

## UNCLE RALPH NEILSON

by Verna Neilson Forsyth

Here it is six months since my brother Ralph passed away and until now I haven't shed any tears since our last farewell a few days before and being the tease he was he reached up and tightened my scarf real tight around my neck. So for the nieces and nephews that couldn't attend the funeral I will write down some of the high-lights. Once Robert said he even enjoyed hearing him tune the violin before our family "jam" sessions. Mary or Jane at the piano, me on the left handed guitar and Elva and Delbert telling us what to do. Delbert was the athlete and Elva ,the seamstress, but they both liked music too. I remember many Sunday mornings hearing Elva play some of the hymns on the piano.

Yesterday the tears began to fall and I finally came to terms that my big brother would not be at the farm, where we all grew up, anymore.

In the family room, son, Tom, gave the prayer. At the "meet the family" the night before John Andelin was asked to say the prayer.

Before the casket was closed Verna sang with Ralph's old guitar, "Come Home It's Supper Time". He and I sang between acts of plays when we were young. He had a nice tenor voice or base if needed. When he went to school in Salt Lake the teacher told Mama he had a voice like an organ.

When the casket was carried in Carol Lowry played, "I Need Thee Every Hour". Nephew Eldon Smith gave the opening prayer. He mentioned Ralph was a true rancher and farmer that took care of his sheep.

When he was about thirteen he got a very high fever and his left hand became so infected , the doctors thought it was blood poisoning. Now it is called "osteomyelitis". They poured boiling hot water on it hoping to kill the infection but had to remove several bones so his hand always stayed small and stiff but he wanted to play the violin so much that he worked his fingers so he could even play for dances but he turned the guitar around left handed so he could finger it with his right hand. He had a blessing and was promised he would use that hand for many things. The right hand became so extra strong that people winced at his grip.

He liked to tease his sister Verna and when a boy might come to take her out he'd watch until the right time and run to the piano and pound out, "Here Comes The Bride".

He had a good memory and people relied on him for information. I remember him helping to build a road at age sixteen with four head of horses and a scraper. He gave all the money to my Dad to pay the taxes as this was the middle of the depression. Elva and I would pick Saskatoon berries and make him a good lunch of things he liked and a cobbler's pudding.

For fun he and Tim Lowry would each bring a bull from home to the top of our hill and soon we would see a good bull fight- our own little rodeo.

Verna gave them this poem for their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

*It seems to me the west has grown a special kind of man  
Who shows up when he's needed most and helps out when he can  
He's the guy that shows up at your gate when the flu has really got you*

Ralph took his work seriously. Floyd Stewart said if Ralph couldn't fix something you might as well take it to the dump. He had critical times in his life but faced them with patience. He loved building new advances in machinery and Tom learned from his father.

In the next life there will be many exciting things and happier times. It will be more fun than in his workshop. He'll meet with old friends and be freed from handicaps. Someday the mortal body will be reunited with a body that is perfect. Jane will find peace in service and he asked the children to be aware of their Mother and Grandmother. God wants us to be happy and successful. We can fill our lives with love for family and neighbors and those around us. This way we show love for our Savior. The bishop said his own father passed away five years ago to the day of Ralph's funeral. He remembers his gestures and expressions of love while he was under his care and he knows this will be true of Brother Ralph with his loved ones. You will again see Brother Ralph and those who have gone before. I'll never forget his smiling kindly face.

Janice Clark sang, "Goin' Home" for the closing song. (a lovely clear voice)

Gilbert Lowry gave the closing prayer. Grateful for this man who has given wonderful service to all who needed it. Protect those who journey to the cemetery and their homes.

As the casket was carried out Carol Lowry played "Nearer MY God To Thee" very nicely.

Ralph August Neilson

Born Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, 1916 in Taylorville, Alberta

Passed away April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000 in Cardston, Alberta

84 years