What pencil?!!” Then he quickly added, *“By the way, would you go to the prom with me tomorrow? . . . you would? . . . Great!”*

He hung up the receiver, glared at everyone again and said, *“Okay, who did it?”*

But before anyone could answer, he took a sommersault on the frontroom floor and seemed to come up with a look of relief!



Then there was the day that Tom came bounding into the kitchen . . .
. . . *“Hey, Mom, those look pretty good.”*

Before she could say a word, he had taken his fork and stabbed a big piece of garlic and stuck it in his mouth (he thought it was an onion!) Well, what happened next, you would hardly believe . . .

TOM

*Into the kitchen rushed happy Tom,
Hungry as teenagers get,
On the sink with fork through its middle
Was what looked like a fresh onion set.
He chewed it, swallowed then looked
dismayed,
“That onion was rotten!” said he.
Suddenly Tom achieved a new status,
He was powerful, potent, you see.
Now no human being came near him,
But that didn’t phase our Tom,
He dressed in his best clothes on Sunday
With his garlic tagging along.
From his mouth he blew a strong spout,
All proper heads turned away,*

*Some folks even got up and went out
But the Bishopric had to stay!
Tom held his poise but his clove broke camp -
The sermon was hardly heard,
Nice folks glanced and eyebrows rose
And many a nostril stirred.
And life at home was not the same
He dared not go to school,
Just showered and bathed and sucked on mints
And tried to play it cool.
Now garlic cloves are taboo for Tom,
Likewise for his relations;
We prefer our children plain you see
With no fancy decorations!*

(LUCIE H. JAMES, 1950)

Every Life With A Purpose

Birthdays with Lucie never brought any monetary gifts of great value, but there was always a cake, and a party, and also perhaps a letter . . . or a poem.

TO CECILE—AGE TWENTY-ONE!

*Happy Birthday, Cecile
You've reached 21
Life as a woman
For you has begun.*



*The key to the house we now
Give you today.
You may go as you like
Come in the same way.*



*You may now look at boys
And maybe perhaps
Flutter an eyelash, it will
"Send" the dear chaps.*



*Think no longer in terms
Of how boys can dance
How handsome their profile
How thrilling their glance,*



*But rather how strong
Their big hearts and big hands
Big muscles to plow and to
Furrow your lands!*



*A man who approves of his
Mother-In-Law
Will think her real "beaut"
With nary a flaw.*



*That would chop up her wood
If pressed by his wife
Be a model provider
All of his Life,*



*That will trundle the children
And put them in bed,
Tell all of them stories
Plus all the prayers said.*



*Lastly, Cecile,
We all hope you'll retain
Your spirit so gay
As you quickly grow up
On this your birthday.*



*Your interest in others whose
Lot you may share,
Keep the love in your bones
That makes you to care.*

*Your heart which seeks others
Along the hi-way
And gathers them in
Makes you richer each day.*

*And safe-guard the glitter
That shines in your eyes
And also the tears that
Back of them lies.*

*No reforms do we ask
On this special day,
We'll take you "as is"
In a "Tom" sort of way.*

Love, Mom and Dad (LUCIE H. JAMES, 1962)

Lucie had never been camping in her life before marrying Cecil. She was a city girl used to an indoor lavatory, just seconds away, and electric lights. Hoot owls on the path to the "rest room" terrified her at night, as did moose and elk and deer, which her husband assured her would run from her. Nevertheless, every summer, year after year, was spent at Fremont Lake in Wyoming. Lucie worried about the drunks - men who came up supposedly to fish but who drank all night and slept all day. She worried too when the boys took the boat out on the lake. Fremont had sudden wind and rain storms and someone told them that it was very deep. No one knew how deep it was.

She was especially frightened once when Richard and Tom took Joyce and Lois for a boat ride, and a terrific storm came up suddenly bringing lightning, thunder, wind and rain. As she raced from the pier to higher spots along the shore, a myriad of thoughts raced through her mind and sometimes came out audibly . . .

“The children are out there, but I can’t hear the boat . . . Is that a motor I hear? . . . yes, it is . . . oh, it’s stopped now . . . No, no, it is a motor - it has to be . . . The waves are too high . . . Oh, I can’t see them anywhere . . . Maybe if I run along the shore . . . I’m sure I hear a motor!”

She frantically ran through the rain for about a mile toward the head of the lake, and through the rain and thunder she heard someone call, *“Mama!”*

This gave her a direction. She looked and caught her breath as two little dripping wet girls came climbing up the bank.

“Lois? Joyce? Oh, it is you! Thank goodness! You’re okay. The boys? . . .”

Lois ran toward her and said, *“Richard and Tom are trying to tie the boat but are afraid it will be dashed to pieces.”*

The boat didn’t seem to matter — the children were safe! Soon the boys came up the bank also, soaked to the skin, but definitely relieved.

“I’m proud of both of you! How ever did you manage the boat in this storm? I’m so glad to have you all back . . . how does some hot chocolate sound?”

Lucie was very thankful her prayers had been answered. She knew then that real praying was done best under the stress of a great need. She made some good promises too that night and every once in a while she remembered some of them! The camping trips continued every summer, and in every extended family they still do — even today.

HAPPY DAYS

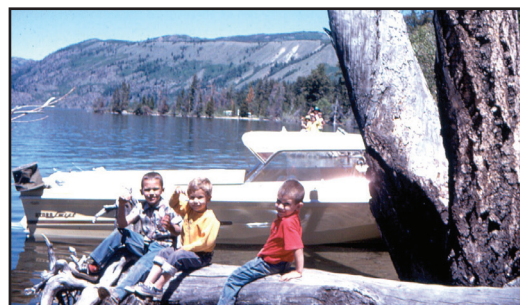
*Tonight I’m thinking of all the fun
We’ve had on trips when we were young.
To distant lakes and parks and such
Where we camped out in one big bunch.*

*We’d wake up early, take our bikes
Go for a ride or take a hike,
Or grab our towels and go for a swim,
Race half a mile to be “first in.”*

*Or had the boys prepare to take
The boat across the waiting lake;
The still long nights beneath the stars
With only an owl the silence to mar.*



Joyce, Cecile and Michael testing the cold water at Fremont Lake



Johnny, Rusty, Billy - Fremont Lake

*No clock to tell us when to eat
When to get up or go to sleep.
No morning paper with the news
Of mishaps or which "brand" to choose.*

*Our first safari let me tell
Of seventeen in one motel!
Three cars then held all our stuff,
Sleeping bags and powder puff.*

*To Yellowstone we next did go
To feed the bears and take a row.
Saw good Old Faithful's faithful spout
Just sixty minutes - up and out!*

*Dude Ranching also we have tried
When riding "Ranger" was our pride,
And swimming was a sun-burnt deal
Our tender skins that hurt to peel.*

*To the Dakotas once we went
Six cars now on pleasure bent,
Saw the big faces cut from stone
Our Presidents, aloft, alone.*

*At Canyon Grand, Pop was pitied quite,
So many children didn't seem right,
To a certain somebody we didn't know,
He paid Dad's bill after eating—'tis so!*

*Through many trips the children small
Held cousins' hands or played at ball
Or ate with zest the camp-cooked fare
And slept at night without a care.*

*For Happy Days we thank you now
For punk baked beans and other chow,
For many free and happy days
Spent in the open, fresh byways.*

Our love, Mom and Dad

(LUCIE H. JAMES, 1973)



Old Faithful, Yellowstone Park



Cecile and Ranger at Dude Ranch



*Cecil at Grand Canyon
Below: Cecil and Lucie, Fremont Lake*



CHAPTER THREE

*“But there is still a greater need
That many years may take
And thought and tears and prayers and love
That ‘trial and error’ make . . . ”*

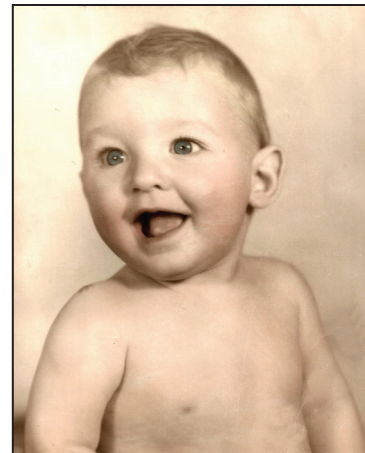
Yes, I see Lucie old, or at least getting older. Some of her children married and gone, and yet to know Lucie, you’d think life had just begun. Every day, new and exciting, with many great adventures yet ahead; the family not becoming less important, but just the opposite.

Her first experience as a Grandmother was not an easy one. Her first grandchild was premature. The doctor’s words rang in her ears,

“Your daughter is just fine, but I’m afraid there’s nothing more we can do for her son.”

Without hesitating, Lucie answered, *“Then can I take him home . . . so we can try?”*

He agreed. The baby only weighed about three pounds. Lucie was determined. Every hour around the clock they fed him with an eye dropper. The progress at first was painfully slow, but little by little he grew. Today her grandson Ron is nearly six feet tall. How could one not believe in miracles after that?



Ronnie

Lucie took the same kind of effort with each of her grandchildren as she did her own children, but with an added wisdom that comes with age. She had some *magic* now. Sometimes where a mother seems to fail, a grandmother can succeed. Take work for example:

Lucie called out to Dave, *“I have an idea that would make this a wonderful day!”*

“What is it, Grandma?” (She already had his attention).

“Have you ever made a BUG ZOO?”

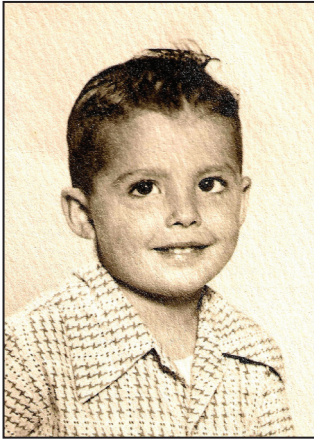
His eyes widened with excitement, *“No . . . ”*

“Well, today we’re going to make one. First let’s find some old bottles in the basement.”

Dave brought them up from the basement, his excitement overflowing . . .

"Look, Grandma, we have our first bug for the Zoo. There's already a spider in this bottle!"

"Wonderful! Now let's go find some more."



Davy

They weeded gardens all day; Grandma clearing the weeds, Dave lifting them on a wheelbarrow and emptying the wheelbarrow in the big pile behind the garage, ready to be burned on Saturday. The day's findings were truly exciting.

"Look, Grandma . . . a grasshopper!"

"Quick, catch it for the bottle!"

"I have it!"

"Wonderful . . . but hurry back for I just found 100 potato bugs under this big rock!"

At the end of the day the garden was immaculate, but the prettiest sight was the Bug Zoo. Bottles were lined up on the porch, each containing a precious find: a black widow spider, four grasshoppers, dozens of potato bugs, three ladybugs, black ants, red ants, squiggly worms, two butterflies, a daddy long-leg spider, a bumble bee, a mosquito and the prize of the day, a little tiny frog!

Lucie also used her magic in helping her grandchildren develop talents. My son, Craig, came running home one day . . .



Craig

"Well, is anyone going to come see me in my school play?" (He was only in fourth grade).

"When is it?" I asked.

"Tomorrow!"

"Well, that's not much time to plan, is it?" His face dropped, but quickly lit up again when his Grandma spoke,

"There's nothing happening tomorrow that's more important than your play. We'll be there."

Craig only had a few lines, but Lucie picked up on something quite unusual. That evening she said,

"Craig, tomorrow's Christmas Eve. Why don't you write up the play and teach it to the other children. You have the whole play memorized, don't you?"

"Yes, yes, I know all the parts!"

Every Life With A Purpose

"I thought you did . . ."

He wrote all day, but came back to Lucie very discouraged. *"The kids don't want to do it, Grandma; they think it's silly . . ."*

"Well, that's even better!" she exclaimed. *"Now you can be all the parts! Go find all the hats and aprons you need for the play, and every time it's a different character, we'll just change the outfit."*

They spent hours. No one in the house really sensed that anything unusual was going to happen that night. The family sat around the fire for Christmas Eve. There was a noticeable excitement in Craig. Finally Lucie announced that there was a surprise performance that night.

"Craig is going to do a one-man show!"

His play went on for thirty minutes. With every change of character, he put on a different hat, or an apron, changed the inflection of his voice and even added a couple of different accents. What a memory!

Lucie, in those years, also took time for her personal development and decided she would graduate from a four year university, Brigham Young University, with her son Tom. Her last two children were in high school and two were attending college with her. She entered as a freshman at age fifty-two. One of her first classes was a Sociology Class. It was straight lecture with a term paper at the end of the quarter - a *"Sociological Autobiography."* This didn't seem difficult, but when she had it finished, she had six sheets of notebook paper. She thought,

"Now who in the world would want to read six pages about me?"

So she cut it down to three pages, then folded it in half, inserting a straight pin to hold the pages together. When she got to class the next day, everyone had a blue notebook, each filled with many pages. She asked the woman next to her,

"How many pages have you?"

She answered, *"Only forty-two. I just couldn't think of anything else to write."*

Some had fatter books and most were typed. After everyone had handed in their papers and left the class, Lucie presented her shining three pages to the professor saying,

"Will you accept this or should I get a blue notebook to put it in?"

He smiled a sort of sad smile and said, *"I'll accept it."*

It was almost two weeks before the papers were returned. When Lucie's was handed to her, she casually slipped it between the pages of her textbook without looking at the grade.

She thought, *"I don't have the courage just yet, but I'll go to the rest room and look at it there. It'll be better looking at it behind closed doors."*

When she got there her thoughts took a change, *"No, I think I'll wait 'til I get home where nothing can hurt me."*

She placed it on the dining room hutch until she had finished supper, again postponing the ordeal.

"Maybe, I'll wait 'til I've had a good night's sleep," she thought. "That will help."

At two a.m. she got up, bravely went downstairs and opened the folded three sheets, and carefully peeked at the last page to see her grade. Then the real shock came . . .

"It's a B-Plus! I can't believe it!"

And at the bottom of the page there was a note saying, *"May I have a copy of this, please?"*

She wanted to shout for joy or call someone on the telephone or take a walk in the moonlight, but the hour was wrong.

"Well, I guess I'll just go take that sleep I so much need . . ." she thought. "But how can I sleep and why go sleepily unconscious when such a delightful, happy, heavenly glow is enveloping me . . . After all, I've heard of some other very smart people who require less sleep than ordinary folk!"

Perhaps the hardest thing about being a mother is her inability to remove life's burdens from her own children. Those are the experiences that finally age a mother. Lucie was no different. Her wrinkles were all well earned. The physical wear and tear began to show on her, but her mental outlook was always positive and young. She had a sure knowledge that life is eternal, even though our stay on earth is very important. Even in the hardest of times, she had a way of making the burden a little less heavy. One such time was the accidental death of her grandson, Danny, who was only nineteen years old. She helped the whole family see beyond . . .

