

Bernard & Louise Knapp
Family History

Memories of
Justin Abraham &
Anna Lemmon Knapp

FROM THE FILES OF BERNARD ELDEN KNAPP

I Remember Grandma

They told me how she lay in a coma for 10 days before she died. Was she reviewing all the things that had happened in her life? Then at last that waiting was over too. Her waiting. She looked lovely. Friends came to the funeral home and said how much they'd miss her. Finally all but her daughters left the room where she lay — her daughters and me. One daughter tied the ribbon under her chin into a bow. It was quiet and the room was musty and heavy with memories. Part of the things she had meant to all 6 of us rushed around in our heads as we secretly said "Goodbye". I couldn't tell what the others thought but I kept thinking she was the first to see me here, she'll be first to see me when I leave and go there. She will be, too, Not with the heaviness of these last few years but young and trim and neat the way I first remember her.

Jennie

Mabel

Annie



Grandma:

Annie Eliza

Warren

Leona

Grandfather:

Justin Abraham

Elsie

Justin Willis

If Heaven's style permits she'll have a neat waist apron on with a little pocket for a handkerchief and a small fold-away pair of scissors. Her hair might be the way it used to be. Parted in the middle but combed directly back above each ear and in a knot at the back. Maybe it will have a krinkly curl at each side of the part because every day will be festive then.

She will have pretty shoes then too, not the long laced boot[s] — like ones she used to wear.

Maybe she will guide me through one of the gardens off the golden street the way she used to back in the old orchard at her home out behind the house where their rose bushes grew, where the iris grew, (Grandma called them purple flags), and the ribbon grass. There was a big tree of lilacs, too. But they had to be carefully saved for Memorial Day when I looked at them with her.

She used to wonder if anyone would remember the graves after she was gone. But with all the roses in Heaven for her to look at maybe she won't mind that sometimes we forget. Half her family already was marked on the homey gravestones in the cemetery. A lot of markers had been made by Grandpa.

Then I started thinking of the headstones, with the little sunken areas where the roses he had chiseled stood in relief. And of the bellows behind the house where he worked. And pictures of birds he had sketched in a big old book. Beautiful birds he had made with elaborate winds and flowing tails like penmanship.

Grandpa laughed a lot and was lots of fun to be around. As some memories come others rush in also and I find myself seeming to see a long procession of past events.

At Home

Breakfast was a ritual.

Often, everyone was there. Before it was eaten every one had to be seated. Thanks was given. A bowl of cooked cereal sat in a plate with good rich milk and sugar on the table. Everyone had a fork and knife but all the spoons were sticking up in a spoon dish. When the cereal was eaten a large platter of eggs and bacon or eggs and sausage was put on the table with a plate of toast. When I first remember, there was a cup of tea at Grandma's

place but once she went up to Rexburg, [Idaho] to Quarterly Conference and heard Apostle Ballard talk, and then there was no more tea.

Already her home would be a relic. It was built of logs with all four rooms in a row with a "shanty" at one end. The roof was sod and stems stood up there forlornly wiggling in the breeze. Inside it was lined with "factory" (a cheap grade of muslin) and white-washed. Blue and white lineoleum squares were on the floor. A coal range stood against one wall between the big wood box and huge flour bin. Behind the stove hung a shelf with a 40 year-old clock that had a tower on each side. One knob from one tower had broken off when Grandpa tried to dislodge his gun one morning. The Clock Chimed and was very musical. If at anytime in the night you, couldn't sleep you could hear your time ticking away. And at night in the winter after the pop-corn or honey-candy was eaten and the coal oil light was "put out" you could see a little red eye of fire through a little hole in the stove. It probably made a necessary air currant but it also looked very cheery in the dark. And the wood crackled and snapped making you feel protected and warm.

On the shelf with the clock sat some glass tumblers with embossed colored polka dots and miscellaneous glassware that had been gifts. Several red glass cream pitchers were there sent to her by Annie Miles who owned a Mercantile store in Smithfield; Utah. They had been girl friends and had grown up together.

Calendar pictures were all around the room. Japanese Calendars with lovely frosted pictures painted on tiny slats of bamboo were on the wall.

