



Blanche Naomi Ellgen

The Story of Blanche Naomi Ellgen Chadwick Martens

December 6, 2007

Name: Blanche Naomi (pronounced Naom-a by her mother's preference) Ellgen Chadwick Martens

Birth date: March 14, 1919

Birthplace: Round Bottom Ranch on the Yampa River, Moffat County, Colorado. Delivery was attended by Dr. Day, the only doctor in Craig. He also delivered all the Ellgens and Chadwicks. Aunt Mabel Culverwell came for two weeks and helped. She and mother were like sisters.

The Culverwells lived about 6 miles away and I would get on my horse and ride over. If I didn't come home, my folks knew I was staying the night – I was maybe 7 or 8 years old.

The horse was named Patsy – Daddy bought her from a neighbor and she was such a good horse – she was the one I did trick riding on. We'd go to all the fairs in Rifle, Craig, and Steamboat. I learned to trick ride with my cousins, Glendon and Frank, and the five Seebaum boys. They always took care of me.

Married: November 2, 1941

Robert Raymond Chadwick, at Round Bottom Ranch by Joseph F. Smith, Branch President of the Craig Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Four children: Raymond Dale Chadwick, November 22, 1942; Robert Gale Chadwick, May 18, 1945;

Naomi Kay Chadwick, April 26, 1954; Richard Kent Chadwick, October 3, 1956. Eighteen grandchildren, forty-two great-grandchildren.



Married: January 5, 1987

Herbert William Martens at the Denver Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Herb's birthday was August 28, 1915. He had 3 boys and one girl, 6 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.

My Name: Daddy's first girlfriend's name was Blanche and he really liked it, and Mama named my middle name after Naomi in the Bible. I think I've got the prettiest name in the whole world.

Jar of Rattlesnake Rattles

When I was 6 years old, Daddy cut off a hoe and taught me how to kill a rattlesnake with it. I always went up north of the house to get the cows to milk. The first time I came back and said I had killed three snakes, Daddy said, "Where's the rattles? You are supposed to cut them off and bring them home." Mama put a 2-quart jar in the kitchen window and I would put the rattles in it. By fall it was full, plus a few more. Once I saw a snake under the clothesline when I went to hang clothes, but I went and got Mama and she killed it.

December 18, 2007

Father: Herman Ellgen, III – didn't have a middle name. He was born in Bolan, Iowa, on a farm. He had 2 sisters and four brothers. His oldest sister, his mother's first child, died in childbirth. His youngest sister died at seven years of age from typhoid fever.

First he worked in a shoe shop but was called home to care for his mother. Then he went to work for the railroad, which at that time only went as far as Steamboat Springs.

In 1909, he filed up on the homestead along the Yampa River and since he had to live on the homestead, he quit the railroad. He was married to Minnie at the time, but she didn't want to stay there so she left.

Mother: Elizabeth Ann Culverwell. After her mother had passed away in California, she went to visit Uncle Albert and Aunt Mabel. She stayed with them to take care of the children.



Elizabeth with brother and sister-in-law

Mother went to a school board meeting and that's where she met Daddy. There was a dance afterwards and he asked Mama to dance. The story goes that he went home and milked the cows and came back to get my mother. They danced all night because the horses couldn't see the trail in the dark so they couldn't go home.

They got married in the parsonage in Craig on May 1, 1918.



Lorence, Blanche, and Phillip Ellgen

After they were married, she homesteaded a 160 acres. Uncle Albert built a cabin on it and she went over at least once a week, with me, until she could prove up on it. After she proved up on it, she sold it to Uncle Albert.

When I was four, we made a trip to Iowa, the three of us. My mother had the cancer from her breast removed. I stayed with Daddy at Grandma and Grandpa's in Bolan. Then Daddy went to The Mayo Clinic and had his stomach operated on, and Mother and I stayed with my grandparents until we were able to come back home.

We came home in the spring. Joanna Ballack took care of the cattle and the ranch while we were gone.

The thing I remember most about my grandmother was that she would put me on the counter to watch her stir up a cake or cook a meal. Herb and I looked up the place. The window and cabinet I remembered were still there.

