

## Chapter LVIII

### Years Slipping Away

September 26, 1970 – March 17, 1973

Something Sheffield's father said to him a long time ago was beginning to make sense as his seventy second birthday was fast approaching. Said Emmett, "Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes." Each year since returning from their mission seemed to be slipping away faster than the one before. Sheffield wondered how time could be going faster even though he was slowing down.

In a flash, what was left of September was gone and October sped by. In November the sale of the land across the river was finalized. Since they had Thanksgiving with the kids the year before, they were on their own this year. Craig and Edith were spending it with her parents. Stirling and Mary Ann invited them to join them, as they had other years. Sheffield and Ramona considered the invitation, but they made yet another attempt to have Kathryn over for dinner. Each time they invited her, she politely turned them down. Then Ramona invited her for Thanksgiving.

"I couldn't impose on your family." she protested. "I'll just have my frozen turkey TV dinner like I do every year."

Ramona explained that they were going to be alone since their kids were all going to their in laws. Kathryn agreed to "think about it." Then the Saturday before Thanksgiving, when Sheffield and Ramona went to her house for their weekly exchange, Ramona asked her one more time.

Kathryn had given it a lot of thought. It would sure be nice not to spend Thanksgiving alone another year and a home cooked meal would sure be good. "Yes." She replied. "I'll accept your offer. Can I bring something?"

"Great. We'd really love to have you. Just bring yourself."

Kathryn looked forward to it with both excitement and reservation. She was thrilled to be included, although much of her exclusion was of her own doing because of anxiety. Over the last several months she had got to know the Brasons quite well, better than she knew anyone else and had come to trust them and was excited to spend some time in their home.

She arrived around noon, although dinner wouldn't be ready for a couple more hours. Although she wasn't asked to bring anything, she brought a jello salad that she had made. Ramona had made a couple of pies the day before and some rolls earlier that morning. A small turkey was in the oven and beginning to give off a savory aroma. Ramona was in the process of peeling some potatoes and Kathryn offered to help, so Ramona had her cut up them up. The three of them visited casually while they worked together on dinner. Kathryn seemed to be completely relaxed around them.

When it came time for dinner, Sheffield asked the blessing on the food and expressed gratitude for a

number of things, especially for the fact that Kathryn was with them. The food was passed around and everyone filled their plates. When she couldn't avoid it any longer, Kathryn removed her scarf. The reason she was uncomfortable eating in the presence of the others was because she didn't have any lips, to speak of. It made it nearly impossible to close her mouth when she chewed her food. Drinking from a glass was also difficult for the same reason. Being gracious hosts, Sheffield and Ramona understood the challenge it was for her. They didn't stare nor said a word. However, Ramona did get up and get a straw for her to drink with.

After dinner, Kathryn put her scarf back on and helped clear away. She lingered for a while as she relished having someone to talk to. When she went home, Ramona sent her with some of the left overs.

The day after Thanksgiving, Sheffield and Ramona and Craig and his family went up to the cabin to find their Christmas trees. By the end of Saturday, both houses were all decked out for the holidays and they looked forward to Norman and Janet and their families coming.

Sheffield's seventy second birthday was on a Monday that year. Craig and his family had them over for dinner and to spend the evening playing games and visiting.

The rest of the month passed quickly and late in the afternoon on Christmas Eve, they picked up Norma and Janet and their families at the airport and brought them home and put them up. Since Janet's kids had the chickenpox the last time, it had been four years since the entire family had been home for Christmas. They were able to stay through New Years and went home on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

1971 got off to a slow start, as January always seemed to be slow. Later in the month, Sheffield and Ramona celebrated their twenty seventh anniversary, which livened things up just a little.

On the last day of January, which happened to be a Sunday, Sheffield was set to watch the launch of Apollo 14, the first manned space flight since the Apollo 13 accident more than nine months earlier. The launch was scheduled for three thirty, which worked out just right to be between the morning meetings and Sacramento Meeting at five thirty. Then the countdown was put on hold due to bad weather. Sheffield was afraid he might miss it, but the weather cleared up and the count down resumed. Lift off was four minutes after four, which allowed him to watch it. He followed the mission on television during its nine day mission, which landed on the moon on the 5<sup>th</sup> and returned to earth on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

During the winter and spring, life was pretty much routine. Ramona taught her Primary class each week and enjoyed her bathhouse. Sheffield gave three or four blessings each week and spent a lot of time flying. They went to Geoff's wresting matches and the other kids' activities. They stayed in touch with Norma and Janet through letters and an occasional telephone call. They were always looking for missionary opportunities and from time to time had referrals for the Elders, who were in their home often. As with every year, the round up was the third Saturday in March. A couple of weeks later a rented bull was turned in with

the cows.

