

Chapter XLIX

A Trip Out West

August 3 – September 27, 1967

Later in the afternoon when Sheffield returned from running some errands, Ramona announced, “Okay Babe. I just talked to both Norma and Janet and they said that we could come anytime.”

“Let me see.” Sheffield pondered. “Today is Thursday. Craig and the boys are going to help me put up the hay on Saturday. Would Monday be soon enough?”

“That sounds good to me. I'll need to get someone to take my Primary class for a couple of weeks. I wonder if Edith would be willing to do that for me?”

“You can ask her. Let me look at the calendar.” Sheffield said as he looked at the calendar on the wall next to the telephone. “I'm supposed to speak in the Lynchburg Branch on the twentieth. Let me see if I can move it back a week. Then we can come back on Monday or Tuesday. That will give us two weeks, one week with each of them. How does that sound to you?”

“Perfect.” Ramona exclaimed. “Let me call the girls back and tell them when were coming.”

Over the next three days, everything fell into place just as they had discussed. Early Monday morning Sheffield had the Staggerwing all ready to go and loaded their luggage into the storage compartment behind the cabin. They climbed in and got settled into their seats. Sheffield started the engine and taxied into position at the end of the landing strip. In a moment, they were in the air and gaining altitude as they headed west, with the rising sun at their backs.

They followed the familiar route that they had flown numerous times over the years. They made the usual stops in Springfield, Illinois and McCook, Nebraska for fuel and to get a bite to eat before continuing on. It was a perfect day for flying, other than some thunderstorms over northern Missouri that they had to go around.

They crossed over the northeast corner of Colorado and into Wyoming just southeast of Cheyenne. Before long, the majestic Wind River Mountains loomed ahead in the distance. Sheffield altered course to come around the southern tip of the range and crossed the the continental divide over South Pass and then flew up along the western slope of the mountains though the Upper Green River Valley. At the northern end of the valley, he came around to due west for several miles, which put him over Palisades Reservoir on the Idaho – Wyoming border, pointing them straight to their destination.

Sheffield found Rexburg and followed main street and the highway three miles west of the center of town until it took a bend to the south along the river. Straight ahead, they recognized the house from Norma's description. Sheffield swooped down and buzzed the house and came around for another pass. This time, they saw Norma, Wade and the kids in the yard waving at them. Sheffield pulled up and banked to the south and looped around and lined up with the runway at the airport, just a mile and half east of their

house.

By the time Sheffield landed the plane and had taxied to the parking area, Wade pulled up. He helped secure the plane and transferred their luggage to his car. On the way home he asked about their trip. Then he turned north onto Orange Bridge Road. Once they crossed the river, he said, "This is where our place begins."

Just up the road, they could see the house on the west side of the road. A moment later, they pulled into the driveway of the two story white frame house with red shutters and a brick chimney. Before the car even came to a stop, Janet and the kids were out in the driveway to meet them. After a round of hugs and greetings, Norma said, "Come in and see our house." as she reached for one of the bags and took it out of the back of the station wagon. Wade grabbed the other two and followed them into the house.

"Well," Ramona exclaimed as she stepped through the front door into the living room, "this is very lovely. You have it fixed up so nice."

The sturdy, old house had been built in the late 1920s, just before the depression, so it was about forty years old. Wade explained, "The previous owner had spent a lot of time and money fixing it up. They had just got it the way they wanted it and had to move out of the state. They were anxious for a quick sale and weren't asking all that much. I happened along at just the right time."

"I'll say you did alright." Ramona replied, recognizing the value of the house and property.

"Let me stash your bags in the guest room, and we'll give you a grand tour." Norma offered.

They went through the entire house, looking in every room. In a lot of ways, it was similar to Sheffield and Ramona's house, in that it had two bedrooms and a bathroom downstairs and three more bedrooms and another bathroom upstairs. It wasn't as spacious and was laid out differently, but it was very adequate for their family. The kitchen and dining area were combined into one good sized room, with enough room to spread out in. There was a nice living room which all of their furniture, including Norma's piano, fit into. At one end of the living room was a fireplace.

