

February 2015  
By R. Kent Seely

For some years I have been pricked to produce an electronic version of my mother's autobiography. It needs to be preserved and shared. There are some things about it you should know.

My mother, Grace Emily Thompson Seely, in the 1962-63 era, had won the local "Mother of the Year" contest for Brigham City; and as such, was Brigham City's entry for the state's contest. She was given a detailed list of instructions for her submittal package.

At the time (April or May 1963), I was a senior in high school and the only child still living in the home. My bedroom was in the southwest corner of the house. My study habits in high school were atrocious and I usually did not go to bed until around midnight. In the wee hours of the morning I remember being awakened by a clicking sound coming from the center bedroom. Putting on a bathrobe, I found my mother in the center bedroom near tears from frustration. She was trying to "type" a hand-written manuscript using a one finger "hunt and peck" method on a very old black manual typewriter. My mother, a straight "A" student and a teacher, had never learned to "type". I asked what she was trying to do, and she told me she had to "type-up" her manuscript and assemble her "Mother of the Year" submittal package by midmorning. She realized there was no way she could produce the material in the time period she had remaining. Trying to be helpful, I volunteered to "type" her manuscript. We made a deal. (I should also note this was a "school night", that is, I was supposed to go to school in a few hours.) I would do the typing if she would proofread it and make the appropriate hand corrections. (I could "type", but I couldn't spell worth beans.) So, after I typed a page, she would edit it.

The first thing I did was read her instructions. I remember them being very specific as to the margin settings (top and bottom; as well as right and left); and the kind of type/font (pica/elite) to be used. Mother had used the wrong ones; the margins were wrong and (more importantly) the type/font (pica/elite) was wrong too. The good news was that we had both kinds of typewriters. So I got out the correct machine, set the correct margins, tabs, and other specified settings, then quickly retyped all that she had produced. This single effort greatly reduced her frustration.

As I read the instructions, I learned she was to include a brief synopsis of her life and focus mainly on her activities, and those of her children, during the preceding year. Her manuscript didn't do that. (Now, I'm very glad she didn't follow her instructions because her narrative gives great inside into her life.)

Virtually all of the comments about her children contained in the document I authored on the fly. I also inserted other things as I typed up her material. At the end of her narrative, I wrote a paragraph or two about each child, including myself. I assembled her submittal package, put it in an envelope, sealed it, and gave it to my mother before going to bed. Midmorning, someone rang our

doorbell and mother gave them her package to hand-carry to Salt Lake City for the contest. I stayed in bed.

After the contest, the package was returned to her. She did not win at the state level. I knew she wouldn't because she had not followed the instructions. Years later, a cousin (Robert (Bob) Thompson) wrote a synopsis of her autobiography. It included the material I wrote about each of my siblings. I still have the original submittal package that I typed, but it no longer contains the pages I wrote about my siblings. I have no idea when or by whom they were removed.

One more important note; my mother felt it inappropriate for her to write about herself. That night she explained to me that she just couldn't write in the first person singular. She just couldn't write, "I was born ..."; so she decided to write her life-story as if her oldest daughter, Joyce, had authored the document. So instead of writing "I was born ...", she wrote, "My mother was born ...". Mother fictitiously gave Joyce full credit for the work, and turned her autobiography into a biograph. John Thompson credits Joyce as the author. However, my mother wrote the bulk of it, and I wrote smaller portions.

(Signed)

R. Kent Seely

## Notes:

- I have inserted page numbers; changed the margins to be right and left justified, and in so doing changed where statements appear on the page.
- My insertions are red and placed in brackets; i.e., [Emily].
- Spelling and some grammar corrects have been made without comment. Where I have felt it important to retain the error, it is followed by (Sic.) to indicate to the reader the forgoing is verbatim.
- Handwritten insertions/corrects by my mother have been made. These are usually spelling corrections to my “typos”.

## A HISTORY OF GRACE THOMPSON SEELY

(Written April or May 1963)

(Authored by Grace & Kent Seely, but credited to Joyce Seely Richman)

(Retyped by R Kent Seely in February 2015)

My mother, Grace [Emily] Thompson Seely, was born of goodly parents September 5, 1902 in a little village called Borrowby, England. Her mother was a beautiful girl from the sturdy middle class. Her father belonged to the upper class. Two of his great aunts married Princes. Her grandfather entertained the King of England at his "Kursel" in Harrogate. The "Kursel" was a beautiful opera house that my great grandfather Thompson owned. The king and his party would come to bathe in the sulfur springs that were in Harrogate. Her father had to come to America to marry his beautiful middle class sweetheart.

After their second child was born, they returned to England where Grace, my mother, was born. Mother's home was only six inches from the church. One day she lost her ball between the church and her house. They couldn't get it out.

In England they put huge twelve foot rock walls around each home and its plot of ground. The church was within these walls. Her father was the organist at this Methodist Church. Her mother and older brother and sister sang in the church choir. Her father was considered "well off" in the little village and was a leader among the people. During her stay in America Grace's mother had learned to make yeast bread. She taught the women of the village how to make it and bake it in their open fireplaces. These kinds of parents gave their children an advantage.

Mother went to the Beginners and Standard One, in the English school, where the boys played on one side of the building and the girls on the other. They were separated by buildings and huge fences. When mother was six, Mormon Missionaries came to her father's home. He accepted the gospel and the next year moved to Murray, Utah. They arrived May 30, 1910. They lived in a tent on Elder Fred Davis' farm. Sister Davis let the family bathe in her bathtub. Mother remembers the joy of that first bathtub. She had never seen one before. In her little village, they had to walk half a mile to the only well in the village. Here, the magic of turning the water on or off, hot or cold, thrilled her.

