

Memories of Aunt Elva - Dorothy Jean March 2004

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>My first memory of Aunt Elva is of her wearing a big dress and hearing
>my Mom tell her to sit down and rest. And about the same time I
>remember Uncle Morgan on arrival to our home jumping out of the car
>calling "Where's my girl?" I would take off running and he would chase
>me. I was shy and he loved to tease me by catching me and giving me a
>big hug.

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>My Mom was always so happy to see her brothers. She laughed and danced.
>They would dance around the living room singing "I Could of Danced all
>Night". My mother could find all kinds of reasons why we had to go to
>Champion. I remember us having car trouble on the Monarch hill but we
>didn't turn back. When we got to Uncle Morgan's house there would be
>lots of people. The cousins were out in the evenings playing "Kick the
>can". Uncle Morgan was going to help me learn to ride a bike. He got me
>on the bike and pointed me down toward the old airplane and gave me a
>push. I ended up learning to ride the bike and going around the
>section. I remember climbing around on the old airplane and playing
>pilot.

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>One day Uncle Morgan told Carol and I we didn't have to do dishes if we
>would ride the horse. We were so excited. He put us up on the horse and
>it just stood still. We finally got it to move, but it wouldn't go
>anywhere. So Uncle Morgan got us down and told us to go get to work
>doing dishes. He laughed because we tried so hard to get the horse to
>move.

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>I liked horse radish and I asked for some at dinner. Uncle Morgan
>thought he was going to see me sputter and cry when I ate it but I
>just took some and ate it which surprised him. I don't think he knew
>that I used to beg my Mom to make some until I found out how hard it
>was.

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>At Christmas time we would go to Champion and Uncle Morgan would take us
>for sleigh rides behind the car. He would also pull the boys on skates.
>When we were at Uncle Morgan and Aunt Elva's it was like one big party.
>I loved to go there because it was the only time I remember my Mom being
>so happy. She also loved to go to Uncle Henry's farm to help make
>honey. Mom had many friends in Hartley. Basically, it didn't matter
>where she was with her brothers she was happy.

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>Uncle Morgan and Aunt Elva stopped once on their way to Taylorsville.
>When it was time for them to go I cried because I wanted to go with them.
>My Mom said no because I had a hole in my sock. Uncle Morgan pleaded
>my case and I think I got to go.

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>Mary Carlson tells of a time when Uncle Morgan was remodeling the brick
>house when I caused a scary moment. I remember the house having big
>stairs in the front entry. There were doors into the dining room and
>living room. Anyway, when the incident occurred Uncle Morgan had taken
>the stairs out. There was a big hole from the upstairs to the basement.
>The adults thought they were safe. All the children were put to bed.
>Apparently, I decided to go for a walk in my sleep and I came wandering
>down. They about had heart attacks when they saw me and realized what
>could of happened.

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>When I was 9 or 10 my parents went to Creston, B.C. to do welfare work
>for the church. They were assigned to work in the orchards and can
>fruit. I know they come home with lots of bottles of fruit. I was sent
>to live with Uncle Morgan and Aunt Elva. I was to help take care of
>Grandma Smith. Anyway, I lived there three months and even went to
>school with Arlen for a month in Alston. I also remember being really
>homesick. Aunt Elva wasn't sure what to do with me so she gave me
>Richard to tend. I remember Richard was a baby and I used to pack him
>around a lot and Aunt Elva made a fuss about my being such a big help.
>There was a song about a Richard and I sang it to him while we played.
>My Dad came to get me and we went back to Lethbridge on the train. I
>rode across the big tall bridge on the train.

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>When my Mom got the call that Uncle Morgan had died in an accident, she
>was so distressed that she went outside to try and get control. She
>didn't know how she was going to tell Grandma Smith. When she told
>Grandma, there was moaning and wailing. To me it was wailing because
>she cried and made moaning sounds. The neighbors came running to
>comfort Mom. I remember being in the living room at the house in
>Champion by the coffin. The coffin was along the inside wall. I can
>remember Aunt Elva standing at the coffin and calling Morgan, Morgan. I
>remember walking down the aisle in the community hall, because there
>wasn't a room at the church. I remember going to the cemetery and
>crying. Uncle Morgan's funeral was on my birthday. It was a very sad
>day. I know that for a long time after Aunt Elva stayed up at night until
>she couldn't stand it any more. Then she was up the minute she awoke.
>She tried to work herself to death. She didn't want time to think. I
>doubt that she got much sleep for years. I think it was a relief to
>have Uncle Fred come with his family because it gave her more work. I
>know Aunt Elva was close to Mom and they talked a lot. In later years
>Aunt Elva told me she didn't know what she would of done without my Mom.
>It was another hard time when my Mom was diagnosed with cancer. Aunt
>Elva was losing another support. Aunt Elva would come to visit or my
>Mom would go there. I was gone to BYU but I remember the letters from
>Mom saying she had been up to Champion, or Aunt Elva had been down. I

