

## Chapter XLVIII

### There's No Place Like Home

July 1, 1967 – August 3, 1967

The sun was just coming up at five fifty three as Sheffield and Ramona took in the scenery as the cab made its way to the airport. "We'll be back sometime." Sheffield promised Ramona.

"I'm going to hold you to that, Babe. It better before we get too much older."

Before long, the cab pulled up to the American Airlines terminal and the driver got out to get their luggage out of the trunk. Once it was loaded onto a cart, Sheffield handed the cabbie his fare plus a tip. Standing on the curb, Sheffield said to Ramona, "Lets go home."

She took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. "I'm ready. After all, it's like Dorothy said in the Wizard of Oz, 'There's no place like home.'"

They went up to the ticket counter and checked their luggage. There was still enough time before they had to board their flight to get something to eat. After breakfast, they made their way to the gate for their flight to wait for the boarding call. They didn't have to wait too long. A few minutes later they were in their seats and at seven fifteen the Boeing 707 began moving away from the terminal.

It took a few minutes to taxi out to the runway and when the tower cleared the flight for take off, the big airliner bolted down the runway and into the sky. Looking past the younger woman seated by the window, they got their last look at Honolulu and Oahu as they climbed into the sky. After the plane circled around, all they could see was the Pacific Ocean.

"Have you been on vacation?" the woman asked.

"Not really." Ramona, who was seated next to her answered. "We've been here on a three year assignment. Now we're going home. What about you?"

"I've been here to spend a few days with my husband before he ships out to Vietnam. He's in the Air Force. What kind of assignment?" she quizzed.

"My husband and I were supervising the Mormon missionaries here in the Islands."

"That must have been fascinating." she said, making conversation.

"Oh it was. We met so many interesting people. By the way, I'm Ramona and this is my husband, Sheffield."

"I'm pleased to meet you, I'm Amy. Where's home for you?"

"Roanoke, Virginia." Sheffield answered as he reached across Ramona to shake her hand. "We're pleased to meet you, Amy."

"My you have a long flight ahead of you. I live in Palo Alto, so I'm only going as far as San Francisco." Then Amy said, "I've seen the Mormon missionaries around Palo Alto. Just what is it they do?"

That led to a discussion that lasted about half the flight. Sheffield and Ramona explained things to

her that led to more questions. Amy was quite receptive to what they told her. She had been brought up Lutheran, but had looked at a lot of other churches over the years. Her husband didn't belong to any church and hadn't been too excited about most of the churches that she had investigated. She told them that they hoped to have a family and wanted to have their children attend a church of some kind. She wanted to know what the Mormon Church had to offer children, which fed the discussion further.

From there, she asked about what the church taught on a variety of topics, which they explained to her. At the appropriate time, Ramona reached into her handbag and pulled out the copy of the Book of Mormon that she had brought for just such an occasion. Sheffield explained it to her and she gladly accepted it and began reading it right then.

Sheffield and Ramona let her read while they turned their attention to what they wanted to do when they got home. They talked about a number of things but they both agreed that they wanted to take some time to unwind before anything else.

As the flight began he decent into San Francisco, Amy closed the book. "This is fascinating," she said.

"Take it home with you." Ramona encouraged.

"Thanks. I will. If I want to know more about it, who can I contact?"

"How about if we have someone contact you?" Sheffield offered.

Amy thought for a moment and said, "Sure that would be alright." and gave Sheffield her contact information.

The plane landed at two ten after a four hour and fifty five minute flight and two time zone changes. As they left the plane, Amy thanked them and promised to finish reading the book that they had given her.

Once inside the airport, Sheffield and Ramona were bewildered by the people they saw. Young people dressed in the most bizarre get ups, all of them wearing beads and wore either sandals or went barefoot, the guys had long hair and were unshaven. "So this is what the next generation is coming to." Sheffield said in disbelief.

They had heard of the hippie movement and seen pictures on television and in magazines, but this was their first actual encounter with hippies. "Welcome to San Francisco." Ramona said. "From what I understand, this is were it all started. Keep an eye out for Harvey's daughter, Winifred. He said that she had come her to join them."

"From the looks of these characters, I doubt we'd even recognize her." Sheffield said as they moved through the crowd. "Speaking of recognizing someone, there's who were looking for."

Chauncey and Darlene Haggerty had arranged to come up from Menlo Park meet them during their layover. They had stayed in touch after Chauncey retired from the Navy and left Hawaii. They had about

forty five minutes to catch up before Sheffield and Ramona had to catch their next flight. They were pleased they were doing so well.