In the fall she went to her first American school. She told the teacher she was in Standard two. But Rex Davis told the teacher she was in kindergarten. That was a word she hadn't heard of. In England it was "Beginners". What chance did she have against Rex? He was a third grader. She was a little English girl, so into the kindergarten she went. She stayed two days, and then she was put into the lower first grade. She stayed two weeks and was placed in the higher first grade. Here the teacher, Miss Barney, taught her when to use her "h" and when to leave it off. Here was love and kindness not fear and force. Miss Barney taught all her students to play with the "Dago" child as well as the Mayor's son. Young as she was she learned that all people have some good qualities. She had learned tolerance.

When she was in the fifth grade, her parents moved to Almo, Idaho. They homesteaded at Reed Springs, five miles from Almo, on the Raft River. Her father built, staid (sic) at Reed Springs, five miles from Almo, in a one room log cabin. Then the family helped haul willow trees from the river. They built a very large room and a small bedroom. They used mud with very little cement, for chinking, slab and dirt for the roof, and they had a dirt floor. It was quite different from the beautiful home they lived in, in England.

Her father wasn't prepared for this kind of work either. In England, he had a personal valet to serve him. He could speak seven different languages. He had studied abroad. Her mother wanted him to teach at the University in Salt Lake, but he needed a certificate. He had no money to go to school. His parents had cut him off entirely when he joined the Mormon Church.

This was when her mother's middle class training came to the aid of the family. She went out as a mid-wife. One day my mother asked her mother how she remembered; how she knew what to do. Her mother replied, "When you know a life depends on you, you will remember. You will know what to do." When mother was fifteen years old her mother took her into the homes with her. My mother learned how to bathe a new born baby. She assisted her mother in every way she could.

The family lived at Reed Springs for five or six years, usually moving into the town for the school term. When mother was in the seventh grade, her folks rented a small log cabin about a mile from the village. One night as she was walking home, she was caught in a blizzard. She had just entered the large field that she had to cross before coming to the cabin. She wandered round and round in the field, not knowing in which direction she was going. After a long time, she realized that she might freeze to death if she didn't find her way out. She stood still and prayed. When she opened her eyes she got a fleeting glimpse of the fence. She headed for it and found it. Then she walked along the fence until she came to the gate. Now she could see the light in the cabin window. She arrived home safely.

The next winter when mother was in the eighth grade, she went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Taylor and worked for her room and board. The Taylor's had six children under nine years of age. Mother arose at four o'clock every Monday morning and did the family washing before she went to school. Those were the days of the hand washer and boiler. She mixed all the bread for the family did the ironing. On Saturday she thoroughly cleaned the house. Here began her training on how to handle children. She learned if she won their love they would co-operate with her.

The next year she went to Oakley, Idaho to attend High School. She was chosen Vice-President of her freshman class but due to the "Flu" epidemic school was closed in January or February. She and her girlfriend had to return home. Her girlfriend's brother, Fred Taylor, came after them. He had a team and wagon. They loaded their things and started out really early in the morning. It was snowing and had been snowing all night. They arrived at the City of Rocks about two or three in the afternoon. No one had wrist watches in those days. The snow was waist deep. The horses, already tired, could not pull the wagon through the deep snow. Fred and the girls had to get out and tramp a trail for them to the top of the divide. Mother and her friends were wet but not too cold. It was hard work tramping a trail. They arrived home after dark, wet and cold.

Mother's sister, from Delco, Idaho, came home the same night. Mother's folks had moved to town for the winter but were in the process of moving back to the homestead. The next morning mother's sister, Jennie, didn't get up. Grandmother thought Jennie was tired and let her sleep. The rest of the family went about tearing down beds and loading the wagon. About noon, mother and her two younger brothers started for the homestead which was five miles away. Her father, mother, and sister were to come later in the day. But her sister didn't get up. She had the "Flu". Soon her mother got it. Already there was an epidemic of it in the little town of Almo. No doctor lived within a hundred miles. Grandmother Thompson was the mid-wife and general nurse and now she had the "Flu". The Bishop's five room log cabin home was literally filled with beds of sick people who had come for help.

In the meantime, mother and her two younger brothers found themselves alone at the homestead. Soon the youngest boy, Billie, who was about eight or nine, got the "Flu". He became delirious. In his delirium he was frightened. Then it was that mother learned that if she talked to Billie about pleasant nice things while he was rational that when the high fever came and he was delirious again, he wouldn't be frightened. He would babble on about the things she had told him. Then the other brother got it and she had to nurse both of them. This was when she really learned to pray.

One day her Father walked the five miles to see how they were getting along, but he had to go back to help at the Bishop's house where he had taken her mother and sister. The next week the neighbor who lived three miles away came and chopped a big pile of wood and brought some broth for the boys. Mother nursed the boys through the "Flu". The day her father brought her mother and sister home, she went to bed. The "Flu" ran its course and she got better.

The next spring mother entered the Mutual Improvement Association (M.I.A.) story contest. She won in her ward and in her stake. That was as far as the contests went in those horse and buggy days. The Bishop's wife, Sister Florence Johns, taught here to tell stories and also taught her faith and how to go to the Lord with her problems.

The next summer, she went to Brother Fred Nye's Sunday school class. He was dressed in rags, but he was the best teacher she ever had. His knowledge and faith in the gospel and his method of teaching, won the admiration of all the young folks in the ward.

The first job mother ever had in the Church was that of secretary of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association. To do this work, she had to drive a horse and buggy five miles alone, and cross the Raft River. One beautiful moonlight night, in the summer, as she neared the steep bank of the willow covered river, she had the feeling that she would be glad when she had forded the shallow river. She drove her horse down the steep bank. Halfway across the river her horse suddenly bolted from fright, broke the tugs, jerked the lines from her hands and went galloping home. Mother sat there, dazed for a moment, then she pulled off her shoes and stockings, held her dresses high, waded to the other side of the river, and walked the half mile through the sagebrush to her home. As she walked she sang songs and hymns to keep up her courage.

