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Worth Their Salt Too

Colleen Whitley

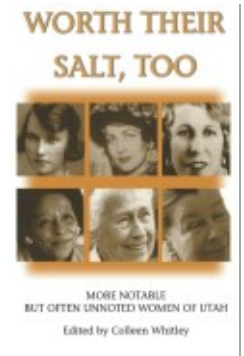
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ALTA MILLER

A Short Sketch of My Life

Autobiography

In her long life Alta Miller has been a teacher, a supervisor of teachers for Jordan School District and for Brigham Young University, a member of the Primary general board for the LDS Church, and a member of the Midvale Historical Society, where she helped organize the local museum. The breadth of her service is reflected by a few of the many honors accorded her: a master's degree from Columbia University, the Silver Fawn Award from the Boy Scouts of America, Special Science Award from the Utah Science Association, admission to the Midvale Hall of Honors and the Bingham High School Hall of Fame, Outstanding Educator, and Woman of the Year. The affection of her students is expressed in a letter from Roma Iasella Ganz: "You have been my idol ever since I was ten years old. . . . We loved you Alta, because you loved us and set the tone for a superb learning environment."¹

Some of these honors, and, more importantly, a record of the work that led to them, are contained in Alta's autobiography, written in 1989. Included, too, is her charming description of growing up in an area which doesn't exist any more. Bingham Canyon, on the east side of the Oquirrh Mountains, was the major access to rich copper deposits. The canyon was shaped like a Y. At the base was Copperton. The stem of the Y was known as Lower Bingham while the top left arm was Upper Bingham and Copperfield. The right arm was Highland Boy. Markham Gulch joined the stem at a right angle just below Highland Boy. All of these areas except Copperton are now buried under debris from the mine which engulfed them as it expanded.

While Miller wrote this for herself, her family, and friends, she has graciously given us permission to use portions of it here. A complete copy is on



When Alta Miller observed her ninetieth birthday in 1994, citizens of Midvale City celebrated her life of dedicated service to their community and to the state as a whole.

file at the Utah State Historical Society. It begins with extensive family background of her ancestors from Scotland and Denmark and the events that brought them to Utah. We join it as her father, Robert Collin Miller, arrives in Bingham.

When my Father came to Bingham he was looking for a place to stay. He heard of my Grandma Cook's boardinghouse.² He walked up to Upper Bingham, where the boardinghouse was located, to see about getting a place to live. . . . He said as he walked in the yard, he looked up, and sliding down the bannister was a girl, quite a large girl. He discovered afterwards it was [the woman who would become] my mother.³ He always said he saw her backside before he saw her face. Anyway, they became acquainted. Several months went by and he started courting her. He and Grandpa Cook became very interested in the mines in Bingham.⁴ They both had a liking for blacksmith work. So they worked in the Upper Bingham mines for leasers for about \$1.50 a day.⁵ With Grandma Cook bringing in what she could from the boardinghouse, they were able to get by.

My dad married my mother not too long afterwards. Their marriage took place on 17 November 1891 in Salt Lake City, Utah. At that time my dad was twenty years old and my mother was only eighteen. Things went pretty well for them. In three years one child was born; my sister, Hazel, was born in October 1894. Shortly after this a great depression occurred. My dad was out of work and had to give up the apartment where they were living. He didn't know what to do. Finally, he decided to send his wife and baby down to American Fork, Utah, to live with his mother and dad until he could get on his feet.⁶ . . . While they were there a second child was born; my brother, Etherick, was born on 16 March 1897.⁷ When Etherick was a few months old, things seemed to pick up in Bingham and my dad brought his wife and two children back. . . . Two other children were born there, Robert in 1898, and Dewey in 1901.

My dad became quite famous as a blacksmith. He was a very meticulous man. He could design the intricate parts needed when the machinery broke down. He got a chance to go over to Highland Boy and work for a wealthy mining company there. While he was there, Alta was born on 23 March 1904. Then Dad got another opportunity to work up in Markham Gulch, which was another very productive area as far as

minerals were concerned. He moved his family down to what was known as Lower Bingham, and it was there that Leonard, the youngest one in the family, was born on 19 September 1905.

My dad had an opportunity to move his family into a company house, about a mile and a half up in Markham Gulch. He took his family, carried what furniture they had, and moved them to Markham Gulch. This is where most of our childhood was spent. The company house in Bingham was a very peculiar little place. We had six children, two adults, and four rooms. The rooms were built one after the other in a long line. In fact, we could stand in one end of the living room and throw marbles right through to the kitchen, which was the fourth room away. It was a wonderful old house, and we loved it.

