

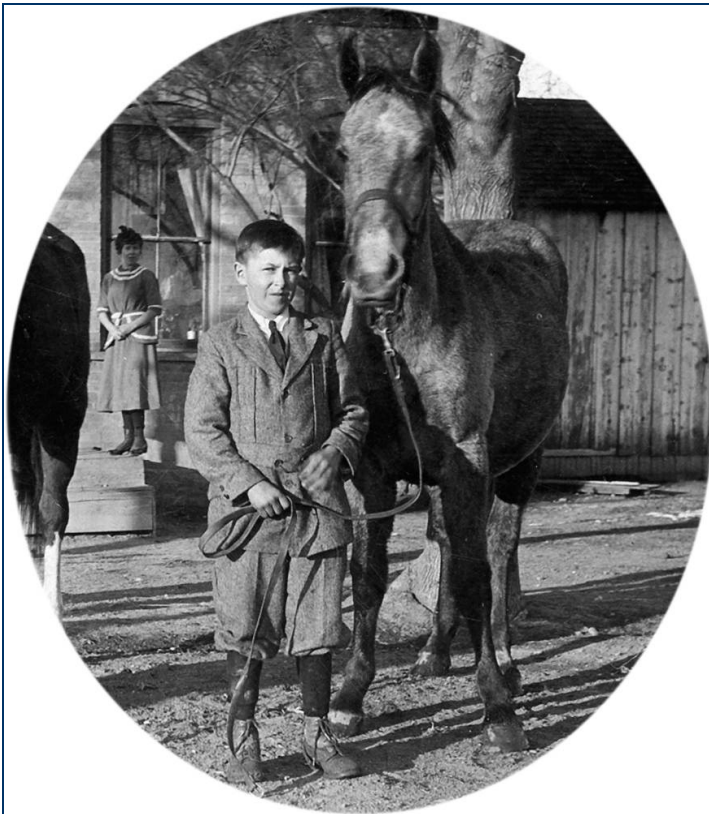
The Owen and Vernessa Story

The Early Years 1904-1922

by their son,
Robert N. Reynolds

First, a little Reynolds background---A cherished story of Grandfather Charles Reynolds is how he fell in love with my grandmother; and how he as a poor farm boy went to the “well-to-do” father Isaac Brockbank Jr. and asked for the hand of his daughter Louise in marriage. “*When you have a home to put her in you can marry her,*” he was told.

Well, Grandpa started immediately to achieve that goal. He had learned the skill of making adobe bricks from his father. And to the west of his father Warren’s farm was a piece of family land—a hill of clay covered with sage and rabbit brush, but surrounded by rich bottom land through which flowed Big Cottonwood Creek. From the top of that hill you could see all over Holladay to the east, and looking south clear to the “Point of the Mountain.” The hill couldn’t be farmed because it was all clay, but it was an ample hill, flat on top, with room for barns and corrals, a blacksmith shop, a fish pond and some chicken coops. And the clay soil would make fine “adobes”!



Owen Ford Reynolds

This is the earliest known photo of Owen. He is holding Dolly, a gift from his father. He was twelve years old when this picture was taken. It is an interesting study with his Sunday dress, knicker pants, muddy shoes and fine tie. His sister in the background is fourteen year old Vernetta. The original adobe structure built by my grandfather was added to a couple of different times as the family grew. My grandparents never moved from this location. Grandpa died here at age 85 having been born just a half mile to the east on his father's farm.

We don't know whether Warren Ford gave that piece of ground to his son Charlie or whether Grandpa paid good money for it. What we do

know is this—the hill, halfway between 9th and 13th East on the Murray-Holladay Road became the home of Charles and Louise Reynolds. There they produced nine children—five daughters and four sons—who loved and stood beside each other throughout their lives in a very special and peculiar way. My father was number seven of the nine

siblings and when he died in my home on April 7, 2003 I received a phone call from his old friend President James E. Faust of the First Presidency of the Church. President Faust, whom Dad always referred to as “Jimmy” said to me: “Your Dad was not part of a family; he was a member of a tribe.” Everyone for miles around knew and liked Charles and Louise and their large family.



Here is a view of the old adobe home. Uncle Len is on the left holding “Molly” and Dad is holding “Dolly.” They are dressed in their “fineries” because this is Leonard’s wedding day, March 15, 1916 when he married Ada Floy Jacklin in the Salt lake Temple. Dad bought Molly from Leonard for \$50 with money he earned from his paper route. I guess Uncle Len figured he didn’t need Molly any more or he needed the \$50. Dolly was killed by a truck, on the way to Murray in 1918 with Dad “at the wheel” er... at the reins. Molly was “a very fast horse” that Dad had a “bad experience” with. More later...