After their brief visit, Chauncey and Darlene saw them off when their three twenty five flight for Washington DC departed. This time, Sheffield and Ramona didn't have anyone sitting next to them to visit with. During the cross country flight on another American Airlines 707, they reminisced about people like the Haggertys and others who they had been directly involved with. As the flight progressed, they talked more about the things they would like to do now that they could enjoy their retirement. They revisited their original plans that had been put on hold for three years. By the time they landed in Washington DC, it was eleven ten at night. Again the five hour flight was inflated by three more time zone changes.

Fortunately, their next flight left only thirty five minutes later and departed at eleven forty five. The L-188 Electra landed in Roanoke just thirty two minutes later to discharge passengers before continuing on. Wade was there to greet them, but because of the late hour, there was no welcoming committee. Just as well, it had been a very long day and they were both very tired.

On the way home, Wade asked them about the trip home. They had just got back from Idaho a few days earlier and had found a place to live. When they got home, Norma came down stairs in her nightgown to greet them.

"Welcome home." she said and had a hug for each of the weary travelers.

"Thanks. Its good to be home." Ramona replied.

Sheffield added, "This morning when we left the mission home, your mother reminded me of what Dorothy said in the Wizard, 'There's no place like home.'"

"Thats for sure." Norma said. "I don't like being in limbo. It will be nice to have a home of our own again."

"Yeah." Ramona said. "Wade told us that you found a place and will be moving at the end of the month."

"We're excited, even the kids. Its on thirty acres along the South Fork of the Teton River about three miles west of Rexburg." Norma explained. "Some of it is river bottom and was under water from the run off while we were there. It's a lot like the Two Star Ranch, there is plenty of pasture and alfalfa with a barn and a corral so Wade can have some cattle and a couple of horses and set up a small clinic. But its the house I love. Its a lot like this house in a lot of ways."

"It sounds lovely." Ramona said.

"We'll have to go out there after you get settled." Sheffield added. "But right now, all I want to do is go to bed."

"Me too." Ramona agreed. "We'll have plenty of time for you to tell us all about it."

At that, they went into their bedroom and got ready and collapsed into their own bed.

There wasn't time the next morning to sleep in. Sheffield got up and got ready to go to Priesthood meeting with Wade, Craig, and Geoff. Geoff had just turned twelve on the 19<sup>th</sup> and could have been ordained a deacon the week before, but he wanted to wait for his Grandpa to be there.

On the way to the church, Sheffield could see how much the area had grown while they were away. Much of what had been open space between Salem and Roanoke had been taken up in homes and businesses. In some places, Roanoke and Salem butted up against each other. The Roanoke city limits were just up the road, a little east of Craig's house and Salem came to just a little west of the ranch. Even the area south of the pasture across the river was beginning to fill in. He could see that he would no longer be able ride his horse out through the country to get to the hills. Only the area around the ranch and north to the mainline railroad tracks were not within one city or the other. It wouldn't be long before the the Two Star would be feeling the squeeze and be incorporated into the city limits of either Roanoke or Salem. There was even talk of Salem being incorporated into Roanoke.

Edith and the rest of their children stopped by and picked up Ramona on their way to the meetinghouse. They waited until after the opening exercises and when the Deacons went into their quorum meeting. They were invited in to watch while Craig, accompanied by Sheffield, Wade, and Bruce Warner the branch president, conferred the Aaronic Priesthood on Geoff and ordained him to the office of a Deacon.

Following the ordination, Sheffield accompanied Craig and Wade to the Elders Quorum. He was at home among familiar faces and some unfamiliar ones as well. The branch, as big as it was was when they left, had grown over the last three years. He was only one of handful of High Priests in the branch, but since the Roanoke District had not yet become a stake, there was no High Priest Quorum, so they participated in the Elders Quorum. Sheffield was warmly greeted by those he knew and was introduced to those who he did not know.

Since they were already at the meetinghouse, Ramona and the girls waited around until Sunday School began. While waiting, Ramona likewise visited with old friends and was introduced to new ones. By the time Sunday School was over, they had met a lot of new people, if they could only remember all of their names.

