

Life in Grafton

Based on
Accounts by

Grace Atkin Woodbury
And Bertha Wood Hall

By Victor Hall

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Introduction

Grafton was settled about 1860, a few months after Virgin was established. Seven families lived there in 1870 and eleven in 1900. An LDS Ward flourished there for years. Floods swept away much of Grafton's farmland and its inhabitants were enthusiastic supporters of the Hurricane Canal project. When it came time to move, some Grafton homes were dismantled then re-assembled in Hurricane. By 1915, Grafton was almost deserted. Life in Grafton can be glimpsed through the eyes of two charming and impressive women, Bertha Wood and Grace Atkin. Both were born in 1889. Bertha was born in Grafton and lived there until approximately age twenty when she moved to Hurricane. Grace was born and raised in St. George. She taught school in Grafton during the winter of 1907-08 when she was eighteen. Bertha later married Lafayette Hall and Grace married Angus Woodbury who became a renowned biologist at the University of Utah. Bertha's account is derived from interview notes made by her granddaughter Tauna (Hall) Navalta. It is presented first. Grace appears to have written her account later in life, probably to be read at a Grafton reunion. Bertha infers that she was a student in Grace's class but she may have just cited Grace as an example of a homesick young teacher. They give slightly different versions of the "hidden hen" probably because there was more than one such incident. They also give slightly different versions of the "hidden English books" incident. Bertha is more likely correct in this case because it happened before Grace came. Grace had more educational opportunities than Bertha, but Bertha's eloquence in describing the activities, the pleasures and the trials of growing up in the tiny village is unexcelled. Some minor edits were made in Grace's account; hopefully changes she would have made herself had she owned a word processor.

Victor Hall

Bertha Wood, Grafton Childhood

As I look back in my life, I think the happiest days were when we lived in Grafton. When I was a little girl, everything was a pleasure, even going to the field and hoeing and pulling wild oats out of the wheat field. Life was a pleasure to me. And then up on the mountain bringing the cows home at night. Everything seemed like it was nice to do. We had such nice neighbors. The people in Grafton were just like one big family. And then we had lots of horses. We used to ride horseback all the time. Some of my friends were Edgar Gibson, Ether Wood, Jean Russell, Thatcher and Harvey Ballard, Roe Ballard. Oh, there was quite a bunch of us that age. Dorothy and Eva Stratton, and Wealthy Isom, Lizzy Ballard, Ivy Wood, and we used to have the best times. Especially when we would have a big melon bust every few nights. We dried peaches - they dried lots of fruit up there and they'd have a "Cutting Bee" - they'd all gather around and cut peaches for an hour or two and then they'd have a melon bust. It was all a pleasure.

When I was a girl, even a little bit of a girl, we'd have to piece quilt blocks. We'd all get together after school almost every afternoon. We'd have to piece two or three quilt blocks before we could play. All of us had to: Eva, Lottie, Ivy, Me, May, Ella and Francis. The older girls used to come with us and they'd piece their two and we'd piece ours. I guess they'd come to show us how. When we'd get that done, we'd get up and play ball, run races, ride horses or just anything.

We had lots of Indians around Grafton. They put their homes or wickiups along the hill just above our place. They used to come to our home a lot. Once, before I was very old, and when Grafton was just started, the Indians came and were really tearing things up around there. So the folks all got together, fixed up a big bunch of food and clothes and took them to the Indians. It made peace between them and us. Seems like we always had a big bunch of Indians. And we used to feed them when they would come to our homes. At Christmas we used to always make something special for the Indians - pie, cake, bread, anything that we thought they'd like. Everybody in town made something and then on Christmas morning, they'd come to every door in town and say, "Christmas give." And we'd take a sweet out and give it to them.

There was this one Indian that we called Wylie. When he died, they buried him in Grafton. I can remember after they got him down in the grave, they brought his horse and dug a big hole out to the side of his grave; killed the horse and put it down in there by him. They buried his saddle and rope too. After Wylie died, his wife, Sally - she seemed more like a white woman than an Indian - used to come there to my mother's place and if Ma was washing, she'd help her do that washing on the board. She'd pick Nen up and throw him up in the air and say, "He-po-aun-o baby. Pretty baby. He-po-auno baby." That meant good, real good. Those Indians were always so good to us. Seemed like those squaws liked my mother. Once right in the dead of winter, oh, it was cold, this Indian woman brought her newborn baby up and gave it to my mother. Just handed it over to her. The Navajo's were raiding at that time and she was afraid for her baby so she brought it to my mother. Ma took that little baby and kept it for weeks. Finally she came back and got it and she cried and cried when she saw that little baby again. Old Mary was Po-ink-um's woman or squaw. They liked Grafton so much that they made their home there. They had two children: Wylie, that I talked about and the Puss. Ivie often thought of it - Puss, just standing out there leaning up against a big ol' cottonwood tree that was just a little ways from the school house, while we were in school. Then he would come and play with us during recess. He liked to play ball. And sometimes he would go home with some of the children at noon, then he'd come back. But he wouldn't go in the school building.

After Po-ink-um died and they had a funeral for him, they buried him in Grafton. Old Mary didn't want to leave but when nearly everyone else had moved away, then she went to live with the Indians more. The last time I saw her was in Leeds. We were going from Hurricane down to the Grist Mill in Washington and we had to go around that way cause there wasn't any road down this other way. Well, Edgar, May and I were taking some grain down to get it ground. Mary was sitting on the ditch bank crying just as hard as she could cry. I went over to her and told her who I was (she was blind) and she put her arm around me and just cried and cried. I couldn't talk to her cause she was crying so hard, ya know they didn't talk so plain anyway. So I went in and asked Tom Stirling's wife what was the matter with Old Mary. She didn't know. Mary had been crying for days. A while after that, they told me that the Indians had come and taken her while she was crying there in front of that place, and they thought Old Mary had been put in one of those pens. When the squaws got too old, the Indians would put them in a pen to die - they would just starve to death. Tom Stirling said he would do all he could to keep her out - but they must have come and taken her.