The next day her mother walked down by the river in search of their cow. She was impressed not to go into a clump of willows. She turned and walked away. In a few moments she heard the cry of a cougar. It must have been the cougar that frightened the horse the night before.

Mother kept this job in the Church until September when she again returned to go to school in Oakley. She stayed at the home of President and Mrs. William Jack, where she worked for her room and board. She was unable to return home for Thanksgiving. The weather was too bad. Mrs. Jack had many guests at her Thanksgiving dinner. She served everything in courses. When mother looked at all those dirty dishes in the kitchen she made up this song as she washed and dried dishes.

I'm forever washing dishes. Dishes is my second name,  
 Wash them and wipe. Never saw the like  
 Perhaps in the future I'll have fame  
 Dishes, dishes, dishes, everywhere I look  
 I'm forever washing dishes, washing dishes for the cook.

She sang it to the tune of "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles".

The next fall, after two years at Oakley Academy, mother enrolled at the Brigham Young Junior College in Logan. Her folks had no money, so she had to work for her board and room again. She had never been to Logan. She knew no one there, but her Bishop said it was a good Church School and she had faith that the way would be opened up. She was placed in a good L.D.S. home – Brother Harry Wilmore's.

Mother had no money for tuition or books but a beet vacation came along and she went with a friend to Smithfield and worked topping beets. She earned some money but she needed a new coat so she bought the first new coat she had ever had since she came to America. She paid for a few books, but didn't have enough money to pay for all of them. About Christmas time mother was called into the office and the registrar said, "They have looked over your previous records. You are a straight "A" student. They are going to give you a scholarship for this year." She was indeed grateful to her Heavenly Father for this blessing.

The next summer she stayed in Logan and worked to get money to go to school again. That summer she attended a Sunday school class where the students were noisy and paid no attention whatever to the teacher. Mother thought of her own Sunday school class with Brother Nye. She asked the Superintendent if she could teach the class as soon as the present teacher quite. She was soon given the class and enjoyed teaching it the rest of the summer.

In four years at High School mother had enough credits for one year of college. She was given her teacher's certificate but didn't attend the graduation exercises because she had no money to buy a dress. She wanted what money she could scrape together to go to summer school at Albion, Idaho. She wanted to get an Idaho teacher's certificate and teach in Malta, Idaho. Her folks had moved there to

help build up the new stake center. Her sister, who had married, loaned her money and gave her clothes. At Albion she met again many of her freshman school friends.

The next winter, at Malta, was a happy one even though in October she sent her first sweetheart on a mission [Irv Maddox]. She was the comedian in the Ward M.I.A. play. They played at all the outlying small towns.

Mother's experience in teaching was very interesting and unique. She taught the fifth and sixth grades. In the sixth grade there was only one girl, the rest were fellows much larger than she was. Her problem was they wanted to date her. It took her three days to convince one ardent admirer that it wasn't good school policy for the teacher to date her pupils.

One day a school board member came to visit mother's school. She stayed all day. She complimented mother on her discipline and the way she taught her lessons. Mother always opened her school with prayer.

The next summer mother attended the national summer school in Logan. She stayed with her old friends Judge and Mrs. Asa Bullen. Judge Bullen was an old school buddy of Superintendent Skidmore, the father of our now famous Dr. Rex Skidmore. Judge Bullen introduced mother to Superintendent Skidmore and the two convinced her that he should teach in Box Elder County. She was given her choice of five schools. Knowing that she understood country children better than city children, she chose the little school in Rosette. There was more money offered there anyway.

Arriving in Rosette via train and mail carrier she reached the home of Bishop A. M. Seely. Lee Seely, the young man at the Seely home, had instructed the mail carrier to look the new schoolmarm over. If she passed inspection, he was to bring her over, if she didn't he was to leave her at Kunzler's. So the mailman stopped the horses, looked her over, and said, "I guess you'll do," and drove on.

Here teaching was different. She had twenty students in a one-room school. She was the only teacher. She taught grades: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8. She was certain that she did not have time to teach all of the grades; so she made a schedule allowing each class so much time. After a little adjusting, her schedule worked smoothly. Here again she called on the children to open the school with prayer.

This little community had no piano. There was an organ in the Church chapel, but no piano. Mother wrote to the schoolboard and asked them if they would pay half the cost of the piano if she would raise the money for the other half by putting on different types of entertainment. Then the people in the community could use the piano for their dances. The dances had to be held in the school house anyway, so the schoolboard consented.

The first entertainment she decided would be a circus. She had the girls and mothers make feathered dolls, fancy pin cushions, pretty doilies, etc. for prizes. Enthusiasm ran high the night of the circus. All the young people from the surrounding towns came; but what to her dismay, she found they had brought a huge jug of homemade beer. She wondered how she could cope with this problem. Then

her opportunity came. One of the boys asked her if she would like to go out and have a drink. She went. On the way to the woodpile, where the jug was hidden, mother picked up a sharp pointed rock. When the boys handed her the jug, she hit it on the bottom with the rock. The jug didn't break as easily as she thought, so she hit it as hard and as fast as she could. When the dazed boys realized what she was doing, they grabbed the jug away from her, but the next morning the broken jug was sitting on her desk. Letting her know that she had accomplished what she had tried to do. It was a happy day for the little village when the piano arrived.

In a little community people look to the school teacher for help. Mother did her part. She was ward chorister, primary chorister, Y.W.M.I.A. president, religion class president, and she taught the parents class in Sunday school. The parent's class was a real challenge to her. The people knew their religion. After school, she would go over to Relief Society. There she learned how to quilt, and learned much in the way of religion.

