

Chapter XXI

Ramona's Pioneer Story

January 23, 1948 – September 6, 1948

Ramona arranged for Ray to buy the house from her and it closed on Friday the 23rd. Now that he had a home of his own to move into, he was in a position to propose to Celia. But first there was one more thing he wanted to do.

The next day, Ray along with his parents, his sister, Maxine and her husband Murry, his other sister Misti and her husband Rupert Casper and their oldest daughter, and his Uncle Stirling and Aunt Mary Ann and his cousin Edith were all baptized into the church. But they weren't the only ones as the rest of the Brason's, except for Wendalyn and Ruth Ann were all also baptized that day.

In all, twenty three people were baptized that day. It created a bit of a challenge for the branch to find something to do for so many new people who were inexperienced in serving in the church. In addition to all of the recent converts, there was the potential for more in the next few weeks as the missionaries were making progress with the rest of the Austins.

Because of the large number of men holding the Aaronic Priesthood, a Senior Aaronic group was organized to better instruct them in the priesthood and to prepare them to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Burt Turner, who had recently moved into the branch was called as their instructor.

Another challenge was the increased number of children and the need for Junior Sunday School and Primary teachers. In some instances, some recent converts were called to work with the children. Each new family was given a pair of ward teachers to visit their home once a month and to watch over them. The challenge faced by the branch also put pressure on their meetinghouse which had become overcrowded. The only solution was a new building, but for now, they would have to do with what they had.

That night, right after the baptismal service, Ray asked Celia to marry him. Even though they had only been going together for a few short weeks, she said yes and they began making plans for a Valentine's Day wedding in three weeks.

On Valentine's Day, Sheffield and Ramona attended Ray and Celia's wedding held at the meetinghouse. They made such a handsome couple.

February 19th marked the first anniversary of Samantha's death. The kids had proved more resilient than anyone would have thought after having lost both of their parents. Walt attributed it to a number of factors. First, they grieved the death of their father while grieving for their mother as she wasted away before their eyes. When she finally succumbed to the cancer, it was more of a relief than a loss. Secondly, they were not displaced by their deaths. Samantha had gone to great lengths to assure that they would have a permanent home. The transition had given them a sense of belonging and more importantly security. The fact that they could remain together was also a big factor. They fit in so well with Sheffield and Ramona that

most people didn't realize they weren't their natural children.

At the end of that week was the baptisms of most of the rest of the rest of the Austins that had been investigating the church. Sheffield and Ramona were amazed at how the Brasons and most of the Austins had followed their lead in investigating the church and how in such a short time so many of them had been baptized. Actually it was Geannie who deserved the credit.

Even more amazed were the branch and district leadership who welcomed the influx of these good families, all of whom were a tremendous assets to the church. They were all people who were spiritually inclined and were just waiting for the right time to find what they had been guided to. Because of them, and the a few other families who had moved into the area, including Roger's brother, Emery and his family who had moved back from Lynchburg, the branch had grown to almost the size of a small ward, doubling the average weekly attendance.

Everyone who wanted to participate had a calling, which meant that most people no longer were doubled up. Ramona was released from her dual calling as the Cultural Refinement Instructor, but not before she gave her lesson on Polynesia.

She wore her long, strapless hula gown complete with a lei and a gardenia in her hair. She arrived early and greeted each of the Relief Society ladies by presenting them with an artificial lei and breathed in their spirit. As she began her lesson, she explained the meaning of the greeting and told of her many years of living in paradise, as she called it. She brought some of her phonograph records to showcase the music of Hawaii. No discussion of the cultural of the island would be complete without including dancing. She performed a hula and narrated the story she was telling with her hands and body and she gently swayed to the strains coming from the phonograph player. She concluded by describing some of the differences between the various Polynesian cultures found in Tahiti, Samoa, and Fiji.

During February, district conference was held in the Jefferson High School auditorium. When President Henry Rowan approached the school board with the request, Bill Casper felt inclined to lend his support because two of his sons had recently joined the church. He was influential in persuading the rest of the school board to approve the use of the auditorium.

As the members of the district gathered, there was plenty of room to seat everyone in attendance, with seats to spare. It was much better than being shoehorned into the meetinghouse that barely accommodated the branch, let alone the entire district.

