

THIS OLD HOUSE *by Helen Shurtliff*
~~W.H. BATHLER 196 S. - 300 W~~ Nov. 1983

As long as I can remember, the house we lived in, on 300 West 200 South, was an old house. We loved it because it was home. It was made from adobes from the old adobe yard east of town.

There were four rooms in the house, with a fireplace in the two south rooms and a chimney for stoves in the two north rooms. The walls were thick, so we were kept warm, with a wood stove, in the winter, and cool in the summer. We would close the doors and pull the blinds when the sun got hot, except for the kitchen. We had big trees all around the house.

Very often at night in the summer, we would make our beds out under a tree on a steel cot so we could take advantage of every little breeze. If a storm ever came up, we folded the bottom mattress over half way with the sheets and pillows inside and covered the whole thing with a canvas until the storm passed by.

The windows in the house were deep, just right to sit in or put house plants where they would get some sunshine. We used the north windows to store our milk and butter, with a damp cloth carefully tucked around it. We had no refrigerator until about 1935.

West of the house was an adobe cellar with a dirt floor and a grainery above. I remember drying nuts on the floor in the grainery in the summer, but we put in a stove and some furniture and rented it out to students most of the time.

We kept our bottled fruit and winter squash, potatoes and apples in the cellar. One summer my sister and I went on a peddling trip with Dad. While we were gone Mother fixed part of the cellar into a play house with old blankets hung on wire to divide it into rooms. We were really excited to have a fun place to play out of the heat. One year we played house in the grainery after the students had gone home.

My folks had the house for about 27 years. We didn't have running water in the house until about 1927, and no bathroom until about 1936. Electricity was there as long as I can remember.

Twice the two north rooms were rented out, and one year when my brother was on a mission Mother lived in the grainery and rented the whole house.

As a child we played nearly all our games outside. We played marble games south of the house and baseball and Steal Sticks in the street. Many times the neighborhood would gather under the light pole and make a fire and roast potatoes in the fall while we played Run Sheepie Run.

I guess we nearly lived outside where it was cooler in the summer, and in the fall and winter we wanted to take advantage of every bit of sunshine we could get. When the sun went down we would bring our books and sewing inside and remake the fire and eat bread and milk with onions or bottled fruit. The light was not turned on until we had all the things done that didn't take much light.

During the canning season we always sat outside to shell peas and peel peaches. In fact, some of the bottles were processed in a water bath in the old wash tub over an open fire.

Mother never washed in the house. She had a wash shed south of the entrance to the cellar where she scrubbed the clothes with a scrubbing board and boiled the white ones in the boiling tub which was balanced on a metal frame over three or four rocks. It was our job to keep the willows pushed under the tub to keep the fire going. She had a good old punch that would do wonders to loosen the dirt. Even after we were able to get an electric Maytag washer, mother felt that the white clothes needed to go through the ritual of boiling and punching to keep them sanitary.

We always had a good garden and a grape vineyard. Sometimes we would even carry a pan full of bunched radishes and onions to the neighbors to see if we could earn some money.

Our irrigation water had to come from the ditch on the street above us so we didn't have too much lawn and flowers -- just a little right in front of the house. We grew some peaches and apples in the field and would always dry sacks of them as well as raisins and Dad would take part of them north in the fall and trade for potatoes and squash.

We had a cow and chickens and for years Dad would use horses to do his farm work and also to do his peddling and visit relatives out of town. He used his team to haul wood from "Out South" meaning of course the Arizona Strip.

Mother had a treadle sewing machine that she used all her life and is still in good working condition.

When we first moved to St. George in 1918, I was just 3 years old. Along with the usual furniture we had an old treadle organ. We had it for years and mother played many songs on it for us. As I grew older I spent some time playing with the keys, peddles and stops, but mother thought if they got a piano we would learn better, so Dad traded two unimproved city lots in town for a used piano.

We went barefoot a lot in the summer -- maybe we thought it was cooler that way or maybe we just didn't want to stop to put on our shoes and stockings. Stockings meant garters for we never wore ankle sox until years later. We had sad experiences when we had to return home after the sandy streets became too hot to walk on.

Before we had a bathroom we had to make the long walk down the path to the outhouse. In case of sickness or emergencies we had a bed chamber that was emptied and scrubbed often. We bathed in a No. 3 tub in front of the stove, fenced off by a few chairs backed up around the tub with blankets draped around for privacy and warmth.

Our only brother was born in this home on March 9, 1921. Mother sent my sister and me up to our aunts to play all day, and we weren't to come home until someone came for us. We wondered why so much freedom all at once -- never suspecting at our early age that such a big event was to happen. I remember a midwife coming for 2 weeks to take of mother and the baby.