There was no running water. Beside our house was the most marvelous spring where the water ran into a barrel. We had to carry the water into the house in water buckets. We had a coal stove, or wooden stove because we had no coal then, and a reservoir on the side of it. We would fill the reservoir with water from this wonderful spring. People came from Lower Bingham and would bring bottles and buckets to get some of this wonderful water from our spring.

We had a cellar Dad built in the mountain. It was like a little tunnel where we could keep our food and vegetables. We had an out-house behind the house and had to walk up some steps in order to get there. It was very miserable on a cold winter morning to have to climb up steps covered with snow. But we enjoyed that old house.

I remember so often as little kids coming home from school, walking up that canyon, with snow up around our waists, and our feet soaking when we got home. Mother would meet us at the door, pull down the oven door, take off our shoes, and put our cold feet in the oven to get them warm. There we'd sit eating homemade bread and chokecherry jelly and warming our feet.

We had a cow we named Molly. She was a great pet and followed my mother everywhere. We'd turn her out on the hillside during the day to feed on the mountain grass in the summer. When it was time for her to come home, we'd whistle and the cow would come home to be milked. We always had plenty of good milk to drink.

We bought our vegetables each winter from my uncle who lived in American Fork. He'd bring up a truckload of potatoes, onions, carrots, and cabbages, and we'd store them in the cellar.

One day an interesting thing happened—we lost old Molly. We looked everywhere for her, and after two days, we decided someone had stolen her. We were all very grieved. My mother had an occasion to go into the cellar for some vegetables, and when she went in, there was poor, old Molly. She had followed Mother in, and Mother had locked her in by mistake because there was no light. Molly had spent two days in that cellar eating most of the vegetables we had stored for the winter. She was a really sick cow. I can remember bringing her out and getting a veterinarian to come. He put a tube down—a rubber hose of some kind—down her throat and worked on her. Finally, she came out of it and was able to breathe normally. Another thing she did was follow my mother down to main Bingham when she went down to do her shopping. When she got to where Markham Gulch met Main Street, Molly would hide behind one of the buildings. When Mother came back, she would whistle and Molly would come out from behind the building and follow her home. She was just like a pet. We loved old Molly. I remember when she broke two of her legs falling down a hole. We had to kill her and everyone in the family was heartbroken because of it.

We had very little money, but we had an awful lot of love, which was more important. I remember this love at Christmastime. My mother was a beautiful, wonderful woman, very compassionate, very friendly, and full of fun. However, my dad was different. He was serious and read a lot. He was also so honest, it was almost embarrassing. Mother had many, many friends, and at Christmastime she liked to make fruitcakes to take to our nearest neighbors as a present. My dad and I would usually distribute them on a sleigh. One Christmas there was a company strike, and everyone was out of work. Mother couldn't make the fruitcakes that year. No raisins were available and no sugar. My dad conceived the idea of begging scrap iron from the blacksmith shop where he worked and making little miniature candlesticks like the miners used in the mines. . . . Mother put a candle in the holder and a bow of ribbon around the stem. I remember this Christmas Eve going with my dad down to our nearest neighbors and giving them one of these lovely little candle holders from Dad and a loaf of bread from Mother. I still have one of those candle holders. . . . On New Year's Eve of that year, the neighbors invited our family to come down under the Markham Bridge, which was quite free of snow, where they built a great bonfire, cooked hot dogs, and had a celebration. When we

arrived, every one of these neighbors lighted the candles that Dad had given them and sang, "For he's a very good fellow." . . .

Another thing I remember about Christmas is our family project. We always used to go up in the mountains to get our Christmas tree. My dad . . . had taken on a job with Utah Copper Company because he could make more money. We bought a horse and a two-wheel cart which he drove in the summer. He rode the horse in the winter. At Christmastime we'd take this horse into the mountains and cut down one of the conifer trees for our Christmas tree. We would take along a sled, which my dad had made for us, and we'd strap the tree on the sled. Before we came home, we would build a little campfire and eat the lunch that we brought. The sled was pulled by the horse down to our home in Markham Gulch. There we would set it up in the living room. We had nothing to put on it except what we made. We strung popcorn and cranberries and made paper chains and cornucopias. One thing we made was very unique: Mother would take unshelled walnuts, because then you couldn't buy shelled walnuts like you can now, and she'd crack them open very carefully so the shell halves were preserved. She'd take the meat out of them, and then she would color the walnuts, some silver and some gold. She'd add a piece of ribbon so they could be hung on the tree. Then she'd glue the two walnut shells together again with the ribbon ends inside so it could be hung. These were very beautiful. Everything on the tree we had to make ourselves. What fun it was. I can remember sitting around that old kitchen table, everybody helping to make the Christmas decorations.

