

## **Early Childhood Memories**

My birth certificate says that I was born in the county of Weber, town of Birch Creek, sex: female; That I was given the name of Ida-Rose Langford; That I was legitimate; That the date of my birth was February 20, 1921, the daughter of Ernest F. Langford and Charlotte Z. Chlarson, who lived in Birch Creek, Utah; That both my parents were white. That my father was born in Utah, and that my mother was born in Arizona. My father's profession was listed as "farmer" and my mother was a "housewife." Also that this was the fourth birth for my mother, and that she had no dead children, and that she had had no stillborn births. The attending physician, Edward I. Rich, M.D., whose residence was Ogden, Utah, then certified that he had attended the live birth that had occurred at 5:30 a.m. on said February 20, 1921. The registration number of the birth was #2 and was signed by J. Alonzo Stephens, registrar.

Clarence Morris, who was the bishop of the 14th Ward, Weber Stake, subsequently blessed me on March 19, 1921. (Why not by my father? I wish I could ask him.) Such is the statistical evidence of my birth, both civilly and ecclesiastically. All of my siblings, three girls older and three boys younger than I, were born at home. At all the births after myself, Dr. Edward I. Rich presided. Two years earlier on October 20, 1919, clear across town in North Ogden, he had presided at the birth of my future husband, H. Tracy Hall.

## **The Family Doctor**

How those early doctors managed, I do not know. I do know that most families did not call the doctor as often as we do today. Occasionally we would go to the doctor's office—say for an inoculation, etc., but usually the doctor came to the home to see his patient. When someone called a doctor, and his familiar car drove up to the house of the patient, the whole neighborhood was alerted and waited anxiously to see what the problem was.

Most babies were born at home, which was generally a happy event, but Dr. Rich also presided at the illnesses and the deaths, which also took place in the homes. Ezra J. Poulson, in his biography of Edward I. Rich "Happy Day. Life and Times of Edward I. Rich," p. 247 states that Edward I. Rich brought 5,828 babies into the world, over 3,500 delivered in private homes under conditions which would make doctors of today shudder." All or at least most of these babies would have been born in the Weber Valley. Dr. Edward I. Rich racked up a lot of mileage in Weber County on his various cars. He was known and loved by a lot of Ogdenites. This much I know of my mother's deliveries—Dr. Rich wouldn't have shuddered when he delivered her babies. Our home would have been spotlessly clean and ready for the delivery, and everything prepared ahead of time. Why I didn't ask my mother just what preparing for a home delivery of a child involved, I'll never know, but I do remember one thing about Dr. Rich's visits that pertains directly to me.

My mother once told me that she tried to get Dad to let her go to the hospital for her last three births, but he wanted her to have the babies at home. He was afraid they would mix the babies and he wouldn't get his own. She had him talked into it for Heber's birth—the last and seventh child of the family. At the last minute he pled with her not to go to the hospital. He would give her all the money she would save if she would just have the baby at home! I wonder how much Dr. Rich charged for my delivery and the subsequent ones of my

brothers Ernest Fountain, Jr., born July 21, 1925, James Harvey, born March 11, 1927, and Heber Otto, born September 3, 1928?

When my parents started their family, they decided that it would be nice to have twelve boys. After having three girls, two of them twins, they waited four years to have me. Maybe they thought a pause would produce a boy. No boy. Maybe they decided I would be the last child. Whatever the reason, it was four more years before their first son Ernest Jr. was born. I was born in February and I can imagine that the winter months were not the favorite months for a doctor to deliver babies. Ernie was born July 21, 1925. My grandmother, Ida Isabella Norton Chlarson, had come from Arizona to help out and it was a beautiful summer day. My mother probably had a difficult time with Ernie's delivery because he was a 12-pound baby. Even with the twins, seven and seven and a half pounds respectively, she only carried three more pounds in that pregnancy and had two babies to show for it.

I was waiting out on the front porch steps to be allowed to see my new baby brother. Dr. Rich came out the door, saw me sitting there and said, "Well now, what are you going to do—you're not the baby anymore!"

It was the law when I was a child that if anyone in the family had an infectious disease, such as measles, mumps, whooping-cough, diphtheria, scarlet fever, etc., the family doctor would call the health department and the health department would send out a man who would hang a sign on the offending house stating, in large bold letters which could be seen from the street, just what offending disease was present in that house. I don't know if the mother in the household could take down the sign when the doctor declared the course of the disease was over, or whether the health department man returned to do it. I remember that my mother would tell me that I couldn't go to that house or play with the children in that house until the sign came down. It was almost as if we would contract leprosy from such exposure instead of a common childhood disease. My mother was especially afraid of whooping cough, as there was no vaccine for that particular disease when I was a small child. I guess she had seen children die of it when she was growing up.

### **A Little Family History**

Following my parents' marriage on September 24, 1914, they moved to Hurley, New Mexico, where my father had found a job in the copper mines. The first child in the family, Irma, was born there on July 22, 1915. As soon as they could save enough money, my father took his wife and child to Salt Lake where on October 11, 1916 they were sealed together as husband and wife in the Salt Lake Temple. Irma was sealed to them the same day. Two years later, still in Hurley, New Mexico on March 27, 1917, baby twin girls Iona and Iola were born to our family.

