

Boise, Idaho  
December 7, 1981

Dear Cheryl Aase:

In reply to your letter dated November 11, 1981. You ask for information about your grandmother and your great grandmother and the days on the farm. Let me go back a little further and explain how Ogden, Utah and your grandmother and her older sister, my mother came together to make up this story.

The story goes back to Civil War times. Grandfather Vaughn had been a drummer boy in the Civil War at age fifteen. He was attached to the sixth Missouri Regiment. He was with the Confederate Army at the Battle of Shilo. Of course his loyalties were with the South.

After the war he rode with the James brothers. My mother told this to me. When the war was over there was very little law. The Southland had been so thoroughly destroyed that all organized government no longer existed.

The big job in the reconstruction era was to build the railroad. The railroad building was paid for by the federal government so the builders assumed government authority with no regard for personal property rights.

The James farm was in the path where the railroad was to go. Jesse and Frank James and their mother lived on the farm. It was a good farm and they wanted to stay there. Father James had already passed on. He was buried there in the family grave plot.

In the fracas that followed mother James was killed and the two boys had to flee for their lives. They had been through the war. They hoped for peace --- a right they thought they had earned. Now they were driven off their land with nothing except their horses and saddles. There were others who were treated the same way including grandfather Vaughn. They had no home, no money, no way to make a living. All they had ever owned had been taken from them. They sought refuge in the company of others who had met a similar fate. The James gang was the name given them.

I knew my grandfather. He was not a mean, revengfull man. He loved children and music. I remember at our home in Ogden, he lined us children up and taught us children to sing America. That is when I learned there was such a beautiful song. (Really it should have been our national anthem.)

2.

Grandfather was a good man trying to survive in troubled times. The so called James Gang didn't last long. Not over a year and a half. Most of them went west to Colorado.

The war left its scar on both the Northerner and Southerner. The victorious northerner still looked upon the South as their enemy and they were very much inclined to "strut their stuff" from their advantageous position. The defeated South was trying to survive in a hostile world.

General Sherman, looking back on the carnage and destruction of his march from Atlanta to the sea gave us his famous quotation, "War is Hell."

There is more that could be written about grandfather Vaughn but we will leave it here and write about grandmother Vaughn.

Grandmother was a dear sweet grandmother to me. After I left home I wrote to grandma often. Folks would say to me at times, "You write to your grandmother more often then you write to your own mother."

Grandma Vaughn was born in Warwick, England. Name, Mary Ann Robbins. She was a member of the Lord Goldring family. If she had stayed in England she might have been heir to an estate. Her father was an educated man. He and his wife and three daughters came to America. He was a civil engineer and was an employee of the Denver and Rio Grand railroad. He was headquartered in Salt Lake City. That is where he made his home and that is where he is buried.

Daughter Caroline joined the Morman Church. What her name was I don't know. I can't recall that I ever knew. I do remember being at her home once. More than that I do not know. Daughter Caroline had a better life than her other two sisters. Maybe her affiliation with the church is the reason.

Sarah married, more than that I do not know. I don't think there were any children came to that marriage. Sarah was a beautiful woman. She came to our home in Ogden with Grandma one time that I remember. It might have been more than one time.

Mary Ann Robbins was my grandmother's name. (I think) What I am writing is all from memory. There might be some inaccuracies. She was always grandma to me. I have a picture of Grandma. As I remember my grandmother, she was a very beautiful woman.

True beauty comes from within. It is a reflection of the soul. It makes the face shine. It surely does but beauty

is character, a sense of duty and love. Grandma Vaughn is a story of love beyond belief.

Grandma Vaughn came across the plains from Independence, Missouri, with a wagon train. She never knew, for sure, how old she was. In that long wearisome journey scarlet fever was taking its toll. She lay in a bed on top of the triumphery it was necessary to have on a journey like that.

Grandfather Vaughn (he would be great grandfather to Cheryl Aase to whom this letter is written), his name James Alexander Vaughn and Mary Ann Robbins met in Gunnison, Utah. They were married there and that is where my mother was born.