Mother's family moved to a lumber town near Rockaway, Oregon, where her sister lived. Her oldest brother and his wife remained at Malta. The first year that mother taught in Rosette, she decided to spend Christmas in Malta with her brother. It took her all day to ride with the mailman, in his spring wagon, as far as Kelton, Utah. Much snow was on the ground and it was very cold. That night, Mrs. Mewman, the Kelton station agent, gave a dance in the school house. There were about fifteen people present, including the fiddler, the harmonica, and the piano player. They really had a good time. They danced the Virginia Reel, waltzes and square dances. It warmed everyone up after their long journey in the cold.

The next morning mother continued on her way to Malta. She rode with a different mailman and a male passenger. This time they had the luxury of a "white top". They had heated large rocks to keep their feet warm. They drove about an hour and half across the flats when they were caught in a blizzard. The horses refused to go on. They would turn around and head back to Kelton. After several attempts the mailman gave up and they went back to Kelton.

They arrived at the station just as the train pulled in. Mother decided to spend Christmas in Logan with her friend Kathern (Sic.) Shaw. After she arrived in Logan, she discovered that her whole body had turned black from exposure to the cold. It lasted only a day or two, and then it was gone. Mother was glad that she had come to Logan. The Shaw's had lost their mother several months before and they weren't planning on much of a Christmas. Mother bought a tree and soon they were happily decorating it. Mr. Shaw thanked mother for coming and helping them to have a happy Christmas.

Mother returned to Rosette and continued her teaching. Once, when Superintendent Skidmore came to visit her school, she asked her class to sing a song that she had made up for them. The song follows:

We're from Rosette, Rosette  
 We've the best school in the land  
 And we'll have you understand

We're from Rosette, Rosette  
That's where the good kids go.

The children sang it with such enthusiasm that it pleased the superintendent very much.

Mother spent two wonderful years teaching in Rosette. Then she married the Bishop's son, Leland Seely, better known as "Jim". They were married in the Salt Lake Temple, June 23, 1926.

In the fourth month of mother's marriage, during October L.D.S. conference, she had an experience that she will always remember. Grandmother and grandfather Seely and many of the Ward members went to Salt Lake City to "conference". Mother's young husband came in and said. "Could you fix a lunch for me? I'm going to ride for cattle. I'll be gone all day." Mother fixed the lunch, walked out to the corral, kissed her husband goodbye and walked back into the house. Then it happened. She was having a miscarriage. She sank into a chair and sat there for a few minutes. When she stood up things would start to happen. She was afraid to move. Finally, in the middle of the afternoon, she crawled to the bed in the next room. As the pains commenced getting harder she trashed around on the bed. After three or four hours of this, her condition was bad. Then she saw a personage at the side of her bed. He did not speak, but calmness came over her – and she took the pains quietly.

In about an hour, the mid-wife, Sister Burton, came over from the neighboring town. She said, "I got to worrying about you. I knew that you would be alone, and I came over to see if you were all right." She stayed all night and the next day with mother. Father didn't find his cattle, so he didn't come home that night. He came the next evening. From this experience, mother knew that our Heavenly Father takes care of His children. She is very grateful to have had this experience. [Note: There are several important points in this account that differ from family member's written accounts of what happened. I leave it to others to determine the true story. However, my memory of her verbal accounts to me corresponded more closely to what my brother, Jim, has written. At the time I was typing her manuscript, I do remember thinking what she had written was far too personal and did not belong in her "Mother of the Year" submittal. So I changed it. I remember telling my mother what I was going to do and why. "But", she said, "It isn't right." I said, "We don't have time to correct it, and have me retype it." I edited out a great deal, especially detail – particularly about the personage that appeared, what he looked like, what he said (He did speak to her), what he did, and how he left. I, unfortunately, also removed her words concerning who the "man" was. I wrote what little there is here and substituted it for her account. Now, half a century later, how I wish I had not done so. I regret not letting her words stand as she wrote them! Nor do I remember, with any clarity, what she had written. Please remember I had been up most of the night typing, was very tired and sleepy, and still just a kid not knowing what was really important and what was not.]

A few months later, mother came to Brigham City to be examined by a doctor. He told her she should never have married, that she was too small to give birth to a baby. That was his firm belief. Mother looked at him and said, "But I am married and I am going to have a baby." With the doctor's words ringing in her ears, she left the office and went back to Rosette where there was no doctor to

help her if things went wrong. Things did go wrong. In about four months, she again lost her baby. [Note: Mother had a series of miscarriages. I don't know how many, but there was a number of them.]

Nearly two years went by. Her folks were still in Oregon. One day Grandmother Thompson said to Grandfather, "I dreamed "Jim" put a little soft bundle into my arms. I think Grace needs me. Besides, we have two sons of marriageable age, if we want them to marry L.D.S. girls, we had better go back. So they quit their jobs and returned to Malta.

Mother's first baby, a six pound girl, was born at her mother's home in Malta, Idaho. Fifteen months later she returned, and with only her mother to help, her first son was born.

Now things started getting rough for the young Seely couple. There was no rain. The crops dried up. Cows that father had paid a hundred dollars apiece for, sold with their calves for sixty dollars. Father left and went to Montpelier, Idaho to sell fruit for his brother Elwyn.

Mother and her two children were left alone on the ranch for the summer. Her well went dry. There were four horses, a cow, a calf, two pigs (one with a littler of ten), and five hundred chickens. Her neighbors were so good to her. Mrs. Olague made two trips every morning to bring enough water for the livestock. Mr. Olague and their son David came at night and tried to dig the well deeper – but it was no use. The soil got drier as they dug deeper. Finally they gave up.