My Grandfather Langford married two sisters, Rose Ellen and Mary Lydia Jackson. After serving time in the Utah State Prison for unlawful cohabitation in 1889, on the advice of Apostle George Q. Cannon he took his families and went to old Mexico in 1891. Apostle Cannon had served a prison sentence for unlawful cohabitation at the same time my grandfather had. The family lived there until August of 1912, when the Mormon colonists were advised to leave Mexico because of the revolution that was going on at the time.

Both my mother and my father spent much of their growing up years in Mexico. After leaving Mexico because of the revolution, my mother went to work cooking for

cowboy help on large cattle ranches. She and my father had started dating in Mexico and they continued their courtship largely by correspondence after the exodus, because their families moved to different places when they returned to the states.

Neither of my parents had the opportunity for much education. In Mexico, the Saints were pioneering new country. Building homes, clearing farms, and getting established had to take precedence. They attended all the school they could in the Mormon colonies but I doubt if either of my parents had any formal education past the eighth grade. Getting regular schooling was especially difficult for my mother, as her father was always moving around looking (I suppose) for a better place to settle. Perhaps it was because of this lack of formal education that my mother had such a strong desire for her children to get good educations. Mother herself never quit learning. She was always taking extension and evening classes while I was growing up. She had an insatiable desire to learn.

Somewhere along the line in my mother's life before she was married, she earned enough money to spend one year in high school. I remember her talking about that year. I wish I had taken better notes. I'm not even sure where she went to school, but I assume that it was before the family came out of Mexico and she probably went over to the Juarez Academy in the Mormon colonies of Juarez, Mexico. That was the only area that had the equivalent of a high school. She apparently had enough to pay board and room and tuition for one year. I remember her saying, "I just took the classes I really wanted because I knew I would only have that one year. Oh, but it was such a wonderful year!"

After their marriage, my father took his new bride to Hurley, New Mexico, where he had obtained work as a laborer in the copper mines. One day he was approached by the mine superintendent and asked if he would like to become a plumber's helper. If he accepted, he would become an apprentice and while on his apprenticeship he would have to accept less money than he could make as a laborer. After talking it over with my mother, he decided to take the apprenticeship, as it would lead to learning a trade. On the bookshelves of our home was a five or six volume set of thick books from a correspondence school, which was a reminder of this period in my parents' life. He learned a lot taking this course, because when I had difficulty with algebra and geometry, it was Dad who could help me with my math. I wonder who has those books now, or if they were thrown out after Dad's death?

In 1919 or 1920, to be nearer the center of the church and to be where their children could get good educations, my parents moved with their family of three daughters to Ogden, Utah. Dad took a job with a contractor doing plumbing, but soon decided to go into his own business. When he first started his own business, he didn't even own a truck and he had to walk to his jobs carrying his tools. As you can imagine, the first thing he bought when he could manage it was a truck. Within a few years he developed a successful plumbing business.

In Ogden, the family's first home was a small three room house on the back of a lot that they had purchased and on which my father commenced to build a substantial brick bungalow. It was located at 35<sup>th</sup> Street and Orchard Avenue in Ogden. The small house later became known as the chicken coop, as it housed the chickens after he moved the family into the basement of the new home.

## **My Earliest Recollection**

I am not sure whether I was born in this small house, or whether by the time I was born my father had moved his family into the basement of the new home while he did the inside finishing work upstairs.

My earliest memory is of a long room that, of course, was the basement of the new home. At the end of this long room was a group of single beds in which my sisters slept. In two of these beds were confined my twin sisters, Iona and Iola, who had just had tonsillectomies. My mother once told me that the twins' operation was so hard on my dad that he swore he would never allow such a thing to happen to any of his other children. And none of the rest of us ever had our tonsils removed, whether we needed it or not.

I probably remember this episode less from feelings of sympathy than from feelings of envy. Envy because my mother was making black stocking dolls to entertain my twin sisters, who were probably about six at the time. How I longed for one of those dolls! I was then probably about two years of age.

Another early memory is of watching my three sisters leave home for school at the nearby Birch Creek School. Why couldn't I go too? Why did I have to wait until I was six? They came home with all kinds of papers, drawings, and exciting things. And they could read!

I remember that I envied my sisters their foreign and therefore more romantic birthplace. "Where were you born?" my parents would ask my three older sisters. And the inevitable answer, "In Hurley, New Mexico."

"And where was I born?" I would question. And the inevitable answer, "You were born in the weeds!" I am still very gullible. When someone tells a joke, I'm always the one to bite.

I never was able to attend the coveted Birch Creek School because my father traded our new brick home for a farm that turned out to not have enough irrigation water. My father said he just let it go for taxes, as it could not be sold. He had been swindled. He moved us into the basement of a rental at 3249 Jefferson Avenue, about the year 1925, while he remodeled a brick and stucco home at 3249 Orchard Avenue, one block to the east.

## **3249 Orchard Avenue**

We moved into the remodeled house on Orchard Avenue a year or two later. I received all the first ten years of my schooling at Washington Elementary and Washington Junior High School in different wings of the same building, and went to the same 9<sup>th</sup> Ward until the day I married.