DANNY

*It does not seem that he is gone,
I feel the nearness of his wit,
His eyes that sparkled with each tale
I see them still with laughter lit.
Strong of leg and limb for skiing,
Brave he took "Big Emmy's" grade,
(A challenge for professionals)
He grinned and said, "I'm not afraid."
Soft spoken to the girls was he,
To ladies fair and to his Mom,
He picked up children with one hand
Held high their torsos with aplomb.
Faithful to his priesthood's calling,
Put first the duties called upon,
Searched the scriptures for his answers,
And knew for sure the right from wrong.
Amazing how much food he ate,
Surprised us how he held it all,
Was never sick, did not complain,
He met life squarely, feeling tall.
He always set his clock's alarm,
But getting up was not appealing,
He let it ring its old heart out,
Then kicked the covers to the ceiling!*



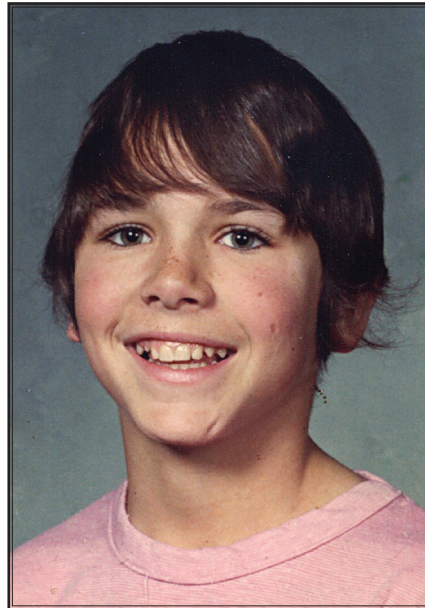
*Calm and collected, shaved and dressed,
Arrived on time, looking his best.
School to him was just a breeze,
And dating girls he did with ease.
So strong, so brave, stalwart each day,
I almost now can hear him say,
"When my time came, I'd made the
grade,
Remember folks, I'm not afraid."*

(LUCIE HOWARD JAMES, 1975)

And then in only the brief span of one and one-half years followed the accidental death of her grandson Johnny. He died when he was almost fifteen years of age . . .

JOHNNY

*How does one describe
A person as special
As Johnny?
Physically he was strong,
But not tall, Firm
 but not heavy.
He had black wavy hair
And sparkling eyes
Always smiling and
Framed by long gorgeous eyelashes.
His skin was fair,
With rosy cheeks,
And one pock mark.
He had a fine
Stevenson nose.
His mouth turned
up at the corners,
Which made for a
 permanent pleasant expression
Which easily broadened
Into a smile.
Spiritually Johnny had a
Willing capacity for work.
At our family outings
It was "Johnny do this!"
 "Johnny do that!"
He loved people
Both old and young
and in between.
Johnny belonged to
All of us.
He might have been
Proud.
He wasn't!
Johnny stood
Grinning on Christmas Day
In a brand new suit
Of tan corduroy.
"Grandma," he said,
"How do I look?"*



*“Gorgeous,” I replied,
“Me for you when
I grow up!”
Then he
Smiled and said,
“Why wait?”
And put his
Nice strong arms
around me.
Now wasn’t that
A nice Christmas Present?
People came to
the house after
His tragic
Accident
Bringing food
And love and
Sympathy to
his parents,
Hundreds
Stood in a long, long
Line, in the cold
At the
Mortuary.
We all felt a
Bond
of Human Kindness and
Love.*

(LUCIE H. JAMES, 1977)

I suppose Lucie had ailments and pain like other people, but her children were not very often aware of them. Only once do I remember her crying in pain. Many of the children and grandchildren were at her home one summer. It was very early in the morning. In that black darkness that precedes the dawn her children and their families were still asleep. Lucie tiptoed out of her room without turning on any lights, trying not to awaken anyone. She wasn't fully awake and miscalculated where she was. Instead of turning into another room, she stepped straight off the top of the staircase. As Lucie toppled down the stairs, she landed right on her head. We heard the crashing sounds and ran to the stairs where she sat weeping with her head in her hands. I remember feeling so helpless and desperate. I was hoping and praying that the pain would subside, but I am not sure it ever fully left her. It occurred to me then how little I had ever heard her complain or murmur about physical pain and it seemed so foreign to hear it then.

Lucie had occasionally suffered from migraine headaches before the fall but they worsened and increased in frequency afterwards. Rather than complain, she would simply disappear up the stairs to her room earlier than the rest of us. On December 15, 1980 one of her severe

headaches resulted in a stroke that hospitalized her. Shortly before that day she had written a Christmas poem to her children. In it she was reminiscent about a family party given earlier in the year for her and Cecil in honor of their birthdays.



OUR EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY PARTY

*It was an unforgettable occasion! However . . .
Suddenly to our great surprise!
Our children dear most all surmise
That we no longer run so fast,
That we stretch sleep to make it last.
They take our pictures lovingly,
While both of us have eyes to see.
They help us in and out of cars,
Insist we hold tight to the bars.
Up easy steps, they hold our arms
So we can come to no small harm.*

*But,
When alone, we move with ease,
With spurts of vigor, do as we please,
Run up the stairs — well, we do some,
Open car doors with finesse, aplomb.
We do not like the pictures took
They resemble oldsters from a book!
We plan to tell them so some day,
Come tomorrow — perhaps we may.
We've grown quite fond of every child,
It's just their ways that drive us wild!*

(LUCIE H. JAMES, 1980)



*Alf & Joyce Ridge, Doug & Cecile Scribner, Dick & Lorna James,
Richard & Cheril Snow, Roberta & Tom James, Lois & Ernie Winfield
Photo taken in 1988 at Cecil's funeral*

Lucie's life had humor and purpose. She convinced us by example that when your heart is young and turned to others, there is no room for self pity. She gave love and respect to her husband as well as roots and wings to her children. Her eighty years were spent in fulfilling those purposes and in the very end, the children were aware of the union that was most important of all to her — the bond of husband and wife sealed for eternity. The children had been given roots for strength, and if they used the wings they had been given, they would have joy. Lucie died December 27, 1980. Cecil died June 8, 1988.

Lucie - Spirited With Happiness

*As a white candle in a holy place
So is the beauty of an aged face.
As the spirit radiance of the winter's sun
So is a woman with her travail done
Her brood gone from her and her thoughts as still
As the waters under a ruined mill.*

(DRUCILLA S.HOWARD - LUCIE'S MOTHER)





"The Wreck of the Birkenhead"
Painted by Thomas Hemy (Birkenhead, England)

ROOTS FOR STRENGTH

CHAPTER ONE

Where does one turn when a child dies? Where does one gather strength to continue life without a loved one? I remember so well asking those questions just seven months after Doug and I were married. We were both anxious to start a family and were thrilled when I became pregnant. There were no complications with the pregnancy, and just like thousands of other parents-to-be who had gone before us, we spent the months in great anticipation: fixing a nursery, buying diapers, picking out names, marking the days off the calendar, lying in bed and feeling all the kicks of the baby, trying to figure out which we wanted, a boy or a girl, and convincing ourselves that we were enjoying the whole experience more than anyone else ever had.

It was very close to the seven month mark, when the hemorrhaging began. I was in the bathroom and ran into the bedroom to tell Doug, knowing that it was all over. There wasn't going to be a baby for us right now.

"The baby's gone . . ." I began.

"What do you mean?" Doug questioned.

"I'm bleeding . . . very badly."

"Climb into bed. Let me hold you."

As Doug held me, we both silently hoped that the bleeding would stop and everything would be right again. In a matter of minutes, terrible pains started.

"Doug, call the Doctor. The baby is coming!"

After twenty minutes up the freeway, we were at the hospital. The pains were excruciating, and the fear of losing the baby kept me from relaxing. I was crying, fearful, tense. Before long there was something over my face, and as I breathed in, the world began to spin. It was a different world, free of pain yet somehow allowing an awareness of my circumstance. Something seemed to leave my body. When consciousness returned, I was in a different room and Doug was beside me. My hands were resting on my stomach.



*Doug, Cecile (and Boots)
December 1964*

“Why am I still pregnant? I was sure I delivered . . . ”

“The placenta gave birth,” Doug was explaining, “but the baby would not turn. Our baby’s dead, but your life is in danger, especially if they keep trying to force the baby to turn . . . ”

Only a few words and phrases were clear after that. My mind kept ringing with the thoughts,

“Our baby’s dead . . . placenta came first . . . your life in danger . . . baby’s dead . . . Cesarean section . . . need our approval . . . our baby’s dead.”

Doug did what he felt best and gave the approval for a Cesarean section. The operation went smoothly. We didn’t even look at our two and one-half pound son before the hospital had him buried. Though we now regret not having seen or held him, at the time we were anxious to put the ordeal behind us as quickly as possible. We were young and just didn’t know what to do.

How I wished my family lived closer. Mama and Dad were in Australia. Oh, how you need a mother at a time like this. We were inexperienced in facing these kind of life situations. We hardly knew how to comfort each other. Yes, help came from family members and friends from all walks of life. Many letters came from my mother, all of which made me cry yet feel better at the same time. Another came from my father, and just one statement of his has stuck with me all my life. He was quoting scripture: *“We see through a glass darkly. . .”* Another special little statement seemed to stay with me. It was written by my grandmother, Drucilla Howard, after she lost not one, but three children at birth. It read,

*“Just a tiny life,
Sweet as a perfumed kiss,
But we are nearer heaven, I know,
Because of this.”*

From that moment it was clear I had been through a near heaven experience - one from which spiritual and emotional growth could be gained. God loved me and would care for Doug and me, even in our sorrow.

Grandma Howard’s life intrigued me. What kind of woman was this who could give strength to her descendants almost twenty years after her death? In seeking comfort, I turned to her journal and found a heritage which became my *Roots For Strength*. The pages of her diary opened with an account of her husband’s father . . .

“John Richards Howard was born September 18, 1841 at Fareham, Hampshire, England. Though his mother died when he was two years old, John Richards grew into a most adventurous young lad . . .” This was possibly a result of his upbringing as a son of a seaman. His father, Richard Howard, was in the British Navy and *“Captain’s cook”* on Her Majesty’s ship, the *Birkenhead*.

Between his father’s trips, John would continually beg,

“Father, please take me with you. I won’t be in the way. Please, Father!”

To this his father would simply reply,

“Not yet, son. Someday, perhaps, but not yet.”

In the meantime, John Richards lived in an adventurous dreamworld of his own and imagined the glorious experiences that were part of his father’s life. By the time John was ten and one-half years old, his desire to go on a voyage with his father was overpowering.

“Father, I’m certainly old enough to go to South Africa with you, and there’ll be other children aboard. Please say, ‘yes.’ ”

No longer able to resist, Richard Howard replied,

“Yes, son, but I warn you, I’ll keep you on the water so long that you’ll never want to see it again!”

On the ship were the crew and a contingent of soldiers with some of their wives and children. They were being sent to the British colony in South Africa as part of the permanent garrison for that country. It was February 26, 1852. Everything seemed to be going well that night. Most of the children were sleeping and others who were awake were happy and laughing, enjoying one another’s company. They were just going around the Cape of Good Hope when suddenly the boat jarred.

“We’ve hit a large rock!” a voice echoed.

The news spread rapidly and everyone hurried on deck, but there was no panic. The officers gave orders and the men obeyed.

“You sailors, work the pumps. Water is coming in fast!”

“And you men over there, get those horses thrown overboard. We need to lighten the ship as quickly as we can!”

“And you, launch the boats. Load the women and children first. Do it immediately!”

Still the water came in and everyone knew that the *Birkenhead* was going down. One big boat and two small ones were filled with women and children and pushed off safely. Another was smashed by a falling spar, and two were swamped before anyone could get in them. The ship broke in two and began to sink. The soldiers were already drawn up in ranks. Someone called to them to swim for the boats, but they knew that the boats would be overloaded and swamped if this were done, and the women and children drowned. So they stood in line and waited for the ship to go down.

In the panic, Richard Howard had forgotten his own son who was asleep in his hammock. He ran to him and cried,

“Johnny, wake up, the ship is going down! Be brave.” A few seconds after pulling him out of the hammock, he tossed him overboard into a life boat that was just leaving the ship.



Richard Howard



The Wreck of the Birkenhead 1852
by Charles Dixon

“Save the boy,” Richard called out.

John saw his father lined up with the others as the ship went down and waters closed over it. He watched with horror as they plunged into the sea and fought for anything to hold onto - the last struggle for their lives. Most of them lost the struggle. This vision never left John the rest of his life. It all happened in ten minutes after the ship struck the rock. In an instant, it seemed, John had lost his father. He thought his little heart would break as the tears fell to his cheeks.

Some of the men managed to swim ashore, but these were very few. A few others managed to keep afloat on some of the wreckage and were picked up the next morning by a passing vessel that had also rescued the people in the boats. Thus, 184 were saved and 454 British soldiers and sailors were drowned, including Richard Howard.

Since his father had died in service to his country, John, now an orphan, was educated by the British Government at the Royal Hospital Greenwich Naval Academy. His future was assured and safe. At age eighteen he entered the British Naval Service. It was while he was on a ship traveling between England and America that he became acquainted with some missionaries who were going to England to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He and another sailor read the tracts and books that the missionaries gave them and listened to their message. They became convinced of the truth of the Gospel as taught by these *Mormon* Elders and decided to go to Utah and join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As my Grandmother Howard tells the story. . . One night when the ship was in harbor, they slipped overboard and swam about a mile to New York. From here they made their way to

Utah, traveling across the plains in the Arthur Brown Company. John was always at the beck and call of Brigham Young to help in the establishment of Zion. He was hired by Brigham Young to drive a team of oxen, back and forth, across the plains to the Rocky Mountains. Somehow, I feel that the courage his father, Richard Howard, displayed when he went down with the *Birkenhead* at Danger Point, South Africa, instilled courage in John - courage to stand erect in the face of anything. I believe that memory of his courageous and daring father was ever with him during his own personal trials and hard decisions he had to make.

He brought the first mowing machine into Utah in 1864 and was also the first to introduce *public bathing* in the Great Salt Lake. The first bathing resort was at Haight's property in Farmington and was opened to the public in 1870. John also ran *The Cambrian*, a pleasure boat on the Great Salt Lake. He was known as "*Commodore Howard*" throughout the Salt Lake Valley. He was also one of the first volunteer policemen and firemen in the Valley. John Richards Howard was a scholar and a gentleman, but most of all he retained his testimony of Jesus Christ and the power of God in his life.