A hush fell over the congregation during the business portion of the meeting when President Price announced, "We certainly appreciate the school board and Jefferson High School for letting us use this marvelous facility today. They have indicated that we can use it until we are able to construct a new building. That is something that we have been praying for, especially with the unbelievable growth of the the Roanoke

Branch. That prayer will be answered sooner than later. The Church has entered a new era of chapel building and I am pleased to announce that the church has approved the construction of two new chapels within the mission boundaries. One in Greensboro, North Carolina and one right here in Roanoke.”

He paused to let the information sink in. When it did, the hush became a buzz as everyone expressed their excitement. When it quieted down, he continued. “The estimated cost of the project is one hundred thousand dollars. Of that amount, we are required to come up with thirty percent of the cost, which will come mostly from the Roanoke Branch. But since the new building will be large enough to accommodate the needs of the district as well, we call on the rest of you to contribute as well. We don't anticipate breaking ground for several months as a number of things must first fall into place. First we need to find and purchase a suitable piece of property. The plans need to be prepared, and we need to raise enough money to get the project started.

“I want to go on record as giving the first one hundred dollars for the building fund. I invite each family to talk it over and decide what you can contribute. Of course, fund raising activities are certainly in line. In the weeks and months to come, I encourage you to support these activities.”

The announcement was definitely the highlight of the conference. When Sheffield and Ramona came home, they discussed what they could do. Ramona looked over their current finances and the very next Sunday, when they paid their tithing, a check for two hundred and fifty dollars was included.

Now that the branch Relief Society presidency were no longer responsible for teaching the weekly lessons, they turned their attention to coming up with fund raising projects. From the founding of Relief Society, they had held bazaars or other events to raise funds for such needs.

In March the branch held their annual Gold and Green Ball. This year it had been organized by Emmaline and Willie, who served as the activities directors, and their committee. The cultural hall was decorated with a St. Patrick's Day theme and the hit song “I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover” as the theme. It was a big social event and everyone turned out dressed in their best formal wear. The committee went all out, even hiring a local six piece orchestra to provided the music. Through out the course of the evening Sheffield and Ramona traded off, he dancing with Norma and Janet and she with Craig, and others.

The youth had practiced the number for the floor show for weeks. Naturally, Craig and Edith were dance partners. Norma had her hopes dashed again when Read paired up with Carmen Fielding . Again Ammon Fielding came to the rescue and asked her to be his partner.

To work fund raising for the new meetinghouse into the Gold and Green ball, the Relief Society came up with the idea of the women collecting a quarter from their dance partners each dance of the evening. The men were then encouraged to bring plenty of quarters with them. At the end of the evening, the Relief Society turned in close to two hundred dollars.

The following weekend, was the district wrestling tournament. As with the previous year, the Magicians finished the season with eight wins and four losses. They dominated the match and went on to the state tournament two weeks later, where Craig finished third in his class while the team as a whole finished second.

Now that the wrestling season was over, Sheffield had more time to write his book. By then he was up to the time where they left the Azores for the raid on Bordeaux. With the coming of spring, there was a lot of work to do around the ranch as well.

The steers were ready to butcher so Sheffield arranged for one of the steers to be butchered and put into the freezer. He originally intended to take the other to the livestock auction and sell it. Instead he donated it as an item up for auction at a building fund raiser. His brother Walt was the highest bidder, coming in at a little more than what it would have brought on the market. The two steers were loaded into the pickup and taken to a slaughter house for processing. A few days later, they went back and picked up the meat, all cut and wrapped. Both Sheffield and Walt had a deep freeze full of beef, enough to last a year or better. Walt intended to share his with his married children.

As for the heifers, they were ready to breed. Sheffield arranged with Roger for the use of one his bulls and to buy two more young steers for meat for the next year. When the bull and two steers were unloaded in the pasture, the bull wasted no time going to work. He selected one of the heifers and climbed onto her back, straddling her with his front legs.

“Why is he doing that?” Janet asked innocently as they all watched from the fence.

“Well, sweetheart,” Sheffield said, “He’s breeding her so she can have a baby calf next winter.”

“Oh, so that’s how it’s done. Is that what people do to have babies?”

Sheffield gulped, Norma turned red, and Craig snickered. Ramona maintained her composure and answered, “As a matter of fact, it is. You see God gave boys certain parts and girls other parts so they could make babies.”

To which Janet responded, “That’s nasty.”

“Not if you’re married and want to have children. Then it’s okay.”

“If that’s the case, when I grow up, I’m never going to get married and have babies.”