It was just a year after the above picture was taken on March 18, 1917 when Germany sank three American ships without warning; and two weeks later on April 2, 1917 the United States declared war on Germany. World War I began. It was during this period that Dad got real busy delivering newspapers and he didn’t have any trouble finding customers because everyone wanted to read the daily news. Not everyone could afford a radio. Dad’s family could not. Soon after war was declared the close-nit Reynolds family saw the oldest son Heber Clyde go off to war.

It was while Clyde was off to war that the horse accident happened. I had heard it a few times, but on October 29, 1984 Dad related it to my family and we recorded it on tape. The paraphrased story goes like this:

I had a horse. I was driving to Murray with my Mother and my brother Jay and my sister Merle—it was just a one seated buggy. We got within two blocks of Murray—Main Street there in Murray—and a truck was coming toward us. I was driving. It was a young colt that Dad had given to me and I'd used him before to drive around my paper route. There was some paper in a bush, and the wind was blowing and scared the horse and it dashed over in front of this truck that was coming. This guy jumped out of his truck and didn't know what to do. Instead of stopping, he just jumped out. I tried to get my horse to turn. I pulled on that one line just as hard as I could pull to try to pull his head around. But when the truck hit the horse, it knocked him clear around and underneath the buggy and we were all thrown out. How far it threw me, I don't know. It broke its neck and two front legs, and it was laying there underneath the buggy. We were all thrown out—not a dog gone one of us was hurt. Jeff Caldwell, the Sheriff down there in Murray, came up and shot it. We were glad none of us were hurt because we all could have gotten killed. Not a one of us was hurt; even my Mother was thrown out and wasn't hurt. I couldn't figure it out!

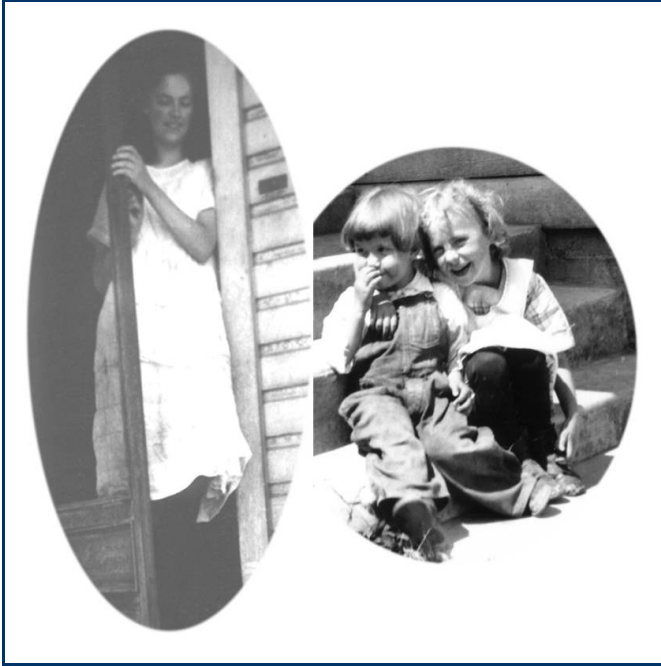
The Young Family

Now, for a little background on the Youngs... While these events were transpiring in Dad's world, mother was moving from place to place as her father took one job after another teaching school and fulfilling church assignments. During the years 1916 through 1921, mother lived with her parents, first in Mount Pleasant for two years, then in Salt Lake for three years. The details of these years can be found elsewhere in this history in the separate accounts but in short there were good times and bad times. And the bad were really bad! Mom's brother Newel died on Oct 17, 1918 at age 17 and her sister Maria died the following March 2, 1919. These were tough times for kids growing up and for her parents too. Mom had a lot of opportunities for character building during her teenage years. During the period the family lived in Salt Lake, Mom's older sister June took advantage of her opportunities for schooling and in 1920 she graduated from L.D.S. Business College and left home to teach in St. Johns, Arizona.¹ Mother, then would have been the oldest of Tina's family left at home.

Mother's teenage years were not characterized by chasing around and having a good time at the expense of helping her Mom and Dad survive the tough times. Her mother Tina worked outside the home whenever she could and mother tended the smaller children and helped with the washing and food preparation. She went to school when she could but helping her folks at home with the younger children often took priority.

¹ Jimerson, Evelyn, Unpublished biography of Newel K. Young.