Mother had one streak of luck however. One day she left her two children asleep in the house and went out to do the chores. I awakened and sent out to find my mother. I was only two years old. The mother pig broke out of her pen and started toward me. I ran back onto the porch. In mother's horrified eyes she could see in her mind, that old sow tearing me apart as she had seen that pig tear chickens apart and eat them alive. Mother ran right into the house and called Lawrence Carter, who bought the pig and her whole litter. Mother insisted that he come immediately and get the pigs, which he did. The next day the bottom fell out of the price of pigs. Mother's business instinct told her the deal was all right because he was the man who had sold father the cows at one hundred dollars apiece and bought them back, cow and calf, for sixty dollars.

Finally, in the latter part of August, Grandmother Thompson sent my two uncles to bring us to live with her until daddy got through selling fruit and could find another job. This ended seven years of living in Rosette with some of the most wonderful people mother has ever known.

In December, daddy got a job in the courthouse in Brigham City. He received two dollars a day. He came to Malta, got mother, my brother and I, and took us to live in Brigham City. Here, on February 2, 1932 mother's third child was born. She had the expert help of Dr. Reese Merrell. Seconds after the baby boy was born, daddy pulled down all the blinds in the room. "What are you doing?" asked Dr. Merrell. "It's Groundhog's Day", said Dad. "I don't want this baby to see his shadow. I don't want to pay for him twice!"

Again mother had cause to thank her Heavenly Father for His goodness to her. Grandfather Seely came, just before the baby was born, and gave her a blessing. He promised her that she would

feel no pain at the baby's birth. Somehow, she was given a little too much ether and she didn't awaken until the baby was dressed and in his crib. She had to be shown the baby before she would believe it was born.

In the middle of March daddy's job ended at the Courthouse. He went to the ranch to see what the prospects were for crops. There had been no snow, so in May he returned to Brigham City.

One day, in April, 1932, my mother, my brother Glenn, and I were out gathering wood to help out the fast dwindling coal supply. Walt Mann, daddy's friend came by. He said, "Grace, how long has it been since you have had any meat?" Walt's thoughtfulness toughed mother's heart and she began to cry. Walt bought a big steak. It was doubly appreciated because he wasn't making very much money in those days either. [Walter G. Mann became the leading attorney in the Brigham City area. He represented the local missile/rocket manufacturing company, and was very instrumental in bring them here. During my adolescent years, and until his death, he lived about half-a-block away from us. He, his wife, Donna, and my parents remained close, life-long, friends. "Walter G.", as he was affectionately called by the family, was also my father's personal attorney. My father would make a business deal, shake on it (which made it binding in dad's eyes), then go see "Walter G." to make it legal. "Walter G." founded a law firm that still bears his name, and it is still the leading law firm in the area. "Walter G." loved ice cream, and the local ice cream parlor (Peach City) still sells a "Walt Mann Special".]

In June, daddy took his family to Idaho Falls and sold fruit for his brother Elwyn again. The first of October we moved to Blackfoot, Idaho, where daddy worked in the sugar factory until it closed in December.

One day at the end of November, mother found a good wool quilt in the coal bin. Someone had thrown it away. It was filthy dirty, so she took it and washed it. She left it on the line to dry overnight. That night the icy wind came down from the north. It was bitter cold. The next morning the quilt was gone. Mother figured a tramp from the nearby railroad had taken it. She was glad if it had helped some poor man.

Our family moved back to Brigham City just before Christmas, 1932. They rented an unfurnished two room house for eight dollars a month. [Note: The story is told that dad walked the streets at night wondering where he was going to get the eight dollars to pay the rent. His landlord did too.]

Hard times weren't over yet for the Seely's. This was the year of the depression. Father was unable to find work. He finally joined a C.C. camp, which was in Blacksmith Fork canyon in Cache Valley, Utah. His pay was thirty dollars a month. There were five of us. Daddy said, "Pinky, (mother's hair was red) I can come home weekends for five dollars a month. Shall I save the money or shall I come home?" Mother said, "Come home, we'll get along on twenty-five dollars a month." She did. She didn't borrow or run any bills either. But how great was her joy when the Sugar Factory in Brigham City opened in October, and then father got his old job back.

Father now made one hundred twenty-five dollars a month. When daddy handed mother his first check she went up town and bought shoes and stockings, underclothes, dresses, overalls, and food. She never to this day has enjoyed spending money like she did that check. She was so grateful to have it because the winter was coming on and they needed it so badly.

From then on the Seely's started to prosper. Father got a job with a gas and oil company. The next year, in September 1934, he bought a home at 27 North 3<sup>rd</sup> West in Brigham City. Five rooms and two porches seemed a mansion to mother. In the new home, October 16, 1934, at high noon, mother's second daughter was born. Again, she had the expert service of Dr. Reese Merrell.

In about a year, mother joined the Kindergarten Club, now known as the Community Club. Later, she joined the Civic Club. She was chosen President of the P.T.A., but had to resign because she couldn't drive a car. [Note: I have written about mother's lack of driving ability elsewhere. See my story titled, "Mack Brown".] She taught the five year olds in the Primary organization. The next year she was asked to teach the third graders in the Primary. It was a class of about 18 little boys. They had excess energy. They had already driven two teachers away. At a signal from the ringleaders, most of the boys would bolt out of the open window. Mother's oldest son Glenn was in this class. She wanted him taught right, so she accepted the challenge.

The first day she took a huge stick. It was a young willow tree. She walked into the room after the boys were seated and placed the stick in the front corner of the room. Then she slammed down the window and looked the boys in the eye. She had been praying all week that she would be able to handle them. Suddenly her son, Glenn, jumped up and said, "You guys be good. This is my mother!" They were good. Soon she loved them and they loved her. She had to send them home from Primary or they would have stayed until dark. Some of these little boys were Doug Mann, Edgar Richardson, Robert Smith, Reed Channel, and Junior Rassmussen.

