

LIFE STORY OF RUELAND EARL WARD

I was born May 9, 1918 to Norman Ward and Luella Green Ward in a small lean-to which was built onto a log house my folks were living in. It was in a farm house my father owned 1 1/2 miles west of Felt, Teton, Idaho. I was the fifth child having two sisters and two brothers older than myself and one sister younger.

The day I was born there was six inches of snow that had just fallen. The roads were very muddy and impassable to cars. They could only travel by horse and wagon. My uncle George met the doctor in Felt and brought him down. My mother's sister, Leda, was staying with her at that time and she was responsible for giving me my name.

I had a very happy and eventful life as most boys of my age would have who lived on a farm in the country having access to many pets and a gentle horse to ride. I used to ride to Felt and get the mail when I was five years of age. Horses seemed to be a very important part of my early life. We used them for work and riding purposes. We did all our farming with horses as our means of power. I remember when we would milk 18 head of cows by hand and then harness 21 head of horses and go in the house for breakfast. Most of the time dad, uncle George, Leonard, Clifford and I would all help with the milking. When mother was alive she had a favorite cow that she would milk. Old Bolly would see mother walk out in the yard and she would walk in front of mother and stop. Mother would have the bucket and stool so all she had to do was sit down and start milking. When I was 4 or 5 years old I told mother I could milk bolly. She let me try and after a while, when mother decided I could, bolly became my cow to milk.

Leonard and Clifford would drive 8 head of horses on a 3 bottom plow and I would drive 5 head on a 2 bottom plow. They would have 4 head in lead and 4 head in back. I would have 2 head in lead and 3 head in back. Sometimes on the 80 acre field on the hill west of our house we would tie the lines to a lever on the plow and let the horses drive themselves down one side and turn tow corners and we would get on the plow when they came up the other side where we could be seen from the house. The horses did not need much driving.

I remember one time when I was discing with 4 head of horses, when a hail storm came over us. I was up on the hill and the horses were going into the storm. When the large hail stones started hitting them in the face I turned the horses around and tried to control them with their backs to the hail. We plowed a swath with the disk across the field and just before they came to the hillside the storm passed by. I was able to

get them turned and finally stopped at the edge of the hill. That still gives me a thrill when I think of it.

I used to drive the derrick team from the age of five until I was large enough to run a hay boat. I was driving the derrick team when my sister Maxine was born on August 20, 1925. Uncle George had a big by team named Jack and Jim that we used. When there was no hay to put on the stack I would run in the house and kneel by the bed and watch Maxine. Quite often I would stay too long so uncle George, who did all of our stacking at that time, would talk to the horses from the stack. Jack and Jim did not need me but I felt important by being there.

I attended school at Felt through the 8 years of district school and graduated from the eighth grade in 1932. My freshman year of high school I lived with Joe Williams in Ashton. I was with aunt Katherine and uncle Edgar Thompson in St. Anthony my sophomore year. I attended Teton High School the next two years and graduated in 1936. I was student body president in 1935-36. Chloe Winger was the vice president and Lois Sewell was secretary.

My mother died on February 8, 1928, following the birth of a baby girl who was born dead, from Bright's disease. She died in St. Anthony, Idaho and was buried in the St. Anthony cemetery.

My father married again in 1934 to Grace Speed Bloomfield and they moved to the state of Washington in 1936. I lived with my uncle George Ward on the old home ranch.

I attended the USAC in Logan Utah the fall quarter of 1936 and winter quarter of 1936-37. The next year I stayed out of school and worked for Milton Phillips on his sheep ranch. I attended Ricks College the next fall. I came to Rexburg two weeks before school started so I could get in on football practice. I graduated after summer school in 1939.

The fall of 1939 I received a contract to teach school in Cache located three miles south of Teton. I was to teach the 5-8 grades. About two weeks before school was to start I was told they would only have one teacher so I taught all eight grades that year. John Buxton died that fall so I moved in the his family and milked cows and helped with the chores.

On the 21st of August 1940 I married Estelle Thatcher Jensen in the Salt Lake Temple. After a short honeymoon in Yellowstone Park we moved into part of Elmo and Gladwin Gee's home in Cache where we lived the next school year while I was teaching my second year there. The next summer we moved to the ranch in Felt and lived with uncle George.

