

Joseph Smith Wardell was born February 9, 1876, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the only son of Martin Douglas Wardell and Mary Anne Askew. He had some half-brothers and sisters: Johnny, George, William, Rachel (wright) and Emma (Tally).

He married Fannie Anne Smith of Rockport on May 19, 1902, at Coalville. Fannie Anne was the daughter of William Wheeler Smith and Ellen Emily Wilson. She had four brothers: William, James, Richard, and Clarence and one sister, Nell.

They moved up Weber Canyon which is about eight miles east of Oakley, Utah, where they homesteaded. They acquired some sheep and a couple of cows. They traveled to Oakley to the store and to the creamer to sell their cream. Joseph drove a roan team of horses--Jen and Mod--of which he was very proud. Many times in the winter the snow would get real deep, up to eight feet, and the road to Oakley would be closed sometimes for six to eight weeks.

Joseph was a well built man, being six feet tall and weighing about two hundred pounds. He was known throughout the valley for his strength. When he went to the country store in Oakley, there was seldom a time when someone didn't challenge him to prove his strength, He could lift a one hundred pound keg of nails on the end of a pitchfork from the floor to the counter, a height of about four feet. Many times there would be a wager of twenty five or fifty cents and Joseph was always able to walk off with the prize,

Joseph and Fannie Anne had three sons; Joseph Vern, born August 9, 1903; Owen Douglas, born February 13, 1906; and William Smith, born November 2. 1908. All three were born at Rockport at the home of Fannie Anne's parents.

One time when Fannie Anne and their three little boys were spending a few days at her parents home in Rockport, and Joseph had stayed at the homestead to take care of the sheep and do the chores, (at this time they had about 250 sheep) he got food poisoning from tomatoes he had eaten. Ike Wardell, his nephew, who was staying there to help, also became ill from eating the tomatoes. Ike left, then and went home and to a doctor. Even though Joseph was very ill, he didn't get to a doctor at this time. He recovered after a few days from the acute illness, but the poison and infection had entered his blood stream and he was never well again. He lived for a few months and died April 21, 1910, at the home of his wife's Parents. He was buried April 25, 1910, in the Wanship cemetery.

And now Fannie Anne, her big strong husband gone, was left with the big responsibility of providing for and caring for their little family She, was a quiet and rather shy woman, but was a good manager and with faith that Heavenly Father would help her, she carried on.

She sold the homestead and sheep to the Stillman brothers, moved down to Rockport and bought the farm next to her parents place. There was a little log house on the place and she and the boys moved into it. The farm in Rockport was eighteen acres. Fannie Anne rented most of it for one half of the hay. She had five or six cows which she milked and sold the cream. She raised a steer each year to pay the taxes. With her boys help, they took care of the farm and made a living.

Although she was not a deeply religious woman, Fannie Anne enjoyed going to Relief Society and she saw to it that her boys were baptized and they went to Sunday School and Primary.

Fannie Anne was very nervous about the dark and was especially frightened when there was a thunder and lightning storm. When there was a bad thunder and lightning storm, she would gather her children together in the middle of the room away from the door and windows and there they would stand until the storm was over. The boys felt this wasn't so bad if the storm happened to be in the day time, but when it came in the middle of the night and they were dragged half awake from their beds, there was much whining and complaining. Nevertheless, they soon learned that they had to stand there together with their mother until the storm was over no matter how sleepy or tired they became. Fannie Anne was frightened and believed sincerely that to stand in the middle of the room was the safest place anyone could be to avoid being hit with lightning and wouldn't hesitate to clout any child who disobeyed at such a time. How she must have loved her boys.

Fannie Anne kept Jen and Mod, of course, but she never had a very strong hand with horses. Jen and Mod seemed to sense this for every time she hitched them to the wagon to go someplace, they would shy at this and that and finally, no matter how much she whoa-ed them., run her off the road, through the field, or some other place she didn't want to go.