But it was seeing their old friends that warmed their hearts; Roger and Pat Rowan, Phil and Anita Moncur, Jack and Renee Brown, and so many others. Sheffield told Luke and Merilee Brown, that their son, Mark, was settled and doing well in Kahala when they last saw him. Before leaving to go home, President Warner took Sheffield and Ramona aside and asked them to speak in Sacrament meeting the following Sunday. They had anticipated it and willingly accepted.

Sheffield and Ramona went back home to unpack their luggage that they had brought with them.

The items that they had shipped home would have to wait until the next day. Being the first Sunday of July it was Fast Sunday so dinner waited. Later in the afternoon, they all went back to the meetinghouse for Fast and Testimony meeting. Even though they would be speaking the following week, both Sheffield and Ramona took the opportunity to bear their testimonies.

Since Sheffield and Ramona hadn't had the time to finish unpacking yet and Norma and Wade were in transit, Craig and Edith had everyone over to their house for Sunday dinner and a birthday party for Todd's ninth birthday and a belated twelfth birthday party for Geoff and Teresa. The move to Idaho was particularly difficult for Teresa as she would be so far away from her best friend and cousin. All of their lives, the twin cousins had been extremely close. If it wasn't for the fact that one was a Brason and one a Rowan, people would have thought they were brother and sister, if not actually twins, because of their uncanny resemblance and closeness to each other.

Over dinner, Wade observed, "You have that far away look in your eyes."

"What do you mean?" Sheffield asked, unaware.

"I've seen in all of the returned missionaries that come home. It's like your heart is still in the mission and you're not sure what to do."

"I remember that look on you when you came home from Japan." Ramona said. "You looked completely lost."

"I know. I remember. No that look is all over the both of you."

"That bad?" Ramona asked.

They all agreed.

"Give it some time, you'll get readjusted."

"I used to talk to the missionaries going home about readjusting to a normal life. I guess, I'd better take some of my own advise." Sheffield concluded.

They all stayed at Craig's until well into the evening. When they finally went home, the rest of their unpacking would wait until the next day. But for Ramona, there was one thing that she couldn't put off any longer. She took Sheffield by the hand and led him out to her bathhouse. The kids had used it while they were away and had kept it as neat and clean as she had. They removed their clothes and hung them up, showered, and stepped down into the nice hot water and had an enjoyable soak beneath the mural of Diamond Head and Waikiki Beach, while sipping on some lemonade; one of which was laced with what Ramona had come to call "special powder".

Monday was a busy day with unpacking and getting settled. It was interrupted when Walt and Sarah and Emily stopped in to welcome them home. Sheffield finally got a chance to go look around the ranch. It looked like Craig and Wade had taken good care of the place. The cattle didn't seem to care that he was

back, but the four horses saw him and came up the fence for a little attention. On the way back to the house, he noticed the garden that Norma must have planted.

By late afternoon, things were pretty much put away; just in time for more company. When Craig got off work at the airport, he brought Janet and her family home with him. They had flown in from Utah to see the folks and to spend a week. Craig took them to his home since Norma's family were staying with Sheffield and Ramona. After getting settled, they all got together for the evening.

The grandchildren were all excited to see Grandma and Grandpa again. Six months seemed like a long time. They had all grown so much during that time, especially little Pearl. In addition to Geoff, Teresa, and Todd, nearly all of them had birthdays since they had seen them last. Gean was now fourteen, but Tina wouldn't be seven until October. Samantha had turned nine in April. Marty turned six in February and should have been starting school in the fall after moving to Idaho, but he was a little slow in his development, so they were considering holding him back a year. Norma suspected that it was because he had such a difficult birth.

Ramona encouraged, "Everyone develops at a different pace and some are just late bloomers, but when they do, they're just as spectacular as anyone else."

Wesley had turned six at the end of May and Andrea turned four two days later, and Pearl was approaching seven months. Even though Janet and Norma's families would be out west, they wouldn't have to wait a whole year to see them again now that they were home.

While the grandkids played, the adults had a good visit in Ramona's bathhouse and eventually moved their conversation to the porch. Janet and Jerry filled everyone in on what they had been up to. Norma and Wade talked about their upcoming move. He was in the process of closing up his veterinary practice and was going to sell some of his equipment and take the rest with him. Craig didn't feel he had anything exciting to contribute, but Edith told Sheffield and Ramona how the Austin's were doing. At eighty, Uncle Charlie's health wasn't so good anymore but the rest were doing well. As the evening wore on, they gathered up all of the kids and retired for the night.

As Sheffield and Ramona got ready for bed, she commented, "Now that was what I missed the most while we were gone."

