

Tracy

The summer of 1939 I worked full time in Ogden's Woolworth store cafeteria. Full time was six hours a day, and I saved most of my money so I could go to college in the fall. My twin sisters had worked there during their Weber College days and had managed to get me a job there, too. In the fall I registered at Weber College. My intent was to take out a bachelor's degree in home economics with a minor in journalism.

I well remember that I just about turned around and returned home without registering. What was all this business about "credit hours," and "majors"? It was a very unfamiliar vocabulary for this new college student, but with a little help I managed to get registered. I still think that college orientation classes should be given in high school instead of after the student has had to learn the hard way, by registering the freshman year at college. I joined a social club, Iota Tau Kappa, and signed up for the yearbook staff. I did not know it then, but this was to be my only year at Weber.

Another big change in my life—I began to date. Or maybe it was that the boys began to date. At any rate, I now did not seem to have difficulty getting dates to the school dances, etc.

A new boy moved into our ward, the grandson of one of our ward members who had come to live with his grandparents and attend Weber. He was tall and handsome, and all the girls were vying for his attentions. For some strange reason he was attracted to me, and for most of fall quarter, I dated him. For the sake of privacy, I will call him Fred. I still had a secret crush on another ward boy, but that seemed to be going nowhere. He was just one of those "friends"—his idea, not mine.

Fred went back to Arizona at the end of the quarter, and although we corresponded, nothing came of it. He was not a serious student, and high on my list for attributes in a husband was that he be serious about getting a good education. It was unimportant to him to get good grades and decide what he wanted to do for a profession. This did not set too well with me. Later in my life I found out that whether he finished college or not, he was a very successful businessman. Moral: Judge not!

It was in this fall quarter that I officially met Tracy, however. When I say "officially," I mean we had never been introduced, although whenever he saw me at one of our church dances he would always smile and say "Hello," but he never asked for a dance. I knew who he was, though. His brother, Eugene, was in my class in high school, and I knew that Tracy was the leader of a popular dance band called "The High Hatters." The Halls lived in the 18th Ward, the nearest ward to us on the north. He and his friends would "ward hop" and come over to check out the 9th Ward girls—and the ones in other nearby wards as well. He later told me that I passed him and his friend, Lane Compton, on the street one day, and after I had passed, Tracy said to his friend, "See that girl? I don't know what her name is, but I'm going to find out and ask her for a date."

We finally "officially" met at a dance held after one of the college's football games. He tagged in one of the dances and introduced himself. Before the dance ended he asked if he could take me home. I had to say "no," as I had come with another fellow. Probably Fred. The "High Hatters" were playing for the dance that night, and Tracy had come to the dance to be with the boys, even though at the time he was no longer in the band. The strain of school, working out his tuition by doing janitorial work at the school, and keeping the band going had almost caused him a nervous breakdown. At the time, he had graduated from

Weber, and was working full time for Denton Checketts, a local photographer in Ogden. Tracy was saving all he could to get enough money to go to the University of Utah to finish his bachelor's degree in chemistry. Now here was a really serious student!

Toward the end of December 1939, he called and asked me to go to the all-stake New Year Eve dance on the 29th. He had called me previously that month but I already had a date and had to refuse, with regret. But fortunately for me, he didn't discourage easily. I was quite impressed with Tracy. He was a serious student and was more mature than anyone I had dated up to that time. He was ambitious, he knew what he wanted to do in life, and his high moral character was evident from the beginning. He also planned to go on a mission.

After our date to the above-mentioned dance, Tracy asked me if I would learn the ballroom dances being taught to couples all over the stake, which were to be performed at the intermission of the stake Gold and Green Ball. I wanted another fellow to ask me for that particular activity, but I was soon glad that Tracy had asked me. The practices were frequent, so I saw a lot of Tracy Hall that spring and grew to appreciate his many fine qualities. The only problem is that I had to do almost all of the talking. Unfortunately, that hasn't changed since our marriage.

Another interesting thing that happened that spring was that Lane Compton, Tracy's best friend, started squiring one of my best friends, June Wheeler, and we made a nice foursome for school activities. For the Gold and Green Ball, June was able to get her father's car, so we went in style. That night Tracy kissed me for the first time.

Since Tracy was not in school that year, he would often come to the college and talk to me between classes, or when I didn't have a class. It got so that if one of my friends saw him, they would automatically tell him where he could find me. We began to be known as a twosome.

One day he came to the college and found me in the library and spent a couple of hours with me. Later I ran into one of my girlfriends and she asked, "Have you got a date for the dance on Friday?"

I said, "No, not yet—have you?"

"Yes," she said.

"Whom are you going with?" I asked.

Her answer floored me. "Tracy Hall." That rat! Tracy had spent all that time with me that day and then asked another girl to the dance!

I was complaining to a couple of my masculine friends about it, and one of them spoke up—"I'll take you to the dance!" Now that's a friend for you!

So that Friday we were both at the dance. I was with my friend, and he was with my girlfriend. It was miserable for both of us. We studiously avoided each other's eyes. Tracy later said that he got tired of my friends asking him to trade a dance with "him and Ida-Rose." I guess Tracy had begun to worry that we were getting too serious. He had so much ahead of him—at least two more years of school, and a mission. Maybe so, but that was the last time either of us ever dated anyone else. But it wasn't the last time that Tracy got worried about our getting "too serious."

One day as we were walking home during the summer of 1940, he said to me (out of the blue), "I'm not going to see you so often. It isn't fair to you!" I thought this was just a good excuse to break loose, but I agreed. Two days later he was at my door. "I thought you weren't going to see me so often!" I said. After that, we didn't even try—we were in love and knew it.

That fall he registered at the University of Utah and started on his junior year of college. Weekends he would come back to Ogden and work Saturdays at the Sperry Mills in North Ogden as a chemist, a job that a friend, Frank Davis, had obtained for him. As Tracy was majoring in chemistry, this gave him an excellent opportunity to practice analytical chemistry. Even though we no longer dated anyone else, he never took it for granted that I would save the weekend for him, but would write and ask me to save it. He hitchhiked from Salt Lake to Ogden sometimes in the middle of the week just to see me.

We would sometimes talk about getting married, but it seemed so impossible. I was afraid that it might interfere with his education—and certainly put an end to any mission plans. I finally decided to talk with my mother to see what she thought about such a move. Imagine my surprise when she said, “You might as well get married and have a little happiness, because there is a war coming!” A war! What war?

Tracy was glad to get out of the environment at the photo studio. The boss and his cronies spent half of their time drunk and the other half with wild women. Every time a somewhat risqué picture came through the studio, the boss would add it to his collection of pornography. The flourmill was a much better atmosphere.

The summer of 1941, Tracy would meet me outside of Woolworth’s and walk me home whenever he could. This one evening he told me he had just enough money to take me to a movie that night if we walked both ways. We usually did anyway, so that was no different.

After the movie, he steered me towards Lester Park above Weber College, and there he asked me to be his wife and put a diamond engagement ring on my finger. That was why the poor guy was so broke! This was July 18, 1941. We married on September 24, 1941 and spent a week’s honeymoon, mostly at a state fair, and started housekeeping in a student boarding house on University Avenue in Salt Lake City. He started his senior year at the U of U a few days later. But my mother was right—there was a war coming! It came on December 7, 1941, a little over two months later, and changed the lives of most everyone in the United States one way or another.