

DIARY OF ELVIRA JACKSON RASMUSSEN

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(Note: This document was typed from Elvira's original manuscript, kept in a 6" x 8" hardback, blue, "Scholastic" notebook with one loose letter inside. It was passed to the hands of Melvin Samuel Jackson, who now retains it. This document was typed with the intent of keeping the original spelling and punctuation intact. However, the document may contain typographical errors and other mistakes.)

I once asked our Little Mother why, before the coming of a new baby brother or sister, she always insisted on a thorough house cleaning; even adding touches of painting, varnishing and brightening; why the last minute washing, ironing and mending of clothes; why didn't she go on her "vacation" (as she termed it) rested and let others worry about the work and the house. She answered "Well -- one can never tell -- and I'd want to leave every thing done up best I could. Then too it's much nicer to lie in bed in a clean house."

Anyway, all such preparations were made -- besides certain drawers and nooks filled with dainty, tiny garments. On Wednesday afternoon February 27, 1929, the last touches were being done -- a curtain fixed for a broken glass in the boys bedroom; a button sewed on Papa's overcoat; a large cake baked etc. Your coming, "Sammy", was anticipated and every one anxious and happy!

Four o'clock Thursday morning Feb. 28, 1929, you were born. We nearly lost our mother but once again were blessed and she was left with us. You were her twelfth and with each one she had nearly "gone". Your doctor was Hurley -- from Antonito. Myrtle Swafford and Lula Rogers were also there. .

You were a cute "pug-nosed" light complexioned little fellow with little hair. We were all proud and mighty tickled with you. Mother and Papa were proud of their "round dozen". You were good natured -- and sleepy for three days -- then something became wrong. Your food didn't agree with you. The doctor advised "putting you on a bottle". Mother dreaded and disliked doing this -- she had been able to nurse all the others and was proud of it. However, doctors directions were followed but it seemed the right food could not be found. For three solid months you cried -- nite and day and became thinner and weaker!

One nite it seemed you first could not last longer; you were worn out and simply starved. Hurriedly the family was called together and a name decided upon. All liked Melvin Samuel. Brother W.O. Crowther was called over and he and Papa laid their hands on you. Brother Crowther blessed you and gave you your name April 20, 1929.

But Mother and Dad were frantic. It did seem something could be and must be done soon. They decided to change doctors and so Dr.

Dwyer of Alamosa, a baby specialist, was consulted. Soon a food was found that agreed with you and that you enjoyed. You were contented and began to do fine. But -- not for long -- for you developed a terribly sore mouth. Dr. Dwyer termed it a regular "trench mouth" and made plain the little chance of reviving it you had. Such a pitiful sight as you were! Your mouth simply raw and bleeding with sores; your lips swollen and so very tender! Again you were wasting away but unable to take sufficient nourishment.

Trip after trip was made to Alamosa day and nites were spent in feverish, patient, anxious, nursing and watching. Many a time Mother has cried over you as you slept -- or while bathing your tiny little body. It seemed you could not stand much more. Friends and neighbors were discouraged and could see no hope. But a mother's and father's faith and love persisted -- they felt "where there was life there was still hope". Much faith was exercised and many prayers said in your behalf, Sammy dear!

Finally your mouth was healed but your stomach remained tender and so weak! Patiently and hopefully the different prescribed food formulas were prepared and tried. At last one agreed and you began to look more like a baby.

However, you were nearly a year and a half old, sixteen months to be exact, before you were able to rest well all nite and before your stomach was anywhere near right and normal. In fact -- Mother, Dad, Elbert, Alfred, Lorraine and you came to see us at Grantsville Toole County, in June 1930 and Mother said that up until two weeks before they had left, she had never known what a full nites rest was. She had need to be up with you three and four times during the nite -- where not all nite.

In June tho, when we saw you, you looked pretty good. We folks were so proud of you too. Mother had cut your hair and had some tan coveralls for you. You were quite a little man. Papa kept telling of how you had enjoyed the trip in. You saw and noticed everything and hummed a little tune all the way. He said you saw some sheep along the road and pointed them out as being some "b-a-as".

You made the trip via Montrose and Grand Junction. Mother looked awfully tired but said she felt quite well. She was rather worried about Papa tho' for he had had quite a severe cough all winter. The winter had been hard and long for all.