Although the house was smaller than Sheffield and Ramona's house, it was bigger than the three bedroom home they had lived in back in Virginia. Twelve year old Teresa and nine year old Samantha were excited to now have their own rooms.

The tour continued outside. The house had a nice lawn around it with several trees. From the front yard, which faced east, they could see the Tetons rising above the bench on the other side of town. Around in the back, there were more trees and a garden that had been planted by the previous owner.

"If you look off in the distance, across the lava flows, to the west" Wade pointed out, "you can see Saddle Mountain and the Lost River and Lemhi Mountains."

"You have a great view." Sheffield said.

“Oh, you should see the sunsets.” Norma boasted.

“How far back does your place go?” Sheffield asked.

“Not quite a half a mile. Do you see that fence on the other side of the hay field? It goes straight back along the fence to the river. Then it follows the river back to the road where we crossed the bridge. All together there is thirty acres, most of it is river bottom. I'd like to get some cows to put in it.”

“We see a lot of wild life come up off the river.” Norma continued. “It's not uncommon to see deer and moose right in our yard. We've even seen some fox.”

“Don't forget the bald eagles.” Wade added. “There are several of them that nest down in the cottonwoods.”

“All of the times that we have been to Rexburg, we've never been out here.” Sheffield said. “This is really nice. I'm sure you'll really like it here.”

“Come on. Let me show you the barn and what I want to do.”

While Wade took Sheffield out to the barn, Ramona went back into the house with Norma. It was supper time and Norma and the girls set the table while Ramona freshened up. When it was ready, Marty was sent out to go tell Wade and Sheffield.

Over supper, Wade and Norma told them more about their neighborhood, which was known as Hibbard. After the dishes had been put away, they took them for a ride. There were a few houses further up the road. The Hibbard Ward meetinghouse was a mile and three quarters up the road to the north. It appeared to have been built about the same time as their meetinghouse in Roanoke. A half a mile beyond that was an old rock schoolhouse that was the Hibbard Elementary School.

They went the round about way into town, which had grown since Sheffield and Ramona had last been there. Then the population was around five thousand, now it was pushing eight thousand, with new businesses and new residential neighborhoods.

The campus had grown considerably as well. Wade said that there were now more than twenty five hundred students enrolled for the fall semester. He showed them around the campus, which had three new buildings. Wade pointed out the Romney Science Building, which had been completed in 1963 and showed them his office and the classroom where he would be teaching.

Among the other new buildings were the Davis O. McKay Library, also completed in 1963, and the Manwaring Student Center, which had been completed in 1966. In addition there were two boys and four new girls dormitories that had been built during the same time.

As they walked around the campus, there was also a four story building under construction. Ground had been broken the year before for a combination classroom office building that was scheduled for completion the following year.

Wade explained that in the fall they would begin construction on a new physical education building that would include a field house, an Olympic-size swimming pool, classrooms, handball courts, dressing rooms, weight-lifting rooms, and a therapy room. The main gym would seat about five thousand with the capacity for another seventeen hundred chairs that could be set up on the floor for special events. In addition, two more girls dorms and an industrial science building would begin construction in 1968.

“With all this growth,” Wade concluded, “it will be interesting to see what the future holds for Ricks College. As long as I’m working here, our kids will be able to attend tuition free.”

“That’s quite a perk for you.” Sheffield said. “It looks like this was a good move for you.”

The next day was pretty much spent at home. Wade took Sheffield out with him to change the water. Unlike back home in Virginia where they had enough rain, this was a desert that depend on irrigation to thrive. That day he was watering the hay field just north of the house. He dammed off the ditch and opened some headgates to let the water out of the ditch. As it flooded the field the water was contained by small dikes about fifty feet apart.

Roger and Chantelle, who were still in the area visiting her family, came out. Her father had since died, but her mother still lived in the old rock house across from the park. While there, they were staying with her. That afternoon, Samantha and Marty had Primary and that evening, Teresa had Mutual.

