

the Virginia Reel, and other round dances where there was no "touching" were allowed. The young people would sneak away and dance their waltzes in the barns of the community. But if they were caught they had to confess in sacrament meeting and were sometimes banned from going to the weekly Friday dances for a while.

Charlotte's brother Louis says in his story of their stay in Mexico, that the young men would frequent the Mexican dances in the area in spite of the disapproval of their parents, who were probably afraid that they would marry the lovely Mexican girls they met at these dances.

#### COURTING CUSTOMS

Since a man could have more than one wife, he could court the local maidens even though he was married. Mother said although she wouldn't go out with him, one of the men of the colony taught his children to call her "Aunt Charlotte". "Aunt" was a common name for a second or third polygamous wife. She said that often the younger married men would go with the young people on their outings. They were always in a group—but the wives weren't present. Even though the Manifesto had been issued, it took a while before it became operative in Mexico. After all, that is why most of the LDS families had come to Mexico in the first place—so they could live the principle of plural marriage in peace.

It would seem very strange (even offensive) if a married man approached, with romantic intent, a single woman in my generation. Likewise, if a single girl flirted with a married man, she would soon be called to repentance by the Bishop. I'm grateful that I don't have to face my husband's courting of "another wife." It isn't hard to imagine how I would feel under the circumstance. And contrary to the picture often portrayed in polygamous family stories, many men took subsequent wives without the consent of their first wife.

However, in spite of these (to us) strange courting customs, in reply to my question of "How many girls of her generation married into polygamy?", Mother said, "Not one!" In fact, after the manifesto none of the young men took additional wives either—except for her father. And did she ever get kidded about that—by one young man about her own age.

#### A BLOW FOR THE FEMINISTS

Mother was in school. (Schooling was very intermittent for my mother and her brothers and sisters.) A boy named Harv Elliot was one of three boys who lived quite close to Mother and she went with all three of them. They often went about in a group of young people. But Harv was the one that gave her the most trouble and he was the one that was her shadow, at home, in church, and in school. He was just younger than she was or about the same age. Also, he was in the same class (but that didn't mean anything in Mexico because young people of all ages could be in a class). In Mother's own words:

"One day we were having a terrible snowstorm, so I went over to Ida Wilson's [she was her father's second wife] for lunch and after lunch I came into the schoolroom. Harv always sat in front of me, beside me, or in back of me. Anyway, he was sitting sideways on the seat with his elbow on my desk. And he said to me: "Been over to Aunty's have you?" And I just hit him—just like that—and knocked him into the aisle. I was surprised at the result—I didn't think I had hit him that hard. And he just bounced to the next seat and into the aisle. Judge Howell was teaching and I thought I was going to catch it, too, and the Judge said to Harvey—"Now you behave yourself." But he didn't change.

This incident must have happened in La Boquilla or Pearson, because as near as I can piece together the story, Heber's second wife, Ida-Wilson, was not with them in Chuachupa.

#### MAN AGAINST NATURE

Once while they were still in Chuachupa, Mother's father [Heber Otto] took on the hard-pan in that area. He had brought some fruit trees down from the States, and he thought if he dug large enough holes for those trees and brought in good soil to put around them they would do O.K. The men in the valley told him he was just making ponds for the trees, and that they would all drown, but he wouldn't listen. The trees all died. Some of the men in the valley had some success with fruit trees by breaking up the hard-pan with dynamite, thus giving the trees some drainage. That must have been some hard-pan.

#### THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

Mother had several experiences with lighting. It seems that they had really spectacular—and frightening—lightning storms in Mexico. Almost everyone knew someone who had been killed or injured seriously by lightning. Lou gives an excellent description of the lightning storms they had in Mexico on page seven of his "Memories." From Mother's tape:

I had several experiences with lightning when I was a girl. My first experience was when I was in Madera. I was running a board and room house there. All the electric lights in the town came from the lumber mill, which made its own electricity and when lightning hit, the lights would go out and we would have to substitute coal-oil lamps for the electric ones. This day we had a fierce lightning storm, and the lights went out. We had a man working for us named "Sharp"—I didn't know him by any other name except "Sharp"—and he came into the pantry to help me get the coal-oil lamps going, and "Bang!"—the flash came and we both went down. I came out of it before he did and when he got up, he shouted: "Let me get out of here—let me get out of here—I'm bleeding!" He ran right into the wall in his confusion. He wasn't bleeding, but he had a burn on his neck, and had to go to the doctor. [There was a big lumber mill at Madera and there was a company doctor.]

The doctor gave us some advice. "Don't ever leave your light sockets without light bulbs in them. If you have bulbs in the sockets, the electricity comes and goes back out. It dropped right down on you folks because you were under the open socket."

One time when I was out at the tie camp [I presume her father and the boys were at a camp where they were cutting logs and forming rail-road ties], I had my own little camp—a dog camp—just big enough for a bed. I was on my bed and lightning hit a tree about twenty feet from my camp and just set that tree on fire. It went right through my camp and it just tingled me. I went clear off! [unconscious]. I don't know if it was a fainting spell [Mother fainted easily] or if it was the lightning that took me off, but I sure got it that time.

The other time was when I was in Chupe, I was sitting in the living room on my Mother's bed—it seems like there was never a place where we didn't have to have a bed in every room, and Mother's bed seemed always to be in the living room—I was sitting on her bed doing something and the lightning hit the corner of the house and came right down and tore the door frame off—just splintered it—and went clear through the house, and out the back window and splintered it! I just grabbed my head—never said a word—and just rolled off the bed. Mother thought