Sheffield who had been listening said, “You might feel that way now, but someday you’ll change your mind. You’ll want to get married and have babies someday.”

Norma turned about two more shades of red but didn’t say anything.

Craig burst out laughing and said, “She wants to make babies with Read.”

“I do not!” Norma shrieked.

"Craig!" Sheffield scolded. "Knock it off."

"Well she does."

He didn't get the notion to keep his mouth shut until Sheffield cuffed him on the back of the head, knocking his hat off.

Ramona attempted to diffuse the situation by saying, "You're all way to young now, but when your older you'll find it all very natural and will want to find someone to marry and start a family."

"How come you could never have babies, Mom?" Janet asked

"Well because when I was growing up, something went wrong in my body and those parts never developed."

"Oh, I see." Janet responded, satisfied with the answer.

"Then how come you can do it, have sex I mean?" Norma asked. "I saw you and Dad doing it once."

Now Ramona blushed. "Oh, and when did this happen?"

"One night a few weeks after we first came to live with you I couldn't sleep and came down stairs for a glass of milk. I heard moaning coming from your room that sounded like someone was in pain. I wanted to make sure nothing was wrong because I didn't want to lose you too. I opened the door a crack to peek in and make sure nothing was wrong and thats when I saw you doing it."

"Well." Ramona said. "Its no secret that we do."

Wanting to change the subject, Sheffield said, "But its supposed to be private and not like these cows." as the bull moved on to another heifer.

The kids ran off leaving Sheffield and Ramona alone. As they walked back to the house, hand in hand, Ramona said, "Well I think that went well. There's nothing like nature to lead into a discussion on the facts of life."

"You were so open and factual about things."

"You're forgetting, I am a nurse. I see no sense in beating around the bush about it. It is what it is. Besides the more they understand about it, the less curious they are to find out on their own. Do you remember what happened with Ruth Ann?"

"How could I forget. Talk about catching someone in the act."

"It sounds like we got caught in the act ourselves." Ramona laughed.

"Doesn't it bother you?"

"Not really. Its only natural that things like that happen when you all live live together in the same house."

"I don't know about you, but I'm going to get a lock for our bedroom door." Sheffield concluded.

With the coming of spring, Sheffield brought the Staggerwing out of the hangar more often and took it up. He noticed that the engine was putting out blue smoke. He suspected that either the piston rings or the cylinder heads, or both needed to be replaced. Craig removed the engine cowling to have a look and as suspected, the piston rings were worn down and needed replaced.

While he had the engine torn down, Sheffield ordered the parts so they could be replaced. He went ahead and had him replace the gaskets and cylinder heads as well. He worked on it after school all of one week and finished it up on a Saturday. Once he had it all put back together, they fired up the engine. That took care of the problem. Sheffield took it up for a test flight and everything checked out.

Craig had not only proven his aircraft mechanic skills, but over the winter he had progressed with his flying lessons to the point that Sheffield let him take the controls of the Staggerwing for everything from take off to landing. All that stood between him and his private pilots license was his next birthday when he could fly solo and take the test.

The plane wasn't the only thing to come out. The horses got ridden a lot more now as well. After a month in the pasture, all of the heifers had most likely been bread so Roger came and got his bull.

Ramona decided that she would like some fruit trees. She had Sheffield clear a spot for her and he and Craig fenced it off to keep the livestock out of them. Sheffield took her to a nursery in Salem and bought six trees, two apple, two peach, and two cherry. While they were there she saw some raspberry and strawberry starts and got several of each as well and planted them in the garden.

A couple of weeks later she went back and got some bedding plants and a few perennials to plant in the flowerbeds around the house. She also had the girls help her plant the garden. After the previous year, she had a much better idea of what she was doing. She got some good tips from a Relief Society Homemaking lesson that she hadn't known about.

On Mothers Day, Craig and the girls wanted to show their appreciation for all she had done for them since becoming their mother. They pooled their resources and got her a silver plated jewelry box with her initials monogrammed on the lid. She was thrilled to tears as she opened it. She kept it on the dresser and kept the birthstone charm bracelet that they got for her in Hawaii in it along with the Geannie's cross necklace and the rest of her jewelry.

The day school let out for the summer was Norman's fifteenth birthday and she had a party with her friends after school. The best birthday gift, in her opinion, was the next day when Sheffield took her to the courthouse to get her learner's permit. He had taken her out in the pasture with the pickup and taught her the basics, now with her permit she could actually drive on the road. With him at her side, she proudly drove home. After six months of supervised driving and passing the driving tests, she would be eligible for a restricted drivers license.