In writing a story like this where names are given according to their relationship, the writer might know what he means but the reader can very easily get lost. There are five generations involved in this story. The words grandma or grandpa are used to designate the relationship to the writer. The writer is the third generation in this story. I have tried to write the story so the reader can understand. If the designations are confusing I will have to beg forgiveness.

It would seem that both Grandpa Vaughn and his bride, Mary Ann Robbins had enough adventure to last a lifetime. Grandpa Vaughn had seen war at its worst. There were thirty thousand soldiers left dead on the battlefield at Shilo.

Grandma Vaughn, to use her new name, had journeyed from Warwick, England, to Salt Lake City, Utah, before the railroads.

For them the big adventure of life was just beginning. I have heard my mother tell of life in the early days. Moving was the thing they did most. Soon after mother was born the Vaughns moved north to Idaho and from Idaho to Star Valley, Wyoming. Then back and forth till there was no way to keep account of the many moves they made.

They never owned a home. Grandpa Vaughn never had a job. Life for them was a series of moves. Grandma was a small woman. I don't think she ever weighed a hundred pounds at any time. Through those years of moving and living without Grandma Vaughn became the mother of twelve children.

My mother was the oldest. Mary Ann was her name. Same as her mother (I am not sure about the Ann part of the name.) Phoebe was the second child. Aunt Phoebe, like my mother, was a beautiful woman.

Alex was third, then Will, then George, Roy, Guy, Gordon, Leonard. After seven boys came Ethel and Bernice. Then another boy, Noel.

I, myself, the writer was eighty-one years old, September the thirteenth, 1981. I have never written this story before. I have lived and grown old, if eighty-one is old, but as I look at what I am writing it is hard for me to believe it myself. My dear grandmother was a miracle.

There is more yet to the story of grandpa Vaughn. I never heard Grandmother talk about doctor bills or medicine or sickness. Hospital was a non-existent word in those years when grandpa and grandma were raising their family.

I ask my mother one time, "How did you live? What did you eat?"

Mother's reply, "Well we always had a lot of meat."

That is still not a very satisfactory answer, Soda Springs, Star Valley, Wyoming is high country. Winters are cold and long. Cattle were raised for their hides in those days. There was no hay put up then. Cattle had to winter out and paw snow or eat willow. Where there were cat tails like at Greyslake cattle would eat the cat tails or the long timothy hay that grew on the shores of the lake. Some times when the winters were too long most of the cattle would die but always there was enough left to start a new herd.

One time when the Vaughn family were living in Gentile Valley a bear attempted to drag Will to its lair. The bear dragged baby Will quite some distance then left him. The family went out on a search. Baby Will was found where the bear had left him. Maybe it was the searchers who had frightened the bear away. As the story was told to me he was laying there on the ground asleep.

Some of the hardships of early day living I saw but, pioneer life was met by my grand parents long before I was born. My mother told us many stories of life in the early days.

Mark you! My mother was the first born and the oldest of the family. One of the cabins they lived in had no door. In the day time Grandma would hang a curtain at the door but at night the table was stood on end to cover the door way.

"Spare the rod and spoil the child," Grandpa always said. That "spare the rod" thing was terribly over worked. Reward children for doing good. Then the need for spanking didn't exist. Grandfather had accepted the credo of the day. The marriage of James Alexander Vaughn and Mary Ann Robbins must have had a very good side. Out of the marriage twelve very fine people were born. The women folks were beautiful. No less a word would properly describe them. The men were all good faithful workers. It was characteristic of everyone of them to never quit a job.

The last born, Noel, was the first to die, in the influenza epidemic of 1918 and was barely twenty years old.

## CHAPTER II

My father came from a well to do family. The Grandmother on my father's side was a most remarkable woman. No more so or less than Grandma Vaughn but the circumstances were different. My father left home at an early age following Horace Greely's advice he went west to Soda Springs in Idaho. It was there at Soda Springs that he met my mother and was married.