In the month and a half I was there, I stayed a lot with Aunt Bertha and Uncle Clifford and my two cousins, Louis and Clifford. Aunt Bertha worried that my cousins never played with a girl and she was afraid they would hurt me. They were very protective of me.

Back at the Ranch:

We lived off the ranch. We always had one or two cows that were milking. Mother had a huge, huge garden. We used to go to Grand Junction for a load of peaches. In the fall my mother had over 1000 quarts of food in the basement. My parents were slaves to that ranch. They loved every day of it and we children have appreciated the beautiful parents we had as we have become adults.

We always got old hand-me-downs from Elda and Minnie that our mother made over for us. I was so proud of what my mother made for me – I always thought I was the best-dressed girl in the county. I would look in the Montgomery Ward or Sears catalog and find a dress that I liked and my mother could make it just like that without a pattern or anything.

I went to Round bottom to the first grade when I was six.. I rode Patsy. Daddy and the neighbors built a shed and the older boys fed and watered the horses at noon. After the eighth grade, the school board hired a teacher to teach me high school. I finished my last year of high school in Grand Junction.

While I was in Grand Junction, I was also able to attend church. How I loved being part of the young women's program. Brother and Sister Gardner were so very kind to me that year. After I graduated, I missed them as well as an elderly lady and her daughter that the folks had arranged for me to stay with. It was a great year -- my first year away from home.

Daddy always spent the winter repairing the harnesses and anything around the house and barn that needed it.

We used to go to Craig every six weeks in the winter to get the mail. Mama would heat rocks in the oven and wrap them in horse blankets to keep us warm. I would go with Daddy – I was my Dad's girl until my brothers got old enough to help. Then Daddy thought I should help Mother in the house and learn some domestic things, but we still did the chores during haying and harvesting.

Out of the thirteen grandchildren my paternal grandparents had, I was the only girl. I always said that's why I was so spoiled. Of course, Phillip agreed with me.

I don't remember too much when the boys were born. Lorence is five years and Phillip is six years younger. I do remember that Daddy always helped dress them if we were going anywhere.

I remember when Joseph Dale was born. They wrapped him up in cotton and put him in the oven to keep him warm. He was just too premature to live. The next morning Daddy got the car started - we had a hard time cranking it - and we went into town. Dad got the best piece of pine and made him a little casket. I went up the hill with Daddy and we dug the hole. I was with Daddy on every bit of it. I wanted to stay with Mother, but I remember Aunt Mabel thought it was wise for me to go over to Elda and Minnie and stay a few days while Mama recuperated.

I tried for years to get my brothers to put a fence around Joseph's grave. My nephew, Gary, promised me he would see that there was a fence. In **1902**, Lorence's family had a reunion. Lorence's, Phillip's, and my family were all there to put the most beautiful fence around Joseph's little grave. Then Phillip decorated the grave. The cedar tree and some of the rocks Daddy had piled around were still there.



Joseph Dale Grave

Dandelion Wine

Every spring the fields were yellow with dandelions. We'd take the wagon and gather a lot. Daddy would clean them good and ferment them in the old-time crocks. Then he would put the wine in jars to keep it. He kept it on the shelves in the barn for the little calves that were born in below zero weather. He and Uncle Albert kept it for their veterinary medicine.

December 23, 2007

Day in and day out we did the same thing – worked and played. We rode toboggans a lot.

I think I was about 18 months old when a movie came to Craig. My mother thinks it scared me when we went in because it was so dark that I screamed until they gave up and took me home. My mother says that is the last time my father ever took me to a movie. I don't really like movies to this day, unless it is a musical.

Christmas at Home

We always went up on the hills above the ranch and got a cedar tree for a Christmas tree. We made our own decorations – paper chains, strung popcorn and cranberries. Through the years we gathered more decorations. We had glass dolls on the Christmas tree. Mama had quite a few from when she was a girl.

My mother and Aunt Mabel always cooked a big dinner and we were together. For Christmas we usually had a beef roast – sometimes we had lamb. We always had mincemeat pies – that was a tradition. Mother always made the mincemeat from the neck of the deer because the flavor of the meat was better.

