

# Nettie Potter Miles

## Her Story

### Beginning

On a beautiful sunny Sunday morning, **April 26, 1903**, a baby girl was born to **John and Jennie B. Potter**. The saying, "*Lucky is the child that is born on the Sabbath day, for they are Luck, Happy, Wise and Gay*" was true for me. When the family came home from Sunday School that day Mother had a new daughter for them, and they decided to name her Nettie. By then they were running out of names and decided one would do. My oldest sister was thirteen when I was born, and all my life she was like a second mother to me. She was always sewing for me, until I could start sewing for myself. Everyone told me what beautiful bonnets she had made for me.

Soon after, when their friends and ward members in Sunnyside (where my father had been bishop) were having a farewell party for my Father and Mother they were surprised to see they had another baby. Mother had had so many children, miscarriages, etc., that I'm sure it was good for her when she could get out to church and leave a small one at home for a few hours.

### Days in Idaho

Our year in Idaho is just memories of listening to my sisters and brother talk about it. It was really a bad winter. The snow was so deep at one time that they would have to go out the upstairs door and shovel a path down to the sleigh that would take them to school. Another wild tale they told me was that the milk froze as they milked the cow, making macaroni.

We left Idaho suddenly when my brother **David** had his eye put out by a slingshot. A friend called him to watch him kill a bird and the slingshot misfired, hitting David in the eye. They had to make a long trip by sleigh before getting a train to Salt Lake to a doctor that could take care of David. It was going to take sometime for his recovery, and Idaho was too isolated. Finally he was fitted with a glass eye. But it never seemed to make any big difference in his personality or his ability to see, as he worked as a bookkeeper and stockbroker all his life.

### Price Utah

In the meantime Dad got work with Robert Howard helping to open the **Kenilworth mine**. After that the family moved to Price. Dad had a job as bookkeeper, through Frank Olsen, for Consolidated Wagon and Machine Company. We moved into a small house on Main Street and First East. The Olsen's lived within a block of us, so I did have a friend. Her name was Josephine Olsen (now Ferguson) and we have remained friends all through the years, together except a year that she spent in California and I ended going to Provo, in what would have been my senior year, to **B.Y.U.**

We didn't live on Main Street very long. Dad found out he could buy a block of property with a house on for the same money as the small house on Main Street. Dad found such a block of property. It was three blocks north of Main Street. There was one house on the corner of each block and they were long blocks, so to a little girl it seemed like the end of the world. There was the church and the school on one block, just north of Main. Lars Frandsen lived on the next one, the next block was the Paces, and our first house was in the middle of the last block with a canal running a bit north of us through the middle of the block. Our first small four room house was surrounded with large poplar and cottonwood trees. Dad put up a couple of big swings and nailed boards between four or five trees, which made it like a park almost. He could bring his Sunday School class up there for the lesson, as the church was so small. It was a long walk to visit friends, so we mainly played with the Andersons, who lived across the street in a big rock house.

Mrs. Anderson was gone a lot, as she acted as midwife, and was busy helping other people. She usually just left a two quart jar of fruit or tomatoes and a loaf of bread on the kitchen table, so the kids could help themselves, and that was their lunch. We had a nice big dinner at home, but that meant doing the dishes. Jennie usually disappeared, so that left me to wash and clean up.

When we first move up there our drinking water came from a cistern that had to be cleaned and filled every so often. We filled a separate barrel of water from the ditch running in front of the house that could be used in washing, etc. We hadn't lived there too long when Father donated land on the north side of the canal and the town built a pump house. From it they pumped water from the canal to a large reservoir up near the Wood Hill. From that the town was able to install indoor plumbing, which made a lot of difference in everyone's life. Later the town was able to pipe a spring water from some twenty miles away. When the town became large enough they installed big water tanks on Wood Hill, so that everyone had some of the purest water to eat and drink there was anywhere throughout the state.

## **Activities : Fun & Work**

Though we had lots of fun and games we were never allowed to be idle. As I was growing up I think one of the things I hated doing most of all was delivering milk. We nearly always had two or three neighbors that I had to take a lard pail full of milk to in the early evening. The gooseberries were the hardest to pick, and the currants. But any money we could make helped Dad and Mother get a few nicer things for the big home he had built to the north of the old house.

He left a two hundred foot front lot for it, and all the lots ran two hundred and fifty feet deep to the middle of the block. The bottom third of the yard was three rows of a variety of fruit trees. I have always wondered how we got by with one bathroom, though Father left one smaller room upstairs thinking at some time we would have one up there. But we did have a sink at the end of one hall which did give us a place to wash up and get ready for meals and school. It was a good thing we kept our outside john as it got a lot of use the year we kept five boarders, most of them basketball players.