By the time school let out, Sheffield was to the point in his book where he left the ship in Algiers after being injured at Salerno. For the next part of his book until she became his flagship, he would have to rely solely on the copy of the ship's log that he had obtained from the Navy Department. His plan was to finish during the summer.

That year Memorial Day was on Sunday so it was celebrated the day before. It was overcast and blustery as they all went to the cemetery to decorated graves. Before leaving the cemetery, it began to rain. Rather than holding the picnic in the trees in the pasture along the river, it was moved inside. The only addition to the family was Sylvia and Scott's little boy who had been born in February. Tim brought his girlfriend with him. At twenty six, everyone wondered when he would get serious with someone. Her name was Vonda Gibson from Radford. They met at a district M-Men and Gleaner dance for young single adults. The only one who wasn't there was Ruth Ann and her family.

Thursday, the 3rd of June was Ramona's 45th birthday, which was marked by a low key observance. After getting the hay taken care of, Sheffield got the Staggerwing out for a trip to Texas. Since it had been a while since Shenan and Emily had seen Ruth Ann and even longer since Ramona had seen Harvey, they left the kids home to fend for themselves and the four of them flew down to spend a few days.

When they returned, Sheffield concentrated on writing his book. With few interruptions, he got to the point where he went back aboard the Reprisal as his flagship when he took her to the Pacific. As the month of June came and went like a dream, they took a trip as family to see Mace and Pat Owen in Washington, D.C.. The kids had only been to Washington once when they were younger and didn't really remember much of it. On the flight up and back, Sheffield let Craig take the controls from take off to landing. Of course, Sheffield was in passenger seat right next to him, in case he had a problem. They spent a week Washington, staying with the Owens and took the kids to see many of the significant landmarks and historical sights.

July began with the Brasons and Austins get together at the cabin for the 4th of July, as usual. Ramona continued to buy and sell property, Norma was doing well with her driving lessons, the garden and flowers were growing as were two new steers.

Ramona was asked to give a talk in Sacrament Meeting on the 25th in conjunction with the annual Pioneer day commemoration. Roger Rowan, who knew just a little of her childhood asked her to relate her experiences. Ramona was a little nervous about speaking in church, even though she had done a fair amount of public speaking during the latter end of her career in the Navy.

When it came her turn to speak, she approached the pulpit with butterflies in her stomach. She looked out over the congregation, clearer her throat, settled her nerves, and began. "It was one year ago that I first heard about the church and began learning about it. I found its teachings true and history to be

fascinating. Prior to that, I vaguely remembered something from history about the pioneers crossing the plains. I thought they all were on their way to Oregon. When I learned about the Mormon pioneers, I found it to be a story that I could relate to. You see, I know what its like to be driven from my home with nothing and nowhere to turn. I know what it is like to pack everything into a wagon and set out for some distant promised land seeking a better future. I know what it is like to leave a loved one in a shallow grave along the way. I know what it is like to live in the harshness of the wilderness. Today I want to tell my story.

“I was born in nineteen oh three. For those of you who are a little slow with math; yes, I am forty five years old, and proud of it. Any way, I was born on the Choctaw Reservation in Southern Oklahoma, near the Red River that separates what was then Indian Territory form the State of Texas. My mother was half Choctaw.

“My earliest memories are of playing with my baby brother on the dirt floor of our log cabin while my mother went about her chores. Later, there was a severe drought and my father's ranch failed. Seeking a better future, he loaded everything we had into a covered wagon, hitched up the team of horses, and set out for the Arizona Territory. I was six years old at the time and my brother was three.

“We weren't part of a wagon train but traveled alone. My mother drove the ream with my brother on the seat beside her. My father drove a few scraggly cows ahead of the wagon and I walked along beside the wagon.

“They Primary children just sang for us a song that I had never heard until just now. 'Pioneer children sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked. Pioneer children sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked. They washed at streams and worked and played. Sundays they camped and read and prayed. Week after week, they sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked and walked.'

“Although I had never heard that song before, I lived it. And that's exactly what I did, I sang. I sang songs that my parents had taught me or that I learned in school, what little I attended. When I got tired of singing the ones that I knew, I'd make up songs. I suppose that is where I discovered my love for singing because I've been singing ever since. Every night when we camped, I was one tuckered out little girl.