Christmas was a time we were always together. We played games and if we were at Albert's, we would stay the night, or if they were at our house, they would stay. When all the cousins got older, we would go into the dance at the armory on Christmas night.

Daddy played the coronet, mother chorded the piano, and Aunt Mabel played the mouth harp and the piano. They played wonderful dance music.

We always got books – different kinds of books – crayons, paints, Big Chief pads, and pencils. My mother always made me a new dress. Daddy always made toys for the boys. We got games. Daddy and I played checkers so much in the wintertime. I still love to play checkers.

Church

My mother taught us – we sang songs and read scriptures. The first branch of the LDS church was formed in 1943. It met in the First National Bank basement. We started out with eight or nine members. Most of those were people who came from Utah with the sheep, and in the winter they would go back to Utah and we wouldn't hold church. Chadwicks were members and our mothers were very close friends and we grew up together. The Chadwicks lived thirty-five miles away so they didn't come. Grandma Chadwick would come if she

could, but Henry wouldn't come. Mother always gave all the clothes we children outgrew to them.



Craig Chapel

I was First Counselor to the Primary President when I was twenty-two. The president was Lawanna Watson. We went to Rangely every other month for Stake meetings. I put Dale and Gale in boxes and they slept and were then very good little boys for our meeting.

I was a visiting teacher and then after Bob and I moved into Craig, I was Primary President.

Grandma Chadwick had to come into Craig and stay because she wasn't doing too well and I went out and stayed with the younger Chadwick children – Rex, Ina and Herbie. After Grandma Chadwick got better, Bob used to come to Craig and we would go to dances. We would have been married sixty-five years this year, if he hadn't left home.

Getting Married:

We were going to the dance at Woodbury Dairy, there on the highway. He had already bought the ring and he gave it to me that night. He was younger than I was and I should have known better. I must have been asleep or something – anyway, that's water under the bridge. I was twenty-two and he was nineteen. We got married on November 2, 1941 at the farmhouse. Joseph Livingston, the Branch President, married us. All the Culverwells and Chadwicks and family were there. My mother and my aunt cooked a lovely dinner for us.

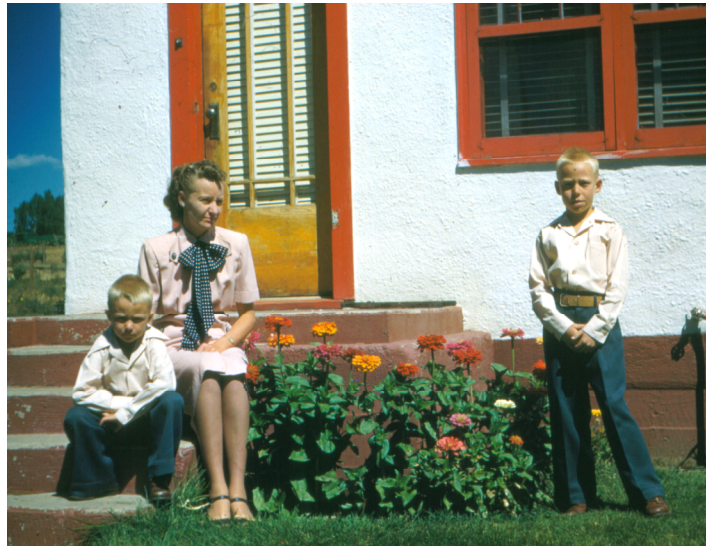
We didn't go on a honeymoon – he had no money. I can see Daddy at the library table. He said "Here is your wedding gift - \$100.00.

Bob worked at the Colorado Wyoming coal mine down by Hamilton.

We lived in a trailer in City Park at Craig, until we bought our home. Lloyd Shreard built us the trailer house and it was very nice.

Our first house was at 619 Colorado Street. The house was built by the Hulls. They wanted to leave Craig, so they gave it to us at a good price. It had one bedroom and Bob, Daddy and the Elders made a second bedroom in the basement. We lived there until we moved to Fort

Collins in 1949. It still stands. It was nice. The Elders came up from Grand Junction and would stay in our basement bedroom.