It was the custom then that the men would get paid on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Eve, Mother and Dad would go down to Lower Bingham to buy our presents, and we would be in bed by the time they got back. They would wrap them and put them under the Christmas tree. We didn't get very much, probably just one thing each. We also got an orange because some cousins of ours in California sent us a box of oranges. But we didn't get any bananas. In fact, I didn't even taste a banana until I was in high school. Usually, we got something to wear which Mother made for us, shirts for the boys and a dress for my sister and me. We always got one little plaything. It might be a flipper; it might be a game or puzzle, some little thing that didn't cost too much money. These we found under the Christmas tree. I loved those Christmases because of the love we shared.

My sister was a little older, so she got a job in Lower Bingham at a dry goods store. My brother, Doc, got a job in Upper Bingham in the Copperfield Merc. Then my brother, Bob, got a job in a store. That left three of the younger children at home most of the time. The older children came home at night but they were gone during the day. . . .

I want to tell you some of the interesting experiences we had. There used to be lots of snow in Bingham. We probably thought there was a lot because it was never moved from the streets. Up the canyon where we lived, there was a stream that ran down the side of a very narrow road. The road was only wide enough for my dad to travel in his two-wheel cart. Occasionally, ore wagons with narrow gauges would come up into the canyon to carry out the ore of some of the leasers who were mining up in that part of the canyon.

We had a very interesting old friend we called "Oquirrh Jack" because he lived in the Oquirrh Mountains. He lived up on the top of the mountain, and we used to go up all the time to visit him, especially in the summertime when we had to help get wood. We would find the dead wood up among the conifer trees, cut it down, stack it up so my dad could come up with his horse after work or on Saturdays and drag it down to our home so it could be cut into shorter lengths later. Because of our activity in cutting wood and because we loved to explore, we knew where the first pussy willows were and where the wallflowers grew. We knew where everything grew in the canyon. Because of our wandering, we became acquainted with "Oquirrh Jack," and he became a very good friend of ours. He always had something to give us. He made pie, cooked, and always gave us something to eat. However, he had a very bad habit; he liked alcohol. When he had ore to ship, he loaded it on a wooden sled and had horses take it down to Lower Bingham where it could be loaded on cars and taken to the smelter. After he got the money back, which happened about every three or four months, he would go down to Lower Bingham on his horse, and there he would get drunk. He would buy himself a bottle to take home and a pocketful of candy for the Miller kids. He would get just as far as our house and then fall off his horse. My mother would put him to bed, sober him up, give him a loaf of bread or something to eat, and send him on his way the next day.

I've always wondered what it was about our home that encouraged that horse to get as far as our house and then stop for "Oquirrh Jack" to fall off. I think it was because of love, love of my mother in taking care

of that old man, love of the old man because he loved my mother and because he loved us. Because he always brought back candy for us, we didn't resent him being put to bed and sobered up in our home. We always were compensated. Even the old horse must have felt this love because he'd get just as far as our house, put his head down and his ear up, and wait for "Oquirrh Jack" to fall off. He knew, too, he would be fed and watered if he came to our home. Throughout my young childhood, "Oquirrh Jack" was quite a character but a good friend.

I remember when we got a dog, an orange, long-haired shepherd dog. We called him Jack. In the wintertime the coyotes would come down really close to the house and growl, bark, and keep us awake at night. Jack would bark and chase the coyotes up the mountain, and the coyotes would chase him back down. Some nights, all night long, they were chasing each other back and forth up the canyon. We were not afraid of the coyotes. We knew they were cowards, and they didn't bother us.

We had a lot of experiences with other animals. We became acquainted with mountain lions, bobcats, porcupines, and snakes, especially rattlesnakes—there were a lot of rattlesnakes. Above our home, on the top of the mountain, were cliffs where most of the rattlesnakes went to hibernate in the winter. When spring came, they would come out. So very often we would encounter rattlesnakes, but we weren't afraid of them. We discovered early that they were just as frightened of us as we were of them. If we didn't bother them, they would go their way and we'd go ours.

One time, however, we had a very frightening experience. On one side of the mountain where we lived, there was a trail that wound its way around the mountain to where you could overlook Lower Bingham. It was one of our favorite places to hike and look for wild flowers and have an interesting walk. We always took Jack with us. One day we were walking along this path with Jack ahead of us. When we turned the corner, there was Jack in front of us, stiff-legged, swaying from side to side, not barking, not making a sound. As we got a little closer, we saw a rattlesnake poised, ready to strike again. Its head was going back and forth, and Jack's head and body were swaying with it. We knew if we didn't get some help soon, Jack would be a goner. We picked up big rocks and threw them at the snake, finally driving it away. When the snake left, Jack fell on the ground. He was so weak and

sick that he couldn't walk. We had to carry him home. For days he was sick and couldn't stand. Never again, when we went for a walk on that path, did Jack go with us. That was a bad experience with a rattlesnake.