Daddy was asked to be Superintendent of the Third Ward Sunday School. One Sunday, mother found a class just bulging with students. Their ages were twelve to sixteen inclusive. Mother knew an expert would have a hard time teaching a class of this kind. She asked daddy if she could teach the fifteen and sixteen year olds. The only available room was dirty and dark, but there began one of the most enjoyable experiences in teaching mother has ever had. She organized her class. She and the class officers planned a party a month. These parties were simple, sometimes in some one's home, sometimes in the park. Any teenager could be invited to come – if he would live up to the standards of the Latter Day Saints. Come? Come they did, not only to the parties but to Sunday School too. They were given the two double rooms which are now the Junior Sunday School. One Sunday when President Lillywhite was invited to speak, there wasn't seating room. They young folks were standing by the walls of the room. It was a wonderful sight, one mother will never forget. Tears filled her eyes as she stood in awe at the many young people gather there to learn more about their faith.

As the class grew, Dan Frodsham was called to help teach, then Ken Halling. Mother taught the class for three years. Then, because she had sent for another baby, she had to quit. However, a committee consisting of Morgan Hawkes, Paul Nelson, Jay Cuthbert, Paulette Hansen, and Cleo Jorden

came to see her and asked her to continue teaching. She thought this was a wonderful compliment, although she could not continue teaching.

During the second year of teaching his class, she organized the boys to canvass the town for jobs. They met with little success. Most of these boys had to go to war when they were nineteen years old. This was in 1939 to 1940. One of their last parties was a watermelon bust held in the park. Mother owed Morgan Hawkes a nickel, but he went to war before she had a chance to give it to him. She put it on the shelf of her cupboard for a good luck token and gave it to him as soon as he returned. All the boys returned - there wasn't one casualty.

Before mother finished teaching her Sunday School class, father was made ward clerk. At this time everyone had to have a birth certificate or statement of birth before they could obtain work. Many of them came to the ward clerk for a certificate, this made tremendous work for mother. But she tried to be gracious and make them feel welcome.

While she was teaching she belonged to Norm Watkins Orpheus chorus. She sang with a double trio at the Logan Temple. She sang many solos in church and on programs. Then her church and public activities were cut down. Mother had three babies in three years and one week. These three were born in the Cooley hospital, with the same Doctor Merrell taking care of her. Mother could bring her babies back once a month for a checkup. Dr. told her what to feed them before she relied solely upon herself. It was wonderful to shed this responsibility.

However, with a family of nine and the last three babies coming close together mother had her hands full. Planning the work with her children made it easier. We each knew our jobs and all tried to help. Mother didn't believe in allowances. It seemed like a dole to the side of her system. She made a chart with a price for every job – one cent for making a bed, five cents for drying dishes, fifteen cents for doing them alone, etc. Everything was written down with a price. We divided the work as we chose for one week. Then it was changed. This system worked wonderfully well for us.

On Mother's Day in May 1945, mother received a corsage for having the largest number of children present at Sunday School.

Mother's faith has helped her and her family throughout the years. When my sister, Karen, was two and a half years old she was badly burned. An oil floor furnace, having leaked oil all summer, burned with red hot heat after it was lighted one early fall day. Father stood guard at the door-way trying to keep all of us out of the room. Baby sister Karen slipped under his arm and ran toward the furnace. When she felt the heat, she stopped suddenly, her feet shot from under her and she sat on the red hot furnace. Father snatched her off, but she had received a severe burn. Mother applied a mixture of sweet cream and soda to the burn, and then took Karen to the doctor. She received more treatment, bandaged, and brought home. She had to be carefully watched for many days.

In our ward all members of the Bishopric and their wives went to the Temple once a month. Temple day came, father tried to convince mother that Karen would be all right left with me. Mother hesitated, still unconvinced, but she went. When she entered the Temple at Logan she stood worrying.

Her concern must have shown on her face because a temple worker came up and asked her what was bothering her. Mother told him. He advised her to go on through the Temple, and consoled her with the promise that her child would be all right. Upon her arrival at home she found the younger children and I were all right, and that Karen had slept the entire evening. The burn healed rapidly, leaving no sign of a scar, although the name of the furnace had been plainly stamped on Karen's "bottom."

On July 6<sup>th</sup> 1946, we moved to another home at seventh South and Main, Brigham City. We belonged to the fifth ward. Here, Mother was named coordinator of the Junior Sunday School Department of her church. She organized the first Junior Sunday School in the fifth ward. She worked under conditions which called for ingenuity of the first order. With the application of ropes, safety pins and blankets, she turned the recreation hall of the chapel into reputable class rooms for her young friends. She received the whole hearted support of her co-workers and all enjoyed the fine fruits of labor.

Next on the list of hard to do requests, mother was asked to teach the first L.D.S. Sunday School at the Intermountain Indian School. She took this job; at this time, as a member of the Sunday School Stake Board. This teaching was difficult because of the language barrier. With her usual sincere interest and feeling of responsibility toward youth, she taught the students with pictures.

Another accomplishment was her privilege and duty to organize Junior Sunday Schools in the Stake Wards where none existed before. At the same time she "made" time for being relief society chorister and leader of the singing mothers in her own ward.

During this particular era, six of the seven wards in the stake were remodeling or building new chapels. Mother gave a donation to each of these wards, because she felt she was helping to build and beautify Brigham City.

It seems that mother was never without some assignment from her Church either as Primary chorister, or Sunday School teacher. One of these teaching experiences lasted for nearly eight years. Under the capable leadership of Boyd Packer, now an assistant Apostle of the L.D.S. Church, mother again taught the new enlarged and established classes for the L.D.S. Indians at the Brigham City chapel. These classes included boys and girls of all ages.