“We traveled west across Oklahoma and crossed into Texas near Wichita Falls and on across the the Texas panhandle and into the New Mexico Territory. It was somewhere near Tucumcari that my little brother contracted a serious case of dysentery. My mother was a natural healer and was able to do some pretty remarkable things. As I grew older, she taught me everything that she knew and that is why I became a nurse. Unfortunately, she was not able to save him and he died in her arms.

“I'll never forget that night. My mother refused to be comforted and mourned after the custom of her people. It was so mournful, she even out howled the coyotes. The next morning I remember watching my father dig a shallow grave in the dry, hard dirt. My mother wrapped his body in a blanket and laid him in the

ground as if she was laying him in his crib for a nap. And then she kissed him on the forehead before covering his face with the blanket.

“I stood by her side, holding her hand as my father covered him with dirt. We all cried as the last piece of the read plaid blanket disappeared in the dirt. Once the grave had been filled in, together they pounded a crude cross made from two sticks, bound together with a piece of rawhide, into the ground with a rock. I remember helping them gather up some rocks that we piled on top of the grave to keep wild animals from digging it up.. We stood there for a moment in silence, then my father said a prayer. We turned around and continued on our way.

“Several weeks and one thousand miles later, we arrived at our new home in a wilderness more foreboding than the one we had left behind. My father staked a mining claim and built a cabin in morning shadow of Superstition Mountain at a place called Apache Junction. Life was hard as we worked to build a new home and eek out a meager living out of the ground. I'm sure it was much like the the Mormon pioneers as they settled in the Great Basin of Utah, another barren wilderness.

“I couldn't go to school on the nearby reservation because I wasn't 'Indian enough' and it was too far to go into town. My mother was illiterate, but my father taught me to read from the only book we had, the Bible. He also taught me to do simple addition and subtraction.

“The claim wasn't very successful, but a rumor went around saying that he had hit pay dirt. One day when he was twenty nine years old, while extracting gold dust from some soil samples, he was confronted by a claim jumper, challenging his right to the mine. My father reached for his rifle. I'll never forget it, I was playing nearby and witnessed him be murdered over a worthless piece of ground. That was the eleventh of June nineteen twelve, just after my ninth birthday. Even in nineteen twelve the wild west was very much a part of the culture in Arizona. My mother and I were forced from our home and off our land with no place to go.

“Arizona had become a state earlier that year and with statehood, came an influx of new comers. My mother, was hired as a nursemaid for a wealthy banker in nearby Phoenix and we were allowed to live in a modest apartment above the stables. The best part was that I got to go to school. In the evenings I would read to my mother from my father's Bible. I got to know the stories from the Bible but never understood their meaning.

“Although we believed in the Bible and the teachings of Jesus, we never did join a church. My mother always spoke of a legend that was handed down to her grandfather through the generations. He was one of the tribal elders. She said that he told of words that would come out of the ground containing the teachings of the Great Spirit to our ancient ancestors. She died waiting for those words. When I was first told about the Book of Mormon, I knew it was the words that my great grandfather spoke of. I knew almost

before even reading it that it was true.

“By the time I was twelve, the banker moved his family to Sacramento, California and took his servants with him. Then there was that awful day when I was sixteen that I was accosted by the banker but I fought him off and escaped. It was the word of a rich and powerful banker against the sixteen year old daughter of a halfbreed nursemaid. My mother was fired and we were evicted from their home.

“With enough money for two train tickets to San Francisco, we set out on our own. Together we worked as nursemaids as we made our way north, stopping to work along the way. Eventually, we settled in Tacoma, Washington.

“So there is my story. Like I said, Its not exactly the story of the Mormon pioneers, but it is close enough for me to truly relate to them. I'm grateful for their faith and sacrifice in building up the church so that I can participate in the blessings of the gospel.

“To make a long story short, I eventually became a nurse and was recruited into the Navy Nurses Corp and was sent to San Diego, California. It was there that I met my best friend, who happened to be Sheffield's first wife. It was she who first introduced me to religion. A year and half after her death, Sheffield and I crossed paths again and we were eventually married. For years she had been searching for answers and one year ago through a chain of miraculous events, Sheffield and I and our children were lead to those answers and here are today.

