

My Remembrances of Ida Stirling Tullis  
by J. Jerome Tullis

My mother, Ida Stirling, was born the 28th day of December 1881 to William Stirling and Sarah Ann Leany in Leeds, Utah, at the home of her parents. She was the tenth child and the sixth daughter of a family of fourteen children. She had reddish-brown hair and blue eyes. Her long hair was worn in a braid twisted and arranged in a bob on the top and back of her head. Even at the time of her death, when she was 77 years old, she only had a few gray hairs. She was always active physically and mentally.

Mother taught school in Pinto the first year after she married John H. Tullis. Their marriage took place on June 28, 1905. After Stirling was born, they moved to Page's Ranch, where they lived for two years. Dad ran the ranch and Mother kept house. She was a very meticulous and particular housekeeper, even sweeping the twigs and leaves up out in the yard. She loved flowers and almost always had a flower garden.

Upon leaving Page's Ranch, they moved to New Castle, where they built the house they lived in until the time they died. The house consisted of two rooms on the ground floor and two rooms upstairs, and had a cellar under the kitchen.

For two months in two different summers, the family lived in Pinto, where the best milk-producing range cows were brought in and milked, along with our usual milk cows so that cheese could be made. In the meantime, the garden in New Castle was growing, and a member of the family would go there once a week to get the mail, water the garden and gather anything ripe to take back to Pinto. Every fall, Mother would spend several weeks at her parent's home putting up fruit for the family. Then Dad would come with a load of potatoes to pay for the fruit and to bring Mother home.

Because of my dad's hospitable nature, my mother cooked countless meals for friends and strangers. On one occasion when she saw him bringing someone home, she rebelled and went upstairs and hid under the bed until the company left, much to the surprise of my father. It was because this was such an unusual occurrence that it has remained in my memory.

Mother was a good reader and loved to read, and as an enticement or reward she would read to us after we had finished our school assignments in the evening. How we loved to lie on the floor and listen to her read to us - books like Ben Hur, Riders of the Purple Sage and other books by Zane Grey, along with many other interesting books. Many times she was called upon in church to read to the congregation the conference talks in the Improvement Era.

Although she was a regular attender at Sacrament Meeting, she did miss Sunday School sometimes, because she never wanted to leave a house that was not spotless. Then, too, she had to prepare the meals for any visitors from the Stake or anyone else that was visiting in town. There was no hotel or cafe in town, and invariably people ended up at our house.

When Mother was past seventy, she went with her son, David, and his family to hunt for pine nuts. In the afternoon she got tired, so she told them she would walk back down to the car and wait for them. When they arrived at the car, she was not there. They hunted in the vicinity for her; then drove up and down the road and honked the horn and called for her until after dark,

but were unsuccessful in finding her. When they couldn't find her, they went home and notified the Sheriff's Department. The next morning a posse went out to hunt for her.

In the meantime, when she discovered she was lost and it was getting dark, instead of wandering in the dark, she stopped by a big rock, lit a fire, and stayed there all night. The next morning she was able to find the road and had just started walking down the road when the posse found her. She was very embarrassed about the whole thing.

My mother did a lot of doctoring on us as we grew up - using mustard plasters, ointments, etc., and a lot of love to keep us going.

When she was about 41 years old, mother was operated on for a goiter, which was huge. She wore high collars in an attempt to hid it. Following the operation, she lost her voice and could not talk out loud for quite a while. She could only whisper and was not able to call the children at all. Several times she got our attention by throwing rocks at us. Because of the operation, she could never again breathe normally, although her breathing did improve as time went by.

Mother never went to the hospital or had a doctor in attendance when her children were born. We were all born at home or at her parent's home in Leeds, with the help of a midwife. She had seven children, but William Eccles died as a baby. Those who reached adulthood were Elvon Stirling, VeRue, J. Jerome, David Anthon, Jean Scott and Carroll John.

In the summer when we were haying, mother would often come out to the stackyard on a hot afternoon, bringing a pitcher of cold lemonade and a cake. Every morning for breakfast we had biscuits - one morning it would be baking powder biscuits and the next morning it would be yeast biscuits. Once in a while we had toast, which was toasted on the top of the stove. No matter what the occasion, she could prepare a wonderful meal without going to the store; just using what she had in the house.

Thanksgiving was a memorable time at our home. We always had a roast turkey which we had raised. Besides the usual Thanksgiving meal items, we would have a variety of pies: apple, raisin, pumpkin, custard and lemon. Also cake and bottled fruit. On Thanksgiving and Christmas nights how we loved to come home and eat cold turkey and dressing and finish off with a piece of pie. I still do!

Mother died after a very short illness. We had planned to take her to Provo to stay with VeRue, but Stirling decided to have the Bishop come and administer to her. The arrangements with the Bishop were made before VeRue and I arrived to pick her up. The Bishop surprised us when he dedicated her to the Lord during the administration. When we saw how sick she was, we took her to the hospital in Cedar City. She died the following Wednesday, on December 11, 1958.