Mother not only taught these boys and girls in religious doctrine, she also tried to help them to live better and understand the ways of the white people with whom they must integrate in daily life. Many Sundays found many Indians fed and entertained in our home. As they learned from us we learned from them. We found that stealing was permissible to them if the object was left unguarded. Mother learned that many of her students had to think answers in Navajo and then translate them into English, their adopted language. For this reason sometimes they were slow in answering.

My father started a motel business before we moved to seventh South. It grew from a small beginning to a prosperous business. We feel that without mother's interest, understanding, and intelligent help that this prosperity would have been much longer in coming. There was a time when mother cleaned all the cabins, and washed and ironed all the linen. When winter slowed the tourist

business, father was busy with his oil and gas business. Mother took the orders for delivery of the oil and gas. She also received the payments for these bills. She used to say, "I am a secretary, a cabin maid, a motel manager, and a mother of seven children. Each is a full time job." Mother was always busy, she never stopped. She was a good manager. She spent thirteen years helping build up the motel and gas and oil business. She helped father plan and build a café, store, and service station.

In spite of the hours of hard work, our family life was enjoyable. As children, mother taught the necessity of work and play, and the joy of family living.

Mother was quick to recognize the need of people as they came to the motel. One night during an unseasonable cold spell - a truck load of transient Mexican field workers stopped at the motel. A baby was crying, and mother recognized that cry. The child was hungry. She went into the house and brought a carton of milk, a paper cup, and a loaf of bread. She handed them to the Mexican mother who couldn't speak English, but smiled her gratitude. Mother installed them in her two largest cooking units, charging very little for the two cabins. She then brought out armfuls of used clothing that she had stored in our basement and gave them to the Mexicans. They really showed their appreciation for her kindness. Mother's natural and sincere offer to quiet the hungry children with food and her giving of warm clothing resulted in their visiting us later as they returned to their homeland. They thanked mother for her kindness to them, when they were cold and hungry in a strange land.

At another time mother allayed the fear and tension of a young mother traveling with young children from the East to San Francisco. Mother helped bathe the children and gave the mother assurance of safety and soothed her shattered nerves. The next morning the mother said, "That was the best night's rest she (the child) or I have had on our trip."

We moved back to the North Box Elder Stake in September 1959. Father now hires a manager for the motel. The gas and oil business has been sold. Mother now has a new home and even some time of her own. This time is used in the usual fashion however; mother comes into our homes and helps my sister Gwen and me when our babies are born. Mother encouraged and aided my sister Karen, who has won five beauty contests. She writes letters of encouragement to her son, James; who is in the German Mission field. She recently called her son, Dr. J. Leland Seely, at Santa Barbara, California and congratulated him for the recognition he received from General Motors Co. for his presentation in Washington D.C. Mother recently cooked dinner for her son Glenn, his wife and four children. Glen is a successful real estate broker in Salt Lake City. Mother tirelessly gave Kent, her youngest son (who is a senior in high school) his queues for the high school senior class play. She also makes certain that he gets his other schoolwork done on time. Mother helped father last year when he was the president of the Box Elder Chamber of Commerce and, at the same time, president of the Lions Club. With mother's help, father has weathered two very serious operations. Mother is presently a member of the North Box Elder Stake Sunday School Board. She supervises thirteen wards. She is a member of the Old Folks Committee in the North Box Elder Stake. In her own ward, mother is the primary chorister, a Relief Society teacher, and serves on the Genealogical Committee. She recently organized a study group of twenty-four members. She and father are director members of the Box Elder Knife and Fork Club. Last summer she went to the "Girl's Home" to supervise the Beehive girls from four wards.

Her own time is truly spent now, as it always has been spent, with love in the service of her family, Church, and her fellow human beings.

BOX ELDER

CHAMBER of COMMERCE

ROSS C. BOWEN sec.

# Box Elder Chamber of Commerce

And Commercial Club

*. Brigham City, Utah*

February 7, 1963

The Box Elder Chamber of Commerce is very happy to nominate Mrs. Grace Seely for "Mother of the Year." During the year 1960 – 61, she was the wife of our very efficient and well-liked President F. Leland Seely. She helped on numerous occasions during her husband's term by giving good will and making people feel welcome to Peach Days, Brigham City, and Box Elder County. Her role as graceful mother of the Peach Queen was another one of her outstanding qualities, always on hand to aid in any way she could.

Grace Seely has been most active in helping her husband with his various civic offices among which was his term as President of the Brigham City Lions Club. Mrs. Seely was on hand during the Peach Days Celebration to supervise the final appearance of the Lions outstanding float, after having helped build it. She has also been a welcome addition to the committees for "Ladies Nights" at Lions. Grace Seely's cheerful disposition, her friendly smile and her ability to make everyone feel welcome is a wonderful asset to any community or civic project.

During Mrs. Seely's younger years, she was very active in the Community Club, formerly the Kindergarten Club, where she helped on numerous projects, among which was the telling of stories to children during a regular story hour. In the Civic Improvement Club Mrs. Seely was active on many committees and did an outstanding job on the various prize-winning Peach Day Floats.

Mrs. Seely has held numerous Church Offices in the L.D.S. Church being able to lead or follow depending on the need. It would be impossible to name all of the positions she has successfully filled; so we will just name a few such as Singing Mother Chorister, in the Fifth Ward for many years, Primary Chorister in the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward, Relief Society Teacher, and The Responsibility for Course One on the Sunday School Stake Board. She was a very welcome member of the Stake Tabernacle Missionaries telling visitors not only about her Church, but about Brigham City as well.

It is a great honor and privilege for the Box Elder Chamber of Commerce to endorse Mrs. Grace Seely as a very worthy candidate for the title of "Mother of the Year."