Grandma Tina had spotless ways and always kept a spic and span home and mother learned those lessons well because she always did the same in her own homes later in life even if it meant working into the wee hours of the morning at the expense of proper rest.²



This combined photo of Mom, Guy and Millie came from the same snapshot. Millie was born October 23, 1915 in Clinton, Utah and Guy was born December 17, 1917 in Mount Pleasant. This photo was probably taken in 1919 or 1920 somewhere in Salt Lake just before the family moved to Murray.

Evelyn Jimerson wrote of this period:

*Newel was to begin teaching seminary at Murray High in the fall of 1921. Sometime during the summer prior to school he moved Tina's family to a large rented home in Murray. Geneva's family was moved to a 13 acre farm in Riverton. Newel struggled mightily to provide both his families the necessities but his combined wages from seminary teaching and summer jobs, divided equally, were inadequate to support two families. Both families continued to struggle to make ends meet. All of the children at one time or another were doing their part and making sacrifices to help out. Tina and Geneva both planted gardens wherever and whenever possible, canning fruits and vegetables for winter use.*³

Mom was fifteen the summer her family moved to Murray.

² I was told by my sisters that one time the folks were given the keys to Biesinger's Bear Lake Cabin for a weekend and Mom spent most of the vacation time scrubbing down floors and cupboards while there. That was Mom.

³ Jimerson, Evelyn, Unpublished biography of Newel K. Young.



Vernessa at age 15

Dear Vernessa,

Last night while thinking of you and about you I recalled with a thrill your attitude and activity while a student in the Seminary in Murray. Many times you especially pleased me. You were so loyal and appreciative of me. Now and again you said things about me and my work in the class that gave me great joy and I still enjoy it all in memory. It is class time. God bless you and all of yours. I love you, Dad

Newel K. Young, November 19, 1934 -- Richfield Seminary

Sometime during 1921 Grandma Tina went to work in the knitting room at Utah Woolen Mills. It lasted only a few months however because her last child, Naomi Rae was born on September 6, 1922. Times were tough, financially, but they would get tougher still. To help out Mom quit school in early 1923 to assist at home. Later in that year she went to work for Ideal Photo Service in Salt Lake City. She was only seventeen but she came across as "soft and pretty and mature for her age."



Vernessa Young at Seventeen

This photo was taken on Christmas day 1922. Soon after Christmas Mom's younger sister Myrl left home to live in Provo with June who was teaching there and Mom quit school to help her mother at home.

If Mother regretted the need to terminate her formal education in order to help her family survive the tough times she never let on. I think she believed there was a higher purpose to it all. She possessed an academic mind and later put it to work in her career with the Salt Lake County Assessor's office where she worked for many years. When I decided to go to the University she was pleased to help whenever she could. When I graduated from the University with my B.S. degree in 1963 she insisted on buying me a new suit and she proudly attended the graduation ceremony.

While Mother was assisting her family both at home and at work during 1923 her father's two families were enjoying blessings of the positive kind. Out on the Riverton farm Grandpa's second wife Geneva gave birth to her last child Kenneth Richard on June 24, 1923. A couple of months later Mom's oldest sister June tied the nuptial knot with Uncle Oswald Pearson on September 6 of that year. With two children born of two wives in a ten month span Grandpa's responsibilities were increasing, for sure, but his paycheck from teaching was not.



This delightful photo of Mom with Guy Wilson and Naomi Rae was taken in the winter of 1923-24 when Mom was 18. Guy was born just a few months after World War I was declared by President Woodrow Wilson. Grandpa Young had strong emotions about the war and wrote an essay on his feelings, but he must have approved heartily of this two term President to name his son after him.

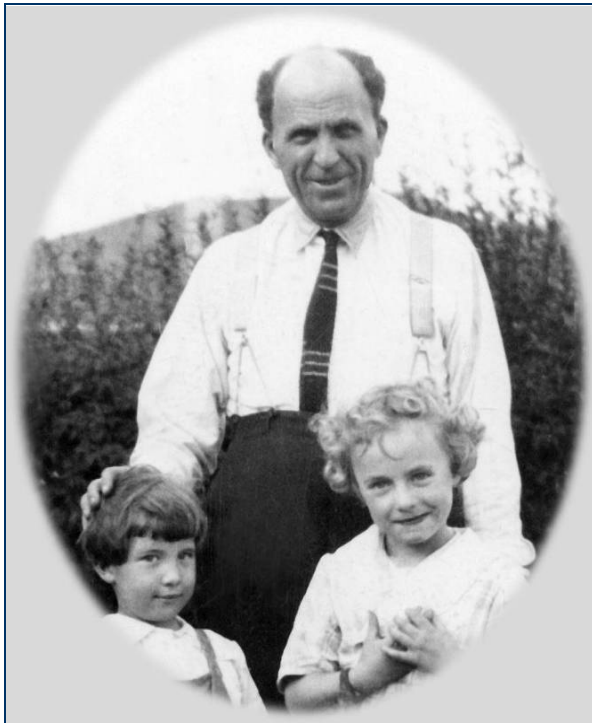
Woodrow Wilson was the 28th President of the United States and a Democrat.