The next day was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Sheffield and Ramona had long since opted out of attending the Austin 4<sup>th</sup> of July get together at the cabin because it had got to be such a large gathering. In its place, they did their own thing with their family. Of course Craig and Edith were torn between the two and attended the Austin reunion every other year. While Sheffield and Ramona were gone, they had attended it each year, but now they were home and the whole family was together, before Norma and Wade moved away, they spent the holiday with Craig's family.

Since Sheffield and Ramona had been busy unpacking and getting settled, Craig and Edith took it upon themselves to take charge of the days festivities. It began at ten o'clock in the morning by attending the annual Salem Independence Day Parade. At one o'clock they all reassembled at the Two Star Ranch for a light picnic and an afternoon of games, horseback riding, and playing in the river.

At one point, Craig took Sheffield out to the hangar to show him all that he had done to the Staggerwing. He had gone completely through it, replacing or rebuilding everything from the engine to the control cables. The twenty seven year old aircraft was in pristine condition and Craig boasted, "She should be good for another twenty years."

"I'm thinking about getting a plane of my own." He continued. "There's a nineteen fifty seven Bonanza H-thirty five for sale. It needs a little work, but I can pick it up pretty reasonably. I'd like you to take a look at it sometime and tell me what you think."

"Okay. I can do that. You know, I'm dying to take'er up. Help me push her out and I'll take the kids for a ride."

Craig's boys Geoff and Todd saw them push the plane out of the hangar and came running. When they got in ear shot, Todd called out, "Grandpa, can you take us for a ride?"

"Sure, if you help me get it ready."

They pushed the plane over to the fuel tank and Sheffield had Todd remove the fuel cap and let Geoff handle the nozzle.

Craig said to Todd, "Go tell you mother that we're going for a ride with Grandpa."

While the Geoff was filling the tank and Todd was telling his mother, Sheffield and Craig went through the preflight checklist.

When Todd returned, they were ready. The boys climbed into the second seat, Sheffield got behind the controls and Craig into the front passenger seat. Once the cabin door was shut, Sheffield started the engine. He listened as it spun to life.

"She purrs like a kitten, Craig. You did a good job."

He taxied over the end of the strip, revved the engine and let his foot off the brakes. Seconds later they were airborne. While Geoff and Todd were busy looking out the window, Craig explained more about what he had done to it.

"She performs great." Sheffield assured him.

After a twenty minute jaunt, they touched down on the landing strip. While taxiing up the hangar, another batch were waiting for their turn. In all, Sheffield made three flights that afternoon.

Later in the afternoon Craig put some steaks on the grill along with some corn on the cob. The steaks had been grown right there on the ranch, but it was too early in the season for the corn in the garden

to be ready, so it came from the farmers market where it had been brought up from Georgia. The potato salad however was made from red potatoes from the garden. Rather than go see the fireworks display in Roanoke that evening, they started fire and watched the show put on the fireflies as they darted around in the dark, or as Andrea called them, ferryflies.

On Wednesday, Ramona, the girls and grandkids went shopping at the Cross Roads Mall over by the airport. When the mall opened in 1961, it was the first enclosed shopping center in the state of Virginia. The year before, while they were in Hawaii, it had expanded considerably with several new stores, including Woolco, a discount chain owned by Woolworth's, and Ramona wanted to see it.

While they went shopping, Sheffield finally got to take the Staggerwing up for a solo flight. It was his first real opportunity to be alone for a long, long time. Alone with his thoughts, it gave him time to reflect on the last three years and think about what he wanted to say on Sunday and to look ahead.

Sheffield had arranged for the use of the cabin on Thursday and Friday. They all went and spent night and went back to the lake as the family reunion continued. There was a lot of time to make up for and with Norma and her family moving away, they wanted to make the most of the week. They didn't come down off the mountain until late Friday afternoon.

On Saturday, the Morrisons flew up from Denison in Harvey's Cessna 310 for Sheffield and Ramona's home coming report. Harvey and Joe had gone in together and traded his old Bobcat on the newer plane. Like the Bobcat, this was twin engined, five passenger aircraft. With Norma and her family there, it got kind of crowded. Harvey and Marcella got the guest room, while Joseph and Ronda stayed with Emily. Anna was home from BYU for the summer and Paul had elected to stay in Roanoke after graduating from high school in the spring, rather than going back to Texas. Fortunately, Ruth Ann had found a place of her own and was no longer living with Emily. That would have been awkward. Other out of town guests included Dan and Daphne Kirk, who came from Council Bluffs Iowa and were staying with Phil and Anita Moncur. In between company, Sheffield and Ramona found time to work on their talks.