>know Mom asked Aunt Elva to watch over me and she did a really good job.
>I always felt welcome in
>her home. I was called by Jessie Stanford, the matron of the hospital
>in Cardston that if I wanted to see my Mom alive I would have to come
>home now. I checked out of BYU and left on the longest bus ride of my
>life. I got off the bus in Cardston and no one was there to meet me.I
>didn't know if Mom was dead or alive. I called home and Jay came to
>get me. Mom was still alive and lived until October. When my Mom died
>Aunt Elva came and picked up a trunk and anything she could think that
>might hold something important because Aunt Eve and Aunt Jeanette came
>and wanted the things that Grandma Smith had made. My Mom had told me
>what to do but they were determined that they should have some of the
>things. They took the picture of Grandpa Smith that hung on the wall.
>When they approached Aunt Elva about the things that were Mom's , Aunt
>Elva told them she didn't know what Vera had done. She always
>maintained that it was okay because she hadn't opened the trunk, just
>prayed it was all there. Then in December, Aunt Elva came down to
>Cardston and packed me up and told me I had to go back to BYU. She had
>Uncle Fred pick me up took me to Provo with Mirra and Edna Marie.

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>I called Aunt Elva crying because I had bought this thing and didn't
>know what to do with it. I had bought a car and didn't know how to
>drive. Aunt Elva told me to get on that airplane right now. Richard
>met me at the airport and my driving lessons began. I remember how much
>fun it was to take some surprises home to her. I take material for a
>dress, a box of fruit, she was so
>easy to make happy.

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>I think the best Christmas I ever had was the year I bought the ticket
>for her to go to Sweden. She had called and mentioned that she had
>thought of going but didn't know it would ever be possible. Richard had
>suggested that she come and meet him when he
>finished his mission. That started my wheels rolling. I told her that
>would be pretty scary and maybe not a good idea because I was planning
>on getting the ticket. I went to Murdock travel and started the
>process. Murdock travel gave me a little canvas bag so I decided to
>have fun. I thought it would be obvious if I didn't have gifts for
>everyone so I got little nothings like a package of envelopes for the
>girls. Lorraine opened hers and said "Oh, these are nice". Then Aunt
>Elva opened the bag and thought it was all a big joke. Then she
>started pulling out the real presents. She thought she was through when
>Linda said she wanted to look. Linda pulled out the ticket (gift
>receipt) and the bag was no longer a good bag for Relief Society as
>Grandma Neilson had tried to make her believe. Aunt Elva collapsed in
>the chair and was in shock . Then ran for the phone to Arlen, Eldon and
>other family, she couldn't talk fast enough. She was so excited, but

>when the time came for her to go there was an air strike in Canada and
>she had to go to Shelby to catch a train. She went to Washington D.C.
>where Dennis and Carol took her to the airport. Murdock had not been
>able to get her ticket to her so they put her on first class to London.
>In London she picked up her ticket to Sweden.

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>Another Christmas, I took all the ingredients home for pizza. It was a
>rage and I wanted to show off. On Christmas Eve we had homemade pizza.
>It must have been a hit because it become quite a tradition. Aunt Elva
>truly treated me as a daughter. Then my brother John got wind that I
>was spending a lot of time in Champion, so he moved in and made it known
>that I was his sister
>and he would take care of me. From that time on I was in the middle.
>One Christmas out of frustration I stayed in Provo telling one I was in
>California and the other that I was in Montana. Thank goodness no one
>checked.

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>Aunt Elva taught me many things. You don't stop because of hardship,
>you keep going. Was called on a mission to Bolivia called knowing I had
>to go but needed her okay. It was my decision but she was willing to
>listen. She was there to take me to the temple when I was so
>frightened. She made sure that someone was there when I came home.
>Lorraine was getting married and Aunt Elva couldn't come. I remember
>sitting in the plane thinking, I had no home, no car, no job, just all
>alone. I walked out of the airplane and there was Ladell and Mary,
>because Aunt Elva had called.

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>Aunt Elva taught me that the Sabbath was a special day. It was a dress
>day. It was a nice china day. My friends still tease me about dresses
>on Sunday. Aunt Elva took me to my first teaching job. That was before
>I bought my car. She encouraged me to do my best. She used to tell me
>that no matter how long it is we never get over losing a loved one. It
>was okay if I missed my Mom. One night Aunt Elva said she had to sleep
>with me because she might think of something to tell me. Well in the
>middle of the night I flew out of bed with this horrible sound. I was
>scared to death until I realized it was Aunt Elva snoring. She used to
>tell me how Uncle Morgan came to visit her in her dreams. He had come
>the night before her trip and she had told him of her plans and he had
>said it was okay.

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>She never accepted as "I can't". It was you just get to work, your not
>sitting here. She loved pretty things and would find any excuse to get
>me crocheting. She taught me to quilt and make blocks. My Mom taught
>me that Visiting teaching was important and Aunt Elva taught it was
>never to far to go to make the visit. I remember driving off on an
>afternoon to do visiting teaching. It wasn't a burden, a pleasure. You

>never said no to a church calling and you always had time for family.
>These are some of my memories. I know that there are many more that I
>will recall but for now I remember an Aunt who loved me, treated me like
>a best friend and was An example of the highest standard. I am so
>excited for her to now be with the love of her life. Her mission in life
>is complete with all the blessings possible.

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>Written by Dorothy Jean Orcutt niece

March 16, 2004

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