The Indian kids used to play with us all the time. And ride horses, Oh, they loved to ride those horses! They'd see us out riding our horses and away they'd come to ride with us. There was this one little girl - Wylie's and Sally's granddaughter - that would come just a flying to go for a ride with us. The Indians were quite interesting. They wouldn't stay in Springdale or Zion over night. They were afraid of the ledges around, superstitious about them. They wouldn't go up and stay over night, only just up and right back. Some of the people in Grafton could talk Indian. Ep Ballard was just like an old Indian. On the 24th of July, he would get up and tell the pioneer story to the Indians in their language and his brother, Dave, would get up and tell us what he said. My Dad could talk some Indian too.

Mother used to go to Virgin to Relief Society, sometimes. They were having a program of some kind or else they were giving the lesson, but anyhow, someone got up and talked in tongues in Relief Society and no one knew what she said, only my mother. Ma said, "I knew every word that woman said." But she was scared; she didn't know she had the gift of interpretation and she didn't get up and translate. Afterwards she told them that she knew what was said but she told them, "I didn't think it was me that was the one that could translate." So the next week Ma went back and told them what the lady had said. Ma used to tell us lots of stories, mostly Book of Mormon stories, and I have the book she used to give them from. It was a Book of Mormon Story Book. My parents told us about their lives, also. It was kind of a hard life for them. They had to really work. My mother and Aunt Mary (her twin) worked down at Silver Reef from the time the mine started 'till the time they were married. They lived there too and told about the people that came there, the people that didn't belong to the Church. She said, "You could pick them out every time. You could pick the ones out that belonged to the Church and the ones that didn't."

My little sister, Jennie, was a cute little girl. Everybody loved that little girl. Even when she got big, she never had an enemy in the world. You never saw such a wonderful disposition as she had. And she'd try to help everybody. But she was sick, awfully sick when she was a little girl. Once my Dad was down to St. George. Uncle George Gibson had his leg broken and one of the family would go down to stay with him for a week, and then come back and another would go down to stay with him. Well, my Dad was down there staying and Jennie got sick, just terribly sick. So they got word to him that she was real sick, and he got on his horse and rode up over the Hurricane Valley - wasn't anyone that lived here at that time, that was before the canal was ever thought of - and he got to Grafton way late in the night. We were afraid that she was going to die. Dad went up and touched her and she looked up and said, "Papa." That was about all she said and then went right off again to sleep. He tended her the rest of the night and the next morning she seemed better. She got over that spell, but she kept having spells, and I guess it was because she had heart trouble.

We used to have a cat that Jennie just loved. She loved animals and to be around them. After she was sick, and got a little better, Orrin went and got that cat for her. When it died we had a funeral for it. Edgar, Ether, Ivy and me and the rest of our group took it up to Magog to bury it. Magog was where we used to play all the time. It's just kind of a big pinnacle standing up there on the side of the hill with a hard-pan on top that the dirt had been worn away from. We used to go up there with our sleds and slide down there in the snow. So we took that cat up there to bury it. We had a funeral. Then they put the

cat in its casket, a box, where they were going to bury it. Then Edgar said, "Now all of you cry right hard." And we all started to cry. We used to do the darndest things you've ever heard of. (According to the Old Testament, Magog is home to the evil force, Gog. As you approach Grafton from the east, you pass a spire to the left and a lower elevation on the right. This elevation is believed to be Magog. Note. In the New Testament, magog is indicated to be an evil force similar to that of gog.)

We used Grandpa Wood's cellar, and one day I'd been over there. On the way back, I stopped to pick up some wood. Down in that wood, there was a big log laying there and a great big, long snake was kind of underneath it. Well, I stood right next to it pickin' up my wood and then I went on home and I said, "Oh, there's the biggest ol' worm over there to the blacksmith's shop." George, or Orrin, one of them got up and said, "Well, come and show me." I took him over there and there it was a great big ol' copperhead snake. Another time, they told me to run over to get some wood. I picked the wood up and put it on my arm and went on toward the house. They saw me a coming and one of them came running out and said, "Drop your wood. Drop your wood!" and grabbed it out of my arms. It dropped down and a long ol' snake was in with that wood that I'd been carrying. I was over by the blacksmith's shop. The blacksmith's shop was in between our place and Grandpa Wood's and everybody came there to use it. I went in there for some reason and there was this great big ol' snake. My it was long! I thought that was sure pretty and I sat down there with a little stick and tapped it on the head. Finally I got up and went over in the house and told them about that pretty snake. I think that one turned out to be a copperhead too. Elmer and I were up in the field pickin' tomatoes. We got about half way down through the patch and there was a snake curled up right in our way. When it saw us, it straightened out and just went a bounding through those tomato vines. I'll never forget it doing that. Elmer said, "We'd better pray." There was just is two kids and we were sure scared. Later one of the older boys came up to the field to find out how we were doing and saw the snake and killed it. It would surprise you what those older boys would do for us kids. If they thought we were gone a little too long then one of them would be after us. They really watched after us.

My father died when I was eight years old. He had a horse he was breaking; he had got it out with the wild mustangs. He thought it was gentle enough to go out on the range. To prove to Ma that the horse was perfectly gentle, he took the baby. Nen was only a few months old, and rode down the street and back with him. Well, Dad went out with a group of guys to gather the cattle. They split up and as Dad rode along, he came to a little wash that he needed to cross. The horse wouldn't go across so he was making it and it reared over backwards with him and the horn of the saddle went right over his heart. Finally the horse got loose and ran off, saddle and all. When the other men that he had gone out with found him, he was unconscious. They came back into Grafton and got a wagon to bring him home in. There wasn't a doctor in Grafton or around that area, and he kept getting worse and worse. Finally they did get a doctor from St. George. At that time it wasn't easy to come up from St. George. But they went and got this Dr. Afflick and when he got there, they had to sober him up before he could do anything. Well, Dad only lived until the next day.

Ma wanted to go out and see where he was killed, so a lot of the town's people went out with us. Two or three wagon loads went out. Jennie was lying in the seat asleep when we got out there. The rest of us got out of the wagon and some of them were

talking. She awoke and raised up in the seat and looked over towards a pile of rocks about where he'd been killed and said, "Mama, there's Papa, there's Papa!" She started climbing out of the wagon and George went over and lifted her down. She walked right over to that pile of rocks with her arms outstretched. Then she stopped and said, "Oh, he's gone."