On Sunday morning, the 9<sup>th</sup>, Sheffield and Ramona, their family and guests attended the morning meetings together, but it was Sacrament Meeting in the afternoon that everyone anticipated. Again they all went back to the meetinghouse, where Sheffield and Ramona were surprised to see Paula and Jacob Messner who had come over from Norfolk. They were even more surprised to see Mace and Pat Owen who had come down from Washington. Another surprise visitor was Ralph Wren, who had been one of their missionaries. He too also lived in Washington and had with him a young lady that he introduced as his fiancée. Not so surprising was Ryan Wood, another of their former missionaries who lived in Greensboro, North Carolina.

After greeting the branch members and visitors, Sheffield's and Ramona made their way to the



stand. Once they were seated, they looked out over the vast congregation to see so many family and friends, that it touched their hearts. All of the Brasons and Austins and many others from the Roanoke Branch were also in attendance. There were so many, that they nearly filled the cultural hall as well.

The meeting began with an opening hymn and the invocation by Wade. When it came time for them to speak, President Warner went to the pulpit to introduce the remainder of the program. He said, "We are pleased to have as our speakers today President and Sister Brason, who have just returned from presiding over the Hawaii Mission. From the looks of the size of the congregation this afternoon, I'm sure they need no introduction. Just out of curiosity, by the show of hands how many of you are members of the church today because of their influence?"

Dozens of hands went up. All of the Brasons, and Austins, Bill and Marge Casper, and Phil and Anita Moncure, and two or three others all rose their hands. Among the visitors, Dan and Daphne Kirk, Paula and Jacob Messner, and the Morrisons also raised their hands.

In looking around at all of hands in the in the air, Pat whispered to Mace, "Maybe we should have taken it more seriously."

Paula, who was setting next to her old friend and neighbor from when the Owens lived in Norfolk twenty five years earlier, leaned over to her and said, "It's never too late, you know." It was Pat who had introduced Paula to Sheffield in the first place.

President Warner continued, "Thank you. I'm sure there are many others who aren't here. We shall first be pleased for hear from Sister Ramona Brason. She will be followed by a musical number performed by the Brason grandchildren, accompanied by Sister Norma Rowan. Our concluding speaker will be President Sheffield Brason.

Ramona stepped up to the pulpit with a white gardenia tucked into her blond hair, bleached by three years of tropical sun, concealing the strands that had turned silver: her natural dark completion, even more tanned by the same tropical sun. "Aloha, brothers and sisters." She began. People were surprised by her new voice; it wasn't the one they were accustomed to. "Today I would like to talk about some of the many miracles that we witnessed while in the Islands."

She began with the one that saved her life although she lost her gift for singing. She told of the day the sea was held at bay. There were the miraculous transformations in some of their missionaries, particularly Sister Rogerson and Elder Rose. There was the miracle born or tragedy in Koloa. There were examples too numerous to recount. She choose to close with the miracles at Keaau, the highlight of her mission, where for ten days she had the actual experience of being a missionary with Sister Rock. She closed with her testimony and sat down.

Following her remarks, the grandchildren all came up and sang "The Call of Love" from the The

Children Sing hymnal. When they were finished, Sheffield went to the pulpit. He too had a tropical tan, but the thing most notable about his appearance was that he had more wrinkles than before.

He began with how the call to serve came about, but mostly talked about the change that he had witness come over people, the missionaries, the members of the church, and the change in him. He summed it up by saying, "I will never be the same after this experience. The Lord has shown me time and time again that He was in charge and I was merely his instrument. Too many times, things came about in ways that I would not have thought possible. So many times, after things fell into place, did I see the wisdom of why things happened as they did. I witnessed people touched by things that I never intended to say. At times, I was amazed at what came out of my mouth when I opened it. I shall ever be grateful for the experience that my dear companion and I had." Then he closed with his testimony. Following the closing hymn, Jerry gave the benediction.

After the meeting, they were thronged by people who wished to welcome them home. After the meeting, there was an informal open house at the Brason home. Some dropped by on their way home from the meeting, others particularly family, close friends, and their out of town guests lingered into the evening and Sheffield and Ramona got to visit with them. Mace and Pat were particularly touched and wondered if they should give the missionaries yet another try.