The three older girls worked downtown. Sarah worked in the Co-Op Mercantile, which carried everything. The first telephone company was in back of it, but they soon built the First National Bank and the telephone offices were upstairs here. My sister May and Euphia Horsley were the first operators, with my sister Edith starting soon after. Once in a while they got in trouble for listening in on calls. Then they let a wife or two listen in to her husband talking to someone else when she wouldn't believe them that he was talking to some other woman. They were really reprimanded for this but didn't lose their jobs, as they were afraid they were going to do.

A second mercantile store was built and grew gradually into one of the biggest stores outside Salt Lake City. This was built by a group of ranchers and sheepmen, a few of the Frenchman who had come to that part of the country as shepherders but soon prospered and became some of the wealthiest men in the county. The same group later built a second bank, naming it Carbon Emery Bank, as some of their stockholders were farmers from Emery County.

The town at first grew mainly in the south part near the church, school, railroad station, etc. So there was just the sidewalk worn down and a place for a horse and buggy in the middle of the street going up to I would be whistling, partly because I was afraid, and so they would know I was coming. A few years later, when I was ushering in the theater, it was Dad's turn to walk and meet me, and we would both be whistling. It was a bad habit to get into, I guess, as in later life when I was working in Price Trading Company I was downstairs cleaning shelves when my boss Gomer Peacock stopped me, telling me that a whistling girl and a crowing hen always come to some bad end. But as long as I was able to I liked to whistle, seemed to make things easier and the work go faster.

## **Our Piano**

I was just eight when Father bought the piano. We had a pump organ, but I wasn't big enough or strong

enough to pump the organ and hit the right keys. Though I didn't ever become much of a pianist, I got where my friend Helen Smith and I could play a duet for the children to march in and out at recess at school, although I'm sure they got tired of the same two tunes.

The town rally began to grow. They started building the new church house which was to be the Tabernacle, serving the entire county for what our L.D.S. people call quarterly conference. For us, it always meant a lot of company from Sunnyside and Castle Gate. Everyone still traveled by horse and buggy, and the children in our family usually got to sleep on the floor so the visitors could have the beds.

One of the things I remember was that I used to pump the pedals on the organ so Edith Jones (Olsen) could play the keys. I think that was one reason Dad decided on the piano. For years after, Mrs. Olsen was the organist for all the church functions. One of the tunes she played most often was Meditation, and Dad requested that she play that at his funeral, which she did.

## **School Fire**

One Sunday night, as Gertrude Frandsen and I were going to church, we could see that there was smoke and fire of some kind coming from the schoolhouse. We had some boys run and tell the firemen about it. Then we thought we would be of help, as the men were trying to get out desks, etc. We went upstairs and were throwing out books and supplies, out of the window, but wasn't long before my dad was up there ready to throw us out for taking such a chance. The result was that our classes were held the rest of the year in different buildings. The fourth and fifth grades were in a new building on First West, which later became a garage.

There were just a few students in the High School that had been built at the top of the street which was then called Eight Street and later called Carbon Avenue. The school was built in the foothills of what had always been known as Wood Hill. It was such a beautiful setting for the big white school which we thought would be there forever. Since I was in it from the sixth grade on it holds many memories, most of them real fun times.

## **Summers**

Summers meant having a lot of fun, along with helping in the garden and orchard. We usually went wading in the ditches. Our new neighbors on the south, the MacKnight family, had girls the same age as Jennie and I. Helen was my age, Virginia here. Mrs. MacKnight thought we may as well try swimming in the canal that ran north of our house. We didn't have swimming suits, so just tucked our dresses up under our bloomer legs and went about a block north of the house to get in. Bloomers came just above the knee and had elastic around the bottom usually. We were having a good time when a policeman came and said Mrs. Anderson had reported us, as it was the water they pumped up to the reservoir for drinking water. So that ended that.

But it wasn't long before the city found a place about three blocks farther west that they could fill with water and that was the first of the many swimming pools we enjoyed. We were lucky that they had a pool in the new high school that we used in winter. The boys had it three days a week and the girl two. It was next to the gym in Carbon High. A few years later it became unusable, as the walls weren't waterproofed enough, so it ended up being used as the Manual Arts classroom.

Price always provided a good swimming pool. For years it was just for the warmer months, only a block north of the Potter home and a block west of my home after I was married, and I loved to swim. Then later they built one in the park and in later years built a big enclosed one next to it. It is a pool large enough for State Swim contests and even now in 1980 has a pool full of elderly people from six in the morning until eight thirty, when the school begins to use it.

I had many friends, some of them were the ones I enjoyed in Church activities, mainly from people that lived in Price when we moved there. There was Iva Fausett, her brothers became famous artists, the ones

that did all the murals in the new Civic Auditorium depicting the early settlers. This is still one of the sights on looks at when visiting Price, and both Lynn and Dean have paintings in lots of big museums.