The newly remodeled house was a bungalow type building with yellow brick on the bottom and stucco on the top. There was a large front porch with two steps down to the sidewalk. Inside there was a long living-dining room, directly from which led three quite large bedrooms. At the end of the living room was a kitchen with cabinets and a sink along the west wall, except at the north end of the west wall, where there was a door leading out to a screened-in, large porch, which my father was always going to enclose and make more bedrooms. He never got around to it. On the north wall was the door to the bathroom.

The bathroom was the showpiece of the home, because I think it was the only house in the neighborhood that had indoor plumbing. It also had—wonder of wonders—a beautiful

ceramic bathtub on four legs. No more carrying water for weekly baths in a round tin tub, or having to dump the bath water. You just pulled a plug and the water miraculously disappeared down a drain into a septic tank. The bathroom fixtures and the kitchen sink, furthermore, had cold and hot water, heated by a monkey stove in the basement. This luxury came our way because our father was a plumber. An electric stove, also a novelty, was at the north wall, also on the east side of the bathroom door. Later on a refrigerator was there also but when we first moved in we had an icebox that sat over a pan on the back porch. Ice was delivered by a truck filled with blocks of ice, which made regular deliveries during the week to supply the iceboxes in the neighborhood.

All the time we lived at 3249 Orchard Avenue, we had to depend on septic tanks, as the sewers were not extended to that part of the city until after I was married. In case you don't know what a septic tank is, it is a large metal tank which is buried, usually in the back yard. All the sewage and wastewater from the house is piped into this tank, which has drainage holes that allow the water in the sewage to seep into the surrounding gravel and soil. When the tank becomes so full of sewage that it is no longer functional, it can be replaced or pumped out by companies that specialize in that service. The septic tank is still used in areas where there is no central sewage system, such as in farm areas and remote mountain homes. We use that system at our farm in Payson. But the septic tank was a decided improvement on what was called a "cesspool." A cesspool was simply a deep, usually round hole in the ground that was covered with boards and usually some dirt piled on top of the boards. When the cesspool was no longer functional, the homeowners would fill it in with dirt. These areas usually settled after a while and unless the homeowner added dirt to the area to bring it to the land level, you could locate the old cesspools by depressions in the back yard. That is, if the homeowner didn't even use a cesspool, but just had an outhouse.

From the back porch, stairs led down into a full basement where Mother did her washing. Dad had installed hot and cold-water taps and a hose, so she could fill the wringer washing machine and the big rinsing tubs. This stood next to a big black coal stove for my mother to use when bottling fruit, etc., and to use to boil the clothes. Why did our mothers boil all those clothes—it wasn't as if they didn't have soap! Some of them even made their own soap from meat drippings. My mother changed the top sheet of our beds every week, and while I can't remember when she got smart, I know she boiled those sheets every week for years and years.

During the summer, we girls usually helped Mother with the washing. Mother did her washing on an up-to-date-for-the-time electric washing machine. It was called a "wringer washer." The metal tub had an enamel finish, and in the center was a metal agitator, which kept the clothes in motion in the soapy water. Connected to the tub by a metal rod was the "wringer." It consisted of two rubber rollers hung over the washing machine and encased in a maybe 15-inch rectangular contraption. (What made the rollers go around?) On the top of this case that contained the rollers was a screw that controlled how much tension was placed on the wringers. For instance, a sheet, or a pair of Dad's overalls required the loosening of the screw or the item would not go through the wringer. For shirts, or pillowcases, a lighter tension would do, so Mother was always adjusting this screw.

The wringer pivoted in a circle from the metal rod so the wringer could be swung out over two rinse tubs, which were placed on a frame or on stools behind the washer. One of the tubs was directly in back of the washer, and the other was placed parallel to the first rinse tub. The clothes were fed through the wringer to the first tub. The two rollers would squeeze

the water out of the item being put through the wringer, and then when all the clothes in the washing machine had been put through the wringer, the wringer was swung out over the second rinse tub. Mother would then put both hands and arms into the rinse tub, and slosh the clothes up and down to circulate the rinse water through the clothes. Then the clothes were put through the wringer into the water in the second rinse tub and the sloshing repeated. The final turn of the wringer swung over a stool on which was placed a smaller tub that caught the rinsed clothing. The rinsed clothing could then be taken out to the backyard to be hung on the lines. One time my sister, Iola, got her elbow caught in the wringer. While not very noticeable, her elbow always was a little disfigured from that accident.

There were no electric or gas clothes dryers on the market until after Tracy and I were married, so the clothes were hung on metal or rope lines strung from poles that looked like miniature telephone poles in the backyard. People in large cities, where backyard space was minimal or nonexistent, had circulating metal clothes lines, which I think consisted of a double line that ran through a pulley connected to a building or a pole at the other end of the line. I never quite understood how this worked so that the clothes could be strung on both lines without being stopped at the other end. We had four metal lines about 20-feet long and we had to run over them with a soapy cloth before we could hang the clothes up.