When the evening finally wound down, the Owens and Messners each stayed at a hotel room and drove home the next day. As for rest of their guests, they all flew home on Monday. After spending an entire week, Janet and her family also flew home. Now perhaps, Sheffield and Ramona could really settle into being home.

After the fast pace and busy schedule of the mission and the hectic last ten days, it occurred to Sheffield and Ramona, that they had nothing that demanded their attention for the first time since they retired a little over three years ago. They had talked of what they wanted to do, but it was as if it was in some distant time. For now, they just wanted to unwind, and enjoy having Norma and her family with them for the next two weeks.

Ramona still had a number of investment properties that she had held on to. At the time, she thought that she might get back into buying and selling property, but now that she was home it was obvious that the business climate had changed dynamically. There was still a lot of money to be made, but it had become a high stakes game for the serious investor. She had been serious about her business, but decided that she didn't want to put the kind of energy into it that was now demanded to be successful. Before they left, she had sold a lot of her assets and put the money into a portfolio of stocks and bonds that had made money while they were gone, without any effort on her part. Therefore she decided to gradually begin selling off the remainder of her property.

One day she drove into town in her car. It had just sat in the garage for three years and it occurred to her that it looked dated. Right then and there, she decided that it was time to trade it in and wanted to see what there was. She happened to pass a Ford Mustang and remembered the one that had rented in Utah when they went to see Janet while on their way to Hawaii. At the time, it had been her dream car, but hadn't thought of it since then. She went out of her way to go to Magic City Ford over in the Northeast part of Roanoke.



And there it was, just sitting there on the lot with her name written all over it. A brand new red 1967 Ford Mustang convertible. She talked to the salesman and then took it for a test drive. She got on Interstate 581 which had opened while they were gone and got it up to highway speed. The thrill of the wind rushing by on a hot July afternoon sold her on it. But to be sure, she drove around in town as well. At one point she was stopped at a red light, next to a four young men in classic 57 Chevy. Every one of them looked longingly her way. No, they weren't looking at her, they probably didn't even see the woman who was old enough to be their grandmother behind the wheel, they were looking at the car.

When she got back to the dealership, she haggled and negotiated it down to what she felt was fair price and made the deal right on the spot, trading her maroon 1961 Chevrolet Malibu Sport Coupe for it. Her next stop was the music store where Norma used to work to buy some bulky eight track cassettes to play in the eight track player that came with it. Eight track was a new format for recorded music that had been introduced while they were away. It was designed so that the tape would play in an endless loop. On the way home she listened to her Andy William "Hawaiian Wedding Song" album that had been released the previous year. She had also bought two or three others for some variety. She couldn't wait to show it to Sheffield when she got home.

"Wow! Look at this." he exclaimed as she pulled into the yard while he was coming back from the barn.

"I usually don't pick up men, but hop in." she winked.

Sheffield got in and she flipped around in the driveway and got back on the highway and drove on through Salem and got onto Interstate 81 and drove down to Christiansburg before turning around. When they got back, Norma and the kids had just got back from seeing Roger and Chantelle, where Wade was packing up the last of the veterinary equipment that he wanted to take with them. Naturally when they saw Grandma's new car, they wanted to go for a ride too. Sheffield got out and tipped his seat forward so that

Teresa, Samantha, and Marty could pile into the back seat. Sheffield gave up his front seat to Norma.

They drove around for a little while, and against her better judgment, Ramona stopped off and bought a round of ice cream cones for everyone. Naturally, Marty's ended up on the floor. He was afraid that she would be upset for messing up her brand new car. Instead, she gathered it up and wiped the carpet the best she could and bought him another one.

When they got back and pulled into the garage next to Sheffield's car, it made his 1959 Buick with the big fins really look old and out of date. It got him to thinking. Unlike Romona who liked to buy new cars, Sheffield was content to buy one or two year old cars. He said, "They were already broke in." Ramona also liked more sporty cars while he went for more practicable styles. According to him, "There was nothing more practical than a Buick." It wasn't too surprising when a few days later he came home with a 1966 Buick LeSabre four door sedan. His old 1958 Chevrolet pickup was still good enough for the ranch.



Another thing that had become obsolete while they were gone was their television set. Beginning with the fall season in 1965, the major television networks began broadcasting in color. Their old set could still pickup the signal in black and white, but now that they could watch in color, why not? In Hawaii they hadn't had much time to watch television other than the news, it didn't matter. But now that they were retired, watching a little television seemed like a nice diversion.