One day, while in Grantsville, Mother told me of a dream she had had during the winter. Said it had been on her mind and worried her some. Said it seemed she was sitting in the dining room and Grandma Gilbert came in thru the kitchen door. Mother seemed to realize Grandma was dead and that she looked so nice. Grandma said, "Well, Mary, I've come to get one of your girls." Mother remonstrated and said "Oh, Mother, I've only the four girls -- just two of them at home and I need them." Then Grandma said, "Well, I'll have to have you then" -- But again Mother resisted and said "Oh, I can't go Mother. I have all these little boys to care for and raise. I'm needed too bad here." Then Grandma

answered, "Well, I've got to have some one", and turned and walked away.

Such a queer feeling passed all thru me as Mother related the dream. Uncle John Gilbert had died in March 1930 so I said -- "Well, you think Uncle John going satisfied her need, don't you?" Mother replied -- "Well, I think so." But as I look back on it all now I realize there was doubt expressed in her voice -- much grave doubt too!)

Then Mother went on to tell me of some severe sick spells she had had along in the winter and said that at the time she had told Papa that if anything should ever happen to her she wanted me to raise her baby -- you Sammy! I told her, "Why of course I'd want to and be glad to" -- but for her to not talk of or think about such things for she must stay and raise you herself. No one could do as she could -- and then we commenced talking of other things.

We all had such a good time and visit that trip. Figured we were saying good-bye for only a month or so too for Warren "Daddy" and I (and Lorraine who remained with us) planned on going home during the summer. However, when the car with you all in, drove away from Heber (June 1930) I was mighty blue. Seemed I never wanted to go home so much!

After you were home Mother mentioned in several letters of how much good the trip had done you all; how all enjoyed it; how "cute baby is -- he says tank you and several new words now" etc. We were all planning on seeing each other again soon.

Then August 5 1930 about three o'clock in afternoon we received a telephone call from Will. We were in Delta Utah. He said Mother was very ill and going to have an operation. Better come. Within a few hours we were on our way. Drove all nite. Reached Alamosa around five in afternoon August 6 -- but too late. Mother had "gone" between one and two that morning -- at Lutheran Hospital Alamosa.

Louvina and Lynn were in Wells Minnesota when wire came to them that Mother had been operated on. They left at once for home. Arrived Thursday nite about 12:00 -- of course too late also -- (Death waits for none of us it seems.)

Saturday nite, August 2 1930, you Sammy were ill. You had taken sick rather suddenly. It seemed you had a heavy cold, your stomach all upset etc. Mother and Papa were worried. All the fore part of the nite they worked with you, doctoring generally to ward off pneumonia as Mother was fearful of you developing it. Along about 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. Mother felt she needed help and wanted Agnes, our brother Will's capable, sweet nurse wife, to come. Papa got out the car and went to the Bountiful ranch for Agnes. She willingly came and then she and Mother worked with you -- using a favorite treatment process of hers. Towards morning your condition was such improved and you went into a sound sleep. Agnes returned home and Mother lay down for a little needed rest. Breakfast time you were awake and hungry.

You ate a good breakfast of cereal and milk. (A way you have of suddenly taking ill and as suddenly recovering.)

Mother got the other children off to Sunday School, you were cared for again then she lay down to rest -- she was so worn out. However, Uncle Nephi Christensen came. Mother arose and she and Uncle Nephi had a good visit -- he says one of their best.

Soon the children came home from Sunday School and dinner gotten over and each one out for the Sunday afternoon fun. Mother didn't feel like attending Sacrament meeting. Then too, Papa was to a special prayer circle meeting and wouldn't be home until the middle of the afternoon. Mother always tried to manage and be home when he came. Knew he dreaded and disliked to come home and find her away. So she lay down again and tried to rest and waited for him to come to his lunch.