Later, on that same path, one of the men who worked in the mine killed a rattlesnake with fifteen rattles, which meant it had shed its skin fifteen times, so it was a pretty big snake. As I tell this story, some people say they have never heard of a rattlesnake charming a dog. But three of us witnessed that, and Jack really was charmed.

When I was growing up, I was fascinated with the underground mines. Frequently, I would go with the miners and watch them muck the ore and load it in cars. I learned all the tricks of the trade as far as underground mining was concerned. I was really friendly with the miners, and very often they would give me dynamite, fuse, and caps, and teach me how to use them. I would help them set their own stakes to be blasted during the night so they could take out the ore the next day. I used to take some of this dynamite and fuses and caps and go up to the top of the cliffs to blast out some of the rattlesnakes. I think this was a horrible thing to do, but I didn't have any more sense then.

We had a very fascinating experience one day. My brother Dewey and I were up by "Oquirrh Jack's" getting wood. We happened to travel over a little ravine where we had never been before. I stumbled over an object. We uncovered the brush to see what it was and discovered a bell. As I can remember, it came up to my waist and was very rusty. The gong had rusted to the side of the bell, so we broke the gong loose and cleaned off as much rust as we could and banged it against the sides to see if it made a noise. It didn't ring very true, but it made a thudding noise. When we would go for wood, we would scatter in all different directions. When it was time to go home, the one who was nearest the bell would thump the gong against the side of the bell and that was the signal for us all to come together to go home. For several years we used that as a sort of signal. Later on, I noticed that on it there was some writing and I made a copy, as far as I could from memory. I didn't know what it meant, but I knew it was Spanish.

Later, I went to the University of Utah and took a class from Levi Edgar Young, a great historian. I wrote a story about the bell. He was so excited, he called me at my home and said, "Is that a true story?" I said it was. He said, "Where is the bell?" I said, "The bell now is up in Markham Gulch covered with millions of tons of dump waste from the

Utah Copper Company.” He said, “It’s no longer able to be located?” I said, “It’s gone.” He said, “What a tragedy. If we could find that bell, and you said you thought it was Spanish writing on it, we could prove that Coronado’s men, or some of his men, did not just stop at Utah Lake in Provo, but went up over the Oquirrh Mountains on their way to California and dropped the bell in the ravine because it was too heavy to take it any further.” He said, “If we could find that bell it would change the whole history of the Utah territory.” I thought how terrible it was we didn’t report the bell to somebody who knew what it was. . . .

Oftentimes we would go down to Bingham Main Street. We’d go to a show or to a school activity of some kind and it would be dark when we came home. There were no lights, no electric lights of any kind on the way to Markham Gulch, so my dad made us a lantern. We called it a bug. He would take a lard or honey can, put a hole in the side of it, put a candle in the hole, and put a wire handle on the top. It made a good light. We would hide these bugs among the bushes. We also hid a little bottle with some matches. If darkness came before we got home, we would just find one of these bugs, light it, and that would give us light to get home so we wouldn’t fall into the stream or have any problems.

One night we had a very interesting experience with one old bug. One of my brothers and I had just been down to a school affair. It was dark, so we lit the bug and made our way up the canyon. It was snowing quite heavily. In fact, before we got home, a regular blizzard was blowing. We were walking along, trying to find our way along the path, when all of a sudden something swooped out of the sky and grabbed hold of my shoulder. I took the bug and slammed it into whatever it was that hit me and it fell to the ground. Then we lit the bug again and looked, and found that it was a bald eagle. We had killed it. The bird had lost its way in the storm, and our light attracted it. We felt terrible about killing it. We left it there and the next morning my dad found it and brought it home. He reported to the police what had happened because it was against the law to kill an eagle. They said, “Well, it was one of those accidents that couldn’t be helped.” I was just trying to protect myself. Anyway, we took the bird to a taxidermist, had it preserved, and gave it to the Bingham High School. It was in their office for years and years. I don’t know what ever happened to the bird, but to us that was a very dramatic story.

Again, we often went down to Bingham Main Street. As kids we'd go down and just bum around. The sidewalks in Bingham, at first, were just wood. They didn't have cement until later. Sometimes they would have to change the wooden planks and we would be there when they changed most of them, if we knew about it, because people often lost money—pennies, nickels, and dimes—down the cracks of the boards. The children would all gather around when they changed the boards on the sidewalk, hoping they would be able to find some of this currency.