House in Craig: Gale, Blanche, and Dale

Bob told Dale he was going to have a baby sister – you know you couldn't tell in those days. When Gale was born and I was just barely home from the hospital, Dale would be playing outside and would come running in, throw the blankets off the baby, saying, "Sister! Sister! Sister!"

Clara and Henry Chadwick (Grandma and Grandpa Chadwick) lived out east of town and had to haul water. They would come every day and get two barrels of water, so we saw them every day. I loved Grandma Chadwick and she loved me. We always discussed the Church. She came from Twin Falls, Idaho. Her family was very active in the Church.

Christmas Joke

Our first Christmas after we were married, Harry Menninger – he was so sweet – brought this huge box filled with all kinds of paper. Down in the bottom was a Negro baby doll all dressed up – just to have a joke. We all loved Harry.

Summer 2008

Our Mission

In 1994, Herb and I were called to serve a mission in Northern Kentucky. We were excited, of course. Since we were both past seventy years of age, we needed to get permission to go. We both were in real good health, so we were able to go, and we requested service in the States. We had the most special time of our married years serving the Lord. We always had church jobs together until Herb became ill.

After our mission and before we came home, we went to Clear Lake, Iowa, to see Clifford and Fern Ellgen. Clifford and I are cousins.

What a great visit. We went to see Grandma's and Grandpa's graves and Emma's at the cemetery in Bolan, Iowa. We went to Carpenter, Iowa, to the house where Daddy's parents lived. When I was four, we visited them for a month. It was the only time I was with grandparents. I was surprised how I remembered the kitchen where I sat on the cabinet by Grandma when she made a cake, and the living room where Grandpa sat and sang to me.

After we were released from our mission, we went back to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Herb's home to get it ready for sale. We both felt we wanted to spend the rest of our life in Colorado.

While in Iowa, we had a Martens' reunion in Dodsville, Wisconsin. Herb's oldest sister Grace and her husband Bill and their seven children and families were there. I had never met their children and it was very special for me. All were so kind and good to me.

We took Herb's sister Wilma from Cedar Rapids with us, and Norman and Valerian from Davenport, Iowa came up. That was the last time Herb saw all his family.

Fall 2008

College Years – going to California to live with Uncle Ernie and Aunt Wanda

Uncle Ernie and Aunt Wanda came to visit Uncle Richard and Aunt Ethel and my family. I was ready to go to Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Colorado State University) and study dietary courses. Uncle Ernie insisted I go to the city to study (he wanted to find me a husband in California), so I did. I went to UCLA Woodbury College that had the dietary program. I loved all my classes.

I didn't really like the city, but many of Mother's cousins lived in the Bakersfield area and worked in the oilfields. Uncle Ernie made sure I got acquainted with them.

My cousin Lois was four years younger than me and we became like sisters in a very short time.

My life was great. I loved the ocean, the redwoods, the new airport, and Catalina Island. We went camping a lot.

Uncle Ernie was Commander of his Post at that time. Aunt Wanda served a dinner once a month for him. I always helped her cook and was her waitress for the meals. He was in charge of Light and Power of Los Angeles.

Aunt Wanda built houses. When one was done, we moved in until it was sold and then she would start another. She also did beautiful china painting.

Daddy would send Uncle Ernie checks for me, but he wouldn't accept them. He and Aunt Wanda thought my being with them was very good pay. I tried to help them with whatever

needed done. Uncle Ernie also remarked how I looked and did things like his mother. I wish I had known her.

I missed the ranch, my pony, etc., lots. I came home every summer to help the folks. Mother and I canned, made quilts and all the fun things Mother and I enjoyed.

I finished my four years with plans of going back in the fall to do my internship, but when I came home, Bob asked me to marry him. I had gone out with a couple of LDS boys in Los Angeles, but they were like me, there to get an education.

Anyway, Bob and I were married on November 2, 1941. Daddy wanted me to look into going to St Luke's Hospital in Denver to take my internship, but by then I was expecting our oldest son, Dale. I was so excited—I had always wanted to be a mother.

My Mission

I always wanted to be a missionary for the church and do temple work, as well I was able to accomplish that with my beautiful husband, Herb.

