Part of a letter from Uncle Fred to Audrey Ellis when she was gathering history for the Champion Ward History Book

According to this record the dependant branch of the Starline Ward was organized in early 1914. They have it in brackets and I believe this is just a guess for I know the Stake Patriarchs came in the fall of 1913 and gave everyone, over the age of ten, their Patriarchal blessings. I received mine on November 27 1913 from Patriarch Frank. The Patriarchs were there for a week and they held a cottage meeting in a home each evening. I also remember them telling us that inside of five years something would happen that would change the whole world and the world war started in August of 1914.

I think I should go back and search the Starline Ward records and see if they recorded anything about the Champion Branch. I know we held Primary because I included a picture taken at Puzey’s and I believe Sister Puzey was the President. I also know it was between 1914 and 1917 because Monty and Alice moved back to Champion from Taber in 1914 when he rented the Miller place near Orvil’s. The Rice’s moved away in 1917. Your brother and sister attended some of the meetings. (Walter and Doris)

I also know that Bishop Pack was bishop of the Starline Ward when the Branch was organized. Emil Anderson moved away before 1914 as Dan Pierson and my sister Eva rented that place in 1914 and lived where George Schultz lives now.

There were five families in the ward when I was sustained as Presiding Elder. William Isaacson, Richard Moore, Fred Puzey, Orvil Smith, Zina and I. Morgan was on a mission and mother was living with Henry and Vera at Glenwood. There was a family by the name of Caufield came to live near Kirkaldy for a short time looking for work but moved on. It was a struggle to keep going in the winter time when the roads were bad but we usually had 100% Ward Teaching. Mary Puzey, Red’s second wife, couldn’t take the dirt, from the west wind, blown in her house and moved back to Salt Lake City.

When Morgan finished his mission in 1931 he also stayed with Henry, Vera and Mother at Glenwood but Mother wanted him to have the farm so I had to move in 1932. I thought Cardston had more rain than Champion so we decided to buy a place west of Cardston and moved there in May of 1932. This took us out of the Champion Branch and away from Champion but the Champion District and Champion Ward or Branch has always been and always will be home to me. I should never have moved away in 1932 according to my hind sight but who knows it may have been intended that I have the many varied experiences both in and out of the church that has come to me since leaving. The experiences I had as superintendant of the Sunday School in Edmonton for more than four years under the direction of President N. Elden Tanner changed my life and attitude for which I shall always be grateful. When I was called to Tacoma, Washington to accept the job of Assistant Navy Auditor at the new naval air base we wondered and prayed about it and talked it over with President Tanner before accepting the offer. I have always had work and my family has always had enough to eat and I have always had at least one or two jobs in the church so I guess I shouldn’t complain.

I forgot to mention that Zina and I moved back into the Ward on the 4th of Sept. 1951 after Morgan’s passing. Kumen, our eldest, was on a mission and Betty was in Tacoma, Washinton working and later worked in Lethbridge at the Ellison Mills. Edna, Mirra and Errol were with us and member of the ward, from 1951 until 1961 when we moved back to the USA. All of us took part in the ward and I served on the Lethbridge Stake’s High Council from 1951 to September of 1960.

Evaline Maria was married to Daniel Davis Peirson at Magrath 20 March 1907 befor we moved to the homestead at Champion.

Richard Demont was married to Alice Henrietta Hansen at Taber 12 May 1909.

Edna Ellen was married to Parley Peter Petersen in our home 17 March 1915.

Orvil Beecher was married to Clara Lavera Anderson in the Salt Lake Temple 21 December 1916

Jeannette was married to Ralph Callison Hardisty in our hom 21 March 1917. Edna and Jeannette were married by Bishop Toone in the Starline Ward.

Vera M was married to William Henry Drollinger in the Cardston Temple 6 January 1921.

Morgan Walter married Elva Doris Neilson in the Cardston Temple 22 Sept 1937.

All the children were living in our home at Champion at the time of their marriage except Eva who was married in our home at Magrath before we moved to the homestead. All were members of record when the first Branch was organized in that area except Eva.