After shaking out the wet clothes, they were hung on the lines and connected to one another with clothespins. The sheets would be doubled and hung from the corners on the line. We sometimes threw the sheets over the lines, but Mother frowned on this because she said it would cause the sheets to wear in the center. No machine dried wash ever has the sweet smell of air-dried wash. But there were hazards with air-drying like the neighborhood kids running through the drying clothes, and accidental dropping of clean clothes on the ground. A long line like ours was usually held up in the center by a pole that was grooved on the top and gave additional support to the drying clothes. Sometimes these would be knocked down, and long items would drag on the ground.

In the winter, the clothes would freeze and not completely dry by the end of the day. Mother did not like to leave the clothes out overnight because everyone in those days used coal in furnaces and stove and the clothes would get dirty. She had alternate lines in the basement and sometimes we would take the frozen clothes off the line and hang them downstairs. Heavy items such as denim pants and overalls had to be dried over chairs in the house, and sometimes on the radiators themselves. Viva la modern dryer!

Another hazard we had to watch for was getting too close to the monkey stove. The monkey stove was a small wood or coal burning stove that stood on four legs on the concrete floor of the basement. The burned ashes fell into a pan beneath the firebox. This routinely had to be dumped or the fire would snuff out for lack of oxygen. The stove was black in color, like the sister black cooking stove that was around the corner from it to the west. In order to feed the coal into the firebox, you would lift one of the two lids with a tool specifically designed to fit into a hole in the lid. Woe to the child who misplaced that tool. Water pipes were circulated through the back of the monkey stove and these led to a hot water tank that in turn fed the hot water taps throughout the house. It was a nuisance to keep constantly feeding lump coal into the monkey stove to have a steady stream of hot water in the tank. It takes a lot of hot water to take care of a family of nine people.

In the summer my brothers and sisters and I liked to put on our bathing suits and run through the hose on the front lawn. It was always cool in the basement and the warmest place to take off our suits and dry and dress was around the monkey stove, which was heated

as I have described all year long to provide hot water. One time I got too close and burned my leg. It got infected and Dr. Rich had to come and look at it. The scar has faded now, but for a long time it looked as if I had been vaccinated on the leg for small pox.

Behind the washer, in the west corner of the basement, was a hole in the wall where the boys liked to play, but which I avoided as I was afraid of spiders. Dad probably started to dig out the basement under the back porch and never got it finished.

There was a bin for coal of two different sizes on the south wall of the basement, where a chute descended into the basement for the coal to fall into when it was delivered. A furnace in the approximate center of the basement heated the radiators upstairs in the winter. The coal was fed into the furnace by hand. I often had to go down into this basement to fetch bottled fruit or vegetables and I don't think I ever completely talked myself into not being afraid of the imagined boogeyman I knew lived down there.

There were some hazards connected with feeding the fine coal into the furnace. One time I was told to go down and put a shovel-full of coal into the furnace. When I opened the door, the extra draft entering the firebox caused the smoldering coals in the fire to blow up and I had my eyelashes and eyebrows singed.

### **Sibling Relationships**

Living up to the scholastic reputation of my sisters wasn't easy. All four of the girls carried a strong familial resemblance. The family resemblance wasn't quite as strong for the boys, but generally the teachers could spot a "Langford." More than once a teacher would say to me, "Are you as smart as your older sisters?" Fortunately I was able to somewhat measure up. But I wonder if some of the good grades of my sisters didn't rub off onto my own grades.

Being the oldest sister in a large family isn't easy. Mother often left us in charge of Irma, the oldest sibling in the family, when she had to go to town or go to Relief Society held in the afternoon. During her lifetime, Mother was Relief Society President of our ward several times. Her church job took her away from home occasionally and then Irma was the boss. Irma took her responsibility seriously. She saw to it that we did what she told us to do even if it involved some hair pulling and some cross words. I am sorry to say that we often gave her a bad time, although the knowledge that if we didn't behave, "Mother would hear about it" kept us somewhat in line.

An interesting thing I remember about Relief Society Visiting Teachers when I was a child was that when they visited, you were supposed to give them a small donation for the Relief Society. Thank goodness we don't have to do that when we go visiting teaching now.

Puberty for all the Langford girls was a difficult time. We grew into lanky silhouettes during this time. And the "Dutch cut" vogue of the time didn't add to our beauty. This was an especially hard time for Irma, who matured early. She shot up in height in the fifth grade and was the tallest in the class—she also developed a bust before other girls in the class and this made it very painful for her, especially when she had to dress for gym. However, the following years made up for this agony, as she developed a beautiful figure and had long, reddish-brown hair that she spent much time fixing and fussing with. Her hair always looked beautiful. Irma had inherited my mother's brown eyes, but they were not as dark. All the rest of the family had blue or hazel eyes. With four girls vying for the only mirror in the house, Irma's primping in front of that mirror inevitably caused some friction. She was a

very attractive girl by the time she got to high school. She was the shortest girl in the family. I am just guessing, but I think she was probably five feet four or five inches, while I was five foot seven and a half and Iona and Iola were taller than I was.

I was thin all of my school days, even in college. My classmates called me “slats,” even “lanky,” easily derived from my thinness as well as my last name. But I learned how to laugh it off, and in spite of my unattractive (at least to me) appearance, I always had a lot of friends, both male and female. Unfortunately for me, the boys used me as a confidant, complaining about their love life with their latest flame. I would rather have been the one they were complaining about to some other confidant. I weighed 115 pounds when I was married.