Herb and I had served in the mission field for one year, when I started having foot trouble. Our mission president really wanted us to stay, but thought I should go home and have surgery on the ligaments of my left foot. At home we took care of baptisms for almost two years. Then we served as temple workers for two years, when we realized Herb was getting Alzheimer's and wasn't able to do the work. We were released and I cared for him until it was time to get nursing home care.

Mission Story

While we were on our mission, a General Authority came. I don't remember his name, but we were all relaxed when President Nielson, our mission president, called me to the stand to speak. I was scared to death. I had never had to rely on the Spirit like I did then.

I don't remember what I said. Herb told me what a great job I did. Then President Nielson said they should have had me talk more and thanked me for a great job.

Spring 2009

My Dancing Years

Daddy started me out by putting me on his shoulders while he danced with Mother. Then I grew to where I could stand on Daddy's feet and dance. Daddy could waltz and dance like no one else. When I got taller, I danced and danced – I can't remember the time when I wasn't dancing.

When I was 14 or so, Glendon and Frank would call and say, "Uncle Herman, can we come and get Blanche tonight?" All the Culverwells were dancers. Lloyd and Harry

always liked to dance with me. Mother was always so grateful for Glendon and Frank, since I didn't have an older brother.

I have been lucky to have really good dancers all my life. The last time I danced with Daddy was after he moved to Truth or Consequences and had taken those hot baths and got over his arthritis. He danced every night. The last time I danced with Daddy it was great.

Herb and I went to all the senior centers in the area and danced four or five times a week. I belonged to two square dance clubs here in Ft. Collins. I have even danced since I broke my leg – I wasn't supposed to walk again.

Famous People I Have Met

Bing Crosby

He lived four doors from my uncle and aunt in North Hollywood. He was a very fun person and good looking. I have always loved his singing; especially "White Christmas".

President David O. McKay

He was President of the Church when Dale left for his mission in Finland.

I went to Salt Lake City with Dale when he received his call. After attending General Conference, we were directed to the back door of the Tabernacle. The General Authorities and President McKay were all lined up to greet us. President McKay said to Dale, "You have a good mission." I don't know how he knew except he just knew. Then President McKay shook my hand and said, "Thanks for being a mother in Israel."

Elder John A. Widstoe

Elder John A. Widstoe came to Glenwood Springs to dedicate the chapel. I don't remember the year, but both our boys were small. We decided we could go. The spirit was so great. People had come from all over Colorado to see him and enjoy his presence.

President Joseph F. Smith

He was President of the Church when I was going to school in California. He came twice to greet the students in the Deseret Club. He used to inspire and bless us so much. I have no idea what happened to my notes when my house was cleaned out.

President Ezra Taft Benson

President Benson came to the Fort Collins Ward when we were in our little chapel on Peterson Street. Sterling Olsen was our bishop. We were just getting ready for our sacrament meeting (then we met in the afternoon), when President Benson and his son came into the meeting. That was the most special meeting; he blessed our ward and all of us. We talked about that meeting for a long, long time.

President Harold B Lee

President Lee was in the First Presidency when Dale was getting ready to leave for Finland on his mission. We attended General Conference. The next day we met President Lee in his church office and he set Dale apart for his mission (missionaries were set apart at the President's office in those days). I will never forget President Lee telling Dale never to carry on a political conversation while he was in Finland. I have never heard a greater blessing than President Lee gave Dale.

Living in Carr, Colorado

I loved living in Carr. The whole community welcomed us and it was really great.

Watsons were so good to us. They tried to make us comfortable by adding a room on the house, and fixing it up and making it nice. They loved Dale and Gale and were always bringing them things. They were kind and good to me.

The Watsons worried that I worked too hard especially carrying irrigation pipe, but I really wanted to make a success of the ranch. I could see a real future in it. When my father and Grandpa Chadwick would come up, Grandpa Chadwick worked very hard to help us. In spite of their advice, our management was very poor. We had gotten 40 head of cattle and they were calving. All the heifers were too fat and the calf crop all died. I cried over losing all the calves.