John Richards Howard

CHAPTER TWO

John Richards' life of adventure had a strong influence on his own son, John Fitz Alan Howard. As a boy, John Fitz Alan loved to hear stories of his father and grandfather. He grew up motivated to seek out adventures of his own. He was born in 1869 in Salt Lake City, Utah, to John Richards Howard and Harriet Spinks Brooks. His mother died in 1883, leaving John, an older brother and three younger sisters. Though he was only fourteen when his mother died, and sixteen when his older brother died, John retained a positive attitude about life. He grew into a handsome young man with a natural talent for art and a determination to succeed that made him a fine catch for any young girl in the Salt Lake Valley.

One Sunday morning John was attending church, though not in his own area. As this tall, young, good looking man walked in, many girls tried to attract his gaze. But, only one succeeded - my grandmother, Drucilla Sears. As she caught his eye, he was already looking at her and it seemed they both *knew* it was right. There was a certain magic in the air and both

Drucilla and John felt it, even though they had not yet spoken to each other. A few days later there was a party. John attended and again his eyes met with Drucilla's. This time he took advantage of the opportunity to meet her.



John F. A. Howard

"May I introduce myself? My name is John Howard. Could I have the pleasure of knowing yours?"

Drucilla blushed with pleasure as she answered, *"Why, of course. I'm Drucilla, Drucilla Sears. You're new around here aren't you?"*

"Well, I only live a few miles away, but I've never seen you before last Sunday."

Drucilla blushed again as she remembered those warm feelings when she first caught his eye just a few days earlier.

"Would you care to dance?" asked John.

"I would like very much to dance. Thank you."

Never before had either enjoyed a dance so much, and their courtship had begun.

On her first date with John, she prepared herself for hours: the bath, the hair, the make-up,



Drucilla Sears

and the clothes. It was just about time for John to arrive. Her parents were very aware of her excitement. A few minutes before John was due, Drucilla's father slipped out the back door, raced to the front and rang the bell. Drucilla nearly flew down the stairs, straightening her hair as she went.

"Mother, he's here. Hurry, get Father. I'll answer the door."

With a great deal of anticipation, she opened the door, but it wasn't John - only her Father having a good laugh.

"Ha! Fooled you, didn't I?"

"Oh, Father. Why tonight of all nights? Come in before John catches us acting like fools!"

"Too late," called John. *"That was some of the best fun I've seen in a long time!"*

"Oh Father!" Drucilla moaned.

Their courting days were wonderful. John Fitz Alan wanted to know everything about this new attractive interest in his life. Though not one to brag, she was proud of her family and heritage, simple as it was . . .

Drucilla was a Christmas baby, born December 20, 1874, to Isaac and Sarah Jane Gailey Sears. Though physically only 5'1" and never very robust, she became a *tower of strength*. She was the fourth in a family of twelve children. Since she had a thirst for knowledge that was unquenchable, she started to school when only five years old (which was young in those days) and learned the value of hard work at a very early age.

Her whole story unfolded as John insisted that she tell him every detail. As she recalled her youth, she told him a story of life typical of western pioneer families.

In her journal, Drucilla recorded:

"To wash clothes, we had to build a fire in the kitchen stove to heat the water, scrub the clothes on a washboard, and boil them in soapy water. Then came the final rinse. To iron our clothes, we had flat irons, each weighing seven or eight pounds which had to be heated on top of the stove. Every spring we took up the carpets and cleaned them. The straw from under them was replaced, and we stretched and tacked them down again."

As she grew, Drucilla enjoyed the fun of watching sheep-shearing, hiking, singing around bonfires and going to the circus. In her own words, she described her childhood to John. He loved to listen to her and watch her come alive as she spoke of those people so dear to her heart.

"In the summertime, we would all pile in the family buggy and Father would take us on a Sunday afternoon up to Fort Douglas to see the soldiers parade. On other Sundays, we would drive out to Mill Creek to visit the Spencers."

Every Life With A Purpose

Then, when it was sheep shearing time, we would all go up in the canyon and stay for days while the men (sometimes twenty-five or more) sheared the sheep. We children had the time of our lives: climbing the mountains, bathing in the canyon stream, and in the evening, sitting around a huge bonfire that the shearers had built. They would play banjos or guitars and sing songs. I remember one song especially, 'Just Before the Battle Mother.' I think that I liked the bonfire and singing most of all. How we hated to leave it and go to bed in our tent.

When I was very small, I remember Father holding me on his knee and singing to me. One of the songs I loved was 'Roll on Silver Moon' and another was 'Never Push a Man When He is Going Down a Hill.'

In the winter, there was sleigh riding and parties with popcorn and molasses candy. We also had cottage meetings in our home with a dance on the linoleum afterwards with Father furnishing the music on the accordion.

I used to love to go down in the cellar just to smell and sample some of the things down there, for always there was a barrel of cider, mincemeat, fruit in jars, vegetables in the bin and molasses. Apples and winter pears were plentiful and made the cellar smell so good."

Growing up and maturing was a simple, but happy experience for Drucilla. Soon she was a young lady and ready to be courted. She had many courting experiences which helped her know just what kind of man she wanted. So when the eyes of John Fitz Alan Howard met hers that fateful Sunday morning, she knew that life was about to take on new dimensions.



Drucilla and John

CHAPTER THREE

John had a buggy, but had sold his horse. Drucilla's brother, Will, who was away on a mission, had a horse. So, when John came to court Drucilla he put the harness on Will's horse, drove the horse back to hitch it to his buggy and then drove the buggy down to Drucilla's house and picked her up. Sometimes he would get between the buggy shafts himself and pull the buggy down to her house, often carrying a bouquet of flowers in his hand as well.

On one particular night, there again seemed to be magic in the air. The moon was full, the air was calm and warm. John presented Drucilla with his usual bouquet of flowers.

"Oh, John, you're wonderful! You always make me feel so special."

"You are special, Drucilla. I've felt nothing but happiness since I first met you."

He gently took her into his big arms and kissed her ever so lightly. She loved him so, and had from the very first moment. Not many days later he received a call to go on a mission. He hurried over to Drucilla's, and with a great deal of excitement, told her the news.

"I've been called to Switzerland to serve the Lord for three years!"

Her voice faltered, *"That's wonderful, John, but three years is a long time. I want you to go, of course!"*

"Marry me, Drucilla!"

Her eyes widened, and she was unable to speak.

"Well, will you marry me?" he repeated.

"Of course, I will. Oh, you know I will."

She threw herself into his arms, and again this tall, good looking man had totally overpowered her. How she loved to be with him. He was kind, gentle, strong—he was everything, and now he was all hers.

Drucilla and John were married September 26, 1895, one day before he left for his mission to Switzerland. He was gone for three years, and while he was away, Drucilla worked as a stenographer and sent him money from her own savings to help pay for the mission and support him. After the long separation, and with a great deal of anticipation, Drucilla traveled to Denver to meet him. Their reunion assured her that life was going to be very sweet.

Life was sweet. It was hard, but great love can make even a difficult life sweet. Years later Drucilla recorded:

“Like my mother I had twelve children. I’ve seen much progress and three wars. Airplanes, radios, automobiles, telephones, automatic washers, vacuum cleaners and all sorts of modern inventions became commonplace during my lifetime; but each new child brought a new and lasting excitement.”

The Howard children had a sure way of knowing when each new baby was about to arrive. The first symptom was the moving of their mother’s bed from the upstairs bedroom to the front room. Soon the little walnut washstand with the marble top would appear holding new shirts and soft white nightgowns, diapers, safety pins and castile soap. After the stork’s arrival they didn’t have to wait until visiting hours to see the baby. There it was, right in their own front room—pink, soft, smelling of talcum powder, and waiting to be loved.

Soon Mrs. Fricke would come with a pot of chicken soup and Swedish dumplings. A new baby was a wonderful event in their home! And each new arrival so beautiful.

“Oh, Mother,” one child would say, *“she’s so soft. May I please hold her?”*

“Of course you can, but be gentle. New babies are very fragile.”

“She’s so light, Mother. I’m so happy she’s here!”

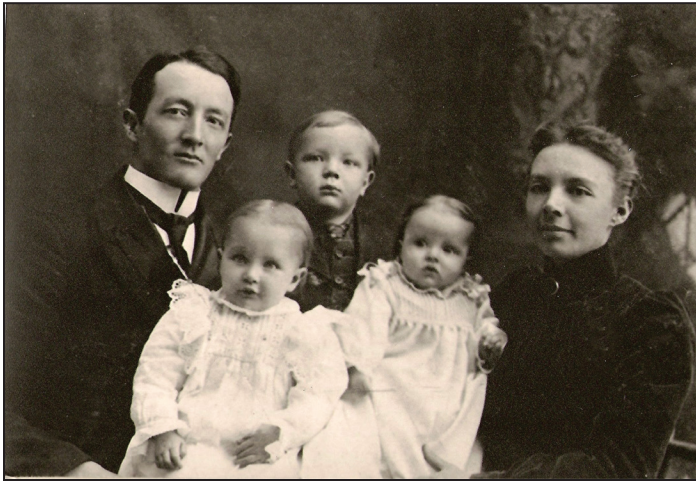
Each child brought a very special love and happiness into their lives. Their first two children were born on a chicken farm which they had bought with the money given John by an aunt in Scotland. On his way home from Switzerland he stopped in Dumfries, Scotland to see his aunt.

“You’re a good lad, John,” she said. *“I have some money for you—two thousand, five hundred pounds. In return I’d like the privilege of naming your first two children.”*

She came to Utah not long after the first two children were born. She had fourteen black taffeta dresses and was quite a tea drinker. Her name was Lucy Maxwell, and her husband Albert Maxwell was formerly one of the captains of the Gordon Highlanders, a military regiment. Thus, John and Drucilla’s first son was named Gordon Maxwell and their second child, a daughter, was named Lucie.

This young growing family moved back to Salt Lake when Jessie was born. 1902 found them in Farmington, Utah where John worked in the refining of salt. The next fall they bought six acres of land in Bountiful, Utah and built a small house on it, and here Jack was born in 1903. He was named John Richards Howard, after his grandfather. Later they bought the old Ellis place up on the bench which had five rooms and eighty acres of land. Their family had been friends with the Ellis family for many years so John only paid \$700 for this house and land. He sold it for \$1,100 two years after living there and enjoying the space. (Later the same land sold for \$10,000 and was worked for a turkey farm, but by this time, John was working in a sanitarium in Salt Lake and commuted on the Bamburger Dummy Line.)

JOHN AND DRUCILLA HOWARD'S CHILDREN



John and Drucilla with Gordon, Lucie and Jessie



Lora and Drucilla



Jack (John), Drucilla, Jessie



Winnie



Alan and John



Mark, Jessie, Gordon, Lucie, Jack and Winnie (center)

In 1906, John decided to study medicine. This not only eventually improved the family income, but also the family status. They moved back East to Davenport, Iowa, where Mark was born. Though these years of study were hard for John and Drucilla, they were full of happy experiences for the children.

Drucilla had to be thrifty with so many little children and a husband going through medical school. There were many times when hunger pangs were so severe that they put the children to bed early and they themselves would go to bed while it was still daylight so they could sleep away the hunger pangs. Drucilla would often say,

“Just give me a bone and an onion, and I can prepare a meal.”

The children ate a lot of beans in those days, for they could buy them for three cents a pound. In 1907 they moved to Chicago where John enrolled in the Rush Medical School. Their first home was an eight room flat on Fulton Street. The children had vivid memories of this home that was in the a low income district, but one memory stood out above them all.

“Hurry,” Lucie called out, *“the truck is coming.”*

“I can hear the clanging,” answered Gordon. *“I’ll race you to the window!”*

“Look, there it is!” they all squealed.

The children were gathered for the view from the second story window. The clanging of the old black *Mariah* drew the children like a magnet to their vantage point where they would watch *“offenders of the law”* being loaded into it and taken off to jail.

Winnie was born in the Fulton Street flat in 1908. From there they moved to Congress Street where they lived until the Spring of 1911. Congress Street in Chicago held some real memories for the children. Their home seemed like an ancient castle. It was three stories high, had bars on the ground floor level and a most exciting staircase with a long slick bannister leading from the second floor to the third level floor. They had been forbidden to slide down it, but occasionally they did, and it was breathtaking! Then there were the rats that their father, John, from the far corner of the cellar, used to shoot as they emerged from a hole under a sink at night.

Gordon had a near fatal attack of diptheria while they lived here, but the folks fixed up a room on the third floor and hired a funny man named Watson to help care for him. Old Dr. Watson was a Spiritualist and used to tell the children of seeing spirits jumping around in the vacant house just opposite their play-yard. Many a time they would peek through the windows to see the spirits, but never succeeded.

The adventures and memories for the children mounted:

- Rollerskating at Iceland Skating Rink
- Drucilla fine combing their heads with kerosene for lice
- The old woman who did their laundry

- The woman on the way to the hospital who had a baby right on their corner
- The beautiful china doll that Jessie bought with the twenty-five cents a man had given her
- The lovely doll that Drucilla had hidden in the upstairs closet
- The birth of Alan in 1910, a most beautiful child. When he became big enough, John used to put him on a seat on the handles of a bicycle and take him riding.
- And then there was the day that Gordon proved his bravery when he hollered, “*Ching, Ching Chinaman*” and then ran!



Home in Maywood, Illinois

A growing problem for the Howards was finding someone who would rent a house to a family with seven children. In 1911 John finally solved the problem by buying two acres of land in a beautiful suburb called Maywood, Illinois. A Danishman named Fricke built them a two-story house, but while it was being built, they all lived in a one room tool shed. They loved their country home after it was built! Lora and Lloyd were born here and also three babies who died soon after birth. They lived here for fifteen years!

They were the only members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were living in Maywood and had to travel about fifteen miles to church via Aurora Elgin and the *L* (elevated train). John always had the train fare ready and took the whole family, not just once but twice on Sunday. They often brought missionaries home to dinner and then had the nice long ride back to the second meeting with them. John had a real fear that some of his children might marry outside the church so he wouldn't even let the children go to school parties with non Latter-day Saints.

John finally became a doctor, a chiropractor. He was not only an artist, but also an excellent gardener. In fact his children loved to wander among the raspberry bushes, picking the soft red ones or a big purple one from a special bush. Tomatoes, strawberries, fresh peas and corn left a permanent taste in their mouths that would be recalled in their memories and dreams for the next fifty years. How they loved their father!

His garden not only helped to provide food for the family, but the acreage provided some real living for the children. It seemed the whole subdivision was theirs so they could play ball or hide-n-seek, pick wild strawberries, and hunt crabs (which carried their young in the curve of their tails all matted together like cockle-burrs). The most fun spot was the one big poplar tree with the single rope which hung down. They would pull the rope around to the back of the tree, sit astride the seat, then whirl as they kicked off. The trick was to land on their feet on the opposite side of the tree and not on their back.