There were many families of Frandsens – Gertrude, whose father was Ras and who was a witnesses at my wedding; and Estella, the daughter of Lars, whose father had one of the first garages and that got us in a little trouble when we were teenagers, were my two close friends. The there were a number of Paces but closest were the Jim Pace family that lived on the block just below us.

## My Family

I haven't said much about my family and they were really the most important part of my life. As they were growing up, each one worked in Sunday School, Primary, or Religion classes, along with their outside work and always trying to make the house look good.

I don't remember **Sarah's** marriage, as it was in the Salt Lake Temple. They went to live in a coal camp called Mud Creek near Scofield, where Henry had some kind of book work. But later Sarah came home for a visit and I remember being sent a few blocks away to Laubers for the day, which was fun. When they came after me they said a big surprise awaited me. It was a niece. Sarah had her new baby girl, that they named Grace. Henry soon had a new job in Kenilworth. He was to be Bookkeeper for the General Store, and Postmaster. Later he ran a movie once a week in the amusement hall. I spent many wonderful times at their home.

**May** usually had a couple of boy friends that the folks were always asking about, but one seemed to be liked more than the others, only he was out in the county or over in Emery County quite a bit. He usually had a horse and buggy to take her for a ride. They always seemed to take off up the cemetery, so one night three or four of us left ahead of them and hid up there, hoping to see what happened. But it was so dark and we were so frightened that we were glad when they pulled away and we could run for home, as we knew we would get it for being gone so long. It ended up that she married him, Robert H. Stewart, the first county farm agent in our area, only he had two counties, Carbon and Emery. When they came home all their old friends had a had cart all decorated up with tin cans, etc. and met them the train, taking them all through Main Street with drums and any noise makers they could find.

**Edith** was the quiet one, always working at fixing up her bedrooms. She furnished her own with Birdseye Maple, even including a dressing table. Then she got a beautiful new dresser for the room that May had had, with lots of drawer space, for Jennie and I. I didn't have to meet her coming from work as she wasn't as frightened as May was, or else her "friend" saw her home.

She was married when I was near twelve years old. It was the only big wedding held in our old home. I was a flower girl. My dress was a salmon pink one, trimmed in white fur. It was a winter wedding and the house was filled with people. When they were wanting to leave to go to the place they had rented all their friends were waiting with noise makers, tin cans, etc. But Dad and Dave drove them away by throwing water from the upstairs porch on them.

## Dad's Mission

The year I was **fourteen** Father was called to go on a **Mission to the Central States**. He spent most of his time in Independence, Missouri, where he was in charge of a group from fifteen to twenty most of the time. Though he enjoyed his work he had a hard time with what they called chiggers, a bug that burrowed under the skin. But from the letters and pictures he sent home they had some fun times too, along with all their serious work. They gave him a silver loving cup with all their names on when he left to come home.

Those two years were especially hard on Mother and my only brother, **Dave**. While most of his buddies had gone on missions, they called our Dad instead of him. He had to return home from the Agricultural College to take over Dad's position as bookkeeper in the lumber yard and support the family. He took many years to get over that.

We did many things to earn money those years, to keep us going and support Dad. Mother took in four or five boarders. Four of them were in high school and one the basketball team. The fifth one was Ray Walters. He was through high school and came to Price to train in the Walker Bank. We just turned over the upstairs to them, with Dave taking the small bedroom and they had the other four. For Mother it meant a lot of cooking. I had to peel a lot of vegetables before leaving for school. Since we had a big garden, carrots, potatoes and turnips were plentiful and they could be taken care of early and left in salt water until time to cook.

**Dave** I thought we could make a lot of money by planting two of the lots Dad owned in **potatoes**. The Kenilworth Mercantile said they would buy them. By the time fall came they all had to be dug. We tried digging them by hand and picking them up, but could see we would never get through, so had a man come with a plow. But we still had to pick up all the whole ones and sack for sale. The ones that had a cut in we fixed for our own use. We ended up getting \$75.00 for the whole wagon load we sold.

## **Pig Story**

We had also raised a pig and when it was fat that winter a couple of the boarder boys, Dave, and I thought we could kill it and take care of it. I was to keep the fire going under the barrel of water so they could scald and scrape it. But were we shocked when we go the pig in the water to find we couldn't get it out. So we had to make a hurried call to Mrs. Bean, the butcher. Though he finished it for us, we had spoiled part of the meat as it was cooked with the hide on.

## **Our Car**

There was one fun thing about the two years. We had a car now and Dave had it all the time. Many the time I made a fuss and Mother insisted he take me along, like to Sunnyside to the opening of their big dance hall. One weekend we went to the Hot Springs up near Spanish Fork in Price Canyon to swim and camp for the weekend. We swam in the warm water and had a big camp fire at night. Sunday the sun didn't come out and it looked stormy, so we started for home. But it rained so hard and the dirt clay roads became so slick that we knew we could never make it. At that time Colton was a small town. The train stopped there and people took another train to Scofield and the mines up that way. We thought we could get that far and take the train on home.

