

## **We Get New Wheels**

When we arrived back at Marion Avenue, the first problem which faced us was to replace the car that was wrecked coming back from Utah. Cars were very difficult to come by, as I have already said, with hardly any choice as to color, etc.

One of our friends in Detroit, however, arranged for us to get a replacement, but Tracy had to go to Detroit to pick it up. Then he had to pay for a Michigan license plate as well as a New York one. Our insurance was \$50 deductible, and since the car we were able to get had some extras we ordinarily would not have purchased but we had to take, we ended up paying about \$300 more for our new car than we had planned. But at least we had wheels again. Our new car was a light green, Ford two-door sedan.

407 Marion Avenue was quite a place. Most of our neighbors were nice people, but there were some families which were not the type of people I would have chosen to have as permanent neighbors. We had to park our car outside the project, since there was no garage for us to park it in. We ended up having "Kilroy was here" scratched into the new light green finish on the car. It was with us until we traded that car in.

While at Marion Avenue, I twisted Tracy's arm into starting to teach me how to drive. What an ordeal! Never did I have as low an estimation of my own judgment and intelligence, which estimation seemed to be shared by my usually gentle husband. Tracy's patience seemed to desert him when I was behind the wheel. I almost always killed the engine at stop lights, and forgot to signal, etc. Parallel parking was a nightmare. How I longed for Utah where almost all parking is *not* parallel. Almost all of the streets of Schenectady, especially in the residential areas off the main highway, were narrow and twisting. Just what I did not need while learning to drive a car!

I finally passed my driver's test and got my license, without wrecking the car, but it was some time before Tracy could relax when I was behind the wheel.

For some reason, which I cannot understand, my husband seems to have the impression that I am scatterbrained. This may have something to do with the fact that I am always misplacing things, and that every time I am ready to go someplace there is always a family hunt for my car keys. At least our marriage survived my learning how to drive a car, and Tracy eventually learned to relax while I was at the wheel, and it was really a good thing for both of us to be able to drive.

While we were still at Marion Avenue, our Branch Relief Society President, Shirley Christensen, contracted polio. She was a very sick girl, but she had a lot of spunk and faith, and it brought her through. That fall, when she was well enough to be moved, she was put on a bed on a train and taken to Salt Lake City. The trip was very hard on her, but good care and rest in Salt Lake City helped her almost completely recover. Her husband was able to get a transfer to the G.E. Salt Lake office, so he accompanied her on the trip.

After she left, they made Elaine Maddock president of the Relief Society, and I became her first counselor. I had also been working as the Jr. Sunday School Supervisor, but if I remember, I was released from that position at this time. I think that Helen Barton was the second counselor and that Eleanor Christensen was the secretary.

Tracy had been made Sunday School Superintendent soon after we came to Schenectady in 1948, and the S.S. and Sacrament meetings were held at the YMCA, and the Relief Society and Primary meetings were held in different homes.

As the branch slowly grew in numbers, it became increasingly obvious that we should have a chapel of our own, and so in 1949 the branch decided to start a building fund and obtain suitable property and build a chapel. From that time on until just before we left Schenectady, our personal budget contained a new item: "Church Building Fund."

How well I can remember some of the projects which we held to earn money for the building fund. For instance, one Christmas the men decided they were really going to earn a lot of money making Christmas wreaths which they sold wherever they could twist an arm. Fortunately, almost every door in Schenectady boasted a Christmas wreath on the front door that year, and the Priesthood brethren did make some lovely wreaths. Tracy sold quite a few at the Research Laboratory. Of course, they did not make the fabulous sum they had anticipated, but they did very well. Bill Heffernan always laughed when he remembered that project. One night Tracy had been assigned to stay and sell wreaths at a certain spot. It was a cold night and the streets were almost deserted. Anyone else would have gone home long ago, but there was Tracy, holding down his cold and lonely post. He finally did give up and go home—but Bill always said, "There was real dedication." And it was, too, especially when Tracy had been very lukewarm to the project.

Just after Christmas, after much arm-twisting of the contractor, we managed to move into our new, white-frame home on Vly Road, on December 23, 1950—just before Christmas, and no sooner had we become settled, than the children promptly came down with chicken pox. They all had it, including Elizabeth, who was then the baby of the family.