

JOURNEY'S END

By Marie Manwaring Anderson May 7, 1967

Written 10 days after Teresa's funeral

I am sitting here alone in the old Manwaring family home at 410 Meridian Street, Blackfoot, Idaho. This is the first time I have been here since my Mother's funeral a week ago. I am glad to be in this dear place – and alone on this Sunday afternoon, so I can think about things and do my writing and shed my tears. Not tears of sorrow, but just tears for this empty house with its soul gone. Everything else in it is still the same. We will hate to give it up. It has been home to us for 41 years this month. It is beginning to show the toll of time as did our loved Mother. I want to write down the events of the past year while it is still fresh in my mind, for my family and for dear old friends who are away.

Our Mother, Teresa Holley Manwaring, passed away Thursday, April 27, 1967 at 6 p.m., quietly. She has lived here alone since our father, Arthur Manwaring, died in 1942, June 1st—25 years ago. He was ill for two years following a stroke, with one side of his body paralyzed. Mother cared for him in our home with the help of Basil, who came home from his mission in Texas—and Rondo and Lorraine.

Mom worked in J.C. Penneys until she had to retire and then worked various places for many more years. She was 80 years old on March 14th of last year. Last summer her only sister, Hatsie, died and we took her to Utah for the funeral, making the trip down and back in one day. Two weeks later, her brother, Dallas, passed away unexpectedly and we all went down again and back in one day. She was tired but felt happy to see so many old friends and be loved and fussed over. In the fall, she went with my family to Salt Lake and stayed over night with a dear cousin she hadn't seen for years. They had such a lovely time, we hoped we could take her again this summer. On Christmas she held "open house" as she called it, and all of us came sometime through the weekend to spend some time with her.

Two or three weeks later, she noticed her legs were swelling unduly, making it harder for her to get around, although she wasn't really sick. When she didn't seem to snap out of it, our brother, Dr. Rondo, who is a chiropractor, brought her medication and vitamins and she continued to feel pretty good although the swelling continued. During this time, she remained cheerful, as always, and optimistic, saying, "I'm sure I'm a little better today." She felt she probably over-indulged herself at Christmas time with goodies and got her system off-balanced. Still she didn't mind being alone, she said. She didn't have much sight left, but did well in her own home where she knew where everything was. She turned down offers to go to church, etc., however, because it was tiring for her and she was afraid she might bump her swollen legs. I came down and stayed overnight with her once a week. I had to be home by 7 a.m. and she would be up at 5:30 frying me an egg.

Then Dr. Rondo decided that he had better have Dr. Walter Hoge check her. We were staying with her night and day this last week. The doctor approved Rondo's treatment and gave her some additional pills. He said outside of a slow heart, everything was working properly.

The nights I stayed with her she would get into her bed and I would kneel beside her for our prayer together. I will always be glad for these little special times with her. She would cling to my hand as I kissed her goodnight, such as an anxious child might.

On Sunday, we had her home teachers, Bishop and Holley and Del Parkins administer to her. She said "just ask that my body will function properly," and "call Rondo and Basil to come." She would sit up awhile and lie down awhile, and slept easily wherever she was.

I couldn't stay that night, but all the rest of her children (Wanda and Rondo from Pocatello; Basil, Ashton; Lorraine, Moreland; and Holley, Blackfoot) were there. She said "I could hear them all visiting away. I just got into bed and left them to it." She seemed content to know that they were all there.

I attended church that evening in my own ward in Shelley (Jameston) and being short of sleep, dozed quite a bit. At one time, my Mother's face flashed before me as she slumped away in death. I awoke with a start, shaking. I don't believe in dreams as Mother did, so I persuaded myself that it was not a premonition, and I mentioned it to no one. But I thought, "When she goes, it will be like that." And I was comforted with that thought.

I was working every day, so I stayed Monday and Tuesday nights and Holley's wife, Eva, and Lorraine and Wanda stayed days. Holley and Eva and family stayed Wednesday night. She got up during the nights by herself to go to the bathroom and never wanted to bother anyone else. My family and I were to stay Thursday night with her. We got a dear old friend and neighbor of hers, Goldie Woodland, to come and stay afternoons. So she was with her Thursday afternoon, April 27th. Mom sat at her usual place by the table and telephone to eat her lunch Thursday and asked Lorraine to call up Eva to come and eat with them. Afterwards they helped her into bed as she had been quite drowsy all day.

Mrs. Woodland said Mom remarked, "What to you think Arthur and Chesley (her late husband) are doing about now?" She had replied that no doubt those old friends were having a good time together. Mom said, "This seems like the longest day I've ever spent in my life. It seems like it will never end."

Some friends came and brought her flowers about 5:30 and she spoke to them from her bed. Mrs. Woodland left the room to care for the flowers and when she returned in about 15 minutes, Mom had evidently raised up, left this world without a sound, and fell back across her bed.

