

The First Year

After we moved into Lucy VanCott's apartment and were somewhat settled, I applied for a job at the drug store on the corner of 13th East and 2nd South and also at Woolworth for either counter work or work in the cafeteria. The corner drug store called me first, but they only wanted a part-time worker. I told them that I had applied at Woolworth and that if it came through it would be a full-time job, but they said that they really needed the help and to work for them as long as I could. About a month later, the Woolworth job came through and so I transferred to that job. Full-time meant six hours a day, six days a week. The wage was \$.25 an hour. At first they put me in the cafeteria, saying they would put me on the floor just as soon as a vacancy opened up. That vacancy opened within a week or two and I became a "change girl," which meant that I ran from counter to counter taking large bills and furnishing the girls at the counters with whatever change they needed. I stayed with that job until after Christmas, and then I was given the notions counter. At that counter, I had a million (it seemed) little items that needed to be ordered from the basement each day, things like buttons, pins, snaps, hooks-and-eyes, etc. At least the job wasn't as tiring as the job of running change.

Tracy started his senior year at the University of Utah on October 1, 1941. He planned to commute to Ogden on weekends to keep his part-time job at the Sperry Flour Mill in Ogden on Saturdays. Our local ward was the University Ward and we hit the jackpot for a Sunday school instructor. His name was Lowell Bennion and he was an extremely good teacher.

Dr. J. Victor Beard, one of Tracy's physical chemistry teachers, found out that Tracy played the piano and asked him to be the piano player for the opening exercise of the MIA in his ward. Dr. Beard was the MIA president for that ward. The chapel was located on 13th East, not too far from where we lived at that time. There was a singing time in the opening exercises of MIA. It didn't seem to matter that Tracy was not a member of the ward. The bishop of the ward either didn't know that Tracy was acting as the organist of the MIA, or else they were so hard up they didn't care. Dr. Beard and his wife were very kind to us and had us to dinner several times that year.

We were introduced to Thora Whiting, who lived in the larger basement apartment, the very first night we were there. Thora liked to play the piano and sing. This evening she was playing a piano solo that had gained popularity that year and was taken from the theme of Concerto #1 in B-minor by Tchaikovsky. She played it with gusto! We heard that piano solo a lot that year. In all fairness, Thora had a nice soprano voice and she played the piano well. Our complaint was that sometimes her timing wasn't the best.

Lucy VanCott was either a friend or a relative of President Heber J. Grant, because on several occasions during the year of 1941-1942, he drove to the front of Lucy's home and took her for a ride.

We had a lot of fun that year. The occupants of the apartment house were all congenial and got along just fine. Mrs. Marsh was somewhat of a character. She was a divorcee and had a little girl about the age of six. 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, we found that he had been excommunicated from the church during the Missouri persecutions for signing affidavits against the brethren, which consequently led to the death of David Patten and others. We didn't know if he was ever

reinstated, but we do know he came west at sometime because he was buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

The bed on that open-air sleeping porch left much to be desired, as both mattress and spring sloped to the center. No matter how we moved away from the center, sooner or later during the night both of us would end up in the middle of the bed and not necessarily by design. That was all right for Tracy, because he had always slept with a brother. But for me, sleeping with another body in the bed took some getting used to. That bed helped me to get over my “closeness” problem.

At first we tried doing our washing in the laundry tub-sink downstairs. Tracy helped me, especially with the large items such as sheets and towels, but the laundry soap was irritating my eczema even though I wore rubber gloves. Finally we asked Miss VanCott if we could use the antique washing machine that was in the storage room and that was a big help to both my eczema and the washing.

On a wintry day, the 7th of December, one of the other student-occupants and I were sitting in the kitchen putting together a jigsaw puzzle when one of the boys from the apartment across the hall came bursting into the room exclaiming, “The Japs have just bombed Pearl Harbor! They’ve sunk a lot of ships and stuff!”

“Where’s Pearl Harbor?” I asked.

“In Hawaii!” he answered.

“Oh, they wouldn’t dare!” I exclaimed. But they *had* dared—and it was war!

From that time on until the war ended, the war was the primary concern in all of our lives, especially in the lives of the young men who had to do the fighting and those that loved them.

Immediately America started priming her war machine. Any factory capable of building anything that was useful for the war was turned to that use. There was an ordinance depot out at Hill Field in Davis County, and the University of Utah soon had classes to train ordinance workers for that facility.