There were interesting characters in Bingham. I remember one whom I loved dearly was old Ching Ling, the only Chinese that I knew of in Bingham at that time. He was a laundryman. You've heard how laundrymen held water in their mouths and sprinkled it on the clothes. Well, Ching Ling did that. He washed beautifully and ironed beautifully. The bachelors living in Bingham took their clothes to him. We would go visit him, and occasionally my mother would send a loaf of bread, a pie, or something to him, and he would give us Chinese candy. We learned to love that old fellow, and he was part of my childhood growing up in Bingham. I remember when he died. The Chinese—it must have been a Chinese club from Salt Lake—came to bury him. They put him out on the sidewalk in his casket and left him there for half a day. The people in Bingham walked back and forth in front of the casket. Later, it was closed, and his henchman, who was Chinese, put him on a wagon. They had drums to beat and a dragon they pulled along behind. They walked down to the old Bingham Cemetery and buried Ching Ling.⁸ I remember most of the kids in Bingham went with them. The Miller kids certainly did. For years after that, we would go into the mountains and get flowers on Memorial Day and put some of them on old Ching Ling's grave. He was a wonderful old Chinese man.

Another character who was very interesting was Joe Burger. . . . Everybody in Bingham knew him. When he first came there, he ran a novelty store, then he tried to run a newspaper. Finally, he became a mortician, the only mortician in Bingham. There were quite a few accidents, and sometimes men would get killed and nobody claimed the bodies. It was up to Joe Burger to try to dispose of them. People always said that if you couldn't find Joe Burger anywhere, you could go to the saloon or look in his embalming room. Often if you couldn't find Joe Burger anywhere else, you'd find him drunk and asleep in one of his

own caskets. There's a very interesting story told about Joe, and it's a true one. One of the miners was killed and nobody claimed the body. Joe Burger said he was sick and tired of taking care of all those poverty cases. He took this man, set him up at a table in the mortuary, and put a deck of cards in his hands as if he were playing cards. He invited people to come and look for 25¢ a look. Of course, out of curiosity, many people in Bingham went to see this corpse playing cards in Joe Burger's mortuary. He raised enough money so he could bury the man in the Bingham Cemetery and have some money left over for flowers. Joe later gave up the mortuary business and moved to Upper Bingham where he opened a novelty store. There he sold souvenirs and soft drinks. He was a real gentleman. Joe's wife lived in Salt Lake—she wouldn't live in Bingham. Every once in a while, he'd put on his tails, his best clothes, and catch the old bus down to Salt Lake to go with his wife to a concert or to a movie. Later, he would catch the bus and come back to Bingham to carry on in his little shop. He was one of the legends of Bingham, a very, very interesting man.

There were lots of other interesting characters living in Bingham: Dr. Inglesby, who was a dentist; Dr. Stropp, who for a while was the only doctor and traveled all over Bingham on his horse;⁹ there was also Dr. Fraser. Later, he became famous because he went to the South Pole with Perry to carry on an experiment. There were many, many outstanding people who lived in Bingham; many who became lawyers, doctors, teachers, and wonderful basketball players. All this was going on when we were growing up in Bingham and going to school. I went to the Bingham Central School, and then to the Bingham High School because they didn't have junior high school. I graduated from the Bingham High School in 1922, went to the University of Utah, and later came back to Bingham to teach. We were very faithful students; we had good attendance. Sometimes the snow was so heavy that when we got out of school, we would wait for our dad. He would come along with his horse, put the two little ones on the horse's back, take the bridle, and walk ahead to break the path, and the rest of us would take hold of the horse's tail. Away we'd go to our home in Markham Gulch.

We learned to ski in Markham Gulch, but we never learned to ice skate because it was too steep. Many of the children from down in Lower Bingham would come up to our home because we had a great big yard. We played baseball up there in the summer and in the winter

we would ski and go for bobsleigh rides. We had a lot of fun in the canyon.

Later on, the company that rented us our house wanted it back. We had to move down to Lower Bingham down near the bridge, which was just a little distance from Markham Gulch. We lived there for some time, and Dad went on working for what later became Kennecott Copper. There my brother Doc met Olive Erickson, whom he later married. My sister, Hazel, met Lee Anderson and married him. My brother Bob married a girl from American Fork, Myrle Smith. My brother Dewey married into a family who lived across the street from us. My brother Legrand married Lillian Downs of Midvale.

Later on, about 1927, my family moved to Midvale when there was still Leonard and I at home. We bought a house from Eli Mitchell, who wanted to sell his home because he had built a new one on First Avenue. It wasn't quite ready, and we had to move, so we lived in that house with Eli Mitchell for several months. We had part of the house, and they had part of the house. When they finally moved, we took over the whole house. It was here that Leonard met his wife, Lillian Downs, who lived right across the street. I began teaching school in Midvale in 1925 in the old West building. E. E. Greenwood was the principal. I lived with the Rosse family for two years until my folks moved to Midvale.