Papa says, of their last Sunday afternoon together "When I came home from meeting Mother had been lying down. She still had on her "night cap" which she always wore to protect her hair when lying down. (Mother's hair was so beautiful and long. She always kept it from snarling by wearing the cap.) She removed it as she entered the dining room and sat down in a rocker. Then it seemed Mother looked as she had never looked before -- just so sort of holy and heavenly! She had always looked good to me -- she was so pure and good -- but it seemed there was something even a little different that day. Seemed she just looked extra pure and innocent! A flood of tender, sweet emotion came over me and I couldn't resist going to her -- putting my arms about her and telling her how very good and sweet she looked and was -- and how much I did love her! She smiled, as only Mother could, and said "Oh! Pa" -- and "Why you know I love you too". Then she prepared a lunch for just we two. She set the table in the dining room, as she often did for just such special occasions and lunches for we two. Then we ate and talked. That day we talked, as we so often did, of our great blessings. Oh how good the Lord had been to us. We brought each one of you children up in turn -- spoke of your good and weak points and of our hopes and ambitions for you all. We did have a good visit -- and all alone. That was our last one -- and ohh how thankful I am it was such a good one and that there was such a beautiful spirit attending us. We were so grateful and happy."

"Soon the children came in -- then Sister Christen Jensen came and Mother fixed her a lunch and so the afternoon passed. Towards evening Mother took the car and went out for awhile. She got Aunt Annie and Aunt Effie and they went by to get Aunt Lizze Vance (but she was unable to leave home) and they went over to the cemetery. They went to see all the graves of dear ones over there -- Grandma Gilberts, little Leonards, Vinas, Uncle John Gilberts comparatively new one (etc.) After returning to town they called to see a number of the old and sick. (Mother made such calls as often as she could and in spite of her many home duties made a surprising number of such calls. All spoke of her comforting, beautiful spirit.)

"Mother returned home depressed and almost crying -- she was so full of compassion and sympathy for her dear sick friends. That was Sunday nite and that nite we all rested well -- even to baby Sammy who apparently was over his sick spell."

Monday morning Papa was up early, made the fire, awoke the children and he and the boys went to milk. Mother, as usual, got right up after Papa. Monday meant wash day and she was anxious to get started in good time -- "start the ball to rolling", as she so often termed it. But -- the instand she placed her foot on the floor a terrific "gas pain" struck her. She got up and walked around trying to relieve herself. No relief seemed to come -- as it usually did when she moved around. (She was subject to such "gas paints" and spells considerably in the 1st few years of her life).

When Papa returned from the barn and chores, Mother was out by the garden fence walking and working to get relief. The pain only became more severe. After a few hours they thought it best to call Dr. Van Fradenburg. This "spell of gas" seemed different than she had usually. She tried every way to get relief -- that she had ever tried. She asked one of the children to go get Sister Turner and Aunt Annie. She had Wore Sellers come to help Josephine with the washing. Dr. Van gave Mother three "hypos" to try and relieve her pain -- she was suffering so terribly. Nothing seemed to help in the least.

Sister Lydia Thaynie felt impressed to come down and did so. Mother remarked how glad she was and that she had been wishing she would come all the morning. You, little Sammy, seemed determined to remain by Mother's side and as she lay on the bed in her bedroom (back one near Kitchen) writhing in pain, you would catch hold of her arm and cling on to it -- as you "jabbered and scolded" -- wanting only to be left alone. Then she would ask that someone come and get "the dear little soul" and pat you on the head. In a short time though you would evade them all, and manage to get back and again cling on to her. Your little mind seemed conscious that something terrible was impending; you sensed your dear Mother was ill and you only wished to be near her.

In the evening Dr. Dwyer of Alamosa was summoned. He had done you so much good and Mother and Papa had lots of faith in his skill. He deemed an operation the only chance! Mother and Papa both dreaded the thoughts of an operation but Mother said she was willing and anxious to undergo it if there would be relief and be a chance for her. Dr. Dwyer gave her another and a stronger "hypo" remarking, "how she will rest and won't notice the ride to the hospital" (twenty-five miles distant). However, there was still no easing of the piercing pain she had endured since early morning. Every tiny bump or movement of the ambulance on the way to Alamosa she fully realized and could not help a little moan or groan escaping! Agnes rode in the ambulance with her and did all she could to comfort and care her. Papa followed in his car. Sister Lydia Haynie rode with him.

Before leaving home Mother called each of the children to her bedside and spoke to them. Earnestly pleading with them to be good boys and girls always and to help Josephine good till she returned (Josephine was alone you see for Lorraine was spending the summer in Utah with Warren and I). But Delwyn said he felt when she passed thru the front door that nite that she would never return alive! Josephine felt the same. Mother kissed you too, Sammy, and patted your tiny head and murmured "Oh, the dear little fellow".