Windy Acres Ranch: Gale and Bob

I worked all week to have fresh cream and eggs ready to sell in Cheyenne, WY, every Saturday. We would put Kay in a box in the back seat with the cream and eggs and she would sleep. The boys delivered the produce and collected the money. Dale was very good with the money. It bought our groceries and paid for Dale's and Gale's music lessons. I had bought a piano in Craig so Dale could start music lessons, so we also had those payments to make. I made sure all four children took music lessons.

If I ever learned that we had a Heavenly Father that was really looking after us, I sure did then.

We were raising money to build the Lynwood Chapel while we lived at Carr. Mr. Watson

was aware of this. I don't remember how it came about, but we needed a lot of fence built, so the Priesthood came out on Saturdays and built the fence. When it came time for Mr. Watson to pay them, he was so pleased with their work he paid them double.

Rocky Ridge and Ft. Collins

After we left Windy Acres, we moved down to 80 acres that lay seven miles from Ft. Collins. We raised hay and tried to keep our cattle by taking them to the high country during the summer. That didn't work well so we moved to Ft. Collins to the home I enjoyed and where I raised the four children.



Rocky Ridge: Dale and Gale

I was so blessed. Heavenly Father was aware of me raising the children and it was unbelievable the help I had. My dear mother was so great to help me in every way and it was so great that she could be close all those years. She loved her little apartment and the children.



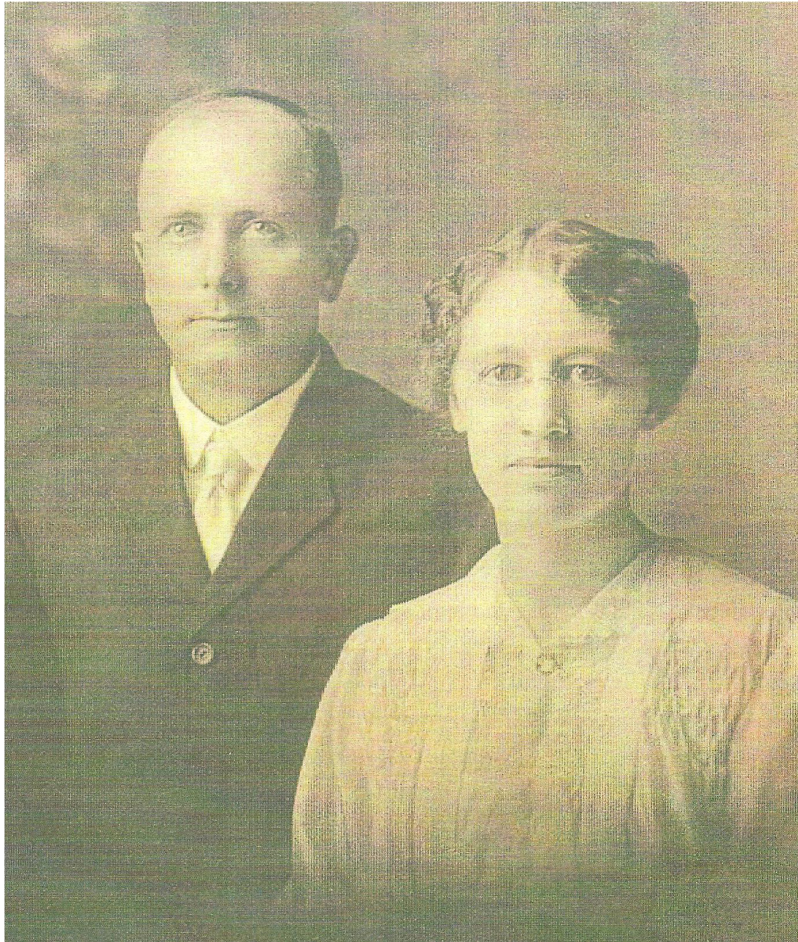
619 South Grant: Kay and Kent

I worked all the time to support my family, first at the hospital for seven years as a dietitian and then at the newspaper. Finally, I bought the Uniform Shop and eventually the building where I had my store for 17 years. I sold my building when I retired.

Disaster

My terrible, terrible disaster happened when Gale and his family completely destroyed my home while I was with Dale and Dorothy. I felt I had lost my life and was ready to leave this life and be with Herb.