Dr. Bonner, who was the head of the Chemistry Department at the U, knew Tracy was a married student and handed him the plum of being assistant to Dr. Corles R. Kinney (one of the U chemistry professors who was teaching the explosives class). The wage was \$1.00 an hour, which was an almost unheard of wage at the time. We felt rich! I was making \$.25 an hour at Woolworth and Tracy was earning \$.50 at the flourmill.

During the holidays, Miss VanCott invited everyone to her kitchen for turkey soup. We had a hard time enjoying the soup because she had not strained the broth for the soup after she had boiled the bones and turkey leftovers, and while it tasted all right, the skin and the floating pieces of stuffing were not very appetizing. We ate it! We knew she was being kind to us, and we did not want to hurt her feelings. I often remember her turkey soup when I make broth of my own from the turkey leavings, but I always thoroughly strain the broth before adding the vegetables, etc.

During the Christmas holidays, Sperry Mills offered Tracy a full-time job. It was a temptation. And we would be able to stay in Utah if Tracy accepted. Before giving them an answer, Tracy decided to go see Dr. Bonner who was the head of the chemistry department. He advised Tracy to finish his bachelor’s degree before he took employment. When we look back on this, we realize how foolish he would have been not to finish his bachelor’s degree.

We got reacquainted with Louise and Alton Wangsgard. Louise’s maiden name was Emmett. The Emmetts lived in the 9th Ward while I was growing up. I don’t remember any

Mr. Emmett, so perhaps Sister Emmett was a widow. Both daughter and mother were master teachers. The mother held together a large group of 18 to 20-year-olds by being their MIA teacher. She held firesides, invited prominent Ogden speakers, and just in general kept us coming to church. Her daughter, Louise, had married Alton Wangsgard, who was Tracy's physics teacher at Lewis Jr. High School. He had a PhD at the time, but because of the Depression was unable to locate a teaching job at a university so he had to be satisfied with teaching the ninth grade at the time.

When we were at Lucy's, he was teaching at the University of Utah. They had us to dinner several times, and we kind of kept in touch during the years following Tracy's graduation.

Another couple influential in our lives was the Frank Davises. He was responsible for Tracy's obtaining employment at the flourmill. At the time, Frank was working at the Bureau of Mines, which was located just east of the University of Utah campus while we lived there.

In February I became very ill with fever and cold chills alternately. Tracy went into Miss VanCott's apartment to see if he could use her phone to call a doctor. She asked him what my symptoms were and told him she thought I might be having a miscarriage. She advised him to get my hometown doctor as soon as possible. We did see a doctor from Tracy's phone call. He came but did me no good for his \$10 fee. I think he thought I had the flu.

We went almost immediately to Ogden where Dr. Edward Rich, Jr., did indeed confirm Miss VanCott's diagnosis, and he took care of me. I miscarried a six-week pregnancy that I hadn't even known about. I was surprised that I felt so bad about losing a baby that I never even realized existed.

Because we both worked on Saturday, we never attended the football and basketball games. The closest we came to school activity was attending the dinner and dance at the country club for the graduating chemistry seniors and their dates or wives in June of that year. It was a formal affair—even for the fellows. Tracy looked so handsome in his tuxedo. During the dance he took me for a walk on the lawn of the country club and gave me a necklace with the University of Utah insignia on it. Probably thanks to the explosives class.

He graduated in June of 1942 with honors and went to work immediately at the Bureau of Mines, a job that had been orchestrated by Frank Davis. Tracy's employment was in the spectroscopy laboratory as assistant to Graham W. Marks, who was a very nice man except for the fact that he smoked a pipe almost consistently.

When Tracy took employment at the Bureau, he told them he expected to be drafted momentarily, but they told him to work until that time came.

The Bureau had a wonderful policy. Since they were so close to the university, they allowed their employees to take time off to take a class or two, and make up the time as they could. Tracy immediately enrolled in a couple of classes leading to a master's degree.

One day I was home sick from Woolworth's for some unremembered reason and Tracy said, "Why don't you quit working, Ida Rose? We can get along without your wages." It didn't take any coaxing. I went right to the phone and quit.

We had enjoyed living at Lucy's and liked our co-tenants. But when a larger apartment opened up a block west of us at 309 South 13th East, we moved.

(To be continued.)