Holley and Eva were there within 10 minutes. Eva lost her mother three years ago while they were sitting at a table playing games, so this was not new to her. I called from Shelley just as they arrived at the house and was given the sad news. I was shocked and crying, but then I thought, "What a miracle for her to go in such a wonderful way." And it's nice to think of her and Dad as being together again. So all of the children came again that evening except Basil and we tried to decide what to do first.

I called my daughter, Diane, in Salt Lake City to tell her of grandma's passing. She was in the hospital to have her baby, which was born the next morning at 8 a.m. (Benjamin). Eva said no doubt Grandma got there just in time to see him off on his journey to earth. It was a sweet thought.

So, though we were sad to lose her, we couldn't but be glad for her – not having to leave her home or to suffer. The last few days we had all been making plans of how we could take her into our homes until she could get back on her feet. It is a comfort to think of her and Daddy being together again. We were all so grateful for the last week with her and for Uncle Ben Holley's recent visit here with her for two nights. We set the funeral for Monday and began notifying relatives and close friends.

Friday we went to the mortuary to make funeral arrangements, and he had Mom ready for her clothes. Wanda set her hair and we enjoyed 30 minutes or so there with her in the little preparation room. She looked her regal self, lying there as though asleep in her own bed.

On Sunday evening, her brothers, John and Ben, came from Utah and we were all at the mortuary for three hours greeting a continuous line of friends who came to see her, lying so lovely in her lacy white clothes, a friend's white lace handkerchief in her hand and her temple robes on. It was nice to meet with them all and talk about her and her wonderful character and personality. So many beautiful flowers – so many nice cards in the mail – so much food brought to our homes – even several gifts of money instead of flowers.

We met friends again Monday before services at the mortuary. Before they closed the casket and Holley gave the family prayer, I was privileged to put her temple veil on her. I couldn't help crying softly as I did, but looking at her face from that angle, she just seemed to have a sort of smile as though amused at our fussing over her dear mortal form, when we knew she wasn't really here at all, but in heaven's realms where she could "see as good as anybody", as one of her grandchildren remarked.

So now we must decide what to do with her dear home and its treasures. They will be divided out for loving grandchildren to remember her by, and I'm sure they will say to friends: "This was my Grandmother's, we loved to go to her house. She always had cookies. She made the best fudge, and always gave us a bottle full to take home. She played the piano last Thanksgiving while we all marched around the church hall ("Under the Double Eagle") like we used to at her house. We liked to have her come and stay at our house. She had us all sing "76 Trombones" on Thanksgiving. She is our last grandparent (for all but Rondo's children's grandmother). "Now who will have grandma's lilac bushes and her early June apple tree?"

Exactly a year and a month ago to the day, Teresa went with the other relatives to Pocatello to her granddaughter, Dixie Jorgensen's, testimonial before her departure for a mission to Finland. Dixie wrote cute letters of love home regularly to "Grandma." Her 7 married grandchildren were all home bringing their

babies to visit Grandma Manwaring, some time during the last summer. They came from California, Colorado, New York, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and Georgia. Now they think “how grateful that we were with her just a few months ago. We still have some of our things stored in her basement. How strange to return and have someone else in the dear old grandma-house with its bright cushions and curtains, and rockers and braided rugs and little odd dishes and old fashioned pictures.”

Her neighbors think “how strange to see no light in the big house on the corner after 40 years. No Sister Manwaring to call up for a ride to church or to take to Relief Society or DUP meetings. No delivery of groceries to a cheerful soul anymore by the neighborhood grocer. No more to hear her rich alto voice directing the Singing Mothers, or leading the junior Sunday School children as she did only three years ago. Only two years ago she and I sang two dear old Primary songs in Relief Society meeting and her voice was strong and sweet. She had all the ladies crying. Her dark, thick hair was only just beginning to show gray.”

We children are thinking and marveling to each other: “How kind people are – how thoughtful; so many flowers; so many who came from so far away, leaving their work, just to tell us of their high regard for our mother and for us. So many letters and cards. So much understanding and reassurances for us of God’s plan of life for our Mother and our Father who has been gone for 25 years. What a miracle and blessing for Mother to leave us just at this time, with warm, sweet memories of a wonderful year just past.”

“What laggarts we have been in the past when loved ones of our friends have passed away. Did we visit? Did we send a card? Did we phone, or send food to the house? Did we hesitate to mention a departed one to our friends? Now we know we must not hesitate again. We know now how much every little tribute means to a family – for weeks, yes for months and years. And we are blest. We had a good “last year” – yes, a good “last week” with our Mother.

Now she is gone we will look around us more. We will visit our older friends in the rest homes, the hospitals, in the homes of their children. It may be our last visit with them. We will be better because of our Mother. And though the heart has gone from our family, we will keep together. We will meet as usual next Thanksgiving at a church and praise her memory and pledge ourselves to stay close together. We will thank the Lord for her teachings and for our Father’s teachings, and their inheritance to us – not of worldly goods, but of goodness and faith in God, and love of people, and a happy outlook on life, and the wonderful gift of music.

And so the book closes, the song ends, and we must go on to other things. But the melody lingers on and the story is forever in our hearts, enriching our own song and our own books to their close.