Children

In her bedroom wall hung the pictures of the children who had died. Aunt Annie who

was a young bride with only a year-old son when she died. Leona who was almost 8, and who had one desire — to be baptized before she died — but the Doctor told her she would not. Baby Adrian was in an oval picture. He was dressed very properly in a dress, although he was three years old. He had asked to have the picture taken and had walked 2½ miles to Rexburg with Grandma to have it done. It was not long after that a Billy goat attacked him and injured him. He died soon afterward. His twin had died at birth — leaving no picture. There was no doctor and after the birth of the first twin the contractions stopped and he was in the birth canal too long. A baby sister also died.

Then there was the picture of Warren.

Warren had been the second son in the family. He had been a very happy boy and much loved in the big family of girls. But when he was nine he became ill with typhoid fever and was very sick. His older brother was stricken at the same time. For weeks the mother was not only cook, washerwoman, ironing woman housekeeper and all the normal things but a very scared and devoted nurse. It saved the life of the older one who was in bed 13 weeks and 3 daughters. The younger son, Warren, kept going to school. Then he, too, took the illness and in 6 weeks, he died.

One night she stood at the foot of his bed as he asked her if she could hear the music. He said he could hear people singing and music playing, then before morning the call was too great.

She used to tell me that the children had small home programs. Some would recite some would sing but Warren like to be Master of Ceremonies.

When Dad's [Justin Willis] fever was 106 they brought in a tub of water, put ice in it and wrung cloths from it to bring the fever down. Then Grandma would wring her hands from the pain of the cold.

An older daughter, Jennie did not get the disease so she helped, too.

Not many visitors came — as the neighbors were afraid. When Dad was well enough Grandma and Aunt Jennie on each side helped him to learn to walk again.

Work

Until Grandma was in her sixties she washed her clothes in a tub on a wash board. The water was carried in buckets from a pump in the yard and poured into a big oval container called a boiler which sat on the kitchen range and heated. Then lye was added and it was poured into a tub. The clothes were then scrubbed across the board downward into the water, spread on the board, rubbed with cakes of homemade soap and turned over to the soapy side and scrubbed some more. Then the white clothes were put into the boiler and boiled a few minutes to bleach them, dipped out, rinsed and hung on a clothes-line in the yard. For many generations before her, this had been the way American women had washed their clothes, but her daughters had washing machines in their life-times — propelled by hand, then by electricity, and finally they do their washings in Automatic washers and dryers that do the clothes so well and automatically that they only need to be handled at the damp dry stage and when they are completely dry. All of this came about in the next 40 years.

Marriage

Grandma told me how she met Grandpa. She said she went to Logan to Conference and saw a man up in the balcony watching her. They watched each other on and off through the meeting and then as she walked out at its close she came face to face with him. She thought he was very handsome but he was

crippled. When he was a small child — 4 or 5 — he had been stricken with a fever. When he was well the cords on one side were drawn up and twisted his foot which was turned and twisted. He walked on his instep with the use of a cane. He had to have a special shoe made. Not long after Grandma met him he was called on a work mission or a real one. He chose the work mission and for 3 years was a stone mason on the Logan Temple. He cut the cap stones you see from the front.

Once when Grandma was still unmarried, but grown, a gypsy came to the door and wanted to tell her fortune. She told her she didn't have any money. Then the fortune-teller said "You have some coral beads you could give me those." When Grandma refused she became angry and said, "You can't have them either then, I'll curse them." Very soon afterward the string broke, and they were threaded again, and few by few they were lost.

While Grandpa was on his mission at the Logan Temple, Grandma sometimes visited him. They walked around the wall of the temple at different stages of its height. If they could have looked into the future they could have seen several Grandchildren coming there to be married. And three of their children came back and were married there.

Grandma first was in love with a tall, dark man with very rosy cheeks who had quite a lot of money. Her father liked him very much. His name was Johnny Gibbs. He was called on a mission in the South but an angry mob killed him.

Her father seemed to think he would have been a better husband than grandfather.

She and Grandpa were married at the Endowment House.

Grandpa

Grandpa liked music very much. He played the Base horn in the Richmond Band. Once he

made a violin by carving the wood. He played it for years. he used to play for dances. He also played an accordion. And Grandma sang. People asked her to sing at church and socials. She belonged to the local Choirs, too. And taught her children to sing and to recite. She told me that Grandpa had been a Marshall once. Once when a man held up a train going from Logan to Richmond Grandpa had the responsibility of catching him. The man left the train at Richmond and went down on Bear River. Grandpa deputized a man by the name of Richmond and they left to go get him. They were very careful because they knew he was dangerous.