When I was thirteen, they put me in as secretary of the Primary and I always felt I belonged. They asked me to preach down to St. George one time and I was just a kid, at least I felt like I was. There was a conference and we had to go down on account of Primary. So they got up and said I was going to tell a story. And I'd never heard of it or ever thought of it, but they asked me to get up and tell one anyway. So I got up and told a story in conference. I said, "It's just a primary story." I was so scared. A General Authority was there at the conference and afterwards, I believe it was Brother Cannon, came up to me and put his arm around me and thanked me for getting up and trying and telling that little story.

In Grafton we only had a grade school and many of our teachers were young girls, right out of high school. They would come up here from St. George or some place and soon get homesick. Grace Atkin was one of these girls that came up to be our teacher and she soon got homesick too. She thought Grafton was the littlest place she had ever been in. One day before she got to school, some of the boys got an ol' setting hen and put in it her desk. When she came and opened up her desk to put her books in, that ol' hen flew right out at her. Oh, she screamed; and yelled! Thatch Ballard got up, went up to her and asked, "Do you want me to catch that ol' hen?" "Yes!" she said, "And get it out of here!" Then Thatch said, "Do you want me to put you out with it?" She said, "No, No!" Well, I guess that brought her out of it cause when it was time for her to go home, we were having a farewell party for her and she said she liked that ol' hen and she liked Grafton and didn't want to leave. We didn't have English at all in school until our teacher got some brand new eighth Grade English Books. It had a lot of diagramming in it and even the teacher didn't know much about it, and we kids sure couldn't understand it. We couldn't get anything out of it. Thatch could always think of everything. He said, "I know what we can do with them. We'll gather those books up and hide them." So after school was out, every one of us took our English book with us. When the teacher had gone home we brought them back to the schoolhouse and those boys threw them up in the belfry. They found them years later. But the teacher sure wondered where all those new books had gone to, and not one of us would tell.

One day I went to the store over in Rockville. There wasn't one in Grafton so we had to ride our horses over across the river to Rockville. Those days the girls with dresses always rode side-saddle, one foot in the stirrup and the other leg over the saddle horn. There was this little boy in Rockville that wasn't very bright, and that little toad, he was always right out in the middle of the street. I had two arms full of groceries and I was going to put one on the back of the saddle and I'd take the other in front of me. Just as I was getting ready to tie it on, that little scamp came up with a red handkerchief and started to wave it right in front of my horse. Well, it scared the horse and it started to run and I had both my arms full. I cramped one down under me so I could hold on with one hand and that darn horse ran clear to Grafton. It never stopped, not even when we came to the river, which was kind of deep where we crossed. He just went in there with a big lunge and sure made a big splash but I held on. He ran clear up to our front gate and

came to a sudden stop! It was sure a ride but I held on to those groceries and got them home.

When we were teenagers we had a lot of fun. We danced what you call old-time dances: Virginia Reel. Quadrille, Minuet, Three Step, Schottische, Danish slide—off, Round dances and many others. When anyone would get married, we'd have a dance. It sure was fun. The dances were really started by us young kids, but the older people came just because they liked to dance. One night there was a dance at the school, and the curtains were closed on the stage. Elmer and Sheridan Ballard were up there behind those curtains just a'dancing and someone went up and right quietly pulled the curtains. There they were just a hoeing it down. When they looked down and saw everyone watching them, they sure scooted out of there fast.

The cowboys liked to come to the dances too. They worked out there at Canaan at a big cattle ranch. The Bar Z Company was from up in Wyoming and they'd bring the boys down from up North. A lot of them came from Deseret, Milford and all over up North. They were out there at Canaan and Cane Beds so they would come into Grafton for the dances and social life. Oh, they loved Grafton. They could always sing and dance. Oh, it was really a pleasure to have those guys come. George Voice was one, and oh, he was a fine fellow and a beautiful singer. He just almost made his home in Grafton but he died soon after he helped take a herd of cattle that they trailed up North to sell. He went with the herd and got walking typhoid and died. His mother wrote a friendly letter and addressed it to "the good people in Grafton" and thanked them for what they had done for that boy.

Joe Scow was another that came down there to break horses for Bar Z Ranch. Then he'd come on over to Grafton for the social activities. The first time I saw Joe was on a bronco horse fight out in front of our barn. That horse started to buck and it bucked clear down tile street, across through by the schoolhouse and down that steep hill into the river with him on it. He stayed on that horse! He was a real good rider. Joe was a good singer, also. He used to sing the prettiest songs you ever heard. Joe and Ella (my older sister) got interested in each other and they got married. Ella was really good to us kids. She'd just do anything for us. She liked to ride horses, too, and she was a good singer. She and my brother, George, used to sing together. She was really sociable and wherever she'd go, everyone would like her. She used to go out and work for people a lot. She was the most religious person for a girl and she really worked hard in the different organizations of the Church. After she and Joe were married for a while, they went to Deseret to live. She had three children but she died when they were quite young.

Grafton had more music than any place I have ever seen. Nearly every night or every few nights, everybody in town with music would get out there in front of the school/church building and start playing. There would be three or four violins, guitars, mandolins, and accordions. They'd get out on those steps and start playing, then everybody would come. Everybody would sing and everybody would dance. There was really a lot of pleasure that we got out of the hours we spent there. My Dad was a good singer. He used to sing lots of songs. Some of the songs my boys sing now were some of the ones he used to sing: Letter Edged in Black, After the Ball, Welcome Home, There's No One To Welcome Me Home. George, my brother, was a good singer, too. He'd go to a dance and they'd say, "George, sing for us!" "O.K. What do you want me to sing?"

He'd just walk up there and they'd say, "Sing anything you want to." He'd sing four or five songs every dance. I liked "The Fatal Rose of Red", but I like them all. He used to sing it so pretty and I felt so sorry. Oh, he could sing so many pretty songs like that. Orrin and Ella would sing sometimes too. And Nen and Elmer had pretty voices. I used to sing with them too - Elmer and me. Our whole family would sing. But then the Ballards would sing too, and the Russells could play about anything. Grafton sure had lots of music.