Wednesday was the day of adventure. Early that morning, they loaded up the station wagon with the girls stuffed into the back with the picnic cooler, while Marty sat between Grandpa and Grandpa in the back seat and they set out just after sunrise at six thirty for a day trip through Yellowstone Park. An hour and half later they paid the entry fee and drove on into the park through the west entrance at West Yellowstone. That early in the morning, the elk and bison herds were grazing along the Madison River. The kids got a kick out of the buffalo calves as they romped and bucked through the meadow.

Although they had all been there on several occasions, it was always an adventure. They took their time as they made the loop through the park, stopping frequently to see the animals and scenery. Bears by the dozens lined the road, stopping traffic waiting for a handout. In other places, it was the bison who stopped traffic as they meandered down the middle of the road. They stopped off at the main attractions as well, including Old Faithful, Fishing Bridge and the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, not to mention all of the other thermal attractions, waterfalls, and scenic turn outs. By eight o'clock that evening, they had completed the loop and exited the park and began making their way home. About forty five minutes later, the sun went down while they were still half way from home.

Thursday was a busy day for Norma. She had Relief Society in the morning and in the afternoon she had to take the kids to get their checkups and to get them registered for school. Teresa would be in the seventh grade at the Junior High and Samantha would be in the fourth grade at the elementary school just

up the road. Marty should have been in the first grade, but as planned, they had held him back. Instead, he would be attending a half day of kindergarten at the home of neighbor lady in their ward. Wade too had a busy day, as he had new teacher orientation.

Sheffield and Ramona had taken their schedule that day into account and had planned a side trip. On his way to his orientation meeting at eight o'clock that morning, Wade dropped them off at the airport. They took off in the Staggerwing and headed west over the vast lava flows to the west. Beyond them were the mountains that they could see from Rexburg. What looked like one continuous range was actually two. After passing Saddle Mountain, they continued on over more mountains, with the incredible Sawtooth Mountains looming off to the North.

While passing over Sun Valley, Sheffield said, "You know, all of the times we've been to Idaho, we've never been here. These mountains are every bit as majestic as the Tetons."

"Well, now we'll be spending more time out here, why don't we come this way sometime rather than going to Yellowstone." Ramona suggested.

They flew on over some very roughed country and came out into the Treasure Valley on the western side of the state. When they landed at the airport in Boise, Hank and Teri Terry met them and took them home. As they visited, Hank told Sheffield all about the Ship's reunion that he had missed back in June. He said that it had the best attendance yet. The next one would be in Chicago in five years.

Hank, who was three years younger than Sheffield had just turned sixty five and had retired from his job as the manager of the Boise Airport. They too had travel plans in their future.

"We're planning on a Mediterranean cruise next summer." Teri announced.

"Yeah." Hank added. "it will mark the twenty fifth anniversary of when we were their on the Reprisal."

"That was quite a summer." Sheffield said. "I've got this bum leg to show for it. I went back again on the Reprisal ten years later, you know."

"I met him in Naples for a few days." Ramona added. "I wanted to go to Rome, but there just wasn't time."

"The trip we're looking at will take us to Rome for three days and then on to Naples for a seven day cruise of the Western Mediterranean."

"That sounds exciting." Ramona said.

"Hey, you know what." Hank said. "I just had a brilliant idea. Why don't you come with us and make it a foursome?"

Ramona looked at Sheffield. He could tell exactly what she was thinking. He turned to Hank and Teri and said, "Yeah. We'd like that."

They went on to make some tentative plans for their joint vacation before moving on to other topics.

Hank and Teri took them to one of their favorite restaurants downtown and treated them to lunch and then on a tour of Boise before returning home for more visiting.

After a light supper, they took them back to airport for their flight back to Rexburg. To announce their arrival, they buzzed the house a couple of times before circling around to line up with the runway at the airport. This time, Norma and kids were there to meet them.

They took them home where they told them about their day trip and the cruise that they were planning for next year. Norma had accomplished everything that she had set out to do that day and Wade was all set to start school to start in two weeks. The rest of the weekend was theirs to do what they wanted with.

On Friday, they loaded up for another day trip. This one was out to the Craters of the Moon, a place that was new to all of them. It was actually a little farther than it was to Yellowstone as they drove across the lava flows that Sheffield and Ramona had flown over the day before.