I signed a contract to teach in the Driggs elementary school the next year for \$90.00 a month for 9 months. We lived

in part of Edna Sheets home. On December 5, 1941 our first daughter, Jerrie Lynn was born. This was two days before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

The next year we moved to the old Rex Smith home where we lived while I taught my second year in Driggs. A high school teacher by the name of Cleo Pond lived with us that winter and taught there. We had three cows to milk which brought in more money than my wages so we decided to buy the ranch from uncle George and quit teaching school. We obtained a government loan to buy the ranch.

During the war Estelle taught 1/2 year in Felt. As prices began going down after the war we decided I had better go back to teaching to help on the expenses and taught for three years in Felt.

On October 2, 1945 our son Rueland Lane was born. That day I was starting to cut second crop hay. This was very unusual for our valley. Our life seemed very complete at this time but as usual we had our discouragements. When Lane was 10 days old we discovered he had a bad hernia. Our family doctor would not operate as he had never done so on such a small baby. We had to take him to Salt Lake where they operated on January 17, 1946.

On June 16, 1948 our second daughter Cathryn Ann was born. The opening from her stomach was partially closed so we had to give her belladonna 1/2 a drop three times a day.

On March 28, 1952 Lane came home from school with the mumps and on the 29th our daughter Susan Denise was born. She was a microcephalic and it was a real shock to all of us. We left her in the hospital for three weeks while the children all had mumps and measles. At the end of that time we were able to take Susan home and give her all the love a family could give her. She has been an inspiration to our whole family.

In 1952-53 I taught the 6th and 7th grades in Tetonia. The next year I taught the 5th grade and the third year I taught the 6th and 7th grades again.

In 1954-55 I was asked to fulfill the position of special interest leader on the Mutual Stake Board.

I was having so much trouble with my back the doctor advised me to get away from the heavy work and lifting on the ranch to see if it would help, so we rented our cows and ranch to Wayne Atchley and moved to Rexburg where I attended Ricks College. Estelle worked in the principals office at Madison High School. Grandmother Shaw took Susan for 9 months so Estelle could work. I took 21 and 22 college credit hours each semester so that I could graduate the next summer with my Bachelors Degree in Education. Ricks College was being changed back to a two year college the

next school year.

I had my back operated on in the Idaho Falls hospital by Dr. Stanley Sell assisted by our family doctor Dr. O.D. Hoffman. Instead of fusing the vertebrae as was planned before the surgery they decided to trim the ruptured disc from pressing on the nerves and not fuse it. This was to give me more back movement. I was able to take enough classes during that summer so I could graduate with the last class while Ricks College was a four year college.

In the fall of 1956 I began the school year as principal of the Burton Elementary. This was a small country school about five miles west of the city of Rexburg. The school had changed from a four room school with two grades in each room to a three room school with two grades in each room. The 7th and 8th grades were bussed to Rexburg and a Junior High School was started in town.

In the spring of 1956 grandmother Shaw brought Susan home. That September we took Susan to Nampa where she could have better care. Estelle worked as a secretary to Willis Nelson, high school principal, during the school years 1955-57.

On January 12, 1958 a baby boy was born to our family and we named him Kerry Ryan. I was able to attend conference that morning after Kerry was born.

In the spring of 1956 Wayne Atchley notified me that he did not want to keep my cows. My idea was not to leave the ranch so I let Tom Smith, who was working at Ricks College, take them with the understanding that he was to buy them. He kept them for a year and a half and I had to take them back and sold them to Charles Burnside.