They raised lots of grapes down in the lower fields. Ep Ballard told us that any time on Sunday afternoon, if we'd all go to Church first, we could go down in his grape vineyard and get some grapes to eat. So we used to go down there a lot of the time to get grapes right after meeting. It was maybe a half-mile below Grafton. It was quite a little ways to walk, but we used to walk it a lot. Then we'd bring enough up so we could have a party that night, and then we'd invite Ep to come to the party. At those parties, boy, you'd have a good time. I remember when Spencer, Star, and Miner came to Virgin. It was during the time of the oil boom. They used to come to Grafton to join all of our parties. They'd come up every time we had one. So one night we had our box of grapes and invited them up to a party and had it down to Ep's. They had a big long porch in front of their house that ran clear across the front. We got up there and danced and sang. Miner and Star never did dance till they came to Virgin. We made them get out and dance. Mrs. Cowen was really friendly with the Grafton people and she lived in Virgin but came up there just to be with the people, just to talk to them. So we invited her up one night - her and Mr. Cowen, Spencer, Star and Miner. At that party we just had grapes to eat. They said, "That's the best party we were ever to! We never had any idea you'd put over parties like that."

When I was around twenty, my mother died, and then I had the family to take care of. We had gone to Kanarra for my brother George's wedding. That night they had a reception and a dance in the school building. Ma sat by a window that had a glass out and she must of caught pneumonia. Of course they didn't know much about pneumonia at that time. She lived only a few days and died in Kanarra. So we were left to look after ourselves. There was Orrin, and me, Elmer, Jennie and Nenniel. Nen was about twelve at that time. When the school closed in Grafton, we decided to move down here to Hurricane.

As I remember Grafton, Grace Atkin Woodbury.

October, 1907, two months before my eighteenth birthday, I left my home in St. George and went to Grafton to teach school. I had finished my education, all that the town provided, by graduating from two years of high school. My experience included some practice teaching when regular teachers were absent and I had taken a correspondence course in pedagogy. I also had a great deal of advice from my Aunt Zaidee, who had been a successful teacher for many years. Her slogan was "Be Firm". Other teachers, some young and some old, almost bogged me down with methods of discipline, punishment, and methods of teaching, how to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, not forgetting spelling, history, geography and grammar. "Be sure and give them a good foundation in grammar" said one of them. "Emphasize reading and spelling", said another, and above all things, "drill and drill their multiplication tables" advised a third. "Make them write so anyone can read it and don't leave out history and

geography” said others. I made notes, mental and written, and resolved to be a very good teacher, hoping that I could teach my pupils to be the best trained in the whole county. So it was that warm fall day when I left home with a heavy heart, a head full of admonition from my mother and a heavy telescope suitcase bound for Grafton forty miles “up the Virgin River” on the longest trip I had ever made.

Grafton, when I first saw it, was slowly but definitely on the way to be coming the deserted village it now is. For the gouging old Virgin River had carried off most of the farmland so the people were moving down on the Hurricane Bench. For years the men had spent time at hard hand and team labor (no caterpillars or trucks) building a long canal that would bring water onto that desert bench which they knew would produce fine quality fruit if irrigated.

Some families were already pioneering the new town and several more were planning to move down in the spring. All winter long it was a subject of constant conversation. The schoolboys and girls were looking forward to the change of homes and planning what they were going to do "on the bench". The girls were saving their newest dresses to wear to the first dance they would go to down there. It was their Land of Promise where everything the heart desired would be found.

I think that two years after I left Grafton, school was discontinued there and the old red schoolhouse lost one of its major functions. But there were two or three families who remained years after the general move. I would like to know whether everyone finally moved and left the little town without a single inhabitant.

I had forty-more-or-less boys and girls in seven different grades all in one room, some students being almost as old as I. My daily program was something to contemplate. I couldn't have taught all the classes I should, even if I had worked day and night. I reread my pedagogy. I recalled and tried to put in practice all the advice I had received, but I couldn't find anything that helped when the sixteen-year old daughter of a school trustee would call out to any of her four siblings when I asked them to recite or to stop talking, “You don't have to mind her for Pa is a trustee”. I kept them after school and worked separately with them to help them make even minimal preparation of their lessons. Worst still, “Pa” trustee backed up his daughter's statement and "came riding, riding, riding up" to the school house door (Allusion to the poem, The Highwayman by Alfred Noys, although Grace's account has a happier ending than that of the poem) when he found that some of his children were being kept in until they had prepared their lessons. He told me if I didn't let them go, he'd see to it that I be sent down the river and my career as the Grafton schoolteacher would be over. He also mentioned that learning poems, writing compositions, learning about them verbs and nouns wouldn't ever do 'em no good. I showed him the text and the outline of study and remembering My Aunt Zaidee's admonition, I was firm. I said they couldn't go until they had their lessons and as far as being sent down river, I might just as well go, for without the support of the trustee I was helpless to carry on my program. Well it all worked out. He told his children, who incidentally were plenty bright, to hurry up and get through as he needed them to pick apples and help with the chores. We parted friends, but an hour later as I watched his children go down the slope, I said to myself "There must be easier ways to make a living than teaching school." There were many other problems whose solution wasn't covered by the advice that had so freely been given me, or was covered by any

experience I had had while in training; but I can look back and smile at many of them now. The people who were raised here will remember far better than I that the schoolhouse was the center of all the social, civic, educational and religious life of the community. In addition, after these various meetings were over, especially on Saturday and Sunday nights it became sort of the clubhouse for the teenage group. Many a Monday morning when I went over to ring the bell at 8:30 I would find some of the desks and benches companionably and lovingly arranged around the large box-stove that stood in the center of the room. I had to place them back in order and sweep up the ashes and litter around the stove, which irritated but in no way embittered my young life. Sometimes the wood that had been chopped to heat the building on Monday had been used, which even in the cause of romance was a strain on one's patience and meant a cold schoolroom. One morning after a cleanup session, when I had returned to the Will and Lottie Russell home next door where I boarded, one of my pupils, a mischievous boy had his bright idea of the day and locked a hen in the cupboard. When I opened it to take out my roll book, she sprang out cackling and flew wildly about the room. The children shrieked with laughter. The problem was, "what should I do?" The pedagogy said that the teachers must keep calm and composed in emergencies, just act or pretend that such incidents were every day occurrences: a hen in the cupboard an everyday occurrence, what a laugh, but laugh I did and everyone joined in, for the first wild blast of laughter had been followed by a heavy silence. I couldn't think of a thing to say, but gradually there was silence again and I said ever so calmly to the boy I suspected of being guilty, "Will you please take this hen outside". He picked up the poor bewildered fowl from a windowsill, took her outside and tossed her in the general direction of her home coop. I never found out whether she got there but she headed down the hill.