Soon after marriage father Smith and mother moved away from Soda to Ogden, Utah. Winters were long in Soda Springs. Ogden had a much milder climate. My father prospered in Ogden and it was there the Smith family was born. My birth date was September the thirteenth, 1900.

In the year 1906 my father thought it would be good if the entire Vaughn family would move to Ogden. Ogden had been so good to the Smiths. Aunt Phoebe had married a very successful rancher so she stayed in Blackfoot, Idaho. Alex had taken up a homestead close to Blackfoot so he stayed with his claim.

The rest of the family moved to Ogden. Times were different then. The population of the United States was about a hundred and twenty-million then. Less than half of what it is now.

The move to Ogden was an epoch event for the Vaughn family just as it had been for the Smith family eight years earlier. Grandma and grandpa had bought a twenty acre fruit farm. There was a lot of work on a place like that and there were many hands to do the work.

I don't believe Grandpa enjoyed the work. After two or three years Grandpa went back to Blackfoot. Manuel labor was not his idea of what a man should do. I loved my grandfather. At some other time and in a different day he might have shone like a star. If he could have been a teacher or a musician he would have done very well. As a laborer, he could not make himself do it.

Grandma and the family ran the farm. I was a child then and many a happy day I've spent out at Grandma's. In the summertime the place was laden with fruit. It was like going to the Garden of Eden to go to Grandma's.

Looking back now to be with her and watch her work was a beautiful sight. Wherever she went she had a half dozen kids trailing along, accepting her orders and scrambling to get the work done. To pick gooseberries, several would take stools, boxes, anything to sit on. We had to wear gloves to pick gooseberries because of the stickers. The family would surround a bush and we could talk as we picked.

Everything Grandma did was never done alone. There were always three or four or five went along. Looking back, it seems to me that was the secret of Grandma's successful life. She worked with her children. Grandma was not a driver. Grandma was a leader. May God bless grandma forever.

When the time would come to feed the chickens, that again was not a one person act. Always three or four went. Grandma would say, "You take that bucket of strawberry hulls," and to another, "You bring the scraps," and to another, "You go to the bin and get some wheat."

Grandma herself would carry a part of what it would take to feed the chickens. There were eggs to gather. There were things we learned about chickens. Chickens can't count. One egg or one little chick looks like just as many as a nest full or a whole brood. Another thing a china egg or a smooth rock of about that size or a door knob will satisfy a hen.

During the summer months there was the peddling wagon that figured in the deal. I have told of picking gooseberries. They had to be sold, that was a daily chore. Grandma and three or four others would load the wagon with berries and or apples, cherries, peaches, tomatoes, whatever was in season. Then Grandma and three or four others would go into town and peddle the fruit from door to door.

Peddling was enjoyable work. Almost every household would buy. It usually did not take more than a couple of hours to sell whatever was in the wagon.

I've heard Grandma talk about the days work. She would say, "Many times we would come home with twenty dollars."

Life in Ogden was so much different than the Vaughns had ever known. In the higher elevations where they has always lived the only fruit they ever got was sundried peaches or apricots. Now they had many kinds of fruit in abundance. More than that, they owned a home.

I remember one dinner time, I was at the table sitting next to Roy. It was in tomato season. Uncle Roy had filled his plate with tomatoes. I thought it was the serving plate, so I started to take some of the tomatoes from Uncle Roy's plate. Of course I got stopped and a much larger platter of sliced tomatoes was set before me.

Years went on, I'm not sure how many. Maybe four years. In a growing family the younger ones go to school. The farm would provide work in the summer time but there wasn't much to do in the winter. The older boys began to find jobs. Uncle Will married and with his wife, they set up their own home. Guy went to work for my father in the jewelry store.

Guy worked thirteen years for Dad. The war came on and Guy was called away by the Army. When he came back from the war he resumed his job with my father. He married a beautiful red head. They had one daughter, Virginia. She has grown up and married and lives now in Gooding, Idaho.