Sheffield was quick to discover a program that he got hooked on. It reminded him so much of the "Constellation Chronicles" that he had read many years ago. That book is what got him interested in space travel to begin with. The program that caught his attention was about a twenty third century starship named Enterprise on her five-year mission "to boldly go where no man has gone before." Needless to say, they ended up with a color television set.

Then on Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, the day that marked the end of the journey for the first westward bound Mormon pioneers, Wade, Norma and the kids pulled out of the driveway on their own westward trek. They had been accustomed to making the trip each year in August for the Ricks family reunion in Rexburg. This time they were moving for good. The moving van came on Saturday and loaded everything up. At first light on Monday morning they got on the road. The caravan was lead by Wade in his pickup, Norma drove their 1963 Chevrolet Biscayne station wagon and Roger and Chantelle, who had been making the yearly trip for forty years, brought up the rear. There were lots of hugs and tears at the farewell and a promise from Sheffield and Ramona to come see them once they were settled.

They walked back into the house that was empty once again. At least Craig and Edith and their four kids were just a few hundred feet up the road on the other side of the river. They were used to being together constantly while in Hawaii, but then they were busy. Now they had more time than they knew what to do with it and needed to find something to fill it with.

It wasn't long before the church gave them something to fill some of their time with. On Wednesday night, Sheffield was invited in for an interview with Lee Bennett, the District President, and was called to serve on the district council. It would entail a meeting on the second and fourth Wednesday night each month, speaking in one of the branches on the third Sunday of each month, being the district representative to the Salem Branch and to the district Sunday School presidency. He readily accepted the calling.

The next Sunday, Marshall Shultz, the second counselor in the branch presidency asked Ramona to serve as the Co-pilot teacher in the Junior Primary. She would have seven seven year olds who were turning eight during the year. Primary was held each Wednesday afternoon at four o'clock at the meetinghouse. She too accepted the calling.

However, both explained that now they were formally retired, they planned to do a little traveling. They were assured that that would not be a problem. So that afternoon they were both sustained in sacrament meeting.

While they were gone, either Craig or Wade had taken care of the hay. Now that he was home, Sheffield could take care of it. On Monday he hitched up the mower and spent the day mowing hay. He had almost forgot the aroma of fresh mown hay, it smelled so good. The next day he raked it into windrows to dry. While Sheffield was taking care of the hay, Ramona and Edith canned beans from the garden.

On Wednesday afternoon, Ramona taught her first primary class. She had four girls and three boys in the class. One of the boys was going to be a challenge. Of the seven children, three of them had already turned eight and had been baptized. The next one would turn eight in August. For Ramona, it was as if she had just been handed seven more grandchildren. She knew all but two of the families that the children came from. The other two had moved into the branch while they were away.

The next morning, while enjoying a soak in her bathhouse, Sheffield and Ramona began making plans for what they wanted to do over the next little while. They definitely wanted to go out west to see the kids, but when?

"Do remember last Christmas when I announced that Christmas would be at our house this year?"

"Yeah." Sheffield remembered.

"Well, I've been thinking about that. They all came to see us in Hawaii the last three years. I'm sure its not easy to travel with kids. I think maybe its time to let them start their own holiday traditions, besides it would be a lot easier for us to go see them."

"That makes a lot of sense." Sheffield agreed. Then he added, "They need to factor in their in laws. I'm sure they would like to be a part of their holidays. Here's what I'm thinking. Since we haven't had Thanksgiving with any of them, why don't we do that this year."

"That's a good idea. Maybe we could have it with either Norma or Janet. Now that they're close enough to each other we have thanksgiving with one or the other."

"Can you wait until then to go see Norma's new house?"

"No. Do I have to?"

"I guess not. We did tell them we'd come when they got settled."

"Good," Ramona said. "I'll call her and see how soon we can come."

"While we're talking about traveling, is there anywhere else you want to go?"

"Yes, there is. I've always wanted to see New England in the fall."

"Well," Sheffield concluded, "It sounds like we have the next little while to get it figured it out. Call Norma and Janet and tell them we're coming to see them." Then he added, "Whatever happened to 'No place like home?'"

"There isn't. The best part of going someplace is coming home."

\* \* \* \* \*

The exact city limits of Roanoke and Salem at the time are unknown, but most likely were close to where they are now. Salem went from a town to a city on December 31, 1967.