But the train didn't run on Sunday, and the small hotel there was so crowded that people were standing everywhere. No one wanted to drive down the narrow winding road through Price Canyon. When a long freight train stopped, a lot of people decided to just get in a box car and ride home, so we went along. It was a fun thing to do, but when we got home it was after ten o'clock. Mother was really worried, as we had just left the car parked up there at Colton. But two days later Dave got someone from the lumber yard to take him up after it. It was a long time before Mother let us take the car out of town again. The only paved road was a short section from Price partway toward Helper.

I think the time I thought I was in the most trouble was when two friends, Leah Lee and Estella Frandsen, and I left Sunday School as we were going back to classes. We went down to the Frandsens garage and talked one of Stella's brothers into letting us take a car to go for a ride. He got in, showed us how to start and stop it, and we were only supposed to drive around a few blocks. It was a Dodge car, as they had the agency, and has something new, a stick gear shift in it. None of us had ever driven anything but a Ford with foot pedals for gears. We decided we would go to Helper and see what was going on. We managed to stop it on Main Street there and visited awhile. A Mrs. Milano had just come out of the Catholic church and wanted a ride to her home that was half way between Price and Helper. We told her we didn't think that if we stopped we could get it started again, as we had had trouble stopping it in Helper.

She agreed that if we slowed down enough she thought she could get out, and we were foolish enough to try it. As we slowed down and she tried to get out, we saw her roll down a small embankment. Just then the Price baseball team passed, as they were going to Helper and play ball. They stopped so we went on home. As soon as we got the car back in front of the garage we all went to my house. We went upstairs, as my

folks had gone back to church. We just stayed there and prayed and waited to hear the worst. Since we had a telephone upstairs the minute it rang one of us jumped and answered it. Brack Lee and one of the Frandsen boys called at different times, telling us how badly she was hurt but as yet they hadn't told the policemen. Once they said she had died. It was night before they called to tell us she wasn't really hurt, but they would have to tell the cops what we had done, anyway.

But since they didn't ever come to get us, by nine o'clock we decided we could go downstairs. Since Mother hadn't known we were up there all the time we were really lectured – for being gone all day.

## My Jobs

I don't remember many times in my life when I wasn't earning at least my spending money. One of the things I hated the most was ironing. Other than at home, it was doing Dr. Goetzman's white jackets and shirts. He was a dentist and they were friends of Mays. I always thought she must have told them that I ironed at home. So twice a week I went to their home on Carbon Avenue and went down the basement to iron. (she usually gave me some bread and butter.) The dollar at the end of the week week seemed like quite a lot then.

The ushering in the EKO movie was the most fun. Sorry to say, we used to give three tickets back to Mrs. Anderson. She resold them and then we bought a pecan roll that we divided in three, so we each had a nice size piece. But Mr. Stringham, the manager and later owner, was soon on to it. He said he thought the least we could do was give him his share, so we divided it in four.

They had built the Bonomo Building on the corner of Main and Carbon. The upstairs was a hotel, but Mr. And Mrs. Tiffany ran a delicatessen place on the corner that was a favorite stopping place of everyone for ice cream, sandwiches, tamales, etc. I wasn't old enough to work back of the fountain. But they had me in the back along with Dick Tiffany's sister, putting together the tamales, rolling the corn husks around the meat, and fastening the ties around them. But I usually had charged enough nut sundaes that my cash pay wasn't much.

I sure wouldn't want to give the impression that all I did was work, as I ran with a group of girls and boys that had some great times. Most of the boys belonged to an orchestra called the **HARMONY SEVEN** that played at all the dances, both school and public. Though they weren't really serious affairs, except Helen's and Jo's, all we girls had a special boy in the group. Leona Gunderson was the only one who ended up by marrying hers, Jon Evans, but that only lasted three years. Min was one called Tub Rumsey, the drummer, so even though I was supposed to be with him he couldn't leave the orchestra very often. I was free to dance with others, and that was one of my great pleasures. From when I was just fourteen on I would be at the high school Friday nights and the church or city hall Saturday nights. Even after I started going with Francis and he didn't dance, he would take me and stand around waiting for me, just visiting, while I had a good time dancing. Later on in life he learned to dance, too, and we had a lot of good times together.

## Meeting Francis

I was going to a butcher shop after school, doing his books, and then going at five thirty to a café. There I was typing up the next day's menus while running the cash register. That was where I met Francis, back home from the army. As he paid for his meal each night he would give me a Canadian quarter that I would have to return to him as we couldn't accept it. He would stand talking to me, and I was interested. **And that's how out interest in each other which grew into marriage and life together all began.**