The rest of the incident happened fifty years later when I was in Grafton with the St. George Sons of the Utah Pioneers who were making sort of a pilgrimage of the "up the river" cemeteries. We, Angus and I, were visiting in St. George at the time and were invited to go with the group. The feature of the day was a chuck wagon dinner that was served in the main street where the James Ballard home was located. During the impromptu program after dinner, both Angus and I were asked to tell of our experiences, he as a surveyor in and around Zion Canyon during the oil boom and I as a schoolteacher in Grafton during the same period. There were some local people from Rockville and perhaps Virgin and Springdale, but only one from Grafton and he was one of my former pupils-- the one I suspected as being the hero of the locked-in-hen event. So I told the group of the incidents and believe it or not, as I told it, what I should have said when I found that chicken in my cupboard popped into my head. Instead of standing in dumbfounded silence I should have casually remarked "What a nice surprise- another dumbcluck in my school," After fifty years it couldn't be called a snappy comeback, but anyway: better late than never; or was it?

Another interesting problem was getting the boys and girls to school at the same time. It wasn't just the ordinary kind of tardiness, for even though they were late, each tardy youngster declared that he was on time. The difficulty was there were two different kinds of time. Grandfather Alonzo Russell who lived with his son Will and family, where I boarded, ran his family and neighbors on sun time. Every day at noon he would step to the north kitchen door at his home, take out his watch and then check the location of the shadow in the "V" 'on Steamboat Mountain. (Now West Temple) adjust his watch and the kitchen clock if needed, then settle back in his easy chair feeling that, or the next

twenty-four hours time was all in order. The rest of the town ran on railroad time that was telephoned (or possibly, telegraphed) to the trustee.

Grafton is located on the bank of the Virgin River about ten miles down-stream from what is now the entrance to Zion National Park but that was called "Little Zion" by the local people of the region. I had heard of the beauties of the canyon but it was from my school girls that I learned of the lovely nooks full of ferns and flowers that years later I also visited and knew as the Grotto, Weeping Rock and Emerald Pool. But my first great thrilling view of the entire panorama of the Zion Country came when one cold January morning I left at 4:00 o'clock a.m. with James M. Ballard, his son Lafe, and daughter, Lizzie, for a trip out to Canaan for a load of wood. I recall driving up the dugway to the top of the low mesa near Grafton all bundled up in blankets, shivering a little partly from cold but mostly from the thrill of what to me was an adventure. We were on top of the mesa by the time the sun came up over the Eagle Peaks. It was definitely "something to write home about", or in other more modern terms "out of this world." Brother Ballard was a very intelligent and well-read man and as we traveled slowly along he pointed out historical places where the early cattle men had had trouble with the Indians; old grazing lands, now almost useless because of the herds of sheep that had passed like a scourge through the country. He pointed with his whip in the general direction where the Berry boys were killed by Indians and where James Whitmore and Robert McIntyre had been filled full of arrows and bullets. It was a day long to be remembered and I saw, listened, questioned and learned much. But the crowning thrill of the day came when we were driving home facing Zion and saw the light of the setting sun glow on its temples and towers. To quote Ruskin, there was "Glory after glory, picture after picture" --- radiantly beautifully outlined against the sky. It was the most thrilling scenic experience of my life and I have never ceased to marvel at its eternal grandeur. (John Ruskin, British essayist, was born in 1819 and his essays that extolled painters and writers such as Turner and Wordsworth were well known to educated people of Grace's day. He "was able to perceive beauty with an infectious intensity and to express his perception in memorable prose". It's no wonder that Grace enjoyed his writings.)

At the time I was in Grafton there was a small oil boom in progress. Oil had been found near Virgin about seven miles down the river from Grafton and surveying crews were staking out oil claims all over the region including Zion Canyon. Among them was Angus Woodbury, a St. George boy, with whom I had been going steady before either of us had thought of coming up the river. I was very happy, after signing to teach at Grafton, to learn that he had been employed to do some surveying in and around Zion with headquarters at Springdale. Every weekend he would ride down to see "that redheaded Grafton school teacher" as his landlady who had four marriageable daughters, referred to me, and I lived for his visits. Sometimes he would get an extra horse and we would ride up to Rockville where two other St. George girls, Ida Webb and Bertie Crosby were teaching school and living at the home of Delia and John Hall. On one visit when he didn't bring an extra horse, we rode double to Rockville on a wonderful ever to be remembered night. As we crossed over the river at Grafton the moon rose over the Eagle Peaks and lighted up majestic old Steamboat Mountain transforming it into a temple of transcendent beauty. There was the fragrance of ripening apples, drying hay and of cool wet willows that grew along the stream-- the kind of night that lovers through the ages have thought was made especially for them. Rockville is just two miles from Grafton and all too soon we reached the orchards at the edge of the village where we dismounted as

we decided it would be more dignified to walk the rest of the way to the Hall's home. As we walked along arm in arm, we paused by a large boulder near the roadside to again marvel at the mountains, the moon and the stars and - well one could get lyrical perhaps even boring on such an appealing subject - but I answered a softly spoken "yes" to a very softly spoken question and from that night on I knew that regardless of whatever plans I had made I wouldn't be an old maid school teacher. The great rock still stands unchanged, but the road has been moved farther away from it since that night more than fifty years ago. We have passed it many times since and always it brings a sweet memory of a pledge of love that has been kept through the years. The oil boom collapsed before Christmas and the surveyors and their crews who were left without funds to finish their contracts disbanded and went back to their farms and former jobs. Angus returned to St. George and I missed him keenly. However, I went home for two happy weeks at Christmas time, and in early February Mamma and Angus came up for a weekend visit which was one of the highlights of my life at Grafton.

I suppose it was just childish curiosity or a lack of something else to do that prompted the younger boys of the village to follow Angus and me whenever we went out for a walk while he was there. If we walked out to the old graveyard, they followed along a short distance behind us, darting behind trees or rocks when we turned around. It was the same if we walked down to the apple orchard or the oil derrick. Some of them, as soon as they found out where we were going, would take short cuts and get to the place ahead of us and be nonchalantly roosting on the fence along with the big black ravens when we arrived. Then as we turned homeward the rear guards took over and the advance guard followed us, only when we sat on a driftwood log on the broad sandy banks of the river in sight of most of the town were we left unescorted. Amazing as it seems, not one of those boys had become a secret serviceman, police detective or even a private eye.