When it came to dating, I didn’t really start dating until I went to Weber College. In high school, when it was a casual, non-date dance, I did fine, as I was a pretty good dancer. I don’t suppose I was much different than many of my girlfriends in this respect. When there was a girl’s choice dance, the girls and their chosen dates would usually go to one of the girl’s homes afterward for refreshments. Boys in my ward who I would like to have dated at school always danced with me at our ward dances, but then took someone else to the school dances. Ratty guys!

I imagine Mother went through the normal trying teen times with her children, myself included, and I can remember one time that I really gave her a bad time. It was over a party that I was invited to, and I wanted a new dress. My mother said that we couldn’t afford a new dress and that I had plenty of dresses to wear. It was probably true, but I kept after her for a new dress. I do remember that the party was on a Saturday and that the girls in the neighborhood were going to pick me up to go to it. Saturday morning, I guess I was still whining about not having a new dress for the party (even though it was certainly too late for whining to do any good) and in disgust she told me to go to my room and stay there—that she would tell the girls when they arrived that I was not going to the party that day. Of course I put on a good crying act but it did no good. She did not change her mind, and I did not go to the party. The worst part of it all was that I knew that I was the one who was in the wrong.

### **Memories of My Mother**

Childhood memories in our house cannot be complete without mention of my mother’s sewing expertise. I think that one of the classes she took in that treasured year of high school was a tailoring course. She could look at a picture and make a dress that looked just like the picture. I don’t remember when she stopped making all the boys’ shirts, but I can remember that every fall the dining room table, which was always extended because of our large family, was covered with cotton materials that she made into school shirts for the boys: blue for Ernie, green for Jim, and beige for Heber. Mother stuck to a strict regime for washing and ironing, so she made enough shirts for each boy to last the week. The boys wore white shirts for church and all these shirts were handmade by my mother and starched and ironed.

The same for the girls; she made all our clothes except for sweaters, and they were far superior to the clothing that my parents could have afforded from the department stores in Ogden. Our dearest wish was for a “boughten” dress like most of the other girls wore.



Somehow in our thinking, if a dress was purchased from a store, it was superior and smarter than a homemade dress. Wrong. When I was in high school my smart mother told me that she would give me what it would cost for her to make a dress for me and I could go shopping for that coveted “boughten” dress. I soon found out that any dress that could be purchased at the local department stores with the money she had given me was pure junk. Even the more expensive dresses that I tried on did not fit me as well as my homemade dresses, nor were they of equal quality. Mother was also fast at sewing. I remember that once when my sixth grade teacher desired all of the girls in the class to have matching dresses to wind the maypole at our sixth grade graduation, Mother made the dresses for everyone in the class.

Mother kept our family in homemade bread, both white and whole wheat. Mother was a terrific cook, and her bread was delicious. She made bread in as large a batch as our oven could accommodate. It was no reflection on her bread that we considered it a treat when we ran out of homemade bread and had to go to the store for “boughten” bread. This bread tasted like cake to us, and seldom got home from the store intact. Often we would come home from school to find the house filled with the tantalizing smell of newly baked bread. Mother would let us eat a hot loaf, and we usually tore or cut off the crisp, brown crust, and then smothered it with butter and honey or jam. Left uneaten was the soft, inside of the hot bread. With seven hungry children, even *it* soon disappeared. Often we would coax Mother into saving out enough dough to roll out, cut into pieces and fry to a golden brown for us. To us, this was “fried bread”—not scones.

Another pleasant memory was coming home from school to Mother's warm, golden brown cinnamon rolls, with vanilla frosting dripping over the sides. Those rolls soon disappeared. For Sunday meals and holiday meals, we always had what Mother called Parker House rolls. These were made with eggs and contained more sugar than the standard loaf bread. Mother was famous for these, and often for a party (especially a sleigh-ride or snow party) our refreshments would be Parker House rolls, chili, and hot chocolate.

Mother was always good at throwing fun parties. During the Depression when money was tight, she didn't let that stop all the Langford children from having birthday parties or “just for fun” parties. I remember that when necessary, the refreshments were cookies and Jello pudding. And if we had no whipping cream at the time, she would whip cold evaporated milk and top the pudding with that--never my favorite topping. My friends loved my mother, and so did I. Many teenagers think that everyone's mother is better than their own, but I can never remember feeling that way about my mother.

### **Neighborhood Fun**

I really think that as children we had more fun than our children and grandchildren are having. You see, we had no television to fill our spare time. Also, if there was a car in a family at all, it was not used for chasing children around to soccer, baseball, dancing, or music lessons. Our baseball was played in the empty lot next door. We had no coach and no Little League. Almost everyone could play—all ages and sizes. I think we had more fun. Or we would read. Every week we would walk to town to go to the Carnegie Library to stock up on books. Dad used to think reading a novel was a waste of time, but Mother knew that reading was the key to knowledge and encouraged us. But I still feel guilty if I read a book when there is anything more useful to be doing.