February 9, 1913 - Maywood, Illinois

Back: Mark, Jack, Lucie, Gordon, Drucilla, Jessie, John Front: Alan, Winnie

At one point in their lives, after eighteen years of marriage, the whole family gathered together for a family picture: the successful father, the wife who looked none the worse for wear, both encircled by their nine lovely children. Their picture appeared in a Chicago newspaper and under it was the caption, "An Ideal American Family."



1917 - Maywood, Illinois

Back: Mark, Lucie, Jessie, Gordon, Drucilla, John, Jack Front: Alan, Winnie, Lloyd and Lora

CHAPTER FOUR

There's a long story that can be told about my grandfather, John Fitz Alan Howard. Many things contributed to the tragedy that became his life, but I'm convinced that we will someday be judged on our whole life - and hopefully the good will outweigh the bad. In 1906 John started his own school of chiropractic. In fact, even Drucilla was part of his graduating class in 1907.



*Dr. John Howard's Graduating Class from National School of Chiropractic - 1907
John is in middle and Drucilla is in back, far right*

He was a man whose brilliance was beyond his time. It was as if revelation (thoughts, ideas, knowledge) and inspiration were coming to him faster than he could get them down on paper. At this time, he was being a father to a growing young family of nine, he was providing food for the family from his beautiful garden, he was running his chiropractic school, he was attending Rush Medical School in Chicago, he most likely had some Church leadership, and in his spare time he was writing an encyclopedia of chiropractic and health sciences. This encyclopedia turned into three volumes with over 300 artistic drawings of the spine. I've studied as much as I can about him and have concluded (as others who knew him also concluded) that John had a physical breakdown. Of all things, he had severe back pain, and to keep driving himself at the pace he felt he had to go, he took medications that contained alcohol to dull the pain. He soon became addicted . . . and lost everything . . . However, if you were to go back to Lombard, Illinois and visit the National University of Health Sciences, you might be as thrilled as I was to enter the front door and look up at the photos that hang on the walls. The first one is a photo of my Grandfather Howard as the Founder of the National School of Chiropractic (which became a full University in the year 2000). And one of the buildings on the campus



Dr. John Fitz Alan Howard

is named after him. He is well respected and honored here, and many of their ideas and teachings have now gone back to those that John Howard was inspired to profess and write about - that the chiropractic world and the medical world must work together for the all around health of an individual.

But. . . this is not really his story that I want to tell at this time - it's my Grandmother's. It was this tragedy that changed the course of Grandma Howard's life. Yet it was in the faith and bravery she displayed through this trial of life that I found my own *roots for strength*. John and Drucilla were at the peak of success and happiness when tragedy struck, and the real story of Drucilla's courage began:

"John, what is that medicine you are taking? Is your back bothering you again?"

A long pause as John sank back into the easy chair and breathed heavily. Her mind raced back to those years in medical school when the pain began. Medicine was easy to get then and still was, now he was in practice, but the dosage seemed to constantly increase. John's eyes looked glassy . . .

"I can't stand the pain."

He was perspiring, but the medicine finally brought relief and he slept. Her thoughts flashed forward . . .

"Why is this happening? How can I cope?" "How can I help my husband? . . ."

"Wake up, John, you have a meeting to attend with the other doctors in your clinic."

Hours past and John returned from his meeting looking worse than before. A white ghostly look masked his expression. He sank to the floor . . .

"I lost it, Dru. I lost it all!"

"What are you saying, John? I don't understand."

"I hardly understand, myself. Somehow the men all seemed to be joking . . . jovial when I arrived. The pain in my back returned and it was more than I could bear . . . Oh, Dru, don't you understand? They offered something for the pain . . . It was all a blur after that. I signed something . . . papers . . . our practice . . . everything we own—gone."

Drucilla gradually rose to her feet.

"Be quiet now, John. I understand. Just rest for awhile."

She went into another room, started thumbing through old pictures: a picture of John in Switzerland, their first home, the church where they met, the baby pictures of their nine children, a picture of John standing proudly with his son and his father, both named John Richards, John's garden . . .

"Oh John—how could you!?"

She wept the night through. The next morning found Drucilla still in the depths of despair. Her thoughts ran on and on, only causing the hurt to deepen.

"How could this have happened to us, John . . . I need you . . . What will become of our lives . . . I could face it with you, John, but not without you. Oh, please, Heavenly Father, please let us go back and start over . . . I'm afraid . . . where am I going to get strength . . . I can't do it alone."

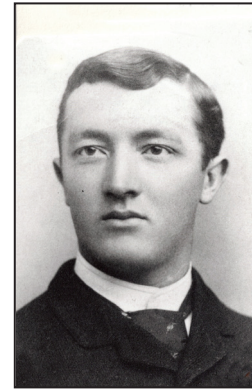
Years of hospitalization followed, and John never again was able to resume leadership as husband, father, provider or Church member. The moment arrived when Drucilla finally had to make an explanation to the younger children, though the older ones had already guessed.

"Your Dad can't live with us anymore. He has to be cared for in the hospital and then in a special home with a full-time nurse. We're going to have to help each other even more now than ever before."

Her children took hold of her plea for help. The financial struggle was the first obstacle to overcome. Her two oldest daughters cut into their education so they could work and help support the family, including the financial support of a brother on a mission. With everyone's help, Drucilla was able to stay home and raise her younger children. She provided them with love, faith, praise, and trust.

As the years went by, she had almost unspeakable trials and tribulations. She seemed to be *alone* through most of her darkest hours, for even though she was surrounded by many children, it was she who had to comfort them.

Drucilla was suffering inside, but her suffering had purpose because her life had purpose. It seemed her whole existence from childhood onwards was to provide her with the courage she now needed. She had a wonderful talent for telling and retelling stories (and most of them true!).



John F. A. Howard - abt 1895



John Richards Howard (top),
John Richards Howard (left),
John Fitz Alan Howard (right)

Many times her children would ask,

“Mother, it’s so hard without Father here. I miss him. . .”

“Yes, Mother, I do too. Doesn’t it seem that Heavenly Father has forgotten about us?”

To these remarks, Drucilla would gather them close around her and say,

“Let me tell you a little bit about life. Your own Grandmother Sears had more courage than anyone I knew. When she and Dad married, their first home, which was in Kaysville, was a one room log house with a dirt floor. Their furniture consisted of a tin stove, a couple of small barrels and boxes for table and chairs. The bed was made by driving a stake in the dirt floors and lacing rawhide from it to the log walls. On this was placed a mattress filled with straw. The bride had only one dress made of calico, and the groom one shirt. Mother worked in the fields, gleaned wheat and doing any other work she could find to do in order to help get the clothing and food they needed. Sometimes she washed clothes all day for some of the neighbors, receiving in pay a spool of thread.

I remember hearing about the day when she and Dad moved to Salt Lake City from Kaysville—the trip of twenty-five miles took all day. It was made in a wagon drawn by a horse and a mule. This wagon contained all their belongings plus the family of four. They lived in a tent while the first two rooms of their house, one above the other, were being built. Before the rooms were ready for them, their baby boy died. A short time later, they made a trip back to Kaysville to visit their relatives, and when they returned all their furniture had been stolen. Four more children, including myself, were born in the little bedroom upstairs.



Sarah Jane Gailey Sears

Later on, additions were made to the home and to the family, and Mother reared a family of nine children. I really think that as a child, the thing I most admired about Mother was her courage. I never saw her afraid and there were plenty of times when the Indians and gypsies came to the house to beg for things. Mother would give them what she considered she ought to and when they insisted on more, she said, ‘No,’ and that settled it. But she had bravery in other ways: the strength to meet trials, the ability to look on the bright side, and the determination to take whatever life held out for her, making the best of it without complaint.”

“Yes, I find it hard to carry on without your Father. It’s as hard for me as it is for you. But there is such purpose in meeting life’s challenges, so much to live for. We are indebted to those who have paved the way for us, so we must go on.”

Drucilla’s children became her reason for existence. She loved them as deeply as any mother has ever loved a child, and they loved her. They were seldom aware of her loneliness inside.

All of John and Drucilla's children were special, but I must tell about three of them in particular. Let's go back briefly to the year 1910. The Howard children were running breathlessly into the house after their usual teasing of Johnny the Chinese laundry-man with his long braid down his back . . .

"Look," said Lucie, "*Mother's bed is in the front room!*"

"*And Mother's in the bed!*" called Jessie. "*With a new baby!*"

The wonder and awe of childbirth drew the children together in a close bond. Alan Sears Howard became the new center of their lives. Drucilla was never very strong and the children learned early to help with the work. Alan did not start school until he was eight years old, but stayed home to help. However, John had built a blackboard on one entire wall of their dining room, and Alan must have picked up some elementary skills at home because he sailed through grade school in four years.

The whole family was proud of all his A's in school, but also was proud of him because he was extra kind and thoughtful of others. Alan was particularly close to Winnie and Lora. The three of them, in fact, could hardly be thought of separately. They were young when their father's tragic illness caused his separation from the family. They still had each other and each had a zest for life. They teased and laughed incessantly. Alan was very proud and protective of his sisters, Winnie two years older, and Lora two years younger. The three loved the big old poplar tree most of all. Every day after school it was a race out to the tree.

"Come on," called Alan, "*I'll race you. The last one there is a rotten egg.*"

"Give me a head start," called Lora.

The race was on. Lora always won. Winnie always a close second and Alan managed to trip and tumble every time, coming in as the rotten egg.

"You're the rotten egg!" Lora squealed in delight. "You're the rotten egg!" Then she rolled in laughter.

As kind and thoughtful as he was, Alan also proved to be somewhat of an embarrassment at times. One night as Lucie was walking home with a date, she was suddenly horrified. She turned to her date and quickly said,

"Do you think you could go back to the bus stop and see if I dropped my scarf there?"

Her date replied, "*I'll take you home first— then I'll go back.*"

Her idea didn't work. She wanted to get rid of her date because Alan was sleepwalking again! There he was in his *long Johns*, walking down the middle of the road, and Lucie was dying of embarrassment. Nothing left to do but wake him up and turn him around! Her date went away thinking, "*Boy, this is some strange family!*"

As Alan, Winnie and Lora grew, they became physically attractive as well as spiritually attractive. Winnie was definitely beautiful, adding more beauty with each year. She had wavy black hair and fair skin like her Father's, had a tilted nose and large blue eyes like her Mother's, and was a bit coquettish. Her beaux were many. There was a dance at the church. Winnie had a date, but sitting on her other side were Alan and Lora.

"Why don't you hold his hand," Alan whispered.

"Why don't you get lost!" returned Winnie.

"He's shy, Win. Help him along!"

"Okay, but would you two please leave!"

Lora inched up to Alan, looked dreamily into his eyes and sighed, *"Oh my darling, I cannot wait any longer. Please hold my hand . . . or I shall die!"*

This time Winnie clenched her teeth and slowly whispered,

"You two—leave now!"

Alan and Lora got up and danced, laughing all the time at the good fun they were having. Winnie, however, did take some of the teasing to heart as she inched a little closer to this shy-looking young man who was her date and said,

"Would you like to hold my hand?"

He did! To top Winnie's other qualities, she had a sunny disposition. She had such rapport! It was an ability to see the fine qualities in people and to assure others of those qualities and virtues. One day while working in Brown's Floral Shop, her concern for others seemed almost *too much*. She had tears rolling down her face as a customer was ordering flowers for a funeral.

"Oh, my dear," said the customer, *"your concern for my deceased father is overwhelming."*

After the customer left, Winnie burst out laughing. She was so allergic to roses, the tears ran constantly, but she didn't have the heart to explain this to her customer!

Lora was spoiled as last children are supposed to be, spoiled by love. She very quickly developed the same delightful type of personality possessed by Winnie and Alan. The older girls, Jessie and Lucie, loved caring for her as a baby. All had remembered her birth so vividly. As she grew she was their *golden girl* with hair the color of spun taffy, and brown eyes almost as dark as Mark's and Jack's, though they took on a rich golden cast. Her skin was clear with a delicate transparency which in summer took on a slight golden suntan. She was always well groomed and soft spoken.



Winnie Howard



Lora Howard

As a teenager, Lora spent many summers with her older sisters who were married and helped care for their children. She was delightful to have around. But always she craved to return home again and be with Alan and Winnie. They all three seemed to complete each other's lives.

Alan grew to be as handsome as his two sisters were beautiful. His hair a different coloring yet. He was blond with brown eyes and, like his father, a good catch for any of the local girls. His sister, Lucie, took great pains in making sure he and the other boys grew up to be chaste so they could always carry the Howard name with pride. On returning from a date one night, Alan was met by Lucie.



Alan Howard

The floor at the entrance of the home was cold. Lucie was in her nightgown and stood on one foot with the other foot resting on top of it. Then she quickly traded places so the warm foot was on the bottom as the other warmed itself so the process could continue. She looked deeply into Alan's eyes as he entered and said,

"Alan, are you pure?"

He could never have lied, so his only choice was to stay pure! He couldn't even imagine what would happen if he had answered, "No." Rhea was the girl who finally made Alan her lucky catch. They became engaged and together were saving to buy a home. Finally they had enough saved for a down payment.

At this time, Winnie was taken ill with tuberculosis. She was in a sanitarium in Denver and had a pneumo-thorax performed. She immediately improved, and they dismissed her and let her come home. Also during this period, Lora was becoming very interested in genealogy work. She spent days and then weeks becoming acquainted with the life and works of many of her ancestors. She had grown up with the stories of courage her mother had told. She loved her ancestors as though she knew them personally. She even longed to meet them, and when she thought of it, realized they would all know and embrace one another one day.

Now that Winnie was back home from the hospital, a real family reunion took place. Alan, Winnie and Lora seemed to gravitate to one another. They didn't like being separated. Yet, they were preparing themselves for Alan's marriage. Pictures were taken. Lloyd, the baby of the

Every Life With A Purpose

family, had grown into young manhood. The older children were married and gone. A close bond between Drucilla and these four youngest of her children was created in their early lives and continued as they now all emerged into adulthood. Drucilla had weathered the storm and “*fought a good fight.*” It was a beautiful warm day for a reunion. Much love was generated as they put arms around each other for the pictures, for the future would now have to separate them somewhat.

“Okay,” Drucilla called, “I want a picture right here on the steps . . . move a little closer . . . Alan, you look at Winnie . . . Lora, stop giggling . . . No, Alan, look at Lora . . . Oh, it doesn’t matter, just smile . . . There I have it!”



After the picture, they didn’t let go for the longest time, and tears even came to all of their eyes as they knew that life for them would never be the same, but there was a definite assurance of love for each other.

