

Chapter Three – Green Years

The Green Years of Wonderment and Awe, through every changing eyes, I saw The wonders of nature, as the ways of man were brought about through the Master's Plan.

The following year was a hard one for all of us, especially dad, not knowing what was best to do for his own well-being and for that of the family. The responsibility fell to me to keep the house in good order. I did nearly all the housework and helped with cooking and washing the dishes. We were often invited out to meals in various homes throughout the neighborhood. These opportunities provided the love and support we sorely needed as well as good nourishing food.



Francis Madsen on her father's ranch in Manti

I feel sure that the answer to dad's problems came in finding another good wife and a stepmother for his children. "Get ready children, I have someone I wish you to meet tonight. She is to be your new mother." This came as a great shock to us because we were unaware that our father had any matrimonial intentions. Francis Madsen, the lady of his choice, was living with two companions in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vern Johnson in Provo. We were dressed in our Sunday best and were taken to her home to be properly introduced. We were told that the marriage was to take place soon. Dad and Francis were married March 12, 1924 in the Manti Temple.

The period of adjustment came hard for us kids and I am sure it was hard for our new mother. We never felt we could call her "mother" and so adopted the title "Aunt Francis." The following summer father bought Harold and I an old Model T for bug. This was a car with the chassis of an old Model T with a

homemade body over it which looked like a bug. It was only a one seat affair. But we had a lot of fun chasing around in it. The following April Harold and his friend Wes Jorgensen took off for Washington and Oregon in the bug. They must have run into some kind of trouble in Oregon for they disposed of the car and went on into Nevada where they found employment in the mines for a couple of years.

One summer Clyde Olsen, Glen Olsen, Clyde Sumsion, Weldon Taylor, Morris Clinger and I decided to take a week-long trip to Provo Canyon. We took Old Bess, one of Dad's horses and one of the Taylor's horses to make a team and made our way up to South Fork. The first night we stayed just below Conrad's ranch. A bunch of horses got loose there during the night and got into the hay we had brought along. They ate nearly all of it. The next morning, we were up early so we could hike to the top of Big Face Mountain. We hiked up Bunnell's Fork clear to the top of the mountain where we could look and see the entire valley. About 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, we decided we would return down the fork that leads to the head waters of Bridal Veil Falls.

We found this to be an exceedingly steep hike and a long way down to the canyon floor. We climbed down to the big spring which feeds all the water for the falls just about a half block above where the falls actually begin to cascade over the rocks. The hike from there down was over high cliffs and we had great difficulty as we made our descent. In one particular place, we all had to take off our belts and tied them together into a long strap. This we used in letting each other down, one at a time, over the cliff. We were lucky to get to the Canyon floor just before dark. By the time we reached the bottom, there were many cars parked up and down the canyon road. People had been watching us and were anxiously wondering if we could ever make it to the bottom without accident or injury.

After getting back on solid ground, we went on down the Canyon to where the Old Mutual Home used to be. This was just across the road north of Spring Dell. There was a swimming pool there, so we dared one another to jump into the pool with all our clothes on. Later we walked through the gathering darkness up Provo Canyon to Vivian Park, and on up to our camp in South Fork. I think it was nearly midnight before we arrived at camp. I have never been more tired in my life than I was when I fell into bed that night. We were up early the next morning. We stole some hay from the Giles Ranch to feed our hungry horses. We first attempted to buy some hay, but our offer was refused. Later we learned that it was their cattle that had gotten out of the pasture and eaten the hay we had brought for our animals, so we felt justified in taking what we needed to finish our trip.

We drove the horses and wagon down South Fork on the third day. From there we went up Provo Canyon to North Fork and on up North Fork to Aspen Grove where we camped for the night. This was another long day and sleep came quickly that night. The next morning, we rose early and climbed to the top of Mt. Timpanogos. On the fifth day we went around the head of American Fork Canyon and on down to Timpanogos Cave. We camped the fourth night and at the bottom of the trail, and early the next morning, we climbed the trail that switches back and forth up to Timpanogos Cave. We explored the cave, hiked back down to our camp and got home late that afternoon.

This five-day trip up through Provo Canyon was much too hard on Dad's old horse Bess. She was never any good after that and seemed to have something wrong with her breathing. But it was a wonderful trip for a group of boys in their early teens. These experiences cemented our friendships. These boys were the friends I attend church with. We all went to dances, sporting events and school activities together throughout high school. It was these guys that saw me through the Green Years.

The Lost Watch

It was a beautiful moonlit night, and I was just returning home about 1: A.M. in the morning. We had been dancing at the old Geneva Resort. I felt it was just too wonderful and beautiful of a night to go to bed. I decided to hook up the team and begin cutting the second crop hay. It was at the blooming stage and just ready for the knife.