Living on the fruit farm and the abundant living a farm provides was probably the happiest days of Grandma's life.

It could be said that Grandfather was not much of a provider. I'm not sure that would be fair. To be rooted out of your home and go off to war at fifteen. Then come back to where he thought home was, only to find that every semblance of a home had been obliterated, There wasn't much he could do but to follow the voice of the day, "Go west young man and grow up with the country."

Grandma came from good stock and she showed it both in her looks and in her deeds. Grandpa must also have come from good stock and as I write along I'll try to tell all I know about my grandfather. And again to remind my reader that this story is five generations long.

When you think of the west before the railroad was built it offered problems that were not easy to meet.

About the only tools available were an ax, a hammer and a shovel. They had to be freighted from the east because there were no factories in the west. Before the coming of the railroad everything had to be made out of the material at hand.

If a man wanted to build<sup>d</sup> a house there were none of the material we have in such abundance today. Cement for a foundation certainly was not to be had. Houses and barns were built on rocks. The wood part of the structure was poles or logs shaped with an ax.

When the Morman people came to the shores of the Great Salt Lake there were, in that party, people who had learned many skills. The message Mormanism taught was that every-one must work. That was not first the message. Love of God must always come first. To quote from the Apostle Paul, "He who does not provide for his family is worse than an unbeliever."

To love God a person must obey His commandments. The writings of the Apostle Paul would naturally come within the scope of the meaning of "Love of God".

Just why this young married couple chose to leave the Salt Lake Valley and go into a much colder country this writer does not know. Many others did the same thing. If a reason had to be stated I suppose it would be, following

opportunity. All western land is not productive. Most of the western land has to be irrigated. Even to this day most of the western land has to be classed as range land. It is unfenced and useable only to graze cattle or sheep. The land around Soda Springs and on north from there for a hundred miles is excellent grazing land.

In this high country the early day cattleman had the problem of the predator killing their livestock. Predator meant the wolf, the cougar, the bear and the coyote. The government in its wisdom sent men out to capture or destroy these kinds of animals. During World War One a special effort was made. The population had grown to the point where if people were going to have food to eat the cattle and the sheep would have to be protected. The timber wolf was entirely eliminated. The bear numbers have been reduced. I have written where a bear dragged Uncle Will off and would, probably have eaten him if it had not been for the vigilant care of the rest of the family.

In this present day when so much of our population has moved into the safety of the city a new breed of people have come into being. They could be properly called, "Wild Lifers." Their objective is to protect the wild life. The cattleman and the sheepman have become the object of their innuendos. Some times they are termed a small inconsequential group. They are going so far as to try to reestablish the timber wolf.

These are incidents of life in the early days when Grandpa and Grandma Vaughn were trying to make a living and a homeland for their children and succeeding generations.

Grandma lived the most of her life and never knew what inside plumbing was. Hot water faucet was no part of her life. Most of the time a pump and shallow well were the source of their water. To wash the face and hands at noon time a person would go to the stove and pour into the wash pan so much hot water then to the water bucket and add some cold water then to the wash stand and wash his hands and face. Usually after the washing the water was thrown out the door.

That was not a hardship. To wash the hands and face, no matter how laborious the task is a pleasure and a joy. The coal oil lamp was held in the same esteem. It was a light in the darkness. The coal oil lamp had an advantage the electric light doesn't have.

In the evening the coal oil lamp was set on the table. Then we would gather around the table. Some wrote letters, some read, some talked, some listened. Whatever a person liked to do within the boundry of the table, that is what he was privileged to do. Every evening after lamp lighting a family gathered together. It has the very wholesome effect of drawing a family together. Maybe there was more love, one for another in those days.

## CHAPTER III

So far this writing has been about the physical problem of the early day pioneers and how they provided food for themselves and for their children, and how they kept a roof over their heads.

Surely the Morman missionaries the church sent back to countries across the sea, England included, must have been a factor in the Robbins family coming to Utah. Grandma's sister Caroline joined the Morman Church. She had a more pleasant life than Grandma Vaughn or the other sister Sarah.