Before his marriage, it became evident that Alan would have to have his tonsils removed. Afterwards, he felt good enough to leave the doctor’s office and walk home. Home was several miles away. He began to hemorrhage and later broke down with tuberculosis. He was later

taken to a hospital in Denver, Colorado where Winnie had been a few years earlier. Alan never improved, but on one visit from his sister, Lucie, he said,

“You know, Sis, I think that it doesn’t matter so much how long we live, but how we live.”

She felt that truly a better person had never lived than Alan. He was always a special source of comfort to his mother. His death on the 19th of December 1933 came one day before his Mother’s birthday on the 20th, and for years the Christmas lights on Main Street in Salt Lake City took on a new meaning of life for the whole family. *“Because Christ lived, we too shall live,”* and they knew that someday Alan would smile and put his strong arms around them all to say, *“Hello!”*

Within a few days of Alan’s death, Drucilla wrote these words:

GOING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

*“Going home for Christmas,” just a year ago he wrote,
How these words had stirred fond memories
of family and of folk,
How he longed once more to mingle,
to see, to hear, to touch
Each member of his family and those he
loved so much.
“Going Home for Christmas,” when the
bells rang out again
Their message of “Goodwill and Peace on
Earth” to men,*

*God took his hand and led him
to his heavenly home above,
Where freed from pain he waits
to welcome us with love.*

(DRUCILLA S. HOWARD — 1933)

“Oh, Mother,” sighed Winnie, “Life is so unbearable without Alan. How can we go on?”

“I know, dear. I hurt too. You and Lora and Alan were always so close. You must be brave. You have so much life yet to live.”

Yes, a source of strength to her children. Yet she fought an inner battle. Just two months after Alan’s death she penned these words:



Sarah Drucilla Sears Howard

Every Life With A Purpose

ALAN

*Soon the Spring will come again,
With leaves unfolding on the trees,
With flowers blooming everywhere
And on the air a warm south breeze,*

*How can I bear to welcome it,
Enjoy its beauty and its cheer
When my brave lad who loved it too
Has gone away and left me here?*

*Soon the Spring will come again
With lovers walking down the lane
Thrilled with the endless dreams of youth,
Repeating still the old refrain.*

*Help me, dear Lord, to understand
Cleanse me from bitterness and woe,
Remembering that Thou leadest me,
Smiling and hopeful, let me go.*

(DRUCILLA S. HOWARD - 1934)

Drucilla still had Lora, Winnie and Lloyd at home and what comfort they were. Winnie was always happy and her happiness was catchy. She was always laughing and having fun. It was October 1934, just ten months after Alan's death that the family was beginning to feel new life again.

"Mother," called Winnie, "come down and join us."

"What are you girls up to this time?"

"Mother, try this hat on. Oh, that's wonderful, it's so old fashioned looking!"

"Come on, Lora, put this old dress on."

"How funny! Did we really wear these clothes just three years ago?"

"This is just awful!"

"Oh, Mother, that one's too funny. Yes, yes, put it on. Oh, I can't stop laughing. It's so ridiculous!"

"I haven't laughed this hard in months and months. What fun . . ."

Winnie started to cough and couldn't stop. A lesion in her lungs broke.

"NO!" pleaded Drucilla. "Please let me keep Winnie."

But Winnie hemorrhaged badly and very suddenly died. She was buried next to Alan in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Winnie's death followed too soon after Alan's. It was almost more than could be asked of a mother. Winnie was only twenty-six years old.



Winnie

Before the family had even been given enough time to sorrow, it was evident that Lora too was very ill. She definitely was physically worn out as her two closest companions in life had left. She wasn't bitter, for her belief in life together after this life was pure and absolute truth to her. Hadn't she felt the closeness already of her dead ancestors as she researched their lives?

"You must get out and get some sunshine, Lora," Drucilla begged. "You need to get color back into your cheeks."

"You know, Mother, don't you, that I'm not afraid to die. Winnie and Alan are okay. I know that."

"I know it too, dear, but life is so empty without them . . . We must get your health restored. Just to hear your giggle again will be all I need right now."

Lora's health, like Alan's, never returned. While she was at a very low ebb with tuberculosis, Lucie came to help Drucilla care for her. After an evening's rest, Lucie came into the kitchen where her mother was sitting alone, staring into the unlit fireplace.

"Mother, I just had the strangest dream. I dreamed that Grandmother Sears had come for Lora. I saw her coming down the street and she came in and said that she had come for Lora."

Drucilla calmly answered, *"Yes, I saw Mother too."*

Both knew that Lora was gone before either went into her room. She was only twenty-three years old.



Lora

Every Life With A Purpose

In the drawer of Lora's dresser Drucilla found this poem:

REQUEST

*All you who know me well, when I am dead,
Look upon my quiet face that laughed the while it lived.
Restrain your tears and give instead,
A gentle word, an understanding smile.
Oh, if you really love me,
Do not cry
To see me lying there, my laughter stilled.
Surely you know that I can never die;
I, for whom every day is strangely filled
With some sweet happiness.
Gather me flowers and pile them high for me to come to see.
They will remind my spirit of the hours
Of joy I spent on earth. Think of me free
Of body's pain, and you will find your grief
Changed to an overwhelming sweet relief.*

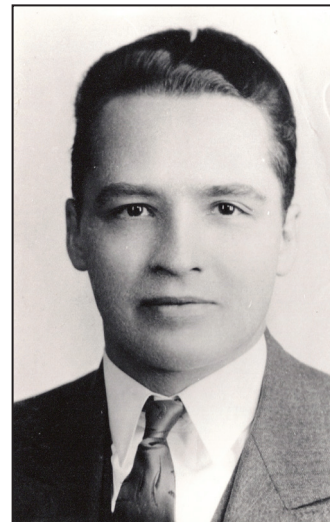
(ELEANOR GRAHAM)

Lora died July 16, 1935, just nine months following Winnie and was buried next to Alan and Winnie. Alan and Winnie and Lora— it's true, one cannot think of them separately. They were close companions in life and death.

In five years followed yet another death. Drucilla's son, Jack, who was thirty six years old with a son of his own, died of a ruptured appendix. Jack was named John Richards after his Grandfather and named his own son John after his Father. Jack looked a lot like his father, but had so many of the qualities of his mother that he might have said:

*Lord, make me something like my Dad;
Give me a little of his will;
That good old stubbornness he had
That helped him up the hardest hill,
Content to work and wait and fight,
Believing always he was right.*

*Lord, make me like my mother, too;
Give me a little of her song.
She laughed at life and saw things through,
And never walked with sorrow long,
Yet saw a thousand islands fade
For every port she ever made.*



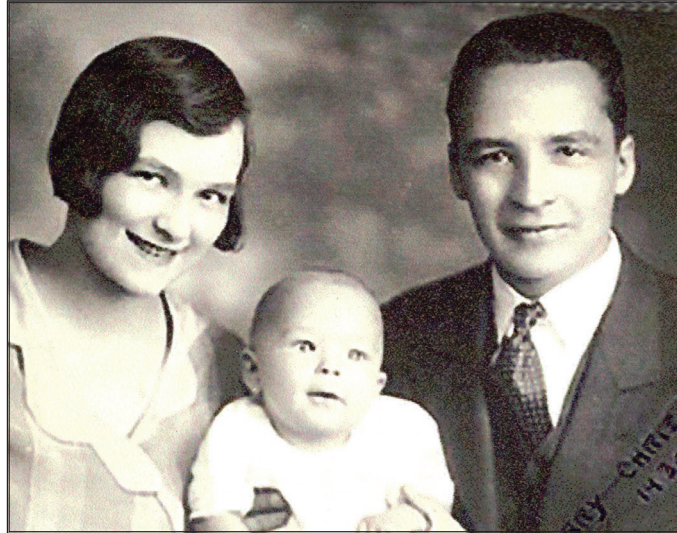
John Richards (Jack) Howard

*Lord, make me strong and make me glad,
With hands to work and heart to sing.
In labor always like my Dad,
And yet like her in everything.
With changeless oath -
Lord, make me something like
them both.*

(ANONYMOUS)



Jack and Drucilla



Mary, John and Jack Howard

Drucilla had lost three babies in infancy and now four of her nine who grew to adulthood were gone in six years of each other. Even before Jack's death, however, she was able to see life with great faith, and again wrote her feelings:

*"There will be sorrows waiting on all roads,
Long heartbreak 'ere we reach the high abodes,
Still we must snatch from these a certain gain,
No heart can comfort 'til it has known pain.
Press a rich honey from the bitter years,
No eyes can see 'til they have known tears."*

(DRUCILLA S. HOWARD - 1939)

CHAPTER FIVE

With Drucilla's ability to face life in such a positive way, her children urged her to write down her life story. It was obvious that her philosophy was that people needed to laugh more and enjoy life to the fullest. Nothing proved to be too much work or trouble to make a party a success or to make a child happy. When she ran out of stories or games for grandchildren, she would simply make them up. She lived an adventurous inner life. So it was natural that at the age of sixty-five, when her family asked her to write her life story, that she would come up with this poem.



*Sarah Drucilla Sears Howard
Sarah Jane Gailey Sears
Lucie Howard - three generations
1914*

LITERARY FORECAST

*And now that I've reached sixty-five
My children think that I should write
Of things I can see which have happened to me
Since I came here one cold winter's night.*

*I might tell of the struggles I've had
And also of dangers I've met,
And be solemn and wise without any disguise,
Though the mood hasn't struck me as yet.*

*But wait 'til I'm seventy-five
And then if I'm still going strong,
I may write with fun of things I have done
And put them in story or song.*

*For I have observed that the years
Add much to the thrill and the style,
The stories get longer, and many times stronger
Until they are really worthwhile!*

*And maybe if you will just wait
Until I am ninety years old,
I'll turn out a story that's brimful of glory
And marvelous deeds will unfold.*

*A masterpiece then I may write
Of memories that sparkle anew
And wonderful facts of remarkable acts,
And you may believe they are true!*

(DRUCILLA S. HOWARD - 1939)

Sometimes as Drucilla sat crocheting, it seemed as though a shadow crossed her brow, and those that knew her wondered if her sparkle was a veneer covering a great hurt. She could never stand to talk of Alan who had been such a fine boy to her and to everyone, or of Winnie so pretty, or of her golden girl Lora. Nor could she talk of Jack who died at the peak of his career. As she stood alone at the graves of her tall son Alan and her handsome son Jack, the words of one of her favorite poems would always cross her mind.

SONS

*To press my lips to a fair cheek or brown,
So long have I stooped down,
But now I find to my surprise
That I must stand on tiptoe and reach up
To kiss their lips.
These tall young sons,
Each straight as any pine,
Can they be mine?
Soon I must share them, soon I know
That they must go;
But oh, I am so glad that I have had
Small sons to stoop to,
Tall sons to reach to,
Clean sons to give,
That other sons might live.*

(ANONYMOUS)

Even with all her sorrow and misfortune, it was Drucilla who continued to lift other people, who continued to go out and meet life head-on with a certain zest. She never gave up. She had permanent smile wrinkles that seldom unwrinkled, framing eager, alert blue eyes. Even after her body was bent with age, her eyes were still young, kind and understanding.

Life was always an experience for Drucilla, and she went out to meet it. She was almost seventy when the Pony Express went through Rock Springs, Wyoming. Everyone else was too tired to make the trip to town to see it, but not Drucilla. She said,

“Well, I’ve learned that if you want a thrill in this life, you have to go out after it. I’m going to town to see the Pony Express ride through!”

She loved to see Bennett Ferguson act and never missed seeing him in a play if she had a chance. Two weeks before her death she made the trip to Provo from Salt Lake City (a one hour trip) on the bus to see him in a play at Brigham Young University. On being told that she should not make the trip, she said,

“If you think that I’m going to lie in bed and wait for the end, you are mistaken. I’d rather go out and meet it.”



Sarah Drucilla Sears Howard

Yes, Grandma Howard's story has definitely become my roots for strength—not only mine, but hundreds of other people's. I remember one quiet evening at home. I was only nine years old. My mother, Lucie, had just come from Salt Lake City, and she very calmly said,

“Mother's gone.”

She walked outside on the front porch to watch the moon come over the mountain, and we all sensed the significance of this. Grandma Howard loved to see the moon come over the mountain. Somehow we must have caught its magic from her, for we experience a return of her presence when we stand alone to watch the faint half circle of silver light gradually grow larger and brighter until the full silver gold orb makes its majestic entrance. At that moment, she seems to stand beside us, face uplifted as though a miracle had just occurred.

On New Year's Eve, at the stroke of twelve, she did not rush to embrace someone as many folks do. Instead, she always stepped outside the front door, and no matter how bitter the weather,

she stood a moment to welcome in the New Year. After a few moments of silence, she would return with a glow, having seen or felt something that we all had missed.

As her granddaughter, I remember how she loved to float in the Great Salt Lake, a recreational activity introduced into the Salt Lake Valley by her father in law, John Richards Howard. It was a wonderful sensation to her to sit down in the water and float without ever doing a thing, not even the slightest paddle. I thought it was pretty wonderful too! We all loved to *float* with her. What fun! She left classical music and good literature around at all times to influence her children and grandchildren for good.

Grandma was a proud woman and wouldn't take handouts. She earned some of her meager income by becoming a *jingle expert*. She finished jingles in contests and won many prizes as well as money. Even when she died, there was a turkey in the refrigerator which the family ate after her death. She had won it by writing a jingle that was on the back of a cereal box!

She didn't want to be a burden, so also earned money by crocheting. She crocheted little dresses on dolls no larger than a thumb nail and sold them for fifty cents each. She was very frugal and saved her money. The money earned from this project was to pay for her burial so she wouldn't cause anyone any expense. The burial was \$600 and she paid for it all.

My own memories of Grandma Howard are sweet. Her funeral was the first I had ever attended. I wore one of the little thumb-nail rubber dolls with the pink hand crocheted dress. She had sewn a tiny little safety pin on it so it could be worn on a dress or a coat. I don't remember the talks that day, but I sat by my own mother and watched the tears gently fall from her eyes, down her cheeks. And then somewhere in the background, I heard a man singing, "*Oh, Danny Boy,*" her favorite song. I don't know why, but the song made me cry as well.

Then, right before they closed the casket, the family was allowed to view her for the last time. It didn't frighten me. Grandma just looked so beautiful and peaceful. At the very last moment, my mother leaned down and kissed her on the forehead. I knew she loved her and would miss her more than words could ever tell.

In the face of great hardship she was, without question, an unusual woman, an unusual mother. Her strength was prayer, which she understood well.