The empty lots and the empty hills were wonderful places to play. In the spring I loved to wander about the hills above our neighborhood. I knew where every clump of wild violets were, both the purple and the yellow kinds. I would pick them and take them to my mother, who lovingly kissed me and put them into water. In the summer sometimes the hills would be blue with flax and sego lilies abounded later in the summer.

In the winter we used the hills to sled on, and the big boys and girls jumped off the steeper snow-covered hills on their skis. In those days, we didn't spend a lot of money on ski equipment. We shoved our rubber galoshes through leather straps and went down the hill. Then we would gather up our skis and carry them up the hill. The city would block off the big hill on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and it made a wonderful, long sleigh ride. The city would also dump sand across the entrance to Jefferson Avenue at the bottom of the hill so we wouldn't run into the path of oncoming traffic or the path of the streetcar that traveled along Jefferson. Kids from all the neighborhoods within walking distance came to sled on that hill.

After I left home, and after the family had moved to the end of the street to 3292 Orchard Avenue, the neighborhood kids ice-skated on a pond made by my brothers. My brothers would dig a ditch from the larger ditch that ran along the south edge of our 3249 yard, into a large dug out hollow about 20 or 30 feet farther south from the ditch. The hollow was the result of the brickyard on 28<sup>th</sup> Street removing clay for bricks. My brothers would use the ditch to channel water into the hollow, and then when it was frozen over it made a wonderful skating rink. My brothers assumed a proprietary attitude to the pond, and dictated that no one could skate there unless they were willing to help keep the ice renewed with water run onto the surface of the ice occasionally, or sweep the ice clean of snow. It became such a popular skating area that eventually the city took it over and maintained it.

Summers, all the neighborhood kids would get together and play games in the cool of the evening. Kick the can, Run Sheepy Run, Hide and Seek, Lemonade, Marbles, Capture the Flag, Enny Eye Over, (at least that's how it sounded phonetically) and many other games. And speaking of marbles, my sister Irma was a tomboy before she became beautiful and she could beat any of the boys at marbles.

And when it came to jump rope, we Langford kids had the best ropes in the neighborhood. Dad would bring home several short lengths of the best rope for individual jumping, which was a woven white rope with a good heft. He also brought home long lengths that were long enough for two people to be jumping inside the turning rope, while two others turned the rope. Two of these long ropes turning into each other, right over left, honed the skills of both the jumpers and the turners. We called this rope jumping "Double Dutch." The jumper would jump over the ascending rope as she entered the double ropes and then try to arrive in the middle of the turning ropes in time to jump over the descending rope. The trick from then on was to keep jumping both ropes as they came around. I became quite good at it. We had rhymes we sang or said while we jumped. A few that I remember were:

Mother, Mother, may I go  
Down to the corner to meet my beau  
Yes, my darling you may go  
Down to the corner to meet your beau  
How many kisses can I give him?

And then the jumper would count until she missed or stopped the rope, each number standing for a kiss. For speed jumping, we would call “Red Hot Pepper” and jump as fast as we could or “Salt Lake City, Utah” and do the same.

This reminds me of a time when my ability to jump double Dutch came in very handy. When Nancy was about five or six years old, Tracy was invited to spend several weeks during the summer teaching at the University of Boulder in Boulder, Colorado. The college furnished us an apartment on campus and we took Charlotte, Virginia, Nancy, and Elizabeth. One day I went outside the apartment and Nancy and some new friends whose families were also housed nearby were playing jump rope.

They were trying to play double Dutch, and had a bit of trouble knowing how to go about it. It had been a long time since I had played double Dutch, but skills you learn as a child often are recalled readily. I showed them how to get the ropes going in opposition to each other, and then when they had somewhat mastered that skill, I showed them how to jump in when two ropes are being turned, and then I skipped double Dutch for a minute or two. I think I was more surprised than the girls were to see this old lady jumping the rope. Later, I heard that the girls thought Nancy’s mother was pretty cool.

I don’t remember any of my children playing “Lemonade.” We would play this game by first dividing up into two teams. We then chose which team would take the first turn by one member of each team putting their two fists in front of them and then a third person chanting while hitting the four fists presented to him in turn, one fist for each word.

Eeny, meeny, miny mo,  
Catch a nigger by his toe (this was before the days of politically correct language)  
If he hollers let him go  
Eeny, meeny, miny, mo  
O-U-T spells out goes he (or she)  
Into the middle of the dark blue sea.

Whichever team’s fist got the “sea” had the first turn. That is, after, “No, let’s decide two out of three,” etc.

The two teams would then line up facing each other. One team was by the lilac tree on the lawn on the east and one team by the sidewalk on the west of our lawn. Then they would hold hands and approach the other team until they met in the center of the lawn, chanting at the same time (The winning team would start the chant and the opposing team would take up the next line.)

Here we come!  
Where from?  
New York.  
What’s your trade?  
Lemonade.  
Show us something if you’re not afraid!

The team who won the first turn would pantomime whatever had been prearranged by the teams (a game similar to charades)—a word, the title of a song, a nursery rhyme, etc. When the opposing team guessed what it was the acting team was pantomiming, the other team

would run back “home,” with the other team in hot pursuit. Anyone caught by the team doing the chasing had to leave his home team and join the pursuing team, the idea being to delete the other team completely. As the game progressed, both teams would become considerable shuffled. If a team wasn’t completely deleted, the team with the most members on it when the time arrived to go in was the winner.