I changed into my work clothes and went to the barn. I harnessed up the team and hitched them to the mowing machine and began cutting an eight-acre piece of land that lay between the house and the barn. There was a full moon that night and I can never remember it shining brighter. How I loved the smell of new mown hay and the feel of the fresh canyon breeze upon my young arms and face. The night seemed to give the horses more zest as well. They also enjoyed this beautiful night-time work in preference to the heat of a midsummer day sun. Around and around we went. Every round brought us nearer the center and the fishing of the hay field.

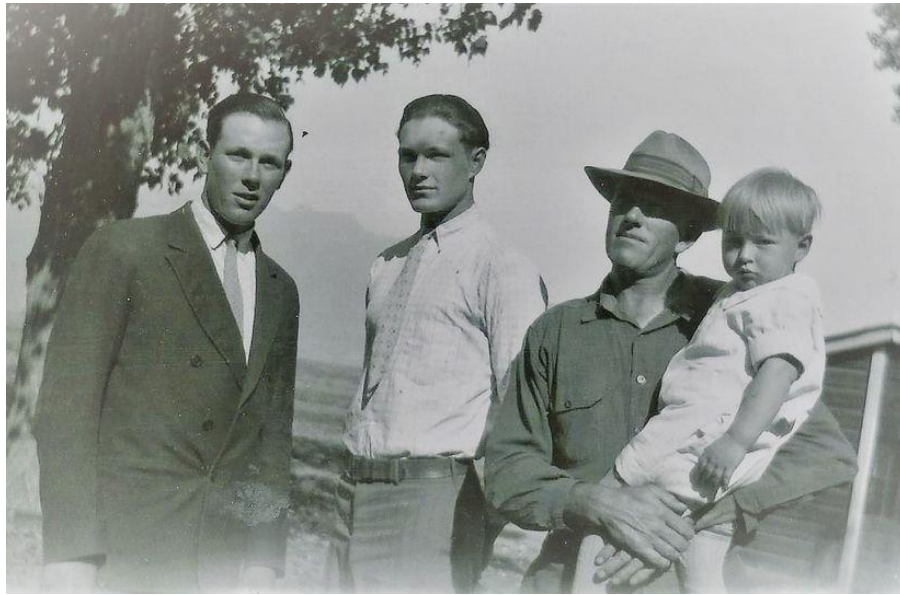
It was about 7:00 A.M. when I finished the field, unhitched the team, gave the horses feed and water and returned to the house for a hearty breakfast with the rest of the family. I decided to lie down for a couple of hours before continuing the mowing on another field of hay down by the Lake. As I began taking off my overall, I discovered to my sorrow that I had lost my watch. I had just purchased it a couple of months earlier. I treasured this watch very highly. It was bought with the first money I had ever earned. I saved a few dollars at a time over the space of many months until I had enough to buy the watch. I just couldn't go to bed. I had only one desire. I had to find my lost watch.

I put on my shoes and returned to the hay field. I searched and searched. I got down on my hands and knees and crawled for rods and rods in the likely places where I thought I may have lost the watch. But it was all to no avail. I just could not find it. After about an hour of fruitless searching, I decided it was no use looking further. I was just too tired. So, I went back to the house expecting to search again after I got some sleep. I remember going up stairs to my bedroom, the one on the south side, with tears in my eyes. I was sad indeed as I had not been able to find my watch. There I knelt and prayed: "Dear Heavenly Father, please! Oh, Please! Help me find my watch! You know how hard I worked and how long I saved to get enough money to buy my watch. I want to find it more than anything else in this world. I believe if you help, I can find it."

I prayed for a very long time and afterwards I felt much better. I rose to my feet and went down the stairs. I went to the field to continue searching in likely places. Places where the knife had clogged, and I had gotten off the mower to clean bunches of tough sod from the hay knife. I crawled up and down the corners of the field with my ear to the ground trying to hear a ticking sound that might come from my watch. Finally, after about ten or fifteen minutes of searching in this manner, I found my watch. It was in the middle of the field. I had lost it while cleaning the knife when it clogged while cutting the last swathe of hay which is nearly always left standing in the middle of the field. "Thank you, God! Oh, Thank You!" I exclaimed as I picked up the watch and examined it to see if it were broken. My watch was still in perfect condition.

This experience of my youth made a huge impress on me. It provided increased faith in the power of prayer. I came to know that with God., anything is possible. I came to recognize that if I did my part, my prayers would be answered.

About a year and a half after Dad and Aunt Francis were married another son was born to the family on August 15, 1925. He was named Edward Dale Johnson in honor of Edward Hatton, Dad's sister's husband, whom we all knew as "Uncle Ted."