As they rounded Saddle Mountain, Sheffield asked, "Wade, in all the years that you have been coming to Idaho, have you ever been to the Sawtooth Mountains?"

"No I never have. I've always wanted to."

"We we're talking about it yesterday," Ramona added, "and we decided that next summer instead of going to Yellowstone, that we would like to come over this way. How does that sound to you?"

Norma and Wade agreed.

And so the rest of the way, there was another trip to plan out. They spent a few hours exploring the cinder cones, fissures, and other interesting features, with a break for lunch at one of the picnic areas. As they were ready to leave, the weather turned rather threatening. All the way home the storm followed them and not long after they got home in late afternoon, the storm moved in, bringing with it high winds, lightning and thunder, and heavy rain. The storm moved on the east as the sun was beginning to settle in the west, casting a spectacular rainbow against the dark clouds to the east.

On Saturday, Roger and Chantelle came out again and Sederick and Jolene came up from Blackfoot with their kids. They had four children, who were all close in age to Norma and Wade's kids. Before they were sister's in law, Norma and Jolene had been best friends who did everything together, including getting married. They were both coming up on their fourteenth anniversary on the 20th, in just nine days.

It was through the Brasons that Jolene had met Sederick. During the Korean War, he and his friend Quinn had served aboard the Reprisal while she was Sheffield's flagship. Sheffield got acquainted through the serviceman's group aboard the ship. When Ramona brought the girls to Japan for Christmas, Sheffield assigned them to see to it that Norma and Janet had a good time.

When the ship returned to Norfolk, they came out to Roanoke every chance they got to stay with the

Brasons, who's home had become their home away from home, By then Norma was going with Wade, who had returned from his mission to Japan. Janet was too young for the older sailors, so they gravitated towards Norma's friends, Bonnie and Jolene, who were cousins, and Jolene was Wade's younger sister. Quinn and Bonnie were married a little while before them and were still living in Tremonton, which wasn't very far from where Janet and Jerry lived. Over the years, both Sederick and Quinn had stayed in touch with the Brasons.

After they were married, they settled in Moreland, which was seven miles northwest of Blackfoot. Sederick had gone into business for himself as concrete contractor. It was hard work, but he was doing alright in supporting his family. It was nice that Wade and Norma had family, besides his extended family, so close to them. Now two of Roger and Chantelle's children had moved to Idaho. Reid, Regena, and Beverly all still lived in the Roanoke area.

Just like back home on the Two Star Ranch, they had their get together in a stand of trees down by the river. While they were enjoying themselves a car pulled into the driveway and a woman got out and began making her way toward them. As she drew closer, they could see that it was Natalie Ricks, Wade and Jolene's second cousin.

She made a beeline straight for Sheffield and extended her hand. Sheffield took it and said, "We aren't missionaries any more Sister Ricks" as he pulled her in close for an embrace. "Gosh its good to see you again."

"I heard through my Dad that you were here, I had to come and see you."

"We're sure glad that you did." Ramona said as she gave their former missionary a hug. When she released her, she said, "Sit down and tell us what you've been up to."

They had got to know Natalie quite well when she lived in the upstairs apartment at the mission home. She had been home from her mission for nearly eleven months and was living in Idaho Falls where she was working as a receptionist in a doctor's office. She had a steady boyfriend, who she was expecting to propose to her at any time now. After getting caught up, they reminisced about their time together in Hawaii. She asked about Janet, who had gone out proselyting with her one day while she was there to take care of Ramona when she was recovering from the complications from being stung. Sheffield and Ramona invited her to stay and have something to eat with them, an offer that she gladly accepted.

Natalie stayed for a while and joined in on their activities. Eventually Jolene and Sederick had to leave for the hour drive back to Moreland and Roger and Shantelle went back to her mother's place, but not until everything was cleaned up and put away.

On Sunday, Sheffield and Ramona accompanied Norma and Wade to church in their new ward. They had only been there for three weeks but had already become acquainted with several people. That

very morning, Norma received a calling to be the Junior Sunday School pianist and Wade was asked to be an assistant Teachers Quorum advisor and they were both sustained that evening in sacrament meeting and set apart afterwards.

