

LUCY ANN DANA NELSON

This information is taken from a booklet called " My Amazing Mother" written by Kerma Niel Harmon about our Mother, Ellen Phonanda (Fawn) Nelson Niel. It was given in Mothers funeral address.

Mama and Papa (As they were called by Fawn Niel)

In the early spring of 1906 George Patten Nelson, son of Joseph Smith Nelson Jr. and Hannah Jane Patten, moved his young wife, Lucy Ann (Dana) and their two small daughters, Mable and Eunice, to Sugar City, Idaho. He set a tent up in the track camp for them to live in and went to work for the railroad. The summer months seemed to have passed fairly smoothly but along toward fall Lucy developed sciatica, a condition which made it increasingly difficult for her to walk. She got around by hitching along in a rocking chair, a procedure which wore runts in the dirt floor of the tent, the runners to her rocker wore very thin, as it did, I assume, her patience. Young, gentle, George, coped with this stressful situation by coming home a little later each evening. The day came when he was issued an ultimatum: "Either come right home from work or don't come home at all." And the next day he didn't/ As the tale would unravel in years to come, when he went to work that morning, the job boss announced that he had contracted a stretch of track to be laid in the State of Washington and anyone wanting to work there should be on the train that afternoon. When the old iron engine pulled the cars out of Sugar City, George climbed aboard; a decision he would live to regret every day for the rest of his life. He would not appear again on this scenario for some six years when he went back to Thayne to his father's funeral. At that time he wished to make his acquaintance known to his daughters, but the father they called dad was Andrew (Jennings Nelson).

When word of the abandoned family reached the valley, Lucy's father, Roswell Root Dana, harnessed a team of horses, hooked the tugs to a double-tree of a sturdy wagon, went to Sugar City and moved them back to his home on Muddy String, which was just that; an almost level piece of land where the runoff from the foot hills in Bedford lingered awhile before rushing on down to the valley floor. Lucy's father, and her mother Eunice Melvina Davis Dana, emptied a one room log building they had been using for a grainery. A hole was cut in the sod roof for a stovepipe and Lucy Ann's meager furnishings were moved in there. On the 4th of November Lucy gave birth to her third child, a little girl she named Ellen Phonanda and called Fawn. Fawn's grandparents, and uncles and aunts who seemed more like brother and sisters all her life, called her "Little Fawnie." The Dana's would have a lasting affect on the lives of these children planting the seeds of faith and hope, a testimony as to the truthfulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints, in their hears at a very early age.

(The three little girls were Mable who married William Artell Cazier; Eunice Melvina who married Joseph James Reeves and Ellen Phonanda (Fawn) who married Dee Nield.)

Mother and Dad (As they were called by Fawn Nield)

Andrew Jennings Nelson, son of Nels Christian Nelson and Inger Christina Peterson from the Bear Lake Valley, came to Star Valley to work as a carpenter. He met Lucy Ann, fell in love with her, accepted her three small daughters as his own, and they were married in 1909. In the ensuing years they had seven children: Inger Christina, who married Orville Rolph; Roswell Root, known as Ross or Roz, married Nellie Illum; Anthon Alma, called Tone or Tony, married Beth Illum; Audrey Metta married Aldon Snyder; Andrew Dana, called Dana, married Mary Lour Danks; Fay Dana married Gwen Hyde. The last boy, Donald, was born and died on the same day.

Lucy Ann and Andrew worked very, very hard to provide for their growing family. Andrew worked as a carpenter and hauled logs from the canyons to be sawed for lumber and fire wood. Lucy took in sewing and laundry for others as well as planted, cared for and preserved a large garden. She also canned wild berries, trout and venison. She gathered peppermint for tea and other herbs for medicinal purposes. Mother remembers the laundry, all clean, ironed and neatly folded and tied up in a blanket sheet and place on a small sleigh Andrew built for them to be delivered to various homes around town. I asked mother if this was hard for her and her sisters to do and she said " Oh, no, it was fun. Nearly every home we went to had children the same age as some of us and we made a lot of friends that way. And then, on Friday, we got to go up to Gardner's mill and buy a sack of flour and a bag of mush."

The family moved many times around the Lower Valley following Andrew's work and moved to Afton the year before Fawn was old enough to start school. She went through eight grades of elementary school and one year of high school in Afton but always returned to the Dana's home in the summer. She recalls going to Stake Conference in a wagon and tying the team of horses to the wagon box to eat the hay they brought along while they were in the wonderful Tabernacle to meetings. The people would all come out at noon and eat the lunches they brought with them and then go back in to afternoon meetings. After meeting of course, they would travel back to Muddy String and when they arrived after dark the cows still needed to be milked, the eggs gathered, and other chores done, like feeding the livestock.

My mother, Fawn, looked after her mother, Lucy Ann, throughout her life. It was a common event for her and Dad (Dee) to take food to the little house on the highway by the Freedom Lane on Sunday afternoons especially if we had extra produce or potatoes, or whenever a beef or sheep was butchered. Sometimes the boys, Roz and Tone, Dana or Fay would live at our home for periods of time. Grandma suffered from sugar diabetes for much of her life and also had a thyroid condition that plagued her. She was legally blind in her later life. After she came to live with us in Afton, Mother would see that she got the proper foods for her diabetes and gave her regular insulin shots. The needles were as large as darning needles and it was difficult to inject the insulin without causing discomfort, but Mother was so tender and gentle with her mother. Family members remember Grandma being rather ornery, but I never heard my Mother speak badly about her. Grandma spent her last years after Andrew died in 1943 in the home of Fawn and Dee in Afton until she died January 27, 1945.

(Joyce Nield Draney daughter of Fawn Nelson Nield)