THE CAMEL

*The Camel at the close of day
Kneels down upon the sandy plain
To have his burden lifted off
And rest again.*

*My soul, thou too shouldst to thy knees
When daylight draweth to a close,
And let thy Master lift the load
And grant repose.*

Every Life With A Purpose

*Else how couldst thou tomorrow meet
With all tomorrow's work to do
If thou the burden all the night
Doth carry through?*

*The Camel kneels at break of day
To have the guide replace the load,
Then rises up anew to take
The desert road.*

*So shouldst thou kneel at morning dawn
That God may give thee daily care,
Assured that He no load too great
Will make thee bear.*

(DRUCILLA S. HOWARD)

When the summons came, Drucilla did not “*quietly fold her tent like the Arab.*” Her spirit seemed loath to leave the body. When released from pain, the muscles relaxed and over her face came the beauty of youth, not a wrinkle. The pink flush of fever lingered to give the appearance of radiant health, beautiful and sustaining. Like a bride with a halo, a mother triumphant, she went forth to meet her dear ones - Alan, Winnie, Lora, and Jack and three babies who died in infancy - not weeping, but with a lamp in her hand and a light in her eye. And she was there, two years later, to welcome her husband, John, to await together the blessed resurrection.

The Old Home
by Drucilla Sears Howard (Feb 1950)

*The old home was torn down today
And bricks and 'dobies hauled away;
It's almost eighty years, 'tis true
Since Pa and Ma with children two
Came there from Kaysville one fine day
To make a home and there to stay.
They had a team – a mule and horse,
A cow, and wagon too, of course –
They pitched a tent and there they stayed
And soon they had some 'dobies made;
And built two rooms – one up – one down –
To help make up the growing town.
They planted fruit trees – dug a well
And did more work than I can tell.*

*The years passed on and after awhile
Not two, but nine rooms rose in style,
And children came, ten girls and boys
To add to all their work and joys.
Barns were built and filled with hay
And children played there every day.
The neighbors came to have a chat
And help make quilts and things like that.
Parties, weddings, death and birth
All came in time to this home's hearth.*

*The parlor with marble fireplace and mantel,
Kerosene lamps and tallow candles,
Carpets to take up every Spring,
Bed-ticks to fill and everything,
The cellar filled with things to eat
In wintertime held many a treat;
Mincemeat, cider and molasses
And shelves with fruit and shining glasses.
Pears – hard and green when packed away -
Were ripe and sweet Thanksgiving Day.
The Conference times we kids liked best –
Sometimes there would be forty guests,
And we would sleep down on the floor
Because the beds would not hold more.*

*The carriage steps there by the lane,
The picket fence so white and plain
With the old green gate and the barns and trees
Went long ago like a summer breeze.*

*And still the years keep moving on
And now the children all are gone;
Some rest beside their parents still
In a peaceful place up on the hill,
And only memories today
Are left to those of us who stay.*





*Cecile James Scribner, Christianne Scribner,
Lucie Howard James, Gina Scribner
1979*

WINGS FOR JOY

Mother was forty-one years old when I was born. As the last of seven children (the baby), I had the advantage of being raised by parents who had gathered strength from experience. Like her mother before her, Mama had become an expert in giving *Roots*. Not only were these the roots that come from a noble heritage but they were the kind that are built daily: roots of faith, roots spirited with happiness, and roots nourished by love. She knew how long to *hold on* and when the time was right to *let go* - when decisions could be made on my own. She understood my personality and talents as well as my failings, and encouraged me in the areas which would bring success. Occasionally my *flights* ended in disaster, sorrow, and failure, but she was always there with encouragement. As my wings became stronger, I finally learned to fly on my own. Taking flight was often a painful process, but with each success came a joy that actually provided the strength for my whole future.

My first memory goes back to Rock Springs, Wyoming when I was about five years old. The party in the living room sounded wonderful. Sleep just wouldn't come. I finally bounced out of bed, slightly opened the hall door and peeked in . . .

"Oh," I thought, "*It is a wonderful party. Everyone's having such a good time.*" My little heart ached to go in. I didn't want to miss a thing. Then someone was smiling and I had been discovered! I froze. In just seconds, which seemed like long minutes, Mama was beckoning to me. Somehow I knew she wouldn't be mad.



Cecile - Six Years Old

"*This is our youngest daughter,*" she said proudly. "*I hope you won't mind if she joins us for the rest of the evening.*" I wandered from person to person, my eyes dancing with excitement. I loved being around happy people.

Parties became a big part of my life. Never was I sent to my room to listen behind closed dark doors, for Mama seemed to understand that I might have experienced *sudden death* from being shut out. Happy people, lots of laughter, house parties, reunions, huge gatherings, and big family dinners - oh, how I loved it all! It just seemed to fit my personality.

Besides loving parties, I loved boys. I dreamed of boys, giggled about boys, whispered about boys, and seemed to put myself where the boys were - playing kickball, climbing

trees, picking cherries, walking home, playing *kick-the-can*. Boys were real friends, but for sure I wasn't going to marry one until I met one just like my brother, Tom. He was the best boy of all. Since he was eleven years older than I, it was easy to keep him on a pedestal.

My third love was dancing. There was a big mirror over the fireplace, and I spent hours watching myself dance. Mama saw this quality in me and gave me ballet lessons, but I was too stiff in the joints and this just wasn't my idea of fun. Nevertheless, this didn't kill my enthusiasm. Nothing could stop me from dancing.



Tom

As I reminisce, I can't help smiling for I never really became great in any of my *loves*, but somehow I gained the confidence to try them all anyway. I never really dated very much until I was a senior in high school, and never did I have the natural beauty that attracts a boy right off. And never did I dance to perform but only for my own enjoyment. "*To dance is to live and to live is to dance*," I thought, so I did what I could with what I had. The only real thing I had going for me was a good supply of self-confidence and encouragement at home to "*try*."

Mama would always say, "*I can't do it, but you can*." I grew up thinking she couldn't do very much. Little did I realize. Even all my *dreaming*, she claimed was a quality. Oh, I dreamed to be mature, to be really good at something, to be beautiful. I dreamed of the time when a boy would first notice me, hold my hand, kiss me, and tell me that he loved me. I dreamed of meeting the *one and only*. Everything else in life would solve itself if I could just get to that highest point of marriage to a boy I loved. I dreamed of the time when dreams would come true!

*Think early in life of what you shall be
And so make your plans and stick to
them;
Inherent within you, a purpose, if free
Will give you a power, a beacon, a gem.*

(LUCIE HOWARD JAMES— 1922)

Very early in life I knew my highest goal was to fall in love and to someday be able to go to dances every Saturday night and dance every single dance! It seemed like a worthy goal and a good plan. So I set out to achieve it. While in high school, I managed to fall in love every single week with a new boy. I remember a particular night when I was fourteen years of age. I came running into the house with several girlfriends . . .



*Cecile - about 16 years old
Provo, Utah*

“Oh, Mama, you’ll never believe it, but this is it. This is really it. I just met the most wonderful boy. He’s so handsome, so friendly. You’ll just love him. Oh, I know you’ll just love him!”

“Oh, I know I will,” she answered, “but with your competition, I just wouldn’t have a chance!”

“Be serious,” I moaned. “This is really serious!”

“Believe me,” she answered again, “I know it is.”

“Then let me tell you everything that happened . . .”

I never saw the boy again. I was beginning to learn what heartbreak was. The halls of high school seemed to be teeming with couples who were holding hands and kissing behind locker doors. All kinds of popular girls were my friends, but I wasn’t really one of them. I didn’t have the confidence to try out for the pep squad or to be in an assembly. My self confidence lagged at school. I did get good grades and was friendly, so at least I had a certain amount of respect given me, and I did have some very good friends.

Remember Tom - my idol? Well he prepared me well for the world. His advice went like this, *“Celie, we Jameses are not good-looking people. Our noses are too big. So we have to develop our personalities.”* So, there it was. I knew what I had to do.

My real confidence came with a close set of friends at church. And now as I look back, if it hadn’t been for a mother who built on my strengths (meager as I thought they were), I might have missed out on the greatest growing experience of my teenage years. These friendships were built through parties and through dancing.

“You know,” Mama said one day, *“there are lots of boys at church who probably like to dance as much as you do.”*

“But Mama,” I countered, *“all the boys at church are so ordinary. I can’t think of anyone who I’d like.”*

“Well, it doesn’t really matter if you think they are exciting or not. Wouldn’t it be great just to have some fun dancing? You know I can’t dance, but you can and you can teach someone else who doesn’t have your kind of ability.”

I sat in thought for a moment. *“Verl’s a great dancer and a good sport. Maybe I’ll ask him to come early to Church on Wednesday night, and we could just have some fun.”*

“Now that’s a really good idea,” she said.

The next Wednesday at 6:00 pm. we met. I felt dumb at first, but we put on *“The Battle of New Orleans”* by Johnny Horton and a few other *greats* of the late 50’s and had a super time. As some other kids came in to watch, the comments started to fly . . .

“Hey, what are you guys doing?”

“What have we got here? A new twosome?”

"That looks kinda fun."

"Anybody willing to teach me?"

The next Wednesday night, there were four of us. The group continued to grow until at least twenty kids were coming every week. We all taught each other and welcomed any new faces into the group. It was easy to bring in the so-called *duds* because we all had trust in each other. It didn't take long to realize that the popular dating group was actually much smaller than we *unpopular* kids. I learned to love each of the kids in this group like my own family.

Every weekend we went to dances or created our own. My home became a gathering place several times during each summer for parties and dances. After the first summer, a few couples started pairing off from the group, but I wasn't part of them. It seemed I liked all the fellows equally. Maybe they were too much like brothers.



*Jerry Crismon eating out in the bad weather
Below: Duane Olsen enjoying being surrounded by
all of us very pretty girls on another campout.*

One of my happiest memories with this group was when the bunch of us went camping at Parley's Grove in Logan Canyon. I remember this trip the clearest because of the bad weather. It drizzled all day long and was cold.

"Hey, Duane," I said, "Are you going to sit there under that tent all day?"

"Got any better suggestions?" he replied.

"Let's go for a hike!"

"Are you out of your mind?"

"I sure am. Are you willing?"

"Well, why not? Hey, Dave, Mary, want to go for a hike with us?"

"You guys must be crazy!" they both called out.

"Well, are you coming?"

"Sure, we can't trust you two up on that mountain alone."

"That's right," we said, "you better come and chaperone us."

The area seemed well supplied with big rocks. Never before or since have I enjoyed a hike so much. We jumped from rock



to rock and climbed and laughed. We got soaked and found and teased a porcupine. As we looked over the green valleys, we could see lakes and streams and pine trees. There seemed to be no civilization at all. The world was so beautiful and we were on top of it. The views were breathtaking! I felt JOY, a closeness to God and a huge sense of security and closeness to dear friends who shared the moment with me. I felt so alive!

I was never very good at verbally sharing sincere sentiments with these friends I loved; I only hoped they could tell by my actions and my looks how I cared for them. One day, years later, I wrote about them. I realized what an impact they had had on my earlier life. The poem was a take-off from one Mama had written years before.

WINGS TO FLY

*We've heard of roots - yes, you and I,
Roots for strength and Wings to fly.
How can dance give Roots to a guy?
How can dance give Wings to Fly?
A tale I'll tell of a girl I know,
No special looks, no special beau;
But a love had she for all God's kin
And sought a way their love to win.*

*Now she could dance a step or two
And loved to teach them all she knew.
She found a boy - a good willing soul,
They met and danced the rock 'n roll.
This group of two soon grew to four
And then to six and then to more.
Mary was pretty and Lynn was shy
And Verl was really quite a guy.*

*Dave and Duane we might have lost,
Their parents were by doctrines tossed.
They never missed a party or dance
And neither did Byron or Dale or Lance.
Linda was there, at first with a frown,
But there met her mate, the best in town.
This group stayed strong, held firm to the
rod,
They loved each other, and all loved God.*

*And the girl I knew who loved to dance
Knew this occurred through love, not
"chance."
How can dance give Roots to a guy?
How can dance give Wings to fly?
The answer is here in this little tale
Please don't forget, please learn it well.
Roots come from faith in a Father above,
And caring, approval, a smile, pure love.*

*With confidence high, we need to give
wings
That they might go on to unknown things.
Their spirits will soar, their hearts will fly,
They'll accomplish great things, all records
defy!
Wings sprung from roots of well used time
Encouraged through fun to keep them in
line.
Yes, dancing gives roots in so many ways,
The beginning of Wings for approaching
days.*

*This was the hope for each girl and boy,
Roots gave them strength,
And Wings gave them Joy!*

(CECILE JAMES SCRIBNER - 1979)

By the time I was a senior in high school, I had some confidence built from good experiences with good people. I felt like it was definitely time to start searching for a special boy. After all, I was already sixteen, almost seventeen! I made a list of requirements for that one special boy:

- Had to be smart and popular.
- Had to be rich and good looking.
- Had to be at least six feet tall.
- Had to sing and dance (particularly jitterbug).
- Had to love records.
- Had to be born a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- Had to be from Utah.
- In fact, he just had to be BRIAN!

Who was Brian? Well, he just happened to be a brand new boy in school and didn't know enough about the other kids yet to realize that I wasn't one of the real *populars*. I had worked up enough *oomph* to run for the Senior Prom Committee - my first attempt at anything so bold in high school. Lo and behold, I made it! I was so full of excitement as I came running home with the good news. "Mama, I made it! Can you believe it?"

"Well, why shouldn't I? I'm sure you can do it."

"But do you really think I can do it? They've put me in charge of the Friday Assembly. I'm not real sure what to do. I've never done anything like this before. Oh, I'm so scared, but so excited!"

Then very calmly, my mother replied, "Well, I know you can do it. You've been in road shows at church, so what if you used some of the same musical numbers."

"Hey, what a great idea. I think I'll do that. We can do that sailor number with all the guys, and then we could do "Tom, Dick and Harry" and even have a Roaring Twenties theme. Isn't that a great idea?"

"I'll say it is. You've really thought of a great idea."

It was a terrific idea. Everyone liked the theme, and I had a part in the assembly that was just right for the new senior boy (who was six feet tall, smart and good looking). I made sure I had occasion to talk to him every day (about the assembly, of course). At the beginning of the Senior Prom week, all the heavy practices started. The worst realization was hitting me. I didn't have a date for the dance, but then I very seldom did for school dances unless it was the *Sadie Hawkins Dance* (girls' choice). Right after Monday's rehearsal, Brian very hesitatingly asked me to go with him. Oh, I'd felt happiness before, but this was too marvelous. He sent my adrenalin flowing so fast that I could have . . . well, I felt like I could have conquered the world!

And conquer I did. The assembly pulled together just perfectly, and I even decided to sing the solo in "Tom, Dick and Harry." For me that was something. I still can't believe I did it. Granted, the song didn't require a beautiful singing voice, but there I was teaching others how to do some dances, and to sing some songs . . . so, I just ventured out and tried it myself!