The week had passed so quickly and it was time for Sheffield and Ramona to leave and go down to spend a week with Janet and Jerry. During Sunday dinner they got to talking. Since Wade and Norma were going to drive down on Wednesday anyway to go with them to the temple for Pearl to be sealed to them, the plans changed slightly. There was enough room for Norma and the kids in the Staggerwing, so they were going with them. Wade would still drive down to Logan on Wednesday and they would come back with him. He had some things that he needed to do anyway.

After breakfast on Monday morning, Wade took them to the airport and saw them off. With their faces plastered against the window, they waved to their Dad as the plane taxied away.

It was a short, uneventful flight. When the Staggerwing landed in Wayne Gover's pasture, Janet and the kids were there to meet them. She knew that Norma was coming on Wednesday, but was completely surprised to see her and the kids get out of the plane. She didn't have room to put everyone up so there was a last minute change of plans. Wayne and Gale invited Sheffield and Ramona to stay with them for a couple of nights so Norma and the kids could stay with Janet and Jerry. That evening Sheffield and Ramona had a good visit with Wayne and Gale, who wanted to know all about their mission. Wayne had pretty much retired and Jerry now ran the ranch. When needed, he still helped out.

On Tuesday afternoon, everyone went up into the mountains for a picnic up on the range where they ran their sheep. Morris was able to get off work early and he and Sheila and their kids joined them. The kids particularly enjoyed playing in the old swimming whole. The cold water of the creek felt refreshing on a hot August day. Dusk had settled in by the time they all came down off the mountain.

But Wednesday was the big day. Sheffield and Ramona rode into Logan with Wayne and Gale in his car, while Norma and the kids drove over in Gale's car. Janet and Jerry followed behind. When they arrived at the temple, Wade was already there waiting for them. Some of Wayne and Gale's family were already there as well. The rest arrived shortly. The only ones missing were Craig and Edith. Samantha and one of Jerry's nieces watched the younger kids while they all went through a session together. Afterwards they were taken to one of the sealing rooms and once they were all settled, Pearl was brought in and was sealed to them.

After leaving the temple, everyone regrouped at the Bluebird Restaurant for lunch. As the Brasons were all seated together, they had a chance to visit some more. One topic of Thanksgiving came up. It was decided that they would have it at Norma's place that year. After lunch, Norma and Wade and their kids left

from there to go back home.

When Sheffield and Ramona returned to Clarkston, they shifted to Janet and Jerry's home for the rest of their stay. Thursday and Friday were spent visiting and playing with the grandkids. Six year old Wesley wanted to go for a ride in Grandpa's airplane, so he took the whole family up. He had Jerry sit up in the front seat so Janet could sit in the back between Wesley and Andrea. Grandma stayed home with Pearl. Sheffield gave Jerry a bird's eye view of the ranch and then up over the mountain rangeland. They saw the place where they had their picnic and little beyond that, they spotted the heard grazing in a meadow and up the side of a hill. With them was the sheepherder, three dogs, and a horse. The turbulence over the mountains was too much for Andrea, causing her to throw up. That bought a swift end to the tour as Sheffield pulled up to clear the mountains and turned back. Once they landed back at Wayne's pasture, Janet returned with a bucket of hot soapy water to cleanup the mess.

By eight thirty Friday morning, they were on the road in Jerry and Janet's 1963 four-wheel drive International Travelall. (Living in such a remote area, they needed something rugged enough to handle the winter roads and yet haul the family around in.) With a picnic, and the Wesley and Andrea in the very back, they drove the ninety miles down to Farmington and arrived at ten o'clock, just as Lagoon opened for the day. There was already a crowd waiting to get in.

Once they paid for their passes, they went inside to the fun that awaited. At six and four, Wesley and Andrea were drawn to the kiddie rides. While Sheffield and Ramona watched them on the kiddie cars, Janet and Jerry road the roller coaster. After they had lunch in the picnic area they rode the Animaland Train through the wild animal exhibit that opened that year. The afternoon was filled with taking in the rides and exhibits, and by six o'clock the kids were worn out.