But time whether it be the sun or the telegraph variety, time has a way of marching on. Six weeks after Mamma and Angus' visit, five months term of teaching expired. It was all-together too short a period in which to teach even the three R's adequately. I had worked hard, often I thought, futilely, but as one of my older pupils said, by way of consolation, "you didn't do so bad, the kids never locked you out of the school house even once."

As I sat out on the porch of the William and Lottie Russell home, where I had lived, making out the final report required by the school board, Frances, the 16 year old daughter of the house called "Don't you want to take a last ride down to river for a barrel of water? You'll be going back to St. George where you don't have to haul water - such a fancy setup - spring water running down ditches in front of your houses, and all you have to do is to dip it up and carry it little ways to your barrels." "But", I replied, "it isn't what you'd call a 'fancy setup' but there is talk of putting in a water system and then we will have it piped into our door yards."

"I can't imagine what it would be like - but let's go, I have the barrel on the sled and the horse hitched to it and ma is anxious to get to her washing, if the water is clear enough. I rode the sled and held the barrel in place and Frances rode the horse down the sandy road to the river where I helped dip up the water from the shallow stream into the barrel. During a pause for breath, for we were racing to see who could dip up the water

the fastest, I looked up at Steamboat Mountain to the north, the spires of Eagle Peaks to the East, and to the stately Smithsonian Butt to the south and finally at the village and the school house. "While I am very happy to be going home, Frances, I am going to miss all of this," I said with a sweep of my arm. "I wish I could go with you," she said, "How does it seem to live in a town where you have a building just for schools, a tabernacle where Sunday School and meetings are held, a social hall for ward parties, plays and dances, stores and a courthouse. You have been here just five months but you know what I mean," she continued but how would you like to spend the rest of your life here?" "But you are not going to, remember, your family will be moving down on the bench in a few years?" "Yes, I know but we will be pioneering a new place," she answered and "it will be years before we have a water system, and speaking of water -- there is ma out in the yard motioning for us to hurry up with this water."

Will and Lottie Russell and their two daughters Frances and Leone moved down to the bench which became a flourishing fruit and cattle grazing community known as Hurricane. Frances married a Hurricane boy, Howard Isom and died when her seventh baby was born. Leone is still living in Hurricane. She married Karl McMullin and they have nine children. Will and Lottie Russell have passed on to join their friends and neighbors, who in common with all of Utah's southern desert pioneers, spent their lives struggling to get water on the barren wastelands. Their watchword and hope was "The desert shall blossom as the rose" and for many in their later years, it did blossom peach, almond, plum, fig, apricot and grape (yes, and roses) blossom, fulfilling their dreams of a Promised Land on "The Bench".

In September of 1961 I was asked to come to Grafton to help celebrate its centennial but couldn't accept the invitation at that time. But since each September for several years, it has been a custom for the former residents to return to their little village for a picnic-reunion; Leone Russell McMullin invited me to come to the "gathering" in the fall of 1962. We accepted the invitation. Angus and I who had spent 'a week at Batatakin, headquarters for the Navajo National Monument, returned home on route through Tuba City, Kanab, and Hurricane. From there after a visit with Angus's brother Will and wife Verda, we drove up to Grafton. As we drove through the Grafton fields we had to stop while Angus opened and closed four primitive wire gates. At the forlorn little graveyard, some members of the Russell family were placing a stone at the head of Elias Russell's grave. Lias was the family bachelor and lived, or at least was tolerated, at his brother Will's home where I boarded. I felt so sorry for him because other than feed him no one paid any attention to his other needs. When his sox were worn in holes at the heel, he would pull them down until the hole was under his foot then lap the toe which was also holey over the top of his foot, replace his heavy ill-fitting shoes and hobble out of doors. I never saw him after I left Grafton but heard that he had perished in a snowstorm while walking out to Canaan and it was fifteen days before searchers stumbled over his body that was completely covered with snow. I hope the headstone made his relatives feel better. I wish that I had taken time to wash and mend his sox.

Angus and I were the first ones to arrive at the picnic place under the big trees in the street in front of the sorrowful looking Gibson home. While we were waiting for the other folk to gather, we walked up to the house where I had lived, once a substantial and comfortable home but now a gaping empty, forsaken house. Some of the other houses were falling apart, others had roofs that had caved in, everywhere there was ruin and

desolation, verily a "deserted village". But it was the schoolhouse that shocked me most, bereft of floor and door, its roof sagging and the windows sightless and sad without the window panes that had reflected the sun's risings and settings for so many years. The belfry was empty and the bell whose ringing tones could be heard at Rockville, two miles away, has disappeared and no one seems to know just what became of it.

But even as I stood there by the empty, bleakly lonesome shell of what was once the heart of the little community, memories of the forty boys and girls I taught, the parties, dances, choir practices, church services, christenings and funerals that had taken place inside its red adobe wall made me wonder if ever a little building had ever paid greater dividends to those stalwart men, who at heavy personal sacrifice, had built it a hundred years ago.

By noon about forty people had gathered under the trees, fires from the dead trees and old broken wooden fences were soon burning and while the women set the tables, the men put the chicken in the bake skillets heaped coals on the top of the lids and soon the most delectable odors tantalized our noses. Someday I vowed then and there that I would give Charles and Mary Lamb some competition and write a dissertation on bake—skillet chicken. Also, there was an appetizing array of potato salad, baked beans, fresh corn on the cob, sliced tomatoes, cheese, pickles, handsome loaves of homemade bread, apple pie, chocolate, boiled raisin, lemon and spice cake, grapes, sweet as only grapes grown on the southern Utah deserts can be and there was lemonade to drink. I tried to sample all of the cakes so as not to miss any made by my former students, Leone, Eva, Bertha and Lettie whom I taught in 1907 - 8. Several of the boys who were also in my school took charge of the bake-skillets cookery and with long forked sticks lifted off the lids and with a practiced eye judged just how long it would take to finish cooking. Some of the boys and girls I recognized because of family features and characteristics, even though I hadn't seen them since I left Grafton. Others came up and introduced themselves by saying, "Remember me, the dumbest kid in your school, or I know you don't remember me but I'm the one you broke your ruler on, which wasn't true, but we both laughed anyway and it probably would have served him right for he was the son of the grammar—hating trustee. Said another, "you wont want to know me for I was the meanest kid in school". Today he would have been termed a "problem child" but in nowise a "juvenile delinquent", I'm glad I didn't have to cope with boys and girls of that type - mischievous and capable of causing a lot of trouble for a teacher and his school mates, but innately decent. Then there was Lettie who remembered that I had given her a "string of beads", because she was the best speller in her grade, so she, now a gray haired, sweet faced lady told me. I was glad that she did.