Speaking of going in, while there was no competing among the mothers to see who had the loudest, the funniest, or the most musical call to bring their siblings home, there were some very hilarious calls from neighboring homes about nine p.m. in the evening. My mother was no exception. She would call, for instance, starting on a lower note and then on the second syllable of the child’s name, she would slide up to a higher note on an increasing crescendo. “Ida-Rooooooooose!” In my family, we answered the call. If we didn’t, we might not get out the next night. On rare occasions, some of the older siblings would be allowed to stay out until 10 o’clock, but the neighborhood was usually pretty quiet by then.

During the long summer days, we roamed the hills above our home. We had hills to the east, to the south, and to the west. At the end of the street to the south were the remains of rows of decaying bricks in an abandoned brickyard. These decaying piles were places to find reasonably whole bricks and also a good place to hide treasures. Rival gang members tried to find each other’s treasure and confiscate it. The treasure usually consisted of some old beads from costume jewelry, marbles, milk bottle lids, etc. The fun was in finding the opposing gang’s treasure. Our gang guns were certainly not assault weapons, but guns made out of a piece of board with a clothes pin for a trigger and a piece of rubber inner tube for the bullet, or toy guns.

There was also a building where the brickyard had stored clay before sending the clay through a tunnel, I suppose, to mold them into bricks. We children would daringly go across a two by six inch board that stretched from a hill to the top edge of a box-like room that was about six feet deep (although it seemed like 10 feet deep to me). We would jump from the top edge to the bottom, which had the remains of clay leavings in it, and then crawl through the entrance to an open iron box and then climb down about four feet to ground level.

The hills at the end of our street were all of clay and that’s why the brickyard was located there. The clay made good red bricks. The neighborhood children liked to dig in these hills. It may have been to find a new place to cache their hidden treasure that my sisters and I were digging in the side of a bank one day and really came upon a hidden treasure. Someone had hidden in the bank where we were digging a box of silverware and several other items. We left the items where they were and ran home to tell Mother. She called the police and, feeling very important, we took them to the place where the items were cached. The items turned out to have been stolen and soon afterwards, the police came and arrested a boy who lived nearby and who they believed to be the culprit.

The clay was useful for all kinds of fun. We carved steps in the steep sides of the hill on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street so we could climb the hill. The clay was laid down in layers in some places, and we would break large chunks of this clay out of the hill to carve with our mother’s paring knives, or we would soak the clay chunks in water until they were soft enough to mold and then we would mold them in different forms and dry them in the sun. Usually they would crack in the drying. At other times, Mother would let us carve items out of bars of Ivory soap.

My cousin, Carl Langford, and his brothers carved out in a bank by the side of the ditch that ran by our house what we considered to be a wonderful dugout. Branches were

placed over the dugout and dirt was piled over these branches to form a roof. There was an entrance at one corner where you could slide down and climb out of the dugout. In the diagonal corner was a hole in the roof where the smoke could rise when a fire was made for cooking purposes in that corner of the dugout. My sisters were allowed entrance to the dugout if the boys were there; otherwise the entrance was forbidden. They even let me go into it *once*, with my sisters.

Saturday, my parents would give us each a dime to go to a matinee at the five-cent movie in the Ogden Theater located between Washington and Adams Avenues on 25<sup>th</sup> Street. We could spend the other nickel on candy. Usually we would walk to town with my three younger brothers. There would be a continued movie, a cartoon, a newsreel, and a double feature besides. It would keep us entertained all afternoon. I imagine my mother looked forward to a peaceful Saturday afternoon.

Ice cream cones, huge ones, were five cents. Double thick malts were ten cents. A hot dog was a nickel, but a hamburger cost ten cents. Of course the average monthly salary for a family was \$100-\$200 a month, if you were lucky enough to have a job.

I started babysitting when I was 14 or 15. I had the best babysitting job in the ward because the mother in the family knew my mother. I got \$.35 for the evening, no matter how long the parents were gone. It was not my favorite job. I didn't mind it while the children were still awake, but after putting them to bed, the night seemed to go on forever. I would sometimes examine all the clothes closets to make sure there was no one hiding there, and even look under the beds. It took a lot of courage to do that! What if someone were really there? But in spite of my fear, I liked the spending money so I continued babysitting.

### **Girlfriends**

There were a lot of girls in our neighborhood, but the next-door neighbor, Clara Wright, was the one I played with the most while I was in grade school. The Wrights were a nice family. There were three children in Clara's family including her brother, Gerald, and her little sister, Barbara. I doubt if anyone in our family will forget Barbara. When she was just a toddler, I don't know if she knew whether she lived at our house or at her own. She would walk in anytime and make herself at home. If we were eating, she would pull up a chair and join us. There were only three houses on our side of the street. In addition to ours, there were the Wrights, and a rental house to the north with families that changed from time to time. Most of my childhood a girl named Dora Child lived there. Then there was a large field and you came to a sidewalk that ran along 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. There were no sidewalks on Orchard Avenue, and the street itself was dirt. In a spring thaw the street could be quite muddy.

