

Nellie Walker Rostrom

From *The Story of Nellie Walker Rostrom*, compiled and written by Mildred Ann Rostrom Lewis

Nellie was born in Jewett, New Mexico, on July 13, 1904—the 12th and last child of William and Lottie Walker. At the time of her birth her mother was 42 and her father was 54. Estella was 16 at the time of Nellie's birth and she was like a mother to Nellie.

When Nellie was three years old the family moved to Redmesa, Colorado. There were 10 children still living at home at this time. Redmesa was a new settlement of approximately 20 families, and because the soil was red they named it Redmesa. Don Carlos purchased property bordering on William's land.

Nellie did not start school until she was eight years old, the reason being the distance of three miles to walk in deep snow. Nellie remembered one time when Ruth and Ethel and she rode on a white horse to school and it would stay there all day until they came home.

Nellie learned to ride a horse at a very early age. Besides the fun involved, she would round up the cows each evening, as they would be scattered over the countryside in search of food. Coyotes were a very common sight at this time.

Nellie learned a lot from her older brothers and sisters who were home. She passed two grades in one year. There was just one teacher for all grades. She can remember one teacher who had taught there so long he had taught at least six of the Walker children.

Nellie and her family had lots of fun sleigh riding, having snowball fights, and building forts. They learned to appreciate what few things they had. "Waste not, want not" was their motto. It was very common for three children to sleep in a bed, and their mattresses were usually straw filled. There was plenty of work for all to do, and they learned the valuable lesson of work.

The land was covered with sagebrush and cactus. Nellie can remember vivid recollections of the brush being piled in huge piles, and at night it would be lit, and "Oh, what a sight!" The prickly cactus was thrown into the fire and when peeled would make the sweetest candy.

On July 13, 1912, Nellie was baptised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was baptised by her father in the La Plata River in Colorado.

William and Lottie Walker and the younger unmarried girls, including Nellie, moved to Provo, Utah, in 1920, arriving on Memorial Day. Over the next few years Nellie's sisters Lavina, Ruth, and Ethel married or found work elsewhere and moved away.

Nellie:

About 1927, my mother and I lived in Provo. I was head librarian at the Public Library at Provo, Utah, and that is where I met Fred Rostrom. We took a liking to each other right away, but there were many problems to work out before we could become serious. First, he was not a member of the Church. Second, he was a traveling man, which to me did not make for a good family life. His dad was living in Florida at this time, and he decided to go see him. I suggested that if he couldn't come up with the right solution he just drop me a line and I would understand. Ethel and Elmer Smith and Ruth and Jo Lerwill were living in Salt Lake City at this time, and when Fred did come back, one Sunday we went to Salt Lake and he asked Smith to baptize him.

John Branch was district manager of the World Book, and Fred respected him very much. He was living in Seattle, and one day he came to Salt Lake City, and on the spur of the moment we decided to get

married so John could be with us. We were married March 17, 1930. We all had dinner at the Hotel Utah.

Two days later John asked Fred to go to Denver, Colorado. He was gone for two weeks.

I quit my job in July 1930 and was getting ready to move to Florida. There was a big highway being built through Fred's dad's property. We left September 3, 1930, and went to Colorado to visit my sister Mae Bond, then on to Texas, where we visited a number of the Rostrom relatives. Next stop was Louisiana, where we visited Fred's Uncle William and several cousins. We became very close to Furnn Rostrom, who became Mrs. Robert Dezendorf, who furnished me a lot of genealogy on the Rostrom line.

Our next stop was Florida, and by this time I was getting mighty tired.

Fred was getting restless, and I was hearing more and more of the great Northwest. The company really could not transfer him out. The depression had frozen our savings account, so we were completely dependent on him working. We did have a new car, and by April the weather had broken and I felt I was strong enough to travel. I wrote my sister Ruth, who was living in Billings, Montana, for a loan of \$60.

We planned on being at her home on a certain date. The roads were bad, and there were many detours, but the last day Fred pushed himself for 700 miles so we could get there. Mother was staying with Ruth at the time.