Eva and Dan moved to his homestead at Taber when they were married and lived at Taber until 1914 when they rented the half section where George and Jean Schultz now live and moved to Champion in the spring of 1914 and were members of the Branch. Dan was in the superintendancy of the Sunday School when we rented and met in the Sherwood School house. In the spring of 1916 or 17 Dan bought the half section north of Champion where Bill Anderson lived and built a new house in 1917. ( the house Bill Anderson lived in) It was about this time that land prices got quite high and Dan sold his farm for cash, Gus Rice sold his farm and Jack Schaffer sold out and all of them went to Cardston. Joe Petersen, Parley’s brother sold his farm to Charley Sutton and they moved back to Utah.

Monty homesteaded the quarter just east of our house and lived there in 1909 and 1910. In the spring of 1911 he sold his homestead to George Alcock and moved to Taber but he came back in the spring of 1914 and rented the George Miller place just on top of the hill from Earl’s place. George Miller and his father ran a grocery store in Champion. I think they sold the store to George Campbell and bought a ranch at Beaver Mines, west of Pincher Creek. I know they lived there in 1918 because Morgan and I with Monty and his family trailed all of our young horses to Beaver Mines to pasture that summer. Monty moved to Eagle Hill, west of Olds, in the early fall of 1919 and lived there until 1922 when he had his accident and lost his leg. Henry and I moved the family back to Champion where they lived until the fall of 1924 when Monty moved to Aetna.

Vera lived in the Branch until she married William Drollinger in January of 1927. Henry moved to Hartley, west of Glenwood in 1927. Rhoda, his wife, died in February 1928 and Margaret, their daughter, died in July of 1928. Vera’s marriage didn’t last much over a year when they separated and Vera went to Henry’s to keep house for he and his boys. She lived with them until she married Harry Orcutt in 1935.

Jeanette married Ralph Hardisty and lived in the Branch until December of 1923 when they moved to Seattle, Washinton where Ralph was working.

They organized the first Sunday school in our home and they met in our home for a long time. By 1914 the Branch had grown to a membership if 125 and they rented the Sherwood School house for a number of years as they had no school there after the consolidation with Champion in 1913. After so many moved away in 1916 and 1917 they held the meetings in the different homes. Mother built a new house in 1917, Orvil and Henry built their new home on the river in 1918. The conferences were held in our new home. Just before I left for a mission we rented the hall over George Campbell’s store. They built the Champion Community Hall in 1927 and we were meeting in the basement of that hall when I was Branch President in 1930. If there were………?

All the lumber was hauled from west of Stavely.

Monty and Alice we married 12 May 1909. He asked me to go with him so we drove from the homestead to Taber in the Democrat in two days, camping overnight on the prairie. When we got to Taber I stayed with Eva and Dan until after the wedding. It rained while we were in Taber and on the way home as we crossed the Little Bow River, by the Baldwin Ranch, the water ran in the Democrat and Alice and I were plenty scared.

Father and Monty attended Tom Purcell’s funeral on Monday, January 21st 1910. They stayed to help cover the grave and Father was cold. When they returned home Father was chilling so he went to bed. He was sick on Tuesday morning and didn’t get up until the evening meal. Wednesday he was worse so Orvil drove to Carmangay for Dr. Brans, a young doctor starting practice in Carmangay. After he examined father he said father had pneumonia. They tried mustard plasters and everything they could think of but it didn’t help. Doctor Bryans did everything he could and by Saturday morning January 29th the told mother to send Orvil to Stavely for another doctor to see if he could help. Uncle Richard funk and Harry Grow came from the Starline Ward to administer to father and stayed with us to give their loyal support but father passed away on Tuesday evening February the first 1910. Morgan and I had been staying with Monty and Alice and when they came for us that evening we knew the end was near. We were all around his bed side as his spirit left and as I left the room crying saying I would never see my father again, brother Harry Grow picked me up in his arms and walked over to the sofa where he sat down holding me in his arms and told me I would see my father again, that his spirit was not dead but was very much alive in another sphere of action and that someday I would meet and know him again. He talked to me for some time and gave me that testimony that death, as we call it, is not the end. That testimony has never left me and I shall always be thankful to Harry Grow for the comfort he gave me. Father’s funeral was held in our old home but wasn’t large enough for the number who attended. George W. Green from Lethbridge spoke at the funeral and said in all his business dealings with Dick Smith he found his word as good as his bond.

