

HISTORY OF RHODA MAY GOODRICH

By Stanley Dee and Madge Munk Roberts

George Albert Goodrich, with his first wife Eliza Ann Taggart had moved to Morgan, Utah where he engaged in milling, first operating a saw mill and later a flour mill. He also served as sheriff of Morgan County. Here Rhoda May was born 24 April 1874. She was the seventh child, with three older brothers and three older sisters. In 1884 when Rhoda was eight years of age the family moved to Ashley Valley, Uintah County, Utah. Here her father operated the first grist mill owned by a Mr. Johnson. Under the Timber Act he took a homestead and planted two acres of cottonwood trees.

Rhoda was lovingly called Dode by her family. Probably some of the little ones had a difficult time pronouncing their R's. She loved music, learning to play by ear. She also sang a duet, "Oh Happy Come Among the Hills" with David Manwaring, which made such an impression on his daughter Leona that she remembers it to this day. He sang the alto, Rhoda the soprano. She played for church meetings. Later she gave lessons for fifty cents.

Aunt Ruth Stone remembers what must have been a Primary operetta, "The Boston Tea Party" directed by Rhoda. It was in a Dutch setting and the participants wore white squares tied around their shoulders. Someone laughingly called them the "diaper brigade." Some others who took part were Veda and Mable Collett. It was composed of lively, catchy songs. Ruth also remembers the many times she stopped to play Rhoda's organ. Rhoda would fix the stops for her. She thought the most beautiful sounds came from that instrument.

Rhoda went to the Uintah Stake Academy in Vernal, living at her sister Mary Augusta Gagon's home because Naples was too far away from school.

Rhoda May was raised in a home where a love of the gospel permeated family life. When she was sixteen her father was called to serve on a mission for the LDS Church in the Southern states 1892-94.

It was during this time two special people were destined to meet. Ephraim Horace Roberts lived in Mona, Utah with his eleven sons and one daughter where he was engaged in the pottery business. He thought it best to get some land for his many sons and moved his family to Naples Ward near Vernal, Utah in 1893 where he purchased a 15-acre lot and set up a pottery business across from the Naples chapel. He had twin sons, Marion and Myron. When Marion first saw Rhoda he fell in love with her. Rhoda was eighteen, Marion twenty-two when they were married. A year later they were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.

The Roberts Pottery became Roberts Hall in 1896 where they held weekly dances. One could have dinner and dance the whole evening for fifty cents. A three-piece

orchestra furnished the music, Rhoda on the organ, George Allred on the violin and Robert Allred on the guitar. Dances were the schottische, the quadrille, polka and waltz.

Marion and Rhoda had five sons: Marion Asa, Evan Eugene, Emile James who died at five years of age, Carlyle Reed and Stanley Dee.

Rhoda was a beautiful woman with large brown eyes, about five feet four inches tall and slender. She was very ambitious, keeping a cozy home and raising a fruitful garden for her growing family. On 17 January 1911 Rhoda May passed away at Naples. Asa, the oldest, was fifteen and Stanley, the youngest, was sixteen months.

Because of Rhoda's long illness the children were taken by different relatives. After the funeral Marion gathered them all except Stanley, who remained for some time with Uncle George L. Goodrich's family, and took them home. Mamie Gagon, who had spent so much time in their home, couldn't stand to see the children alone, so she went to their home and took care of them. She was only nineteen years of age. Marion asked her to marry him and they went to the Salt Lake Temple 11 Oct 1911. These two women have become as one to these five boys.

In comparison to the beautiful love of Biblical Ruth and Naomi, we might look upon the lives of Rhoda May and her sister, Mary Augusta's daughter Mamie. They had great love for each other from the time Rhoda lived in Mamie's home and went to high school. In a long-ago letter Mamie wrote to Stanley on his birthday she stated, "I remember so well when you were born. You were a fat roly-poly baby with big brown eyes and such a good little boy. Your mother was proud of you as she was of all of her sons.

"She was the loveliest of mothers, very beautiful and a talented musician. She was dear to me and I felt when I lost her I had indeed lost a dear, sweet friend. Since her death I seem to have felt her presence near me at times.

"A very vivid dream I had: Your father had left you with Uncle George (Rhoda's oldest brother and his family.) I dreamed I was sitting on the granary steps and your mother came along on a big black horse with you in her arms. When she passed by me she dropped you in my lap and said, 'Take care of my baby.' I told your father about the dream and he said, 'I must go and bring Stanley home,' which he did. So you were my baby for quite a while and I loved you as though you were my own."

To Marion and Mamie was born a son, Homer, then a darling baby girl on 18 January 1916. What was the name chosen for this first daughter of Marion's? Why, Rhoda, of course. This Rhoda was taken in death by appendicitis when she was four years of age, a great tragedy to the boys who had been so delighted to have a sister, and to the loving parents. Three more girls were born to Marion and Mamie: Alice, Sylvia and Flora.

Mamie has always treated all the children with love and respect. They revere her. Mamie says it will be her delight after this life is over to meet Rhoda and thank her for the privilege of raising her boys. Depending on the two people she loved to take care of her precious little ones, Rhoda asked Marion to marry Mamie if she would have him.

The following is a treasured poem written in Rhoda's beautiful handwriting and given to her son Stanley by kind relatives:

The only perfect peace and pleasure
That one truly can enjoy
Is being pure and holy,
Serving God and doing right,
Knowing that we have His favor,
Praying to Him morn and night.

Dode