In the fall of 1956 I became principal at Burton Elementary. During this time I took night classes in counseling and guidance. In 1962 I changed schools and worked as part time Guidance Counselor and taught Math and Crafts in Madison Jr. High. In the spring of 1963 I applied for a Counseling and Guidance Institute at several different schools. I was accepted at the University of Wyoming and at Alabama University. We made the decision to go to Laramie, Wyoming. We moved to Laramie in the Fall of 1963. Estelle, Cathy and Kerry went over a few days early and made arrangements for a freezer locker. A few days later Lane and I loaded our old truck with a few of the necessities we thought we would need. Lane was a freshman at the University and I was working on my Masters in counseling and guidance. It was a very hard and tedious year that I was glad to see completed and I am sure my family felt the same way. We did have some very memorable experiences and met some very fine people. There were thirty people in the Institute and only three that would claim to be L.D.S. We got to learn about and

appreciate people of other faiths. Our daughter Jerrie Lynn was working in Logan and met a young man by the name of J. Wanless Southwick. They decided to get married in the Logan Temple on the 20th of December, 1993. It just happened that my professor had scheduled the Graduate Record Exam to be given from 4:00-7:00 on the evening of the 19th. Mother got the car packed and waited at home for me. I finished after about three or four hours and we left Laramie about 7:00 p.m. We arrived in Logan between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. and drove to the Southwick home. We were able to sleep an hour or two before getting ready to go to the temple for the wedding. It was a lovely experience to see our first daughter married to a good man in the right place. They had a lovely reception that night and we started for Rexburg early the next morning. We had friends prepare for a reception in the third ward church that evening. It was storming and took us six or more hours to drive from Logan to Rexburg. We really appreciate good friends who were so willing to help. We had a very good reception thanks to our friends, Ardath and Con Carlson. Cathy stayed with Peggy Clemons for Christmas and we went to Richfield and had Christmas with Clifford and Olive and family. We had a more mild winter in Laramie that year than they had in Rexburg.

Lane completed his freshman year in Laramie. Cathy completed her sophomore year in high school. Kerry went to kindergarten. Mother received her P.H.T. degree, (Putting Hubby Through) and I finished my Masters Degree in Counseling and Guidance so I was able to graduate in the summer. It was a good experience that I would not want to repeat.

My brother, Leonard, fed my cattle that I had accumulated and took care of the ranch while we went to school. We returned to the ranch in the spring of 1964 and moved to Rexburg that fall, living in the Lowell Barrick home. I was half time Guidance Counselor and half time teacher at Madison Jr. High School that year and have been counseling full time until 1970.

My father died in June 29, 1965. He had been in a rest home near Tacoma, Washington for three or four years. His wife, Grace, wanted to have him buried in Washington but the welfare would only provide a very minimum amount for burial. My brother Clifford talked her into letting Dad be shipped to St. Anthony and let his children pay the difference to give him a decent burial. He was buried in St. Anthony by the side of my mother.

The fall of 1965 Uncle George became quite ill. He was in the hospital in Driggs for a while. When he started to get better we knew that he could no live alone so he went to a nursing home in Rigby. He disliked this very much. We would try to go see him as often as we could, at least twice a week. He died on the 14th of March 1966. This made quite a change in

going back to the ranch. He had been like a father to me since Dad got married and moved to Washington in 1936.

My back was bothering me in my work on the farm and at school so in June of 1966 we went to Logan where Jerrie and Wanless were living. They had just brought their second baby, David, home from the hospital. While we were there visiting, Estelle called the Salt Lake Clinic and got me an appointment with Dr. Okelberry. While there he told me that he thought he could relieve my trouble with an operation but there was no room to get me into the hospital. We went back to Logan and stayed with Jerrie. While we were attending the funeral of Mr. Elija Robinson, who used to live by my father when he homesteader in Teton Valley, the doctor called from Salt Lake and told me to report to the hospital that evening. I was operated on the next morning. They fused the two vertebrae and the operation was very successful. I was down most of the summer but was able to go to work when school started.

Lane went o his mission to England the fall of 1964 and returned home the fall of '66. Lane and Cathy both attended Ricks College in '66-'67. Lane went to Alaska to work the summer of '67 and he and Bonnie were married November 27, 1968 in the Idaho Falls Temple. Cathy completed her nursing degree at Ricks the spring of '68.