So the years move on. I wish I had the power of words to adequately tell about my life in Bingham Canyon and the life of my friends and family. I almost get a lonesome feeling wanting to go back and relive some of those beautiful, wonderful experiences. The people made Bingham so wonderful.

I remember the sidewalks, and I remember the dirt roads with mud up to your knees. I remember when they put cement on the roads in 1938. I remember the wonderful celebrations that we had; I especially remember Columbus Day. On Columbus Day all the Italian people in Bingham would get together. They would dress in the old Italian costume of Columbus and they would make the three ships—the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa María*. Then they would have all the children excused from school. We would line up. Each child had two flags, and we would hold one in each hand—one Italian flag and one American flag. We would follow the three ships up the main street. The bands would play, the people would wave their flags, and everybody in

Bingham came out and lined the sidewalks. It was wonderful! In the afternoon they had all kinds of races—foot races, three-legged races, and horse races. Then the Italian people would serve refreshments. We all looked forward to Columbus Day.

We had other celebration days. The Japanese people had Kite Day and Doll Day.¹⁰ One thing about the people in Bingham, everybody supported everybody else. I feel there was no prejudice among the people in Bingham at that time. There were many different nationalities, especially Spanish, Greek, Austrian, Italian, quite a few English, lots of Scandinavians—about eighteen different nationalities. Many of them were young men who came to work and later brought their families. They built homes, many of them up on the side of the mountain just like a crow's nest. Many of the single men lived in boarding houses.

The streets of Bingham were very narrow. It was almost impossible for vehicles to pass each other during rush hour. In fact, one fellow said, "The only thing between you and the next car is a coat of paint." That's true. If anybody ever double parked on that road, it was very hard to go up or down. It was a narrow, winding road.¹¹ What stories that road could tell. Of course, today it's all gone. . . . All that's left is a great pit that covers the whole area that used to be Bingham.

But the memories of Bingham are treasures for me. Hundreds of beautiful experiences come to mind. Dozens of beautiful friendships still exist. I think of our family growing up in Bingham and what a great privilege it was. . . .

I grew up in the elementary school in Bingham, went to the high school, graduated in 1922. I was valedictorian of our class. I wanted to become a teacher, so my father said, "If you want to become a teacher I'll do what I can to help you." I went to the University of Utah for one year. At the end of the year, D. C. Jensen, who was the superintendent of Jordan District, called me and said, "How would you like to go to Upper Bingham and teach school?" I said, "I don't think my dad will let me; he wants me to finish and be a teacher." Superintendent Jensen said, "If you had a few years' experience, your college would mean a lot more to you." He talked me into it. I went up to Upper Bingham in 1923 to teach school. I was only seventeen years old. I was paid \$800 a year.

In that old two-story building, they had just installed plumbing. It had a bell on the top of it, and a very small playground. The children

had to do most of their playing on the mountainside and in the road. I'll never forget that first day. After a short faculty meeting, I walked into my room and there sat forty-five children from three grades—third, fourth, and fifth. There were rows and rows of seats screwed to the floor and nothing but a teacher's desk and a chair.

Standing in the back of the room, in a corner, was a boy, a man, as tall as I was. I knew that this was Malachi. The principal, Mabel Neprud, had told me about Malachi. She said, "He probably will be in your room; he carries a knife and he teases the children, so you'll have your hands full." Because I'd had some good psychology classes, I went over to Malachi, and I said, "Malachi, I'm so glad that you're in my room. You can help me; there are so many things that we need and you can help with the boys and girls." Somehow this was the right approach and it worked. Malachi turned out to be my right hand man. He was wonderful, and I loved him dearly. He used to stay after school almost every night and make me furniture. He made me a table; he made chairs; he made a reading table; he made bookcases; he made them all out of powder boxes his dad got from Kennecott Copper and also out of orange crates that I begged from some of the stores. Malachi was a wonderful person.

We had sixteen different nationalities in that group, beautiful children. They brought to school with them many of their customs. Some of their customs were they'd have to drink a glass of wine before they came to school because it kept disease away. They had garlic on their breath because that was what many of them used in their food. Around their necks many of them wore a little bag of asafetida, which is a very smelly disinfectant—it's supposed to keep diseases away. Some of them were sewed into their underwear in the fall and didn't get out of it until spring. Many of their other customs came with them. In spite of these personal habits, they were adorable children, and I always considered 1923 one of the most beautiful, successful years of my life.