We made all our soap out in the old wash tub. We would put scraps of fat, water and lye in the tub and it would all dissolve as it boiled very carefully. We would have to watch it closely after it was cooking to keep it from boiling over. We had a bucket of cold water handy so we could add some as needed. We also had to be careful about the size of fire we had. After it had cooked until it would string like candy, we would pour it through an old screen wire into another tub to set overnight to cool. By the next morning it was set up enough for mother to cut it in pieces 2 or 3 inches wide. The soap was 5 or 6 inches deep in the tub. We would carefully lift these pieces out with a big knife and set them up on some boards to dry.

Dad had a farm in the Washington Fields, about 5 miles southeast of our home. Driving a team back and forth was quite time consuming so we built a small house there so we could stay there in the summer and he wouldn't have to make so many trips in the winter. Even after we got a truck, it got to be expensive to buy that much gas during the depression.

Finally in 1945, mother decided that two homes were too much to keep up, so they sold the home in town for \$4,000 so she could build a better home on the farm, and a two story brick home was built for that amount.

We have been hoping many times since we were established on the farm that someone could restore the old home and make it beautiful for another family. At one time we even inquired about purchasing it, but the owners lived in California and it wasn't for sale.

It was a choice experience when Lovinia Harmsen telephoned me and told me of her plans for the house. I met her at the place and I relived some of the experiences we had when we lived there.

Since my first contact with her I have telephoned, visited and researched in old books and histories to find more about the beginning of this house, and I have found out many interesting things.

St. George was settled in 1861. The pioneers came over the black hill on the east from as far north as Salt Lake City on December 1, 1861. Upon entering the valley a ditch was plowed to direct the water from East Spring down through the campground. Wagons were parked on either side of it so they would be close to drinking water. Early the next spring a program was started to survey the townsite and during the next few months the pioneers took possession of their lots.

"Under Dixie Sun" states "By January 23, 1862 the survey was so far completed that the people began moving onto their lots which had been selected in the usual pioneer style. In order to give each man a square deal, numbers of the lots were placed in a hat, while the names of the men were placed in another one. A slip was drawn from each hat and handed to the man whose name was drawn. Many were perfectly satisfied with their drawings, but others did some trading among themselves before they found the lots of their choice."

An abstract was signed and recorded on February 15, 1875 to give Lot 1 on block 8 Plat A to William F. Butler, however his name was on the map made of St. George in 1873 that showed the location of the lots of the original settlers. He was listed as one of the original pioneers when the census was

taken in 1862. It looks like it took the town fathers a while to get everything down legally.

Most of the pioneers set their wagon boxes on their property while they took the running gears of the wagons and went to the river to get willows to make a quick shade for protection from the elements and then they got busy on important things like getting the ground ready for spring planting and make a few fences to keep the cattle and horses that were grazing in the streets and on the hillside from destroying what they had.

As far as I can find out, the two south rooms of the house were built first in the late 60's. They used black rock from the hill closeby to make the foundation and the top was made with adobes made at the old adobe yard east of town where there was a lot of clay.

On June 7, 1886 William F. Butler sold his holdings to Henry Bryner. A niece of Henry Bryner said her uncle added the north rooms on as well as building the cellar and grainery. She used to play with her cousins there as a small child. Her folks lived only a block away and had a similar type of house.

On April 27, 1897 Bryner deeded the home to Arthur Woodbury. I talked to their daughter, Dixie, who was born in the house in 1902.

In 1904 the place was sold to Ephraim J. Webb. He lived here with his family until 1918. I talked with his daughter, Jessie Webb Eagar. She said she was born there in 1908. She remembers playing in the cellar and grainery and herding their milk cows on the hillside in the spring.

In November, 1918 my father, William B. Bradshaw, traded his home in Hurricane to Ephraim J. Webb for the home and lots. I think there was more trading than paying cash for property at that time.

We lived there until we sold it in 1945 to George Hackford. The back of the lot had been sold previously to mother's brother, W. O. Bentley.

On May 14, 1952 the home went to Job F. and Annie Hall.

Ivor Clove took possession of it in January of 1967. He was a nephew of Annie Hall.

A few months later in April 1967 it was turned over to his daughter, Mary Rondo and her husband, Joseph. They lived in California and were always going to move back to Utah and fix up the house, but finally gave up the move and sold the place to Lovinia Harmsen, Stephen Mark Harmsen and Randall Harmsen on August 18, 1981.

I am thankful that someone has made the place look like someone cared. It is really an asset to the neighborhood. Now I don't feel embarrassed about what was happening to our old place. I want to go by it nearly everytime we go in that part of town.