

Memories of My Dad – Leon S. Richman

By Reta R. Nelson

The earliest memory of Dad was in 1923 or 1924 in Paradise, Utah. He was a hard worker. He had a big garden and a strawberry patch. There was an old barn with a couple of cows and a riding pony. He had a team of horses too. He owned 10 acres of ground and grew sugar beets. He was either in rubber boots or leather boots that laced criss-cross to his knees and pants that circled out at the thighs. He was short, about 5'3", and looked shorter than ever. His hair was a light red. He had a good singing voice and played a banjo and drums, and a mandolin. He played for dances with a small band most Saturday nights in Paradise. Kids went too. Mom said I slept on a bench on the side-lines. Dad also sang at funerals with a quartet.

Dad was quiet spoken and I never heard him say anything bad about anyone. One day the cow got out of the barn. Dad got mom to help him chase it back. I was on the fence. Mom stepped in a fresh cow pie and fell flat. Dad and I died laughing and mom got really mad at both of us.

The night I was born Dad was trying to get the beets out of the ground and there was snow on the ground. (10-14-20)

One summer, dad took care of a dry farm out in Blue Creek (north west of Brigham). We stayed in our old cabin during the summer. We left to go to Paradise and Logan on the weekend. As we were going back we could see Dad's team of horses heading back to Paradise. They had broken loose and were heading home.

In August 1926, dad had gone over to Willard to take Aunt Bess to get Louise. There were 8 of us in the car. We were on top of the old Sardine Canyon road when a woman from California came around a curve in her car and hit us head on. Dad's car was a Star. It was totaled and I was the only one hurt. Aunt Bess, Louise, Floyd, Ray, Vance and Betty (only a little baby), and the three of us were all in the car. A big piece of glass lodged in my eye which took my sight. The doctor was able to save my eye so I wouldn't have to have a glass eye.

The night Lynn was born, there was traffic (people) going through the house. I didn't know what was happening. I had the croupe and Dad had hurt his shoulder lifting a sleigh box on to the runners. (The sleigh was our only transportation during the winter). The doctor had given him a burning salve to rub on his shoulder so Dad rubbed some on me. I screamed like a baby because it burned the skin off my neck and chest. The next morning my croupe was gone and dad brought out my baby brother for me to see! (Big surprise!) They hadn't told me about a baby coming and I didn't know straight up. However, that accounted for all the traffic and I was happy to have a baby brother. Mom had a baby boy two years earlier but he only lived a few hours. I remember mom and dad crying over the baby. Dad was so soft hearted

he would cry over any ones troubles. He had the kindest heart of anyone I ever knew. I think I was in his arms most of his life.

About 1930 Dad bought a truck. We would go up to St. Anthony in Idaho and he would haul potatoes from the farms to the potatoes pit. He would haul wheat to Malad, Idaho. We sold the home in Paradise to Zoe and Josiah Tams (dad's sister), and moved to Idaho. We rented from Mr. and Mrs. Zeimer, a little short fat Dutch couple. We called them Grandpa and Grandma. Lynn and I loved them.

Then the Depression hit and dad lost his truck and had to depend on whatever jobs he could get. He went to work shoeing horses for a sheep owner. Uncle Glaud Housley (Aunt Matt's husband) worked for him for years herding his sheep. Dad only worked a short time when the horse he was shoeing straightened his leg out and it broke dad's leg. It was hard times for us all. I think the man dad was working for paid him some kind of compensation.

Heber, Vernal Norman and Marion Olsen came up a couple of summers and worked in the fields and stayed in our extra bedroom and paid us rent. That was how we got along. We had such fun with them. They would chase me and would scare the devil out of me. It was great having them there. Lynn was tearing through the house in your walker. One time you went whizzing through the room and grabbed the skirt on my favorite baby doll and pulled it off the table and broke the china head to pieces. I bawled and bawled and mom wouldn't let me hit Lynn.

Aunt Matt's son, Louis, and dad were out in the pasture of Lou's farm and Lou stepped behind Dad and bellowed like a bull. Dad scaled the fence like a deer. Dad admitted that was one thing he was really scared to death of. Lou could make a sound just like a bull or a sheep. He laughed so hard over scarring Dad so, and he never let dad forget it.

While we were in St. Anthony at Ziemer's, Lynn played with the cutest little girl named Mary Carrol Green. The two of them rode tricycles up and down the street. They were so cute together. They were about the only two little kids there. We heard that she had died soon after we left St. Anthony.

After dad's leg healed he got a job working at the pump house for St. Anthony Water Department. He hadn't worked for many weeks when he got his little finger on his left hand caught in the cogs of the machinery. His finger was cut off to the first joint. He really suffered with the pain. He would walk the floor at night because he was in so much pain. He said it was worse by far than his leg had been. Dad's good friend, Louis Hamilton, told dad when he heard about his hand, "My word, Leon! Get yourself killed the next time."

While dad was laid up with his hand his Life Insurance came due. He wrote to grandma Richman to see if she would lend the money to him. She wrote back and ~~that~~ that she didn't have the money. I think that really broke dad's heart.

Dad's next job was for a seed company in St. Anthony. They grew peas for the cannery. Men would go out to the fields and rogue peas. I don't know what that was, however they took the men to the fields in trucks.

On the morning of July 14, 1933 Dad went to work and on the way out to the field the driver of the truck tried to pass another truck and rolled the truck. Dad was pinned in the truck and was crushed. One other man drowned in a ditch full of water. Dad lived until later in the afternoon before he died. Mom said he begged to see his kids but the doctors said no! I will never forget what a horrible day that was. We were all devastated. Grandma Richman and Zoe came to St. Anthony the next day crying. (I'm sure it was all the guilt they felt!)

His third time proved to be the last charm for him. Louis Hamilton came to mom and said how terrible he felt. He felt he had been to blame. The driver of the truck was an alcoholic and never should be driving that truck.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of July we had a funeral in St. Anthony in the morning. There were quite a few people there for the few years we had been there. Dad was well liked by everyone that knew him. We then followed the hearse to the edge of town where the American Legion sounded Taps. I will never forget the awful feeling of horror and loneliness we all felt.

The drive to Paradise (200 miles) was so long. There were mostly graveled roads at that time. When we got to Paradise there were so many people and family waiting for us. I remember Edna, our cousin, running up to me and hugging me. So many people came to the house (Grandpa Thomas' house).

The next day was the funeral. The church house was packed. They sang, "I Need Thee Every Hour" and I thought they meant we needed our dad, which we surely did.

At the cemetery they had Military Honors with a 21 gun salute. They folded the flag and sounded Taps and presented the flag to mom.

We lived at Grandpa Thomas' until the next spring. Then mom bought a house in Brigham City.