It must have been obvious that there was a new budding friendship between me and Brian because someone nominated both of our names for King and Queen of the Senior Hop. I knew I wouldn't win, but it just didn't matter. To be nominated was really special. Life couldn't have been sweeter. We worked so long and hard on the decorations for the dance that I hardly had time to get ready. That was a huge mistake! For an hour before the dance, Mama helped me redo one of my sister's old formals. We pulled a gathering thread around the bottom to give it a *bubble* effect, which was popular, but it seemed obvious to me that it was a last minute make-over. My spirits would not dampen, however. I could hardly wait for this first date with Brian. When we met each other at my door, it was obvious that he saw more to me than my made-over dress and my uncurled hair.

"You look beautiful," he said.

"Really? Thank you," I replied.

"I don't think I've ever been so happy," he beamed.

"Oh, I know I never have."

The dance was thrilling to me. I felt so pretty inside that I must admit that for a fleeting moment I actually thought I was the Queen of the Senior Prom. For sure, I felt like it. They didn't vote for couples, just individuals, and I had such a strong feeling that Brian would be the King. The end of the intermission came and with it, the royal announcement. Sure enough, Brian was chosen the King— and I was chosen Queen!



*Senior Hop Committee
Orem High School
1959:*

*Doug McKinlay
Larry McKee
Sheron Schauerhamer
Cecile James
Marilyn Wallace*

Me? The Queen? Wow. That was a surprise! I knew there would never again in my whole life be a moment like this, so I savored every second of it. The band played a number for just the two of us, and for the moment I forgot I was in a dumb bubble dress. My whole body was warmed with excitement, and I knew Brian's feelings were the same. The whole world had been created just for us. Hugs and congratulations followed and pictures were taken. The pictures always served as a constant reminder of happiness and also the made-over bubble dress and uncurled hair.

Every Life With A Purpose

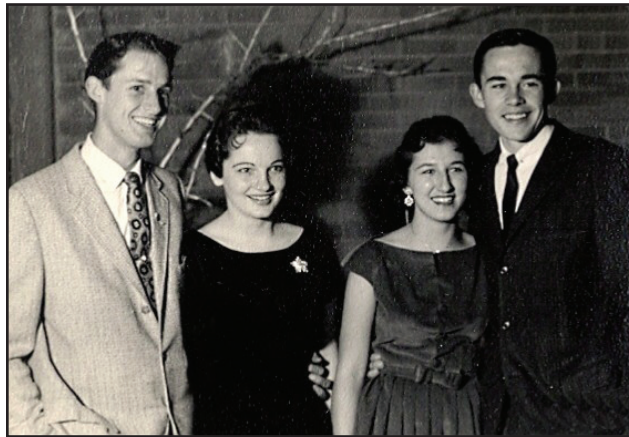
We went for pizza afterwards and then home. It was late, but I could've gone for days without sleep. He walked me to the door. "Thank you," I said, "for tonight and such a memorable week." I was so happy . . . well, "I could've danced all night."

"You'll always be a Queen to me," he softly said.

And then followed a very short, very sweet kiss, and I turned around and floated into the house and continued floating all the way to Mama and Dad's room. For the next hour I lay at the foot of their bed and relived the whole evening with them. Mama always seemed to welcome these moments and was always awake for them, for as she put it:

"We loved to hear Celie's exciting replay of special dates, all aglow with the thrill of the evening still upon her. By morning some of the bubbles and glitter would be gone."

Mama also made a doll collection for me by dressing the dolls in a replica of the dresses I wore on special dates. We always had such a laugh when we looked at the doll with the dark blue bubble dress.



*Ralph Finlayson
Pat Billings
Cecile James
Brian Utley*

Brian and I went to several school dances together - often attending with my closest high school friend, Pat Billings. We were a twosome for several months, but a break-up came. We both had growing pains and were anxious for new dimensions in life. College was just around the corner, and so my list of requirements for that special boy changed a bit:

- Had to go to college.
- Had to be a returned missionary from our Church.
- Had to be at least 5'11."
- Had to be in Kia Ora Club (or at least had to love Polynesians).
- Had to be a good dancer (cha cha and jitterbug).
- Had to be morally clean.
- Had to be from Utah or Idaho.
- In fact, he just had to be BRUCE!

Who was Bruce? Well, he was a boy who made me realize that high school was definitely over and there was a big wide wonderful world awaiting me. He went in and out of my life (several times) as he went in and out of another girl's life (you might sense a bit of jealousy here), but

he was such fun. I was more than crazy about him. We were together on tours for the Brigham Young University Kia Ora Club and shared several happy years with this group. A new group of friends formed here which was just as exciting as my original church group. In fact, at this time, I had the best of both worlds because I was close to both groups at the same time. It was a thrill as I felt my world widening. (Yes, Bruce is in this photo - Can you find him?)



Our home continued to stay open for parties. It's an old home with many creaking bones, but it withstood even Kia Ora Club parties. We would do all kinds of Maori dances on the floors and even the warlike hakas tested the old hardwood as well as the rafters. And then, of course, the stick game did a certain amount of damage. I realize now that the house wasn't as important to my mother as my circle of friends were. She became an honorary member of the club, and very often I didn't know if friends came to visit me or visit her. She always insisted it was me they came to visit. I wasn't convinced.

I met a few fellows outside of my established groups that left impressions of memorable evenings with me. One fellow in particular was called my *dancing buddy*. His name was Brooks, but everyone called him *Bish*. My, how I loved to dance with him. Surely there was never a better dancer in the world (at least in mine). He could lead a girl like no one else ever could, but of all the countless hours we spent dancing together, there was one evening I'll never forget.

We hadn't seen each other for several months, and there was a kind of warm, close feeling this one night. We decided to ride south toward his hometown. We were on a dark road, no other cars, when he suddenly said, "*I really feel like dancing!*"

"*Me too,*" I replied.

"*Well, what do you say? Will this particular spot on the road do?*"

"*It looks great to me.*"

“What’s your favorite dance number?”

“C’mon . . . you know what it is.”

“You’re on!”

At this point, Brooks and I began humming Glenn Miller’s, “*In the Mood*” and did the jitterbug up and down the highway “*by the light of the silvery moon.*” I’m a romantic, and that definitely was a romantic night.

Another fellow just happened into my life for one night. I knew of him and his dancing abilities (he was well known on campus, but I’m sure he’d never heard of me before). After a dance practice at church one night, we started talking and he offered to drive me home. I invited him in and put on some music while we visited. All of a sudden he took off his shoes and jumped up on the couch. “*Doesn’t that music make you want to dance?*” he said.

This frightened me at first, because interpretive dancing wasn’t my way of moving - wasn’t my *bag* - at least not in front of anyone else. “*I’ll try,*” I replied, “*but I’m not very good at this.*”

“*Just let yourself go,*” he encouraged. “*Do anything you want.*”

It took me a little while but pretty soon my inhibitions were gone, and I was having the most marvelous time. We were on tables, chairs, couches, in each other’s arms, twirling, spinning and then rolling in laughter on the floor. A one-night spree, no romance, but a debt of gratitude for an extremely happy evening in my life. I don’t remember his first name, but his last name was Oliphant. He definitely prepared me for the new type of dancing that was to come forth in the sixties, seventies and eighties. He not only prepared me to do it, but helped me be ready to love it!

As I was maturing, my list of requirements for the *one and only* was changing. I’d seen so much good in fellows that weren’t particularly the most sought after guys, and I gained new insights that caused me to look deeply into a fellow’s personality and change my priorities.

Dating, courtship and marriage were important dreams and goals of mine. I enjoyed the many years of courtship immensely; so much so that I wasn’t sure I wanted to marry at age twenty-two or three. It seemed so young at the time. Earlier however, at age nineteen, I felt like I had passed the age of desirability, for all my friends from high school were getting married. Why, I had already been a *Maid of Honor* three times! I seemed to look at every one of my dates as a potential husband, rather than someone to just enjoy, but nothing ever seemed to click. I had several good, close boy friends, but that was the problem—they were such friends that I couldn’t envision myself marrying one of them. I was frustrated and frightened that the Lord had forgotten to send *the one* to me. Then a choice experience came my way.

I went with a group of 150 girls from around the Utah area to be part of the cast for the Hill Cumorah Pageant in Palmyra, New York. We joined 150 full-time missionaries in that area to rehearse and put on the pageant for over 100,000 people who came from all over the United States to see it. It was definitely a spiritual high in my life.

I met a missionary who was everything on my so-called list (though I was only guessing about the dancing!) He just entranced me. At one point, when he was presenting a discussion and asked me a simple question, my mind was so much in a world of dreams that I gave a totally wrong answer. Then I was mortified and knew he'd never look at me again. I suppose, however, that eventually he felt much the same as I did. Nevertheless, without the freedom to go on dates to get to know one another, I had to go back to Utah with only the thought, "Now *that's* the kind of guy I'm looking for." His last words to me (written on the back of a photo card) were, "I don't know who she is, or where she is, but when I find her, I hope she's a lot like you." Well, I just simply thought, "I hope eventually that it won't be a lot like me, but will be. . .me!"

He put thoughts into my head that inspired me to serve a mission. I never before imagined myself capable of such a feat! When I got home, I had a burning desire to be twenty-one so I'd be old enough to be called on a mission, but that was a year away! Also, when I got home, one of the fellows I was dating before I left for the pageant started talking about marriage. I didn't love him, but after all, how many offers of marriage does one get in life? This was my first. Three weeks earlier, I was ready to jump into marriage, but now I had things to do before making such a long-lasting commitment. He was a good person, but the timing was off, and the right feelings were missing, and besides I'd been entranced by this missionary in New York, and still wondered what might lay in store for me there, if anything.



Cecil, Cecile and Lucie James

Even at that, I found it frightening to turn down the proposal of marriage. However, right after I did, my parents were asked by Church leaders to go to Australia and supervise the building of chapels, and I could go with them. My mind was racing. What if I went with them and got called on a mission at age twenty, instead of twenty-one? That would get me in the mission field at least six months earlier, and then I would be home again six months earlier, and then . . . Oh, yes, my mind was racing.

It was just like answers to prayers coming true! The preparation to me was exciting. I had new goals, new heights waiting for me. I was thrilled and never before so happy. Just imagine - I would see Australia! How many people get to do that?? We had our missionary farewell at Church. Well, it was actually my parents' missionary farewell, but I was asked to speak as well. I spoke with the hope that I would also be a missionary - maybe sooner than later.

During the next week, I went to the Kia Ora Club to say “goodbye” to some of my closest of all friends. We were in a big circle with our arms around each other singing, “*Po Ata Rau*” (“*Now is the Hour for Us to Say Goodbye*”) when I looked across the room and saw a fellow who had just walked in. He had recently returned from a mission in New Zealand. I knew him and even had had a passing crush on him four years earlier when I was a senior in high school and he was a freshman at Brigham Young University. We were just very good friends. At that time, he left BYU to go to school in Arizona, his hometown. We wrote for many months, but then for some unknown reason, stopped writing.

And now, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. There he stood - tall, dark, and handsome (and a good dancer for sure)! Basically, he was everything on my list! We walked home together in the snow, talked for hours, and literally fell in love with each other. “Am I crazy?” I kept asking myself. Why does life offer such hard choices? I fell so totally in love with him, but didn't dare say the words for fear I would end up hurting him and myself as well. I was so mixed up.

It was only a week and a half before I was to leave for Australia. Never, ever was I so torn inside. It wasn't a decision between right and wrong. It was a decision between two rights, for this fellow was everything just as much as I thought the one in New York was everything. I knew I could've stayed home and married him and been extremely happy, but again it was a matter of timing. I also wanted a mission so badly I literally ached inside. This was a decision my mother couldn't help me make - but would I be able to make it myself? How would I know what to do? The answer was never clear, even after long periods of time on my knees praying.

The only decision I could make was that a mission was right for me at that time, perhaps a little more right than marriage. But. . . for heavens sakes, I didn't even have a mission call - I only had the hope of getting one! Are there times when Heavenly Father leaves us alone to make decisions? Perhaps happiness would come no matter which of these two choices I made. We went to the train station, and both of us wept as we said goodbye. He then pulled out a small box which literally frightened me.

I thought, “*Oh, no. I can't be engaged on my mission. It wouldn't be fair to either of us.*” And the other half of me thought, “*Oh, how I'd love to be engaged to him and come back and marry him. How I love him!*” I opened the box, at the same time trying to put together a response. It was a pearl drop necklace! I never took it off during my whole mission. I even wore it after we stopped writing (for reasons I can't seem to remember). It took a lot of faith in an unknown future to say *goodbye* to this fellow, but through tears and some sweet moments, I did.

Five minutes after shaking President McConkie's hand, I was given a call to serve a mission. Every so often during that next year and a half, I entertained thoughts of the missionary in New York. We didn't really know each other, but now and then he did send letters of encouragement that helped me to reach heights I had never thought possible. I had never even imagined that such opportunities could be mine. These included glorious friendships unique to missionaries and their contacts, and the chance to rub shoulders with Church leaders like Bruce R. McConkie, Howard W. Hunter, Ezra Taft Benson and Gordon B. Hinckley, who are some of the greatest men I'll ever know - even Prophets! I established bonds of love with people I may never see again on this earth, but with whom I share a deep and lasting relationship.



*Bruce R. McConkie and Cecile at
Mission Home in Melbourne, Australia
September 1963 (on my way home)*

No other single experience prepared me so well for married life with all its trials and triumphs, discouragement and joy, as did my mission to Australia. I gave much credit to the missionary in New York for having such a belief in my abilities that I even dared to go. Otherwise, I might not have had the courage to do it.

Missionaries must keep a sense of humor or they could never last a year and a half or two years without dating, as they surely must while serving a mission. During this time we lady missionaries adopted a poem that helped keep our sense of humor (or reality) alive:

*At Sweet Sixteen I first began
To ask simply for a man.
At Seventeen, you will recall,
I wanted someone strong and tall.
For Christmas when I reached Eighteen
I wanted someone more extreme;
At Twenty I still thought I'd find
Romance in someone with a mind.
I retrogressed at Twenty-one
And found the college boy more fun;
My view had changed by Twenty-four,
Send anyone, please, except a bore!
Now I'm nearly Twenty-five
Just send me someone still alive!*

Well, I wasn't twenty-five yet, but after my mission I definitely made a new list of requirements for that future mate.

- He had to be patient with me as I adjusted to new life after the missionfield.
- He had to be nice looking.
- Height wasn't really that important.
- Had to be a returned missionary - I had to know HOW WELL he had served.
- Had to LOVE dancing (that's right, it's still on my list).
- Had to have a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Had to have respect for his parents.
- Had to have or be seeking a college degree.
- Had to have strong morals.
- Had to want to live in Utah.
- A sense of humor was really important.
- In fact, he turned out to be DOUG!