Harold, Dean with Alfred holding two-year-old Ted

This event happened while I was on another camping trip up the canyon with some of the boys from this end of the ward. We were camped just above the old Wallsburg bridge and while we were here Morris Clinger got shot through the foot with a 22 rifle and one of us swam across Provo River to call his folks and they came up after him. When we returned, we were glad to discover that Morris' foot was not seriously injured, and I was made happy with the news that we had a new baby brother.

In the fall of 1926, I began my freshman year at Lincoln High School in Orem. I now became interested in the opposite sex and began going out to dances and parties. My best gal was a dark complected girl named Norma Sumsion who lived in our neighborhood. She was lively and full of fun and we had good times together.

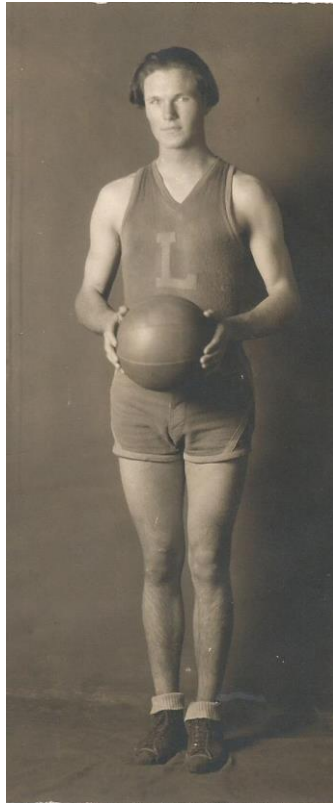
My favorite subjects in school were animal husbandry, mechanical drawing and shop. I was large for my age and gymnastic sports became important to me. I became extremely interested in basketball in my sophomore year and for three years was a regular member of the basketball squad. The "Green One" had reached a height of six feet two inches and weighed about 180 pounds. I was placed in the position of center on the basket ball team. My senior year I became captain of the team and was cited for being high point man in Alpine School District during the first half of the basketball season. I received a great deal of satisfaction in traveling from school to school with the coach and basketball team.

During my Sophomore year at high school in the spring of 1927, I was operated on for a hernia on my right side at the old Aird Hospital which affliction I had carried for about ten years. Father not having the necessary cash, had to borrow the money from Uncle Ted Hatton for the operation.

About this time, I became interested in a couple of blond girls, the first being Jessie Farley from Orem and a friend of her, Velma Nelson, who lived near the school. I met Jessie before I entered high school

at an Eighth Grade Dance at the High School where we were introduced by Florence Burningham, one of the Lake View girls. We went out together on dates a few times.

Our first date was on Easter Sunday at Saratoga. Morris Clinger and I had planned to take our dates over in his father's car. In the meantime, Harold sent me into Provo with his girlfriend and I should have had plenty of time to get back in time to pick up my date. But luck was not with me for just as we got to Provo Floral on 1st South and 2nd West, the motor died and try as I would I couldn't get the darn thing started. Finally, I took off running, all the way home. A distance of about five miles. This was the longest distance run I ever made without stopping. I made it in time and was ready to leave with Morris, and I spent a nice day at Saratoga with my girlfriend, Jessie.



Captain of the team



First Date with Jessie Farley at Saratogo

I was a good student at Lincoln High School and very active in many different fields. I won a part in the school play and was also chosen to be a member of the debate team in my junior year, which would also have been effective in my senior year. Due to my position on the basketball team, I was encouraged by my teachers to devote my energy to that activity, so I did not go on in dramatics and debating. I was Vice-President of my Freshman class and I became President in my Senior year. I had the honor of giving the welcoming address at our graduation exercises in the spring.

During the spring of my Sophomore year, I went on a blind date with Velma Nelson, the date being arranged by Kenneth Olsen. She was a tall blond gal, athletically inclined and interested in outdoor sports. We had a great deal in common. She liked to do all the things I did, such as skating, swimming, hiking, horseback riding and dancing. Our interests became stronger for each other, and we went together steady for about two years. In the spring of 1929, we became engaged as life took on a rosy

glow, with the Nelson home being the center of my interests. I learned to have a great deal of love and respect for Velma's mother, Daisy Nelson. She was always fixing me good things to eat, and doing little things for me.

During the summer of 1929 Velma went to work in the Southern Canyons to obtain money in anticipation of a mission in the fall. I also, after graduating from Seminary and High school, laid plans with the desire of being called to the Mission field.

During the fall, sometime in September while working on a country road project with our Bishop, Spencer Madsen, I approached him with the query, "How are you fixed for missionaries this fall?" He replied, "we will see what we can work out." In the meantime, he must have had a conversation with dad, and it was agreed that I would go on a mission "after the work was all done that fall."