They left the park and went on down to Salt Lake and checked into Little America. Although they only lived ninety miles from Salt Lake, going to the "Big City" was a rare treat. For them, going to Logan twenty miles away with its population of twenty thousand was a big deal.

After getting something to eat, Janet and Jerry put the kids down while Sheffield and Ramona took their Travelall and drove up by the Capitol Building and spent the evening visiting with Debra and Chet Mayfield, who wanted to hear all about their mission to Hawaii.

Saturday was spent visiting Temple Square, the Hansen Planetarium, and the Hogle Zoo, the zoo being the highlight for Wesley and Andrea. After getting something to eat, the kids fell asleep on the drive back to Clarkston.

On Sunday they attended church and for Sunday dinner between meetings, they had a roast leg of lamb. And that ended their week with Janet. On Monday morning, they packed up and said goodbye, until Thanksgiving. Sheffield and Ramona followed the same route home, with a stops McCook and Springfield. It

was late afternoon when they landed at the Two Star Ranch.

While they were gone, Criag had bought the plane that he had been talking about. Now that they were having Thanksgiving at Norma's, his goal was to have it ready so his family could make the trip. He had hoped to keep it at the ranch, but the thousand foot landing strip was just a little too short to accommodate the Bonanza H-35

Once back home, life settled back into their routine. Although they had just made the trip out west to see the girls and their families, it was strange not having Norma and Wade living nearby any more. They had talked on the telephone nearly every day, sometimes more, and they got together quite often. That would be no more. They would especially miss watching Teresa, Samantha, and Marty grow up.

Now they would have to settle for an occasional telephone call or letter. They had plans to go see them at least twice a year. At least Norma and Janet were in such close proximity to each other, they could see them both in the same trip. Since both Norma and Wade both had family in Roanoke, their plans were to come home at least once a year.

At least Craig and Edith still lived just a up the road.

On Tuesday, Ramona taught her primary class that Edith had taught the two weeks that they were gone and that evening, Sheffield attended his council meeting. The following Sunday he kept his assignment to speak in the Lynchburg Branch. He took Romona with his as his speaking companion and together they talked about their mission to Hawaii. Then on the following Saturday, Ramona attended the baptism of one of the children in her primary class.

Ramona needed something more to fill her time with. With the recent emphasis on genealogy work, she turned her attention to organizing all of her records so they could be submitted to the Genealogical Society in Salt Lake. While they were on their mission, Walt had taken it upon himself to submit the Brason and Sheffield lines.

One day in early September, after they had only been home for a few days, Sheffield received an unexpected telephone call from the Dean of Student Life at Ricks College. "President Brason," the man said. "We understand that you will be in Rexburg the week of Thanksgiving. Is that correct?"

"Why yes it is." Sheffield replied.

"Good. On behalf of Rick College, I would like to extend an invitation to you to be our devotional speaker on Tuesday the twenty first of November. Would you be willing and able to do that?"

"I suppose I could do that."

"Would Sister Brason be willing to take a few minutes as well?"

"Oh I think she would." he answered for her knowing that she would.

"Very good. Thanks you so much." the caller said. He went on to tell them what to expect.

It turned out that they had circulated among the faculty and staff a request for ideas for possible devotional speakers and Wade had submitted his name. That gave them one more thing to look forward to.

The rest of the month was spent at home, with their immediate attention focused on their next little excursion, This time, the Staggerwing would remain in the hangar as it would be a road trip in Ramona's Mustang.

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Norma Wade's house is about two miles from where I live and right next to where we used to live. The property is situated as described, but the house is fictional.

All three of the new buildings mentioned, the Romeny Science Building, David O. McKay Library, and the Manwaring Center, have since been enlarged considerably. Of the new buildings mentioned, The Classroom Office Building was completed in 1968 and later renamed the Joseph Fielding Smith Building. The new physical education building, which would become known as the Hart Gymnasium, and the Austin Industrial Building, were both completed in 1969. The two new girls dormitories were not completed until 1971.

For the story of Sederick and Quinn and the girls in Tokyo, see *New Beginnings*, chapter 34 and for Norma and Jolene's double wedding see *A Growing Family*, chapter 7.