## OUR ANNUAL PEACH DAYS CELEBRATION

(Signature) Ross C. Bowen Secretary

RELIGION

LEE R. ANDERSEN

2<sup>nd</sup> Counselor

North Box Elder Stake

# THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

NORTH BOX ELDER STAKE PRESIDENCY

BRIGHAM CITY, UTAH

February 12, 1963

Because of her sincere service to her church and its people, we of the North Box Elder Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints enthusiastically nominate Mrs. Grace Seely of the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward of Brigham City, "Mother of the Year". Her willingness to devote her time and means for the benefit of young and old alike in the church to whom she has become greatly attached, demonstrates her effectiveness.

Since April, of 1960, shortly after her family moved into our Stake, Mrs. Seely was called to serve on the Sunday School Stake Board. She has been devoted and very successful in this assignment to the present time. This makes a total of some 11 years of Stake Board work. She has served over 15 years in the Primary organization of the church, part of this time as chorister to the children, teaching them to sing the lovely hymns of Zion. A sum of 5 or 6 years have been added in service with the Relief Society singing mothers. She has taught Sunday School off and on all of her married life and is a member of the [Stake] Old Folks Committee and the Genealogical Committee in her ward. [Note: in mother's hand is written, "Also a Relief Society Teacher and the Primary Chorister."]

Soon after the former Bushnell General Hospital was converted into the Indian boarding school, the LDS Church built a Seminary institution close by. Mrs. Seely has had a colorful career with these indian [Sic.] children. She taught for many years in the Sunday School to them. Getting acquainted with them here, she would invite several to her home for Sunday dinner and to acquaint them with our ways. She has had hundreds in her home in this way. She also gave them employment and training while she and her husband operated a motel in the area of the indian [Sic.] school.

Very recently she has organized a 24 member study group in her ward. One of her former Sunday School students who is now a Bishop is assisting Mrs. Seely to formulate plans for a temple excursion for the people who made up her Sunday School class so many years ago. They are planning with great enthusiasm for this event this year.

We of the Stake Presidency feel a great deal of pride in endorsing our Sister Seely for the dignified position of "Mother of the Year".

Sincerely,

Lee R. Andersen  
(Signature)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Counselor  
North Box Elder Stake

Brigham City, Utah  
February 11, 1963

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my privilege and pleasure to be associated with Mrs. F. Leland (Grace) Seely in the Brigham City Thirteenth Ward Primary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It is truly wonderful to be able to work with someone with such outstanding capabilities and characteristics as Sister Seely has. She loves children and has not only been a fine example to her own children, but to every child she has come in contact with. The children in our Primary look forward each week to singing time and their association with Sister Seely. They love her warm friendly smile and seem to sense her love and admiration, for they follow her capable direction and sing to the best of their abilities.

Grace Seely is sincere and consistent. To me, these are two of the most important attributes that a mother can possess. She also has firm convictions and stays true to those things which she knows to be right. She is loving and kind and her children, whom I know, radiate peace and happiness. This comes; I am sure, from the wonderful home life that their parents have given to them. She is also a wonderful grandmother to her own grandchildren and to all of her neighborhood children as well.

Sister Seely holds several positions in the Church as well as her responsibilities in the home and still finds time to take part in civic affairs. However, no matter how busy she is, she never refuses a request for her help, and does a good job at whatever she undertakes. We can always count on her to be in Primary as well as the extra meetings that her position entails. We know that she will never disappoint us and also that she will carry out her duties cheerfully and without complaints.

It has enriched my life to know Grace Seely and I am honored at being able to write this letter. I am thrilled that she has been asked to be a nominee for the 1963 "Mother of the Year" contest because I know how worthy she is of this honor.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Bobbie Ann S. Hunsaker  
President  
Brigham City 13<sup>th</sup> Ward Primary

EDUCATION

HERVIN BUNDERSON  
Former Superintendent  
of BOX ELDER COUNTY  
School District

SUPPLEMENT

162 North First East  
Brigham City, Utah  
February 7, 1963

Mrs. Grace (Thompson) Seely is the mother of seven children, all of whom received their elementary and secondary educations in the Box Elder County School District. They are as follows:

Glenn, who served and L.D.S. Mission in England; took a Law Course at the University of Utah, and is now a successful broker in Salt Lake City.

Joyce, after completing formal education married and is the mother of four children; she is active in the organizations of the L.D.S. church.

Lee, who has his Ph.D. degree in science and is presently doing special work for the General Motors Corporation.

Gwen, who after graduation from the B.Y.U. taught school for four years; specialized in recreation; was dance director in two L.D.S stakes at the same time [in SLC]. She did the solo dance in one of the L.D.S. church-wide dance festivals, in June, at the University of Utah campus. She is married [and has two children].

Karen, who graduated from Weber College; was "Miss Utah National Guard", and during the same year was winner of four other beauty and popularity contests. She is married.

Jim, who is presently serving an L.D.S. Mission in Germany.

Kent, who is currently a student at the Box Elder High School in Brigham City. [He had co-lead in the Senior class play.]

(Signature)  
Hervin Bunderson

[Note: Mr. Bunderson got the birth order wrong. Joyce was born before Glenn. What appears inside the red [ ... ] brackets were my mother's hand written additions. She also had me staple a note to Mr. Bunderson's remarks:

“We called Lee Feb. 2, 1963 on his birthday. He said the secret project he was working on is a success. He was sent to Washington D.C. to talk to the Government Officials.”

The staple is from a small, red, two-and-a-half inch Swingline stapler. I used my personal “homework” stapler because I was dead tired from staying up all night and because I didn't want to try to find our larger one. Over half-a-century later, I still use a similar Swingline stapler.]