On the opposite side of the street, east starting from the corner lived Van Battenburgs, a Dutch family who had quite a few children: Raymond, a boy my own age, and his younger sister, Thelma, who contracted polio when she was young and had to wear a brace as long as I knew her. Going south along that side of the street was a house with a large family in it, the Alsop family. They had a boy named Larry my age, and quite a few other children. Next was Mrs. Putnam, a widow. All her children were grown and gone, but she grew a huge vegetable garden every year to the south of her home. Next to her was Mrs. Marker, an older lady (also a widow), and she lived alone. Every spring her front yard was filled with gorgeous tulips. Next to Mrs. Marker was a rental home. The renters moved in and out of

this so fast we could never keep up with them. Mother, as Relief Society President, was always sending me over with food for one family that lived in that home, but any children in those families I do not remember, as they were usually quite a bit younger than I.

Next were the Goodwins, who lived directly across the street from us. There was a boy, Clyde, my age and an older boy. Behind this house was a house in which a daughter of the Goodwins lived. Next was a small house in which the daughter of the Wilsons lived, then the Wilson's home with a daughter a year younger than I was, a girl a little younger than the twins, and a boy several years older than I. The Wilsons always had a large, nice vegetable garden. Then there were four small brick bungalows in a row. The first one was on my Uncle Alva and his family lived in for several years, and the families in all four of these bungalows changed from time to time and usually had small children. These families were a source of revenue for my sisters and me as we were called on to be babysitters.

As I would go to school especially while in junior high school, I would pick up Clara. Then we would pick up Dora Child, go on down to Jefferson and pick up Frieda DeHart, and Clothel Gale, go on down Porter Avenue and sometimes pick up Mary Lou Madsen, proceed past Adams Avenue and then pick up June Wheeler on Ogden Avenue. After that, for a few years while she lived in the ward, Beth Manwaring would be next. Then we'd go to Washington Avenue, where we would turn north for a block to our school. This varied from year to year and day to day. The crowd would change depending on who was mad at whom. When we got to high school, the crowd changed. June Wheeler weathered all the years. We are still friends, but while we both live in Provo, and June's husband Lane worked with Tracy doing high-pressure, high-temperature research, we seldom see each other. I keep saying that I'm going to change that, but I don't.

These girls were supplemented with boys and other girls from nearby Jefferson Avenue. When we played games in the summer evenings, kids of all ages except the very young all joined in the fun. And of course we all saw each other at Sunday school, Primary, and MIA. In about the eighth grade, a group of my school friends formed a club, which met once a month. We rotated going to each other's homes. June Wheeler was one of these. I won't attempt to name all of these girls for fear that I will leave out someone. Wouldn't want to do that. We had fun.

### **Childhood Holidays**

Christmas: When I was a young child, I counted the time from Christmas to Christmas--so many months until Christmas. Mother and Dad always made Christmas special. Christmas preparations started right after Thanksgiving. Mother would make fruit cakes that she would bake and season long before Christmas. I was always able to resist breaking off pieces of the fruitcake because it was never my favorite dessert.

Mother's favorite hiding place for Christmas presents and goodies was a large, deep closet above my bed. The only way anyone could get into it was to put a chair on top of my bed and climb on top of the chair to get into the closet. I remember one year that Mother made cinnamon apple slices. She would cook apple slices briefly in heated heavy syrup of sugar, water, and dissolved cinnamon candies. The resultant red apple slices she would put on cookies sheets and put up in the closet above my bed to wait for Christmas. I wasn't supposed to know where she had put those cinnamon apple slices, but of course I did. It's a wonder there were any left by Christmas!

Mother always made the girls a new dress for Christmas and the boys would get a new pair of “cords,” which were pants made of corduroy material. Even during the Depression, there was always a toy for each of us, a stocking full of candy, nuts, and an orange, which we hung at the end of our beds by draping our long cotton stockings over the metal bedstead at the foot of the bed and securing it with a pin. I always thought I could hear the bells on Santa’s sleigh. If I woke up so early I knew I wouldn’t get by with trying to rouse the family, I would crawl to the end of my bed to feel the stocking to see if Santa had come.

When I was in the fourth grade, I was sent to bed “so Santa could come.” But I did not stay in bed. I snuck into the living room. My three older sisters and my mother were in the kitchen with my father. I could see them through the kitchen door that was open a little bit. They were stuffing all the stockings. My mother was putting the finishing touches on a beautiful dress for a doll I could see in a box beside her, for me. That was the year that I found out that Santa Claus was my parents--my fault for being so snoopy. I cannot remember that I was particularly disappointed, which may mean that I was already suspicious.

New Year’s Day: I don’t know where the tradition originated—perhaps in my mother’s Swedish background, but when we were little we watched for “The little New Year” to come during the night before January first.

He always left oranges and candy. A repeat from Christmas, but usually left on the dining room table instead of in our stockings. A primary song reinforced this tradition:

I am the little New Year, ho ho!  
Here I come tripping in over the snow.  
Shaking my bells with a merry din.  
Oh, open the door and let me in!

Try and find that in the present day church songbook! I didn’t carry on that tradition in our own family, except for the repeat of candy, nuts, and oranges.