When Leone had written her letter of invitation, she asked if I would write something about my experiences while I was in Grafton, and so I read some that I have mentioned in this chapter to the group after the feasting and greeting were over. These brought back memories of other school teachers and other pranks that were played on them.' When I read that episode about my experiences regarding trying to make the trustee's children, who were divided in five different grades, prepare their grammar lesson. The self styled dumbest boy in class said, "Why you done right well with that grammar business, didn't you ever hear what happened to one of the teachers who was here a few years before you was." I hadn't heard and he continued, "well, I tell you, someone of those grammar hating boys gathered up all of them grammar books and hid

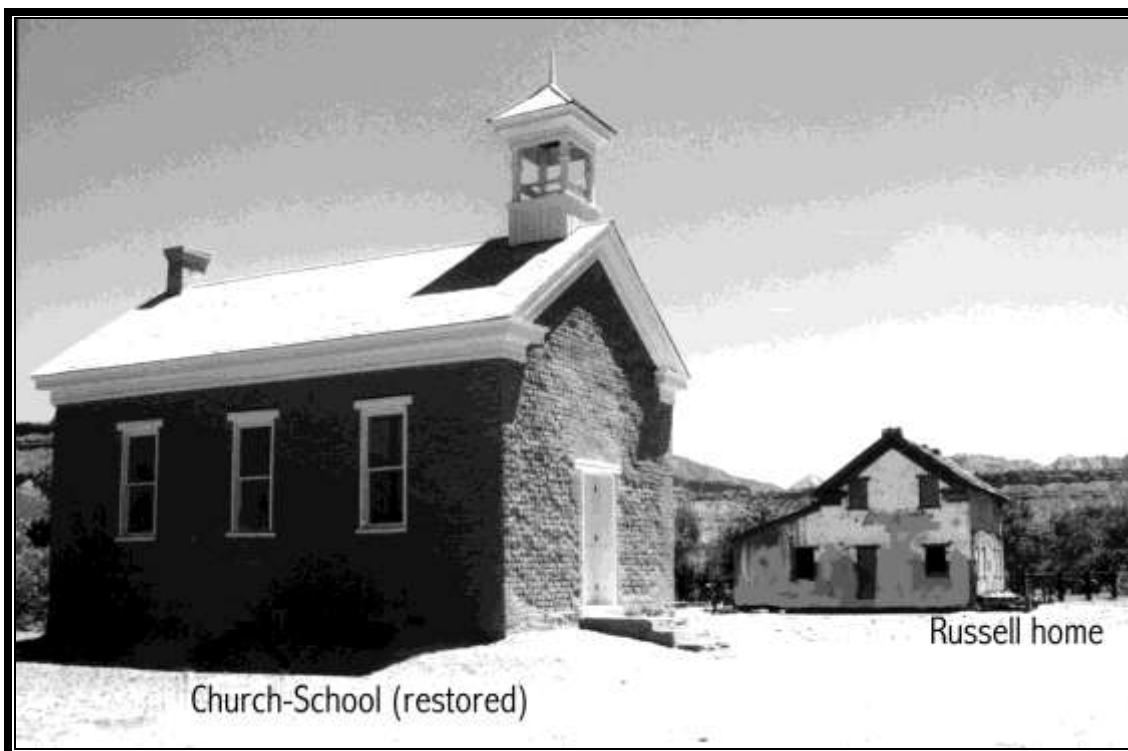
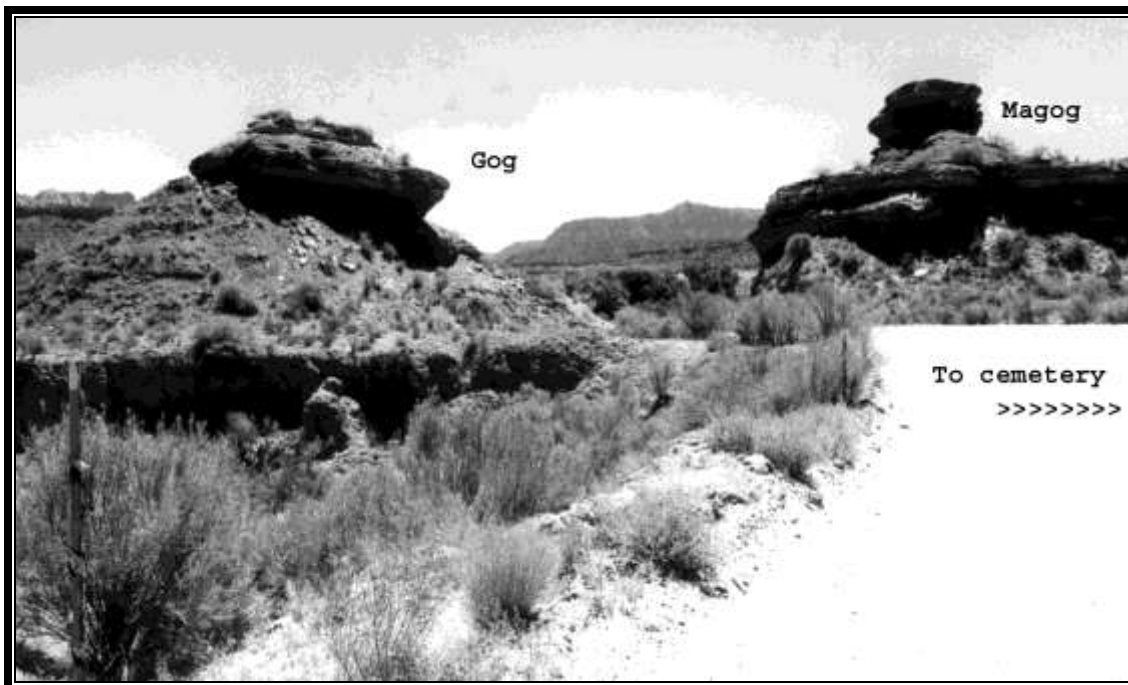
em. So for two whole weeks we didn't have to do any diagramming, didn't have to learn about nouns, verbs and them crazy adjectives or adverbs - no grammar of any kind - boy, did it seem good. The teacher and the kids looked everywhere, some of the parents helped too. But one day somebody, I guess his folks pressured him into doing it, climbed up into the belfry where the books had been hid all the time and took them to the teacher. I thought she'd be gladder about getting 'em back than she seemed to be". Then as an after-thought he added, "Who in the hell wrote the first grammar book anyway?" And I must add that as far as I have been able to check, not one of Grafton School children ever became a teacher of English grammar or any other kind.