Just how grandma managed to give birth to twelve children and raise them all. Never having lost a single one. Clothe them, feed them and keep them warm against all the adversities that came against them.

How they managed the doctor part of child raising. What I've written so far is only half of the problems of life that the Vaughn family met and mastered. Of the twelve children, eleven of them were good productive citizens. These last two or three sentences and the next two or three have been written before. The Twelfth child, Noel, a boy died in the flu epidemic of 1918. He was about twenty years old. All eleven of the Vaughn children lived good long, productive lives.

Education and how did Grandma or Grandpa and Grandma together manage to get an education for their children. They were all well versed in the Bible. Mary, the writer's mother knew the Bible as well as anyone ever learned to know the Bible. My mother learned to write. Almost a lost art but she could write a beautiful hand. Mother could recite many poems.

Here is a poem mother taught me. I have it in my scrapbook. Mother wrote it in her beautiful Spencerian hand.

I met God in the morning,  
When the day was at its best,  
And his presence shone like sunshine,  
With His glory in my breast.

Now I think I know the secret  
Learned from many a weary way  
You must meet Him in the morning  
If you want Him through the day.

There were other family members who had an education and abilities. Aunt Phoebe, the second in the family was like educated and able to teach her children same as my mother.

If Grandma or Grandpa had a church affiliation I never heard them speak of it. When the Vaughn family moved to Ogden, Utah they all joined the Baptist Church. It was there they

were baptised. I can remember them making their baptisimal gowns. They put lead weights on the bottom of the dress.

They are all gone now but their progeny lives on there in Ogden. Many of the wives and children still attend the First Baptist Church. Other of the decendents have joined other churches.

Year later after the Vaughns had established themselves in Ogden, Grandpa's relatives came west from Missouri and visited. I remember them when they stayed at our house. The names of two young women were (I think) Bessie and Lula Nickerson. Lula married soon after their visit. That must have been before the war. Bessie came west several times. She taught school in Gentile Valley and stayed at Aunt Phoebe's place. I was working for my uncle. In that day the hired help and everybody lived in the same house. A man came from Blackfoot with his wife. They drove a team and wagon with their household goods. A hundred mile journey.

When they finally got to the ranch the man was so sick he could hardly climb off the wagon. He died with the influenza a day or two later. The Hansens took him into their home and gave them their own bedroom. There were several living in the house then but not a one took the flu.

They were a Morman couple. When the man knew he was going to die he asked for the Biship to come and administer to him.

Life goes on, there is much more to write. In the eighty one years that I have lived, there have been many changes come to this land we live in. The hundred and sixty year period would take in most of the steam locomotive, railroad and the electric light time. Never in all history has so much change come to a people. Are we children of destiny or is there many wonderful things yet to happen?

## POST SCRIPT

As a postscript to the story of my maternal grandfather and grandmother, there are some observations that could be made. The most obvious is that war is a terrible thing. There are no rules to conduct a war by. Except maybe one. Show no mercy. The South suffered terribly in the Civil War or as the Southland chose to call it, "The War Between The States."

Ideals, morals, rules of conduct we are taught and teach are abandoned for the time of the war. Anything to make the maximum of uncomfortableness for the opponent is the rule. Love your enemy becomes, hate your enemy or kill your enemy.

When a state of war is carried on like the, "War Between The States," for four years the temporary tends to become permanent. Ideals, morals, peace, mercy, love, and kindness all tend to be forgotten, both for the victor and for the vanquished. War is the abandonment of common decency.

This is the way my grandfather taught my mother and I am setting down on this page the teaching of my mother. If Frank and Jessie James, her father and others found themselves without a home and without a way of life and in the land where law and government had been destroyed they were indeed faced with a problem of survival.

The escapades of the James boys, to them was a continuation of the war. It was doing the thing they had learned to do in the time of war. After their time of outlawry, both Frank and Jessie James married and went west to Colorado hoping to re-establish themselves, raise a family and live in peace. Jessie had three children at the time of his death.

