

Isla Rose Hall

LUCY VAN COTT

When Tracy and I knew we were going to be married before he started his senior Year at the University of Utah, we went to Salt Lake to find a place to live. The chief specification for our lodgings was that it be as inexpensive as possible. The one we found cost us fifteen dollars a month. (Big money in that day.) We finally settled on an apartment in the home of a former Dean of Women of the U of U, Miss Lucy VanCott. She lived on University Avenue, which ran a block above 13th East and which bordered the University. This was about the closest anyone could be to the University.

Some of the residents had been living there already for a year or two and had picked up some stories about Miss VanCott. There was one story about how she laid down strict rules regarding the need for the women students to be certain that their "bloomers" were not showing while sitting on the lawns. I wish I had the exact dates when she was the Dean of Women, but the "Bloomers" might give some idea of the era. We moved there in 1941 and it had been a long time since girls' underwear was referred to as "bloomers."

The house was a typical bungalow with one story and a basement. The house faced east, facing the University grounds. The entrance, however, was in the middle of the south side of the house with three or four steps up to the main level. On the main floor was Miss VanCott's apartment, which was a little larger than most of the apartments, our apartment, Mrs. Marsh's apartment (directly across the hall from us). The bathroom was between Mrs. Marsh's apartment and ours at the end of the hall. Next to Mrs. Marsh was another apartment and next to it was Miss VanCott's kitchen. Just north

of Miss VanCott's door were stairs leading to the basement. The kitchen and all the apartments downstairs led off the hall at the bottom of the stairs.

The kitchen was shared by all the tenants except Miss VanCott, and one apartment downstairs, which was occupied by Flora and Juan Whiting, brother and sister, and a friend of Juan's, Eugene Robertson. This apartment had a small kitchen. Eugene was a farm boy who paid Thora to cook for him. Eugene supplemented their groceries with produce he brought from his family's farm. Eugene went on to become a surgeon and later settled in Provo, Utah to practice medicine. We were never in this apartment, but we presumed that it had at least two bedrooms.

In the kitchen had a laundry type sink, a large table, and a stove and there was also a piano in this room. Directly across from the kitchen and north of the Whiting's apartment was an apartment occupied by a couple of boys. I can't remember their names. One of them was a "Judd."

There was a open storage room on the east of the kitchen and one thing I definitely remember that was stored in the this room was an *antique* washing machine, which Miss VanCott let us use when she found out I had eczema on my hands and arms. I do *antique*. But we were glad to have the use of it.

Miss VanCott believed in fresh air to sleep in. So much so, that all the bedrooms were screened-in, open-air bedrooms, just large enough to hold a double bed. So they were warm-to-hot in the summer, and cold in the winter. The beds left something to be desired as both mattress and spring slopped to the center. But that was all right, because in the winter, those sheets on those beds never were anything but cold--in spite of trying to warm the bed with two or three hot water bottles each night. We were glad to have

each other's body warmth. Once you got into the bed, you didn't want to move one inch away from the middle. That was O.K for Tracy who had always had a brother in his bed, but I had always slept alone, and in spite of the fact that we were newlyweds, I had trouble adjusting to having another body in the bed with me. It was alright for preliminary cuddling, but when I wanted to go to sleep, if I moved away from the center, it was *too* cold. This helped me to adjust to my problem of closeness. Miss VanCott was probably right about the fresh air, however, because we were very healthy that year.

I applied for work at Woolworth's and also at the fountain of the corner drugstore on 13th East and 8th South. The job at the corner drugstore came through first, but was just a part time job. I informed them that I expected to go to work full time at Woolworth's, but because of my experience, they were willing to put up with the indefinite time frame. Within a short time, probably in less than two weeks time, the Woolworth job came through, and I transferred to that. I worked there until Tracy graduated in June, 1942.

.We had a lot of fun at Lucy's. The occupants of the apartments were congenial and got along just fine. Mrs. Marsh was somewhat of a character. She was a divorcee and had a little girl about six years of age. She soon let us know that she was descended from *the* Thomas Marsh who had been President of the Council of Twelve in Nauvoo. Later, when we looked him up in church history, we found Thomas Marsh had been excommunicated from the church during the Missouri persecutions for signing affidavits against the brethren, which led to the death of David Patton. I do not know if Thomas Marsh ever regained membership into the church, but he evidently went west with the church because he is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

We got acquainted with Thora Whiting very soon, because the first night we were there she serenaded us by playing and singing on the piano downstairs in the kitchen. *Loudly*. She was especially fond of playing a then popular piano solo taken from the theme of the concerto #1 in B-minor by Tchaikovsky, which she regularly performed. With gusto! In all fairness, Thora played the piano well, and had a very nice soprano voice. We just did not like her timing sometimes.

Lucy was either a relative or a friend of President Heber J. Grant, because occasionally he would drive up in his car and take Lucy for a ride.

.On the Sunday of December 7, 1941, I was down in the kitchen putting together a jigsaw puzzle with one of the other students, when one of the boys across the hall burst in excitedly declaring, "the Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor!"

"Where's Pearl Harbor?" I asked.

"In Hawaii", he answered.

"Oh they wouldn't dare!" I said. But they *had* dared and it was *war*. From that time until the war ended, *war* was the primary concern in all our lives, but especially in the lives of the young American men who would fight that war, and in the lives of those who loved them.

At Christmas time Lucy invited everyone who had not gone home for Christmas into her kitchen for turkey soup. We had a hard time eating this because although it had vegetables and potatoes in it, the soup also had floating in it all the skin and some of the stuffing from the turkey. We ate it—we knew she was being kind to us, but I never make turkey soup of my own that I don't recall that day. I make certain that the broth is very carefully drained before I add the other ingredients

Miss VanCott was very kind to us, and in February of 1942, when I had symptoms of what I thought was flu, she recognized that I was having a miscarriage and recommended we go to our family Dr. in Ogden as soon as possible. We did just that and Dr. Edward Rich took care of me. I could not understand why I was so upset at losing a baby that I didn't even know had been conceived.

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