Still, it was a hard year. It snowed really heavily. I had to walk a mile and a half down Markham Gulch, then I had to walk a mile and a half up to my school, three miles a day. When it snowed, I'd put on overalls in the morning to walk to school, change when I got to school, and put overalls on again to get home. Sometimes, when the roads permitted it, I took a sleigh and slid down on the sleigh. Once in a while

we got snowed in. There were two other teachers, besides myself, in the school, Mrs. Atkinson and Alta Accord. We'd get snowed in, and we'd stay all night in the schoolhouse. The people around us would bring in dinner. They were wonderful, especially the Japanese people who lived right across the street in Jap Camp. We had camp cots and blankets ready for our use in the storeroom.

Behind the school was Dinkeyville, where many of the Greeks lived. Down the street were the Austrians, English, and Irish. Whenever they knew we were held up in the school and couldn't get home, somebody sent over our dinner. It certainly was a satisfying experience to have taught in that school.

After one year I was transferred down to Lower Bingham and taught in an old gym building. I taught on the top floor—it was three stories up. That was an interesting experience. In 1925 I was given the chance to go to Midvale to teach. I went to Midvale School and taught there until 1937. In 1937, Superintendent C. N. Jensen called me into his office and said that Freda Jensen was going to get married and would I be interested in taking her job as an elementary supervisor? I was. So I borrowed the money, and my dad promised to help me; I went back to Columbia University in New York for one year. Oh, what a beautiful experience that was!

About Christmastime of that year, I got word that Freda's fiancé, Ray Beck, had died. I thought, "Well, now they won't need me." So I partly committed myself to Salt Lake City to teach there. Superintendent Jensen called me on the phone one night and said, "We still want you to consider the plan. Freda Jensen will be the primary supervisor and you the intermediate." So I became the intermediate supervisor of Jordan School District. I graduated from Columbia University that June with a master's degree, having had a tremendous experience. I met and worked with some of the giants in education: Mrs. Lois Mossman, Jean Betzner, Roma Ganz, and Dr. Counts . . . and I had the privilege of knowing them. I also met two beautiful people who became my friends, Lorene Fox and Wanda Robertson. They became lifelong friends of mine. Wanda died just a short time ago, and Lorene is in a nursing home. Through the years they have been wonderful friends and wonderful people.

I came into the district to work with Freda. She was an outstanding working companion, very cultured, very refined, a beautiful individual to

work with. Until 1969, when I retired, I held that position. We did some interesting things, I think, Freda and I. When we began in the district, there were no school libraries; none of the schools had libraries. We asked the boys in shop to make us fifty tin boxes. We took WPA project money, \$5,000, and went to Deseret Book and bought some of the most beautiful children's books we could buy.¹² At that time you could buy a beautiful book for about \$2 to \$3. We put them in the tin boxes and rotated them around the schools. We left them in all the elementary schools, and every two weeks the principal would take them to the next school. They rotated them so the children had access to some of these beautiful books. That was the first library in Jordan School District.

When you think of what they have now, the beautiful libraries in each school and the county library. . . . We also had no visual aids; so we started that also. . . . We had a little old cubbyhole in the supply room where we had the custodian build some shelves for us, and we bought a few filmstrips. I remember the first one we ever bought was called "What Is Flour?" It was the story of the making of flour. After a while, each school got a filmstrip machine, and we had a library of filmstrips that we rotated around, but no moving picture machines. Finally, we had access to movies from the state school office. We bought a moving picture machine, and we would rotate the machine with the film. They'd keep it in the school for a day, and then the principal would take it to the next school. That was the beginning of the audio-visual library. Just imagine what we have today—at each one of the schools they have their own moving picture machine, and almost every room has a filmstrip machine. Think of the TVs they have; think of the wonderful computers they have now. What a great difference between then and now—how wonderful that we can make school more interesting for the children.

I taught and supervised for forty-six years in Jordan School District. After I retired, BYU offered me a position as student teaching supervisor. For two years I supervised the BYU students who were training in Jordan District and conducted training classes for them. My experience in education of forty-eight years has been a very rewarding experience for me. I have worked hard and wouldn't begrudge one minute. If I had to do it all over again, I'd choose the same profession.

As I look back over my teaching, many beautiful experiences stand out. This Malachi Lopez I've told you about stayed in my room until just about Christmastime. The Depression came and his dad lost

his job with Utah Copper, so Malachi was going back to Mexico. This knife he had was a part of his personality. His uncle, in Mexico, who knew he was coming to Bingham, gave him the knife and said, "Malachi, I'm giving you this knife because when you get to Bingham you're going to find some tough characters and you're going to have to protect yourself." That's how Malachi happened to have this knife. When I first knew Malachi, he carried it with him. But very gradually he quit chasing the children with it. Finally, he started allowing me to keep it. He'd give it to me when he came in the morning and get it when he left at night. Finally, he gave it to me on Monday, and I could keep it until Friday. He said, "You keep it for me and when I want it I'll come and get it." So I had that precious possession of his in my desk.