Jen and Mod weren't too spirited for the boys, though. They used them for riding. What fun they had when about fifteen kids from the town got together, each with their own horse, and they would run races or swim their horses through the river to see which ones could jump the ditches in the widest places. Sometimes they'd have a rodeo or play a game, on horseback, they called dare devil or back out. It was quite a rough and dangerous game for when Fannie Anne saw them playing it one day, she made her boys stop riding horses. Since this was their only means of transportation other than walking, she didn't ground them for long. They pastured their cows in the hills in the summer and they needed the horses to round them up every night. Also they had to ride to Wanship, a distance of about three miles, to get the mail once a week.

In the winter time when it wasn't so much fun to ride horses, the boys vent sleigh riding and skiing in their spare time. One time they went up three-mile canyon and a friend., Buddy Reed, was with them. Buddy and Smith came down the hill both of them sitting on a pair of skis and hit a sage bush. Buddy wasn't hurt too much., but Smith came out of the pileup with a broken leg, just above the knee. The boys laid him on the sleigh, tied him on and pulled him the mile and a half home. He was about twelve years old at this time, not too big to bawl.

Rockport was quite a thriving little community by this time People came from the towns all around to attend the dances held at the Rockport hall. George Wardell was a favorite fiddle player and he played his fiddle for many of the dances. Rockport had a good basketball team and they won the district tournament one year. The school at Rockport went from grade one through eight. After that age the students went to high school at Coalville.

About ten years after the death of Joseph, Fannie Anne married Edward Richard Welsh. One child was born from this union. He was named after his father.

Fannie Anne had suffered for several years from a growth on her neck and finally went to Dr. French. He told her it was a goiter and she would have to have an operation. The doctor put her in the Dee Hospital in Ogden to try to build her up for an operation. Being away from home and especially in the hospital was something Fannie Anne didn't like at all and she didn't respond to treatment. The doctor then had her brought home and put off the operation until she could be built up as he referred to it. She became worse instead of better and when she was no longer able to care for herself, she went down to Wanship to stay with her brother, Dick and his wife Lectie. She said many times she wanted to live long enough to see her sons married, but she was denied this wish. She died at her brother's home in Wanship on July 3, 1925, and was buried on July 6, 1925, in the Wanship cemetery along side her husband, Joseph. She was forty six years old.

Little Ted went to stay with his Aunt Amanda Welsh. The three Wardell boys were left to care for the farm and themselves and make their own way. At this time Vern was nineteen, Owen was seventeen, and Smith was fifteen years old. The first winter after their mother's death, Vern went herding sheep and Owen and Smith stayed on the farm and did the work and went to high school. A cousin, Elwood (Responsibility) Smith, lived with them. During the summers the boys worked on the section at Keetley as well as take care of the farm.

It was during this time that Smith got appendicitis and before Owen and Vern could get him to a doctor, his appendix ruptured and he got peritonitis. They took him to the hospital in Kamas which was a house converted to a hospital. Dr. French was sick so Dr. Danningberg was the doctor they went to. A Dr. Dean was helping while Dr. French was sick and he helped Dr. Danningberg with the operation.

Vern and Owen were waiting there and they heard Dr. Dean say, "No use even sewing him up., he'll be dead in an hour." But, Dr. Danningberg said, "As long as he is alive, there is hope." Dr. Danningberg was a real fine doctor and he took good care of Smith and worked with him for hours to help get him better. He sent for a nurse to come out from Salt Lake. She was unable to get there for ten days and somebody had to stay with Smith at all time. The boys

took turns staying with him until the nurse could get there to care for him, Smith ran a fever of 104 degrees for days and days. He was a very sick young man for a long time, but apparently also a tough one, because he did get better.

Owen was the first of the boys to get married. He married Margaret Reese on August 4, 1926. Vern married Lily Fillmore on May 16, 1927, and Smith married Ruth Fillmore on September 1, 1931.

Material for this story was taken from stories by Owen Wardell and from family records and compiled by Remona Wardell Atkinson in May of 1970.