“When I first heard the message of the restored gospel, I knew it was true. As Brother Furness and Brother Brown met with us for our cottage meetings and as I read the Book of Mormon, things fell into place for me. But it was after making it all a matter of prayer that the Holy Ghost confirmed it within my soul. I'm ever so grateful to now be a member of the church and for the blessings and opportunities that it affords for me and my family. And I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

With a little over a month left of their summer vacation, they took advantage of the time left. Craig celebrated his seventeenth birthday on the 4th of August. In preparing for his private pilots license, he had his physical exam and had taken and passed the written test. On his birthday he took his solo flight. It required five hours of solo cross-country time and at least one hundred fifty nautical miles total distance, with three full-stop landings at approved airports.

The entire family waved him off as he took off from the airport in Roanoke in the same Piper J4 Cub that he had most of his earlier lessons in. The take off was flawless, but Ramona still worried about him being up there all alone.

“Don't fret about it.” Sheffield encouraged her. “He's a good pilot and knows what he's doing. I have every confidence in him.”

“But he's just a boy.”

“He might have been a boy when he climbed into that plane, but when he gets back, he'll be a man. I envy him. I had to wait until I was twenty three before I could learn to fly.”

Craig circled the airport as he climbed into the sky and set off to the east for Lynchburg where he made his first landing. After only a few minutes on the ground, he took off again for the longer flight to Charlottesville where he landed at Milton Field eight miles east of Charlottesville. Milton Field was an instructional airfield operated by the University of Virginia. After having a lunch, he took off again and flew all the way back to Roanoke.

Once he was back on the ground, he was told that his performance would be evaluated and the results would be forwarded on and that it would be several days before he would receive the results in the mail. If everything was in order, his private pilots license would be included.

During the middle of the second week in August, they took Red and Roxy up the cabin to spend a few days. Sheffield took the typewriter with him to work on his book. He was to the point where they sailed for operations off the coast of Japan. His goal was to have it finished before he went back to school.

While at the cabin they spent time at the lake doing a little fishing and a lot of swimming, and rode the horses up the trail to the spring and beyond. Each night they sat around a bonfire until the stars came out.

When they came back down off the mountain and got home, Craig checked the mail box to see if his pilot license had arrived. He was disappointed and had to wait a few more days. Sheffield was almost finished with his book. All there was left was to get from Pearl Harbor to New York City for the Navy Day celebration, where he was going to end the story. It only took him a few more days to finish it. By then, Craig had received his pilots license in the mail. That very afternoon, he and Sheffield pulled plane out of the hangar with the tractor and with Craig at the controls they took off for a joy ride.

During the last week of August, Sheffield had a meeting to attend in preparation for the upcoming school year. As some of the teachers were visiting about their summer and what they had done, Ferron Alder, one of the English teachers asked, “So, Sheffield how is your book coming?”

To which he proudly replied, “I just barley finished it.”

“Really.” Ferron said. “I like reading about that sort of thing. I'd be interested in reading it and edit it for you.”

“I don't know how good it is.” Sheffield warned. “I'd really like your honest opinion, after all the work I put into it.”

“Let's get together for lunch and I'll take a look. What do you have on for tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow will work. When and where?”

The Next day they met at the appointed place and time. Over lunch Ferron looked through the manuscript. "It looks like its pretty comprehensive. It looks like you've covered the subject very well. I like how you've included your personal perspective in describing the events. I look forward to reading it." After lunch when they went their separate ways, Ferron took the manuscript with him promising to take good care of it.

Summer came to a close with Labor Day, which was on Monday the 6th of September. The Brasons all got together at the Two Star Ranch. Everyone was there, including Ruth Ann and Joseph who flew up from Denison. Sheffield provided the steaks and hamburger from the steer that he had raised. Everyone brought something and as always there was plenty of food.

Emmett was having more difficulty in getting around and Ellen was also beginning to have difficulty taking care of him. Ramona noticed them struggling at the picnic and offered to stop by more often to help out. They didn't want her to put herself out for them but she insisted, "Thats what I've done all my life. Remember I am still a nurse." They agreed to accept her offer.

These types of family get togethers always seemed to be the place to make announcements. Tim and Vonda announced their engagement. They didn't have a definite wedding date as of yet but were planning on sometime in the spring when school let out. Two more babies were on the way. Wendalynn was expecting in February and Ruth Ann was expecting in March.

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M-Men and Gleaners were church organizations for young single adults who had either turned eighteen years old or graduated from high school to age thirty. These programs were discontinued in 1970 and were combined into the Young Single Adult program.