After school on the day the Christmas holiday began, the children all came up and gave me their gifts and wished me a Merry Christmas. I noticed Malachi just stayed around and stayed around. Finally, he came up to me with tears in his eyes and said, "I won't see you anymore. My dad and I are going back to Mexico tomorrow. He's lost his job, so I'm going home. I don't have a Christmas present for you, but I want you to know that I love you because of all the people of these United States who really loves me you were the only one. And, I want to give you a gift: I want you to have my knife." Malachi walked over to my desk, took out the knife and gave it to me, kissed me on the cheek, and ran like a deer out of the door. I don't know who shed more tears that day. I never forgot Malachi. In fact, the next year I got a letter from his principal in Guadalajara, Mexico. He wrote, "Malachi wanted me to write and just tell you that he's doing very well in school." About twelve years later, arriving at my desk in Jordan School District because it was the only address they had, I got a letter with a newspaper clipping in it. The clipping said, "Malachi Lopez had just been elected the Mayor of Guadalajara, Mexico." Oh what a thrill that was to me—this big, tall, lonesome boy had the right goals in life and had achieved them until he became the mayor of Guadalajara.

So that's just one success story. I think, like every teacher, hundreds of stories, hundreds of experiences with children could be written. But always to my mind when I think of the compensation of teaching, I think of Malachi, that wonderful boy from Guadalajara, Mexico. I still have Malachi's knife, and I treasure it very, very much.

All the time I was in supervision in Jordan District, I was having other beautiful experiences. In 1942 Sister Laverne Parmley called me in to the general board offices of the LDS Primary Association to have a conference with me.¹³ . . . A few days later a letter came from the First Presidency inviting me to become a member of the Primary general board. For thirty-two years I served on the Primary general board in many capacities: in-service training, conference training, Tabernacle programs, articles for the *Children's Friend* and others. But most of my general board experience was in Scouting. When the Boy Scouts of America lowered the Scout age to eleven years, the MIA was unhappy with the program. The president of the church asked the Primary to take it. We were responsible for the eleven-year-old Scouting program for the entire church. Sister Laverne Parmley asked me to serve as chairman of the eleven-year-old Scouting committee. I accepted and chose a wonderful group of board members to help me.

Edna Faux and I wrote the first manual for the leaders of the eleven-year-old boys of the church. We were asked by the First Presidency of the church to correlate Scouting and priesthood preparation in the manual. . . . The Scout emphasis for the eleven-year-old boys' guide was to reach the rank of Second Class in Scouting. This was the first effort to correlate the two programs. We accomplished this, and it proved to be helpful and successful. The lessons had to be approved by the Primary presidency, the church Curriculum Committee, and the National Boy Scouts of America. It was a very exacting and humbling experience. We did a lot of research and a lot of planning. We did a lot of rewriting, a lot of weeping, and a lot of praying. We had six months to complete the project, and we met the deadline. What an experience it was. We met so many new people in the process.

In all, I spent nearly twenty years in just the area of Scouting alone. As I traveled all over the United States on conferences and training sessions for Primary people, one of my big emphases was to help in the Scouting program. After I retired from school, I had the privilege of taking many trips overseas. I went to Australia and New Zealand, Tahiti, all over Europe, Mexico, Alaska, and many other parts of the world doing Primary work.

I remember, especially, going to Australia where they were very interested in starting the Scouting program. I met group after group of

teachers, to help them and train them in this new eleven-year-old Scouting program. In Italy, I remember, we had many private meetings on Scouting. So, while there was great emphasis on that, I did other jobs in the Primary. But what an experience that was to travel the world, to meet those wonderful LDS Primary leaders everywhere who were so gracious and so wonderful to us. I traveled thousands and thousands of miles, flying most of the way. Never once in those thirty-two years did I have any kind of an accident. I was never ill, never had to miss a conference, never had an unpleasant experience. The Lord was certainly with me.

Since then I have had other experiences. I've been a counselor in the Relief Society, spent three years as president of the Relief Society, been a Sunday school teacher, stake and ward cultural refinement instructor, and one of the compassionate service directors of the Midvale Third Ward. So, I've kept busy because I believe everybody needs to have work in the church and I love the callings.

I have helped to establish the museum in Midvale and now, along with Laura Cerrone, have charge of the displays and help schedule the hostessing for that museum. I have tried to keep up in some of my other professional organizations, and I've found I have a very busy and wonderfully productive life.¹⁴