The government had offered a reward, dead or alive, for him and it was in Creed, Colorado where he was shot by a new breed of justice called the bounty hunter.

I don't know of anyone who would be more of an authority on the doings of the James boys than my mother. My mother loved her father. She knew him as a good man and father. Mother didn't attempt to say that some of the escapades were less than true. It was a time of uncertainties, a time when it was hard to tell the good from the bad. In the short time the so-called James gang were doing their misdeeds they could not possibly have done all the things that was blamed onto them. Nor could real---criminals abandoned that way of life so easily or so quickly.

Happily those days are all behind us and we Americans have emerged a great United States of America.

Abraham Lincoln's objective stand as the final outcome of the war, "The Union Must Be Preserved."

"With malice toward none. With charity toward all, let us finish the task we are in."

These are the thoughts of an eighty-one year old man. I'm sure younger people have newer and different thoughts. The "War Between the States" has been over for more than one hundred years. There have been bigger and more terrible wars since the time of 1861-1865. It has always been a hope that war would be no more. It still is a hope. It may be - - some good day it will be an accomplishment.





## SPANISH CIVIL WAR 1937-1939

There was an incident that happened in my lifetime that illustrates a lesson worthy of reviewing and thinking upon.

"Vanities of vanity," saith the preacher, "All is vanity and a striving after the wind." Ecclesiastes 1:1

Those words were written at the behest of Solomon after many years of thought on the purpose of life.

Spain was one of the last countries in Europe to change from a kingdom to a representative form of government (if indeed it has changed.) In the year, about 1935, an ambitious colorful personage named Francisco Franco came into a place of political influence and power.

He had considerable support from the Spanish population who had wearied of a monarchy and thought a change would be for the better.

This is not unusual thinking. As long as there have been governments of any kind and heads of state there have been other men who wanted the head job. Some men have been good leaders and the country has prospered. Some leaders have been bad and their country has suffered. More often it has been just a change, not better nor worse.

Francisco Franco, like so many political figures, promised wealth to everyone who would give him their support. Political figures are not always wise or good men. Just as often they are arrogant rascals.

In Franco's time, the years 1936-1938, Spain engaged in a bloody civil war. Like all wars and especially civil wars it was a terrible conflict. To add to a bad conflict in Spain, there was a

2

rising scoundrel in Germany who was making plans for a great war of his own, Adolph Hitler. Hitler had no great love for Spain but he was building some new and powerful war machines. His plan was to furnish a considerable number of these machines to Franco to see how effective they were in combat. Hitler seemed to like to be a part or the leader in any act of carnage.

The Iberian Peninsula is quite a large parcel of land. Almost as large as France, about half the size of Germany and it has a large population.

The Spanish Civil War raged on for two years. Brother pited against brother, families divided to the point of killing each other, love turned to hatred and outsiders furnishing the machines of war so that they might have the fun of a spectator.

Finally after two years of battles and showers of hate, the Franco forces emerged as the victors. In a war no one knows many lives are lost but it is estimated that two million people met a violent death. Exhaustion ended the war and victory was given to Franco.

Franco was in his middle years at the time. He ruled Spain with an iron hand for thirty-five years. Anyone who dared oppose him or showed a potential for leadership was immediately put to death. At the end of the thirty-five years the ravages of time were creeping into his frame. He could no longer stand the pain and strain of being head officer in the government of Spain. He knew he would have to relinquish the affairs of state to a younger man. Who should he appoint to take his place.

Through the heyday of his rule he had not allowed anyone to show a potential for leadership. Now he must lay down the cudgel and the bow; but to whom.

Looking the field over for a successor - the most likely person was -- believe it or not--- the descendent, son of the king he had overthrown. And so, after a bloody civil war and after thirty-five years of cruel despotism he had to return the rule of Spain to the Bourbon family.

-0-

"Vanity of vanities," saith the preacher, "All is vanity and a striving after the wind."

W. Kenneth Smith