My Parents



Mother was all English and such a talented lady you would never know. She was always busy. Our family has paintings, fancy work, quilts – everything my mother did was very, very neat. Daddy was German and Swiss and was raised by very neat parents. As children, if we didn't do things right and neat, then it wasn't worth doing.

My Testimony

I want my children to know I love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ with all my heart. There is no other church on earth but the Church of Jesus Christ, organized by Jesus Christ.

When I was eleven years old, Mother and I were washing in the old house on a Monday morning. When Mother saw two men walking, she got so excited and told me the elders were coming. I spoke up and said, “Yes, they are coming to baptize me”. My mother stopped and said, “You can’t be baptized. You haven’t studied enough, you don’t know enough or understand”. Me, with my nature of determination, said, “Yes, I do”.

The elders stayed a week with us. They helped us put up hay, butcher, put a fence across the river, etc. All this time I was trying to convince my mother they had come to baptize me. On Saturday morning, when Daddy was going to take them to Craig, my mother gave up on me and said, “Go ask your Dad”. Daddy came in with the bucket of milk and sat down to listen to the news on the radio. I crawled up on Daddy’s lap and asked if the elders could baptize me before they went back to Grand Junction. He looked at me and said, “Well, Sis, if that is what you want, I guess so”. My mother got busy and got me ready and all of us went into town.

The elders made arrangements to use the baptismal font in Craig and me and another girl from Maybell were baptized late that evening.

It rained and rained. We had a hard time getting to Craig and worried about getting home that night, but we made it. I was one happy girl—I knew that was what I wanted. My life has been so blessed by the Gospel. And Heavenly Father blessed me with an eternal companion, Herb, who I met on the bus going to the Denver Temple.

A Footnote on how this story came about and why it is organized the way it is – by Dorothy Chadwick, wife of Dale

Dale, for his sixty-fifth birthday, wanted all of our children, spouses and grandchildren to gather for a family reunion. We invited Grandma Blanche because there were several of the spouses and grandchildren she had never met.

We met in South Carolina and had a wonderful time. We arrived back home on Monday evening with plans to rest up and then spend the next few weeks showing Blanche around – The Washington Temple, Washington, D.C., Amish country, Longwood Gardens, Philadelphia, the beach if it was warm enough.

It was not to be. On the very evening we returned, Blanche announced she was going to go to bed and she went upstairs. I heard her moving around upstairs and breathed a sigh

of relief. We had worried about she would handle the stairs in our old house, but she assured us that she would be fine. However, I heard her coming back down. She wanted to show me the exercises her doctor and therapist had her doing to strengthen her ankle. I heard her cry out and looked up to see that she had fallen from the last step and was on the floor. She could not move and I felt almost immediately that she had broken her hip. We called 911 and a neighbor who came to assist Dale in giving her a priesthood blessing. At the hospital, they confirmed she had broken her hip. She was in terrible pain.

The surgeon who operated on her hip warned her that 20% of persons her age did not survive the surgery. However, the surgery was successful and she was discharged to a rehabilitation hospital where she worked hard and was able to leave using a walker. She came to our house and received home care and physical and occupational therapy for several weeks. Each time she needed to go to the doctor, it was a long, excruciating trip down our stairs to the car and into the doctor's office.

Each of the doctors and rehab specialists we talked to felt that if she were able to walk independently at all, at best she would need to use a walker. There was no indication that she would be able to live independently in a house that required stairs to get into and stairs within the house.

Gale, meanwhile, was exploring all the options available for her return to Ft. Collins when the doctors would finally allow her to travel. He sent extensive material comparing all her options.

Blanche agonized over the choice. She did not want to give up the home and garden that she loved. She cried, she prayed. She finally told Gale that she would come back and live in the senior residence at Rigdon Farms. It has been a very difficult change for her.

It was during the many hours and days of recuperation that I got her to begin telling me about her life. Since then she has written responses to questions I have asked her.

Additional Pictures



Craig: Blanche, Dale, Gale



Rocky Ridge: Blanche, Kay



Fort Collins: Sylvia and Granville Carter



Fort Collins: Kay, Blanche



Kent with Gigi