Of this period, Evelyn Jimerson wrote of her grandfather's experience at the Murray Seminary:

By the time Newel started his second year at Murray High Seminary he had gained a sizable reputation among parents in the area, as an excellent teacher and Christian scholar. Several families wanted to transfer their 'highschoolers' to Murray to attend his seminary classes. But trouble was brewing. Word had also got around that he was a polygamist. Complaints were being made to L.D.S. Church Headquarters. Finally, Church representatives suggested Newel take a year off with pay and leave the area until things quieted down.⁴

⁴ Jimerson, Evelyn, *ibid.* The authority and specifics for the alleged complaints are not given. Whatever the situation might have been it certainly was not a stain on Grandpa's sterling record as a teacher because when he returned from his year sabbatical he was back on the L.D. S. full-time payroll and in 1926 he was sent to Moroni as teacher and principal of the L.D.S. Seminary there. Later, he spoke at the Ninety-Sixth Annual Conference of the Church in April, 1926.

“A year off with pay” -- a “sabbatical” for sure! Just what Newel and his family needed—an opportunity to work another job and pick up some extra funds—heaven knows they all needed it. Well I guess that is what Grandpa did. The story goes that he headed off to Arizona with his son Marvin and sold shoes for awhile. Apparently this sabbatical took place during the 1924-25 school years.



This picture of Grandpa with Guy and Millie was probably taken in Murray during the summer of 1923 when Guy was five and Millie seven.

Time has a way of creating parody with our perceptions. The people in this picture are happy and loving. You can see it in their faces and in their eyes. Times were tough back then, but everything is relative. What we consider hardships today they looked upon as everyday realities.

In 1922 Vernessa had begun to see the world through different eyes. She had met a wonderful friend in Melba Morgan and was taking a liking to Melba's brother Scott whom she dated. There was dancing and picnics and hiking and church socials and life was beginning to take on a different meaning. While Mom shared her earnings generously with her family she also was able to buy some nice clothes. All of her pictures of the period show her finely dressed. The "Twenties" were a fun time.





Over in Reynoldsville on the hill above the Murray-Holladay Road...the young man Owen—my Dad, was beginning to “feel his oats.” He had survived his childhood without any major difficulties except a case of pneumonia when he was treated “especially well” by his Mom and Dad. Since the age of nine Owen had been delivering newspapers--three routes in all--and eleven miles in length. He was never without money. He learned to manage it real well. According to Mom, he was afforded the wonderful luxury of being able to spend everything he earned. And she would know that since it had been her lot for a long time to help support her polygamous father’s family.

Now he had decided to become a “stepper.” The year was 1922 and Owen was seventeen. He was getting tired of his paper route, for sure. But what is a fella to do? We have the good fortune of being educated by Dad’s first cousin Elwin who wrote him a letter dated July

15, 1922 from Moore, Idaho where his family had recently moved. Elwin (1903-1985) was the twin son of William Warren Reynolds, younger brother of our Grandfather. Bets are that Dad had been looking at work possibilities—that is until things got thick with “*a little Morgan girl.*” Elwin advises his seventeen year old cousin Owen that there are jobs aplenty and that he should come up and pick spuds till he gets homesick. He said, “*I guess you think I’m the cat’s ears for not getting that job a year ago, but the bird wanted a man for only \$25 a month.*” Elwin kindly documented our family history for us when he said: “*I hear your stepping a little Morgan girl. Good for you. Tell Melba hello for me next time you go over.*”

Well, Pop didn’t go to Idaho to pick spuds and I’m guessing Melba had something to do with the decision. Over the course of the next year his relationship with Melba thickened. It was during these months that he tried to persuade his father into buying an automobile, to no avail. In the meantime he did his courting with “horse and buggy.” He also continued delivering his papers, and he must have engaged himself in work somehow in these months because he claims to have quit work after two years of high school and he turned eighteen in November, 1922. **More later.....**