The spring of '67 we rented a home in Plano for the next winter so we would be able to keep our own cattle. Leonard had been feeding them in the winter before this. Leonard's health was not too good so we decided we had to move somewhere to take care of our won. We enjoyed our winter in Plano very much. The next spring we bought three acres of ground from Eldon Steiner and started to build a new home. that summer Estelle and Kerry and I went to the forest and got out poles and posts to build a shed for our cattle. That fall we lived in the basement of our new home. We had cardboard walls and a fire place for heat. We built the shed for the cattle and had them in Rexburg. That summer I had the misfortune of tipping the Ferguson tractor over on top of me. I was very fortunate and was rescued in a short time that seemed like hours to me. I spent three days in the hospital. I had no broken bones but Dr. Hoffman said it was crushed soft tissue. I felt very lucky that it was not more serious. Kerry saw the whole accident and it upset him very much. We also had the misfortune of being gassed with a small butane heater we borrowed from Leonard. Estelle and Kerry both passed out but we were able to get to the hospital for a short stay.

Lane was accepted to the dental program at Northwestern University in Chicago in 1969. They left that fall to go to Chicago.

Leonard had a heart attack and went to the hospital in Driggs the last of February, 1969. After spending about two weeks in the hospital the doctor let him go home. He had another attack the next day and they rushed him back to the hospital where he died shortly after arriving there on March 11, 1969. Stanley came from California to run the ranch for his mother.

Kerry and I moved up to the ranch in the spring of '69. Estelle finished her work at school and then went to Salt Lake for an operation. The morning of July 1, I got up and left Kerry asleep. I built a fire in the trash burner and went out to do chores. I rode my horse out in the pasture to check on the cattle and when I came back I noticed vapor coming from the shingles of the house. When I went in to check I found the house a blaze with Kerry asleep in the bedroom. I rushed in and woke him. He grabbed his baseball uniform and ran outside. Enough help came and we were able to cool the air with water so we were able to get a lot of the things out but the house burned to the ground. The water tank exploded and sent burning material flying over most of our furniture, bedding and clothing, so most of it was ruined.

We bought a 21 foot trailer house in which we lived for the rest of the summer. This was our summer home for several years while we worked on the ranch. We finished our home in the mean time.

Cathy met Rodney Green in February of 1970 when he came into the Health Center at BYU with an injured ankle. As time passed interesting things happened and they fell in love. They were married August 21, 1970 on our 30th wedding anniversary.

Lane graduated from Northwestern in June, 1973. Rod, Cathy, Kerry, Grandma Shaw, Estelle and I drove to be with Lane when he graduated. After visiting Lane and Bonnie, we drove to Virginia and stayed with Rod's cousin, Darelyn and toured Washington D.C. and area for two days and then we drove to Palmyra, past New York, and on to Niagara Falls where Rod was on his mission. We drove on to Chicago through Canada and came out at Detroit and on to Lane and Bonnie's. We were in our first cloud burst during Lane's graduation. There was 4-6 inches of water in the parking lot when we went to our car.

Lane and Bonnie and two daughters, Kami and Kolette, who were born in Chicago, moved to Miami where Lane was in the Public Health service for two years. Mother, Grandma Shaw, Kerry and I flew to Miami and had Christmas with Lane and Bonnie and girls in 1974. We went to Disney world and Cape Canaveral. Lane and family moved to Rexburg in 1975 and set up his dental practice.

In 1974 Estelle, Kerry and I went with Garth and Nina Joy

Holman and their daughters, Diane and Collette, back east to bring back two school busses for Madison School District. We made the tour to Palmyra in time for the Pageant. Then we went to Niagara Falls and back to Chicago and picked up the two busses. We had an enjoyable trip.