The summer of 1910 was one of the driest on record in that district. The crops burned and didn’t produce one bushel. Even the hay on the prairie didn’t produce. That winter Monty hauled wheat straw eighteen miles to feed our livestock. We milked cows and mother was able to sell enough butter to keep us going. She got feed from George W. Green in Lethbridge to feed the cows and by spring she had the feed paid for and we had lived. George Marks, who had the store in Champion said to mother, ”I don’t see how you have managed. You are a widow with seven children to feed and have never had to ask me to charge any groceries.” Well mother said she knew. I never remember eating breakfast not supper until after we had family prayer and many times I have opened my eyes as prayers were being said thinking I would see my Father in Heaven, I could feel the spirit so strong.

I remember one morning mother had used the last flour in the house to make our breakfast. We didn’t have any money to buy more flour. As mother was praying that morning she told Our Rather in Heaven she had used the last flour she had and prayed the Lord would open up some way that she could buy more. About ten a.m. a man came by driving six beef steers down our lane, Alcocks had fenced their side of the road and father and Monty had fenced our side of the road, and when he got to our place he came in and asked if one of the boys would help him drive those steers as far as the river at Baldwins. Henry saddled his horse and helped him and said the steers didn’t give any trouble at all even though the road wasn’t fenced. When they crossed the river where the road was fenced the man said he could take them from there and asked Henry how much he owed him. Henry told him he owed him nothing but he was glad to help, which was the custom in homestead days. The man insisted and put a five dollar bill inside Henry’s pocket. It wasn’t until Henry was on his way home that he remembered Mother’s prayer. The Lord had provided a way. Sometimes things happen so natural we forget the provider of our blessings.

In the book, “A History of the Mormon Church in Canada” starting on page 136, I read that President Wood came by sleigh in the early part of 1911 and organized the Champion Dependant Branch of the Starline Ward.

Due to the drought of 1910 and perhaps Alice’s folks living in Taber, Monty sold his homestead to George Alcock in the spring of 1911 and moved to Taber. However in three years he found the Taber district dryer so they moved back to Champion in the spring of 1914 and rented the George Miller place now owned by Lorne and Earl Smith. Dan and Eva also moved to Champion in the spring of 1914 and rented the three quarters Emil Anderson and his brother Ott had been farming. If I remember correctly when we held our meetings in the old Sherwood School House we had a membership of 125.

I believe I have written more that you need for your book about our family. From 1914 to 1919 all of mother’s children lived in a radius of ten miles. I remember the get-togethers after church on Sunday with the two and a half gallon ice cream freezer and the good food. It was like heaven on earth.

I have given the marriage dates of my brothers and sisters but I forgot to say Henry and Rhoda were sealed in the Cardston Temple 21 November 1923, shortly after the Alberta Temple was dedicated. And by the way mother, Parley and Edna, Orvil and Clara, Henry and Rhoda, Vera and I attended the dedication of the Alberta Temple. I also attended the dedication of the Oakland Temple in California.

Rhoda passed away on the 17th of January 1928 and Henry married Laura L. Tolley on the 20th of December 1934 in the Alberta Temple. Henry passed away on the 10th of March 1956.

Monty and Alice were sealed in the Alberta Temple on the 5th of February 1925. Both passed away in and accident on the first of January 1953.

Eva passed away on the 9th of April 1973.

Parley and Edna were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on the 30th of August 1916. Edna passed away on the 12th of March 1930. Parley passed away on the 2nd of April 1948.

Orvil passed away on the 20th of May 1949.

Jeannette passed away on the 21st of March 1975. She and Ralph were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on the 19th January 1953.

Vera passed away on the 3rd of October, 1958.

Morgan passed away on the 14th of July 1951.

Written by Frederick M Smith, May 3rd 1983, last living child of the Richard Demont Smith and Evaline Maria Mooso Smith family, 79years 9 months 11 days young.