Sister Louise Turner, our ever dependable, faithful and true friend, was there too -- and asked what Mother wished her to do. She answered "Oh, if you can stay here with the children awhile I'll be so glad and you know what to do".

Ivin was in the mountains with the sheep.

Arriving at the Lutheran Hospital in Alamosa she was made as comfortable as possible but still the terrific pains continued. The doctors thought it best Mother be left alone except for Agnes who was her Special nurse. Before leaving to return home Mother and Papa spoke of the operation on the morrow. Papa dreaded it greatly but she said "Now Pa -- don't worry. I want to try it if the doctors think it will help. Now you go home to the children and rest. You've always been so thoughtful and good Pa. Come back in the morning. Go rest now and I'm going to try to also."

Before Sister Lydia Haynie left she went to Mother and told her she was going to go now but would come back in the morning. (Mother always thought so much of Sister Haynie). Mother took hold of both her hands and said in a low tone "I think I'll be alright -- but in case I might not I want some one to know certain things. I want Brother R. M. Haynie and Brother J. F..... Thomas to speak at my funeral. I want Elvira to raise my baby. She wants children and would have them if she could. She will love and care well for him. I want Louvina to have my wrist watch and Elvira my cameo pin. There is something too for each of the others and don't forget Agnes." Then she mentioned what a true friend Sister Turner was and always had been. Also spoke of how badly "certain people" had made her feel by telling false-hoods of her and proving to be untrue friends -- and of how much she had wanted to talk to Sister Haynie before. She then asked Sister Haynie to go see Aunt Annie as often as she could and to comfort "the girls".

The next morning, August 5, 1930, came the operation, between 9:00 and 11:00 o'clock. The doctors soon realized her condition was even worse than they had feared. There was a gangrene condition throughout her intestines; complete bowel obstruction; a very rare condition. There was nothing to be done but suture her up! The one chance in a thousand she had was a slim one.

Mother was opposed to letting Louvina, Lorraine, Iris, and I know of her illness until after the operation. Said there was no use worrying us. However, Father felt we should know and so notified us. We all of course answered we would leave for home

immediately. Ivin came down from the mountains -- but was too late to see her alive.

Strange as it may seem, Mother felt relieved after the operation and when Father told her he "had got in touch with us all and that we were on our way home, she was glad and said "Oh, I'll just rest up now and get better. Play the Lady. Have our Louvina to nurse me and we'll all have such a good visit!"

Father, Will, Agnes, and the other nurse were only ones permitted to be with her. Friends called but were not admitted -- as it was desired she be given every possible chance of recovery.

In the afternoon Mother asked for the Elders -- Brother Wm. O. Crowther and Brother Robert M. Haynie. Sister Haynie also went. Mother was conscious and seemed to have a numb feeling in her arms. She asked to have them rubbed and propped up. Then for a few seconds it seemed she would tell them where to find plenty pillows and ask for her own little pillow she always used -- it fit so well under her large bob of hair and her neck.

When Sister Haynie was ready to go, she went to tell Mother good-bye and Mother again took her hands and said "I think I'll be alright -- but in case I am not, don't forget what I've told you" -- and she repeated what she had told Sister Haynie the evening before.

That nite Papa remained in Hotel in Alamosa -- as all deemed it best for him to not remain at Hospital. During nite Mother's pain and condition took definite turn for worse, however. In her condition of course, was not wise she should move at all. Hypos were administered. Her suffering was terrible. Papa was called also.

And so, our little mother left us. Such a shock to us all! Seemed our world had "stopped"!

You were so pitiful, Sammy, dear. Cried so much. Only Papa could comfort you - or any way take her place - for some time. You seemed to realize the face you wanted to see, and the tender voice you wished to hear - was gone.

She was taken to Earl Haynie's undertaking parlor. Sister Haynie, wishing to make "shock" least possible, made her dress especially to bring her to the house in. Later of course it was removed and her beautiful burial clothes and temple robes was put on. Mother did look so beautiful in them too! -- and so peaceful. In her "autograph" albumm - which she reserved for writing just "special" items in - I've written a few more items, as the number of dear kind friends and relatives who called; those who made her clothes; those who send flowers letters and messages of sympathy; those who had a clean house and warm dinner for us - when we returned from cemetery; those who were pall-bearers; of some of the beautiful things which were said of her full beautiful life (etc.). Read them Sammy. We'll help you to realize what a truly wonderful mother we have - waiting now for