In the spring of 1976 we had a very wet spring. My best cows were knee deep in mud and I lost several calves. This helped my decision to sell the cows and try to sell the farm. I sold the beef cows to a Mr. Shirley in Salem. I hauled the yearlings to Richfield where Clifford pastured them until fall. It was when Kerry and I hauled a pick-up load to Richfield on Friday and stayed over night. When we were coming home Saturday morning, a pick-up passed us going very fast. Kerry was driving and I told him that fellow knew something we did not or he is crazy. I turned on the radio and we heard the announcement that the Teton Dam had broken. Kerry drove quite fast the rest of the way. When we came to the Teton River bridge they were blocking the traffic. they said there was a wall of water coming through Rexburg at that time. We told them we were going through as Mother and Grandma Shaw were home. We had 6 milk cows and two calves and three horses. We were home an hour before the water came. Mother had the animals turned loose. Grandma had washed clothes. We hooked on the trailer house and I backed the truck up to the loading ramp. I had to pump a trailer tire up and we took the trailer and our car up on the hill above Rexburg. We came back with the car and the cows had all walked into the truck. One calf was on the ramp. I closed the gate but we were not able to drive the truck out. they stayed in the truck for two days. They had plenty of water. The water filled out basement and Mike and Karen Fullmer who lived there lost everything they had. We did not get water in the upstairs. It cost more to redo the basement than it had to build it the first time. Many people from Utah to Boise, Montana and Wyoming came in to help clean up. It was really a good feeling to see all the busses filled with people, tractors and trucks that came from far away. The church set up their buildings for use and Ricks College fed thousands of people for several days. It was a great demonstration of what the church is able to do in a disaster. We sold the ranch to the O.J. Neeley Corporation in 1976 just before the flood.

Kerry received his mission call in January 1977 to the Taiwan Kaohsiung Mission. He was very excited to receive this call. At the end of his mission we received permission to tour his mission with him when he was released. It was a great experience and pages could be written about it. We traveled the full length of the Island and were the only white people that we

saw. Kerry was a good guide as he knew the language well. We also spent 2 days in Hong Kong before flying to Hawaii where we stayed with Ann Shaltry and her husband John. They were very good to take us around the sights of the big island. We saw the cultural center, the temple and where the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and other parts of the Island.

We had trouble each year getting our payment for the ranch from Neeley's. They had turned the property over to their son Jud an alcoholic. In 1982 when the payment came due and was not paid we checked with our attorney and he advised us to go to Driggs and get the quick claim deed put back in our name and take the property back. We did this the next day. It was not long before Rob Reiley, our realtor, had the farm sold to Reed and LaRee Casper.

We retired from Madison School District in the spring of 83 with plans to serve a mission for our church. I had been school psychologist for the past ten or more years and mother had been secretary and right hand person for Robert Pederson in the Madison Jr. High. They gave us a clock with a placque on it saying it was given in honor of 49 years of combined service in the school district. Estelle was a very good secretary. When Mr. Pederson would leave he would tell her to take good care of anything that came of anything that came up while he was gone.

Grandma Shaw came to live with us and we put our mission off for a while. She needed constant care and mother accepted the duty of doing it for her. Tracy came to live with us and help with Grandma. That worked great for a while. Tracy was in the nursing program at Ricks College. Grandma did not accept Tracy's help and wanted Estelle full time. Tracy moved to the Pineview Apartments her second year. We were called to work in the temple one day a week but Estelle could not leave grandma so I served for 2 years without her. Grandma became very ill and we took her to the hospital in February of 1985. The Dr. recommended that we put her in a nursing home so she could get the therapy she needed. She hated the nursing home and passed away February 24, 1985. She had been there 18 days.

We received our mission call to the California San Jose Mission and went into the Mission home on the 15th of October 1986. We were away 2 winters and only one summer. Stan and Brenda's daughter was married that summer so she and her husband Matthew Hyer lived in our home while we were away. Dick and Jordis Shaltry were living in the basement at that time.

We were assigned to the bay area below San Francisco call the Silicone Valley. We served in the Los Altos 3rd, and Sunnyvale 1st and 3rd wards. We had a very interesting and enjoyable 18 months there. We met some very special people that we learned to love. Some of the special highlights were when

our family came to visit. Kerry and Linda were living in Nevada and were able to come 2 or 3 times. Lane and Bonnie and family and Cathy and Rod and family came once. That was a special time for us.

We returned from our mission on April 27, 1988. We have been busy ever since doing church work and going to ball games. Estelle served 5 years on Ricks College campus in the Stake Relief Society Board in the 2nd and 5th stakes. I served 4 years on the High Council. We were released in the spring of 1993. I was released two months before Estelle was. By the time she was released we were both set apart as stake missionaries in the 13th ward in the Rexburg Center Stake. We are still serving in the temple on the Thursday early morning session and other days when we substitute for friends. We are still enjoying life. (November 1993)