

CLARISSA McALISTER

(Written in 1980 by Clarissa McAlister Murdock)

I was born March 5, 1913, in River Heights to Sarah Ann Zollinger McAlister and Lorenzo Charles McAlister. Not long after that the family moved to Logan and it was there that Father died, I was about a year and a half old. The church still stands where his funeral services were held.

After his death Granddad thought that the best place for Mother to raise eight kids was on a farm so she moved back up to River Heights. My earliest recollection of Mother was of her with a shovel in her hand sitting under an arbor looking exhausted. Another thing I remember when we lived there was looking down a two-holer and losing a fancy hat that one of the McAlisters had given us.

The move to River Heights didn't work out, the older ones in the family were either working in Logan or going to school there and so it left Mother with taking care of the "farm". She made a trade with one of the Budges for a house in Logan big enough to take in boarders. Some of Father's family would have been glad to take Dot and Dean, but with the boarders, the cow, chickens and garden, Mother managed to keep us all together. In those days there wasn't the welfare that there is now and we got along fine. Later on Mother earned extra money cooking for the Sigma Chi's and doing extra cooking for summer sessions held at the college.

The first boarders brought a variety of diseases, diphtheria, small pox, trench mouth, etc. In the flu year of 1918 Mother got small pox and we all had flu. I remember we wore masks and Mother hung a sheet at the bottom of the stairway.

My life up until I was about eleven or twelve was pretty carefree except for the times I got scared to death that the cow, when I was taking her to and from the pasture, would take it into her head to run and join a herd of cows that were passing by. Once I held onto her tail as she went bellowing out the lane, I didn't slow her down much.

Miss Patrick, a school teacher who stayed with us, must have been the one who was behind having Dean and I get a special promotion. I don't remember having any trouble

keeping up with the advanced class but it was probably a poor idea, we were both small for our ages. I was probably happy with the idea because it would get me out of school that much sooner. I disliked school then and the feeling never changed. I didn't participate in any school activities and as I got older it was necessary for me to go right home from school. In my junior year my school clothes were a sweater that Granddad had bought for me, a skirt and two blouses.

I used to worry about how we were going to pay the grocery bill that we ran up in the summer months but somehow Mother always got them paid. I didn't worry though about the Christmas bills. We had the most wonderful times at Christmas with lots of presents from Santa Clause. We used to stay up all night Christmas Eve. Jack Coles would spend the night with us too. They used to see Santa Clause but I was always too slow getting to the window. Dot and Dean saved their money and went together to buy Christmas presents. Once I went into the long closet and got a glimpse of a doll swing they had for me. They were so mad at me I thought the end had come for sure. We used to buy small amounts of candy and nuts and put them away for the holidays. And then we all looked forward with great anticipation to the Christmas box that Irvine and Gladys sent us.

The year Wayne stayed at our place board and room was \$22.50 a month. I think Mother had charged as little as \$18. She usually served a soup first and then a full course meal followed by dessert. Mother was a very good cook and was famous for her pies. I didn't ever do any of the actual cooking, just mashed potatoes and waited on the table--things like that. In school I learned how to make a white sauce. So after Wayne and I were married and we went to the herd he did the cooking. Finally he quit and I had to learn. The first thing I tried was a tapioca pudding and it would have made very good wallpaper paste.

My senior year Venice talked Mother into letting me go back to Chicago with them. She was pregnant with Venice and I could have been some help. She thought too, that I was too young to be getting serious about Wayne. I went with them and started school but tuition was too high and I was too homesick. So I came back and graduated and as much as I hated school--with an A average.

In June following graduation (the ewes were all lambled out and docked) Wayne and I were married, very much in love with each other. I think there must have been a lot of girls around here who wondered what he saw in me. He was a star athlete in all the sports and a very good looking young man and he was a MURDOCK!--just to name a few of his qualifications. It was a complete change of life for me with lots of happy times and homesick ones too, when I cried buckets of tears.

When we set up housekeeping we bought a cook stove (the one that is being used at the ranch) and a black hot blast heating stove for \$41. The bedroom set that is in the east bedroom cost \$85, a sofa and chair \$130, and two rugs were \$61.

Our first baby was born March 29, 1932. He was a nice big boy, looked like Wayne. Later years I would have had a cesarean and our baby could have lived.

Joyce came along two years later and she was our miracle baby. A little too soon baby that we put in Edna's old worn out wicker clothes basket and which we put behind the stove, so she would be kept warm enough. Dr. Wherritt had told us to get Ruth Hicken, an R.N., and it was she who worked on Joyce after Dr. Wherritt had given up and got her to breathing. She got some milk from me and fed that to Joyce.

The depression years were not so bad, we didn't have any money but living was cheaper then. We rented Beth Ritchie's house for \$5 a month (it had a sink in the house but that was all) and our electricity was only about a \$1 a month. Wayne got the wood out that we burned and we had most of our own meat. Although I do have on my list of expenses for that time an occasional 10 or 20 cents for meat and sausage. Bread was usually 10 cents a loaf but often we would get it for five. I spent \$12.55 for a baby layette.

After Wayne and his Dad bought J. S. Murdock's outfit we all worked very hard to pay for it. Joyce always liked animals and working with her Dad, she was his boy. We took her out to the herd to live in a tent when she was just past a year old. We slept on pine boughs and so did she on a little bed in the back of the tent. We always had happy times when we were together at the herd.

It was in June 1944 when Sara called to tell us that Mother was sick and had been in the hospital. Wayne took Joyce and me to Logan and left us there. We were not satisfied with the doctor Mother had so Clarence took her and us to Salt Lake for Mother to see Dr. Hicken. I didn't leave her and Wayne understood. After Mother died it was never quite the same.

Another person who was very dear to me was Wayne's Aunt Stac. She lived across the street in the old Averett home and kept house for her three bachelor brothers--Billie the oldest, a very highly respected farmer and cattleman, John who was Aunt Stac's favorite, and last but not least, Jode the horse man. Aunt Stac never married but she was a Mother to me and a lot of her nieces. She couldn't have loved Joyce more if she had been her granddaughter.

In the years that our grandsons were growing we have been privileged to be a part of their lives. They have brought a great deal of happiness and joy into our lives we are very proud of the fine young men that they are and for all their accomplishments. Lynn graduated from Washington State University with a Ph.D. in Soil Chemistry. He is with the Dept. of Agronomy and Soils at Utah State. His wife, Caryn, is a lawyer and teaches at the University. They have a delightful year-old-son. Capt. Wayne is a dentist now serving in the U. S. Air Force. In between going to school he served a mission for the Church. He and his wife have a young son and baby daughter, also most delightful children. Kenneth graduated from Weber State College with a B. A. in computer science. He also completed a mission to Japan and is now employed at Hill Air Force in computer networking, his wife, Shae, is going to school at Weber State College to get a B. A. in interior design. Mark completed a mission last summer and back up to Utah State going to school. He is enjoying it very much and as yet he has not decided what he will major in.

It's been a wonderful life--so many good and splendid happenings and people--I am grateful.