We started to leave the celebration about 2:00 p.m. but by the time we had told everyone how happy we were to be with them again, listened to and told more anecdotes, it was 2:30. Then the delightful, "meanest boy" Melvin Gibson, escorted me with some "pomp and ceremony" to our car - it was all such fun.

The Virgin River cannot be forded with cars so it is necessary to drive up to Rockville and cross the bridge there in order to get back on to the highway. As we drove west en route to St. George, we had a full view of Grafton again, across the river where we could see the cars of the folks we had been with just a half-hour earlier. The scene somehow seemed to bring the ruined little village to life and again memories came crowding: It was March 15, 1908, and the last day of school. The program to celebrate the event was over and I was all packed up ready to leave for home early the next morning, for St. George was forty miles "down the river", and it took a full day of traveling to reach it.

Angus arrived in the early evening in his father's one seated covered buggy to take me home. After supper we walked around the village to say goodbye to everyone and then walked down by the river, one of our favorite spots, for a farewell view of the mountains that had been such a source of comfort and joy to me. Next morning after telling the Russell's goodbye, which was rather difficult, as they had been so kind in every way to me, we climbed into the buggy, forded the river and were on our way. Just before leaving, Frances whispered. to me, "Ma is going to buy me a bureau with some of the money you paid her for your board, and now I am going to embroider some pillow slips and learn to crochet."

The drive home was an interesting and happy one. Angus knew so much about the lava flows, the Hurricane Fault and river meanderings, to mention a few, and we also talked of future plans, which didn't include marriage at that time as he was then working on his father's farm while deciding what line of work he would follow, which of course was a vital subject. When we reached the top of the Black Ridge east of Washington and could see "the hills of home," I realized just how much .1 had missed them: the town they surrounded, and most of all my mother, and my sisters, Annie and Abbie. When we rounded a curve on the Middleton Dugway and could see the tower on the tabernacle, the beautiful imposing white temple and the town dotted with blooming apricot trees and green weeping willows. I could have wept for joy -- I had ceased to be a teacher; I was just a girl again. I was home.'





The Fatal Rose of Red

Oh wear a red rose, Uncle
 A maid said with delight.
 Unto an aged man with head bowed low.
 I cannot, Child, he answered
 But I'll wear one of white.
 My hopes were shattered by a rose of red.

You see I had a sweetheart once;
 A singer on the stage.
 In anger, from her side one night I fled.
 Time proved I sorely wronged her
 T'was in a jealous rage.
 One night I wrote a note to her that read,

Wear a rose of white when you sing tonight
 That will mean that you love me again
 But if instead, it's a rose of red,
 Then I'll know that my hopes are in vain.
 But I never knew that she loved me true
 Till my dreams of the future had fled.
 For instead of the white she wore that night
 T'was the fatal rose of red.

When she appeared that night child
 A singer on the stage
 I thought that all her love for me was dead
 She wore a rose of crimson pinned in her golden hair
 One glance told all and from the scene I fled

I journeyed far in after years.
 Returned, she'd passed away.
 She thought me false. It broke her heart they say.
 I later learned a rival changed my note to read that
 day,
 If you still love me, wear a rose of red.

Chorus
 Wear a rose of white when you sing tonight
 That will mean that you love me again
 But if instead, it's a rose of red,
 Then I'll know that my hopes are in vain.
 But I never knew that she loved me true
 Till my dreams of the future had fled.
 For instead of the white she wore that night
 T'was the fatal rose of red.

Letter Edged In Black

I was standin' by my window yesterday morning
 Without a thought of worry or of care
 When I saw the postman comin' up the pathway
 With such a happy face and jolly air.

He rang the bell and whistled as he waited
 Then he said; "Good morning to you, Jack"
 But he little knew the sorrow he had brought me
 When he handed me a letter edged in black.

With trembling hand I took this letter from him
 I broke the seal and this is what it said:
 "Come home my boy, your dear old father wants
 you
 Come home my boy, your dear old mother's
 dead."

I bowed my head in sorrow and in sadness
 The sunshine of my life, it all had fled
 When the postman brought that letter yesterday
 morning
 "Saying come home my boy, your dear old
 mother's dead."

"The last words your mother ever uttered
 Tell my boy I want him to come back
 My eyes are blurred; my poor old heart is
 breaking
 So, I'm writing you this letter edged in black."

"Forget those angry words that we had spoken
 You know I didn't mean them, don't you, Jack
 May the angels bear as witness, I am asking
 Your forgiveness in this letter edged in black."

After the Ball

A little maiden climbed an old man's knee
 Began for a story - "Do, uncle, please!"
 Why are you lonely; why do you roam?
 Have you no sweetheart; have you no home?"
 "I had a sweetheart, long long ago;
 Why we were not wed, you will soon know.
 List to my story, I'll tell it all,
 I broke her heart then, after the ball."
 After the ball is over,
 Just at the break of dawn
 After the dance is ended;
 And all the stars are gone;
 Many is the heart that's aching,
 If you could read them all;
 Many the hopes that have vanished
 After the ball.

"Low lights were shining in the grand ballroom,
 Softly the organ was playing the tunes.
 There stood my sweetheart, my love, my own -
 'I wished some water; leave me alone.'
 When I returned, dear, there stood a man,
 Kissing my sweetheart, as lovers can.
 Down went the glass, pet, broken the fall
 Just as my heart was, after the ball."
 After the ball is over . . .

"Many years have gone by, I've never wed
 True to my first love, though she is dead.
 She tried to tell me, tried to explain;
 I would not listen, pleading in vain.
 One day a letter came from this man,
 He was her brother - the letter ran.
 That's why I'm lonely, no home at all;
 I broke her heart then after the ball."
 After the ball is over . . .