Who's Doug? Well, you'll meet him shortly. My first worry was meeting the Missionary from New York who had now become the *boy from Idaho*, who was, of all things, still unattached! I wondered if Heavenly Father was preparing us both for each other: the meeting, the mission, the every so often exchange of letters, the similarities. Now, after two and a half years of correspondence, I was about to actually go out with him on a date. All my eight college roommates were watching through the windows as he came to the door. I was a little worried because I was carrying ten extra pounds put on from good Australian food (had to be the crumpets!), but I thought he could surely only see the person in the letters. He came to the door . . .

"Hello, Sister James."

"Hello." And then I thought, "Why is he so formal? I do have a first name. . . Please, Heavenly Father, help me to say something interesting."

But nothing came. The longer we were together, the more tied up inside I became. When a missionary returns home, there just aren't any conversations available except religious topics. The whole day seemed miserable. I met his family. We actually spent the whole day together, but I seemed to be tongue tied. As we left his family, his father gave me a big hug, and that seemed to be the only reassuring factor that I was worth anything. Otherwise, I came home empty. I didn't see him for two weeks because we were still separated by several hundred miles.

I knew he was a horseman, so I had an IDEA. A day in the canyon on horses! My brother, Tom, tried to help me by letting me borrow two of his Arabian horses. He also took me downtown and bought me some riding clothes, including black trousers to help those extra ten pounds disappear. Black is a good color for that! Two weeks had gone by and I felt well adjusted to the world again and ready to even ride spirited Arabian horses which I knew very little about, but I could pretend.

We rode up Rock Canyon, but all I could think of was the scriptures, the mission field, conversion stories, the Michaelis Family, etc. (on horses, even!) - nothing worldly, nothing of interest and nothing exciting. The hurt inside was terrible, and I was horribly disappointed in myself, but I'd been out of the world too long and my usual ability to converse with a fellow had gone rusty. Even a good joke wouldn't come to mind. I don't remember a more miserable date in my whole life than those hours spent in Rock Canyon, and it seemed to be all my fault.

Later that night we drove up through Provo Canyon. There was dead silence all the way. He parked, and I thought, *"Oh, great. Maybe we're finally going to be able to talk. After all, I'm a smart girl and I've got things to say. . ."*

He began, *"Well, I'm sure you can tell as well as I that this isn't working."* Outwardly I was the obedient, sweet, agreeing girl and said "Yes," but inside I was crying out, *"How can you say that? After two and a half years, why can't we give each other some time! This is only our second date together. What about my whole world that's beginning to crash? What about a wonderful marriage to a wonderful guy that I gave up for a mission?"*

But I had such great respect for his opinion and inspiration, and so little respect for my own at the moment, that my answer was simply, "Yes."

I came home so dejected, so low, so broken, so alone, so tearful, so hurt. I wanted my mother - I needed my mother, but she was still in Australia, 10,000 miles away. Still, she managed to reach me as I searched for answers in our basement. The basement seemed like a lowly place to hide when I was at my lowest ebb. Through tears, I opened some drawers and discovered some old journals. I started thumbing through these old books and found some poems Mama had written over forty years before. She was exactly my same age when she had written them at twenty-two years. I had never before seen these poems. She, too, had loved and lost. At this moment, I knew that she too would listen to my cries and understand if only she could hear.

MY ROMANCE

*So I've named it "My Romance"
And tied it in pink,
Even now will no heart beat
When on it I think.
All the pages are worn
And thumb marked with use,
Many hopes in them born
Many fears there set loose.
So full of sweet phrases
All surely should know,
Such bright, flaming blazes
To ashes soon go.
But I've read them so often
They almost seem true,
All harsh thoughts quite soften
When thinking of you.
So if left I have proof,
Deny it, who can?
That once in my youth
I was wooed by a man!*

(LUCIE HOWARD JAMES, 1922)



Lucie Howard

Every Life With A Purpose

Then right below this poem were scribbled these verses:

*The bottom of earth has fallen it seems
For he was unkind to me;
And while the whole land with its joy and love teems,
I would from its mockery flee.
The treasures I valued and handled with care
Are meaningless quite to me now,
All hidden, depressed in this stifling air,
For he has broken his vow.
Oh, a broken heart, like a broken head,
Is not to be soldered with zinc,
And the hopes and plans of each unsaid
Are heavy and would make me sink.*

(LUCIE HOWARD JAMES, 1922)

How I knew that same heavy feeling at this moment. My whole life seemed ready to end as I thought of the chances for romance that I had given up, and yet remembered the uncertainty and indecision with each of them. My sight was very short, admittedly so, yet I not only wondered why I'd given up other boys, but also wondered why I'd gone on a mission, why I had trusted in the Lord, why, why . . . The next poem I read of my mother's caused the last six years of my own life to flash before me. Was it really possible that she had so closely experienced the same feelings I had at this very moment?

WORDS, IDLE WORDS

*"I love you", he said in writing bold,
"I love you more than my heart can hold."
And I read it over and cherished a hope
That maybe it really was good, honest "dope."*

*"You're a queen to me," the next one ran,
Pretty words those, to come from a man.
"Maybe I am," I said to myself
And thought how I'd fool the Old Maid's shelf.*

*"You're interesting, lovely, divine and fair,"
But how could I be with auburn red hair?
Did I doubt his judgment? Oh no, not I,
Such wonderful insight made him seem high.*



Lucie Howard

*"I want you forever to be my own
In a comfy cottage, we shall call home."
I laughed at this much and called it a jest;
But that didn't keep me from filling my chest.*

*"Please send me at once your own self, sweet child."
Just for a moment I felt a bit wild,
Then calmly sat down and scribbled a line
About "How the folks were all feeling fine."*

*Impatient, he more elaborately wrote
'Til all of a sudden my conscience was smote,
For I realized then 'twas a serious game'
That leaves not the players feeling the same.*

*So stop then, or go, one surely must
If each should hold sacred that lingering trust
I, womanlike, wonder and fear and plan
A pity our hopes all rest with some man!!*

(LUCIE HOWARD JAMES, 1922)

Somehow I lived through the most desolate night of my life. My eyes were too red to face anyone the next day. In a matter of a few days those ten extra pounds were off, but it didn't seem to make me happy.

A week earlier, I had met Doug, a returned missionary from Australia. I knew him in the missionfield, but only briefly. And now with bright red eyes, I answered a ringing telephone.

"Hello."

"Hello. Doug Scribner here."

"Oh, Hi." (Why should I be excited. After all, he was only 5'8" and wore glasses and was from California.)

"Remember in the missionfield," he continued, "before I left, you asked if my wife and I would take you out to dinner?"

"Yes, I remember."



Doug Scribner in Australia 1962

“Well, I don’t have a wife, but how would you like to go to dinner anyway?”

“Okay.”

After all, who was Doug Scribner anyway, and who cared? I was too broken to care about much of anything.

The evening was filled with as many things as one could put into a date—a dinner, a walk home, a stop for a milkshake, dancing in the living room, singing a dozen songs with a ukelele, popping popcorn and conversation. Conversation! I could really converse, and it came out of my mouth so naturally. (I knew I was a smart girl and could carry on a conversation)! I was beginning to be my old self again. Nothing more happened, but a little confidence was returning. However, it wavered when Doug didn’t ask me out for another month. I actually thought I had been a pretty interesting person that first date. As I learned later, he was very perceptive and knew another month of adjustment would give me a little more time to become more myself. Besides that, he was still a bit *busy* with a few other girls!

We went bowling next. Not spectacular to some, but this had to be the most spectacular date of my life. Everything was coming together. He rolled the ball . . .

“It’s a strike!”

“Wow, that was terrific.”

“Now it’s your turn.”

I took the ball with a good amount of confidence. I hadn’t bowled for over five years.

“It’s a strike! Can you actually believe it!”

I ran back, and we threw ourselves into one another’s arms. I think we both *knew* at that moment, but didn’t dare speak.

“Another strike!”

“A Spare!”

“Nine pins!”

“Eight pins!”

“You’re wonderful!”

“Oh, so are you.”

“A spare!”

“A strike!”



Doug and Cecile

Our scores were both high. The excitement between us was electric. We were both caught up in a feeling that neither of us had felt before. A few goodnight kisses followed, but being afraid of losing a good feeling, Doug said, “*I don’t think we’d better make kissing part of our relationship.*”

No longer the meek, obedient, sweet girl, I spoke my feelings. “*Oh, really? Do you think I give kisses out freely? Believe me, I’ve only kissed a few special boys in my entire life!*” I now had some *fight* in me!

Well, he did kiss me again, and again. We both knew a strange and wonderful feeling that was building up between us. Yet . . .we weren’t moving fast. We saw each other often on campus, but only went on one more date the next month. However, I knew for sure what I wanted and schemed and planned and plotted like I’d never done for any other fellow. It’s hard to get the attention of a graduate student in his last year!

While he was studying, I was also studying and enjoying my last year of college, but I was also enjoying dating (after all, I did know a bunch of returned missionaries from the Southern Australian Mission!). I wasn’t quite ready when he put an abrupt stop to my fun by asking me to marry him. Somehow I knew I would say “*yes*” after that first strike at the bowling alley.

The courtship and engagement were going just fine, but as it got closer to the time of marriage, I became confused. It didn’t seem to be the overwhelmingly happy time that I had anticipated and dreamed about. My father was in Australia, still on a mission and unable to come home, but my mother flew home to be with me. However, it was a hard experience for her to leave in the middle of her mission for a few weeks. For the first time in my life, I couldn’t even seem to share my feelings with her. This problem was totally mine to solve. Her strings were fully detached. She had let go.

The house and the yard needed a lot of work before the reception, so we were all worn out. And most of all, my brothers and sisters didn’t seem to gravitate to Doug very much. Well, they hardly knew him or ever saw him, and Doug’s main focus at school was to finish his Master’s Degree and thesis. I respected my siblings opinions and loved them so much that I began to think that I was surely making a mistake. Most of our engagement was spent studying on the fifth floor of the library.

We went down to the Manti Temple to be married, and for a few hours before the ceremony, as I sat there, I offered many fervent prayers to Heavenly Father, pleading for some assurance. I knew that if He somehow could tell me that this man was right for me, then I could go on faith that everything else would work out. And since it wasn’t feeling *right*, I then started to pray for the strength to say, “*No.*” I felt so terribly alone while kneeling at the altar, even though I was surrounded by family and friends who all loved me. When asked the question, “*Do you take Douglas MacKenzie Scribner . . .*” I felt a warmth start at my feet and envelope my whole being—I felt happiness. I could feel my face warming up, and in a pool of tears, I answered, “*Yes.*”

I finally proved I could “fly” on my own. I was capable of seeking answers for myself and getting them. My wings in full flight had truly brought joy and even a much higher level of confidence.

It was amazing how much fun Doug had in him, particularly after he finished that Masters’ Thesis. He loved to dance, he put up with my parties, he loved my family and our family gatherings - he loved camping, and he was willing to put himself in uncomfortable situations, until they just became commonplace in our marriage. Little did he know at the beginning what marriage to me was going to be like! Perhaps I gained too much confidence when I was put in charge of that Senior Hop Assembly back in high school in 1959. I never became any kind of performer myself, but I sure learned how to get others up on stage and enjoy this ol’ life of ours! And Doug never let me down. . . .



“Fiddler On the Roof”



“Annie Get Your Gun”



Road Shows



“Uncle Josh Died Last Night. . . “
Martin McOmber, Deems Davis, Steve Fife, and Doug

Years passed, sixteen years, and Doug and I had become the parents of seven children ourselves. It was now a week before my mother's death. Over the years I often leaned upon her strength, not in excess but only for a little added encouragement. It was always good to hear her say,

"I knew you could do it."

"I promise to be there for the birth."

"How I wish I could've heard you teach that lesson."

"We'll be there for the surgery. You can count on us."

"The Dance Party sounds wonderful. It's what you've always wanted to do."

A mother is always a mother no matter where we are in life, but there comes a time when they have to leave us for good. Mama had a stroke. When Tom called, I said, *"How bad is it?"*

"Well, if you want to see Mother alive, you better come tonight."

I flew home immediately. She was only conscious that day. I looked at her, and her only words were, *"Too far, too far."* She felt that the flight from California was too far for me to travel just to be with her. From then on, she could only squeeze our hands in response.

I was blessed with one more moment of receiving her encouragement. Though no words were spoken this moment, she gave me *"wings to fly"* like I've never been given before. I was alone with her in her hospital room. I had been there for five days, but now there were only five days until Christmas. I was torn between a sick mother in Utah and seven children anxiously awaiting Christmas in California.

Mama was paralyzed on her left side, but could barely move her right hand. She didn't seem to have the strength to even open her eyes. She was motionless for the half hour I spoke to her. Many times I stroked her face and told her how much I loved her and would miss her, and I kissed her many times on her cheek and forehead. I rubbed her arms, held her hands and just talked to her. Finally, in tears, I pleaded, *"Oh, Mama, if you could just talk to me. I can't make this decision. Please tell me what to do. I can't leave you, and yet I feel that I should go home and be with the kids for Christmas."*

For a split second, her body struggled and a slight sound came from her lips, and she raised her right hand. I rushed to that side of her. Then she pushed on my arm very hard, three times, as if pushing me away. Again, she encouraged me, reminded me of the most noble calling on earth, Motherhood, and in her way said, *"Each of your children has a purpose, and so do you. Go fulfill your calling as a Mother. You can do it better than I."*

I flew home that night knowing I'd never see my mother alive again, but being with her put a fire in me to achieve. My purpose was to discover the potential in each of my children and help them to reach it. Yes, a mother should give wings that her children might have joy!



Back: Richard, Joyce, Cheril, Cecile, Tom, Front: Cecil, Lucie, Lois - 1968 - Provo, Utah



*Back: Scott, Doug, Russ Middle: Lora, Cecile, Spencer, Jim, Craig Sitting on grass: Christianne, Gina
1988 - Santa Rosa, California*



Motherhood - Gift Divine

For Mary a new experience,
This first born, small man child,
He shall be called "*Holy to the Lord,*"
Be faultless, void of guile.
As tenderly she held Him close,
She marveled, pondered much,
The wonder of life so fragile,
The softness of infant touch.
"*What manner of man shall this be?*"
His eyes looked into hers,
"*He shall be good, he shall be great.*"
A happiness in her stirred.
For do not mothers everywhere
Hold prayers that their sons can
"*Increase in wisdom and stature*"
And "*In favor with God and man?*"
Only to mothers, this gift divine -
Motherhood, a special kind of love -
Her trust to lead and guide
The spirits sent from above.

BY LUCIE HOWARD JAMES (1973)