The earth had come to life and had greened up as the days got longer and warmer. Gean celebrated her eighteenth birthday a few days before Easter. In May, the new hospital began going up on the property across the river. At the same time, it was announced in church that work finally began on the Washington D.C. Temple nearly two and half years after the ground breaking. The highlight of the spring was when Gean graduated from Andrew Lewis High School in May. The younger kids were happy to be out of school as well.

Summer started off with Memorial Day and the magical month of June. The first ten days of June were spent in Utah with Janet. Andrea celebrated her eighth birthday on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Ramona celebrated her sixty eighth birthday on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The following Saturday, Wade and Norma came down for Andrea's baptism. Sheffield and Ramona didn't go up to Rexburg at that time, since they were planning another trip later in the summer.

They had been home for a little more than a week and it was Geoff's sixteenth birthday. The next day he was ordained a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. That same day was Teresa's sixteenth birthday. If Ramona wasn't able to wish the grandkids a happy birthday in person, she always called them.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July seemed to come out of nowhere. Still the routine of life was much as it was during the winter. Sheffield was engrossed in following another moon landing during the last week of July and the first week of August.

Once into August, the summer was slipping away. They had put off their visit with Norma to coincide with when Craig took Gean out to Ricks College. On the 13<sup>th</sup> Sheffield and Ramona flew out to Idaho in the Staggerwing to spend ten days with Norma. As they had done while at Janet's earlier, they took advantage of attending the temple. It was going to be three or four years before they would have their own, so they took advantage of it while they could.

A few days later, Craig and his family flew out in his Bonanza. While attending school, Gean would be staying with Norma rather than living in the dorms or an apartment so she could save some money. Just like Sheffield had done for him all those years ago, Craig bought a used car for her to get around in.

Then during the middle of the week, Wade hitched up the trailer to their Suburban and they headed out for Granite Creek. Craig and his family followed in Gean's car and Janet and her family met them there for a family reunion. This was the start of an annual tradition that was to last for the next several years. It took the place of their Memorial Day reunion and picnic. Camping for three days with their cousins was a big hit with the grandkids. Of the ten grandchildren, half of them were now teenagers, including Todd and Samantha who had turned thirteen earlier in the year. As for the other five, Wesley, Marty, and Tina were all ten, Andrea was eight, and Pearl was four.

After the family reunion and getting Gean settled, Craig and Edith flew back to Virginia because he had to get back to work, but Geoff, Todd, and Tina stayed behind and returned a few days later with Sheffield and Ramona before they had to go back to school.

Even though they had just had their family reunion, they still had a Labor Day picnic with Craig's family before school started. It felt strange not having Gean with them. With the beginning of another school year, Ramona got another class of Primary children. She had been teaching primary for four years, ever since they returned from their mission, and thoroughly loved the children in her class.

Sheffield and Ramona had only been back from seeing Norma and Wade for a couple of weeks, when they got a call from Norma with some exciting news. "Wade has been called to be the bishop of one of the Ricks College wards," she declared. "His folks are coming out so his Dad can ordain him a High Priest. I know that you were just here, but we would love it if you could come too."

After talking to Norma, Sheffield called Roger too see if they'd like to fly to Rexburg with them. They too had just been out to Idaho and didn't look forward to another cross country drive so soon. Roger thought that sounded like a great idea and offered to help cover the cost of fuel.

With everything arranged, on Friday morning they took off from the landing strip at the Two Star Ranch in the Staggerwing. They followed to usual flight path with stops in Springfield, Illinois and McCook, Nebraska for fuel and lunch. A good conversation helped the time to go quickly. Late that afternoon, Wade met them at the airport. The kids were excited to have both sets of grandparents at the same time.

They spent Saturday visiting. Then on Sunday morning they went to the morning meetings in their home ward. Sedrick and Jolene came up from Blackfoot for dinner and in the afternoon they all attended Sacrament Meeting in the Ricks College 6<sup>th</sup> Ward where Wade was sustained as the bishop. After the meeting, Roger ordained him to be a high priest before he was set apart as the bishop. It meant that Norma would become what was known as a church widow in her home ward, as she and the kids would have to go without him. At least they were no longer little children and were all big enough help out. Wade would be able to attend with them during the summer and during the Christmas break. Since Gean was living with them, she would be member of his ward.

It was a quick trip. On Monday morning they said goodbye to Norma and the grandkids and Wade dropped them off at the airport on his way to his first class. The flight home was as pleasant as the trip out had been, with good conversation with good friends.

With that little bit of excitement out of the way, Sheffield and Ramona settled into autumn and planning their first big trip in quite some time. They were going back to Hawaii in December for the thirty year anniversary reunion of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. Ramona began early to make their travel and hotel arrangements and had everything taken care of. They planned to stay for three weeks and

revisit their mission as well.

But first it was Thanksgiving. This was the year for the kids to come home. They all arrived on the same flight on Wednesday afternoon, including Gean. It was a short three day visit, but a lot was crammed into those three days.

On Friday morning, they all went up the cabin and spent the night. The next morning the set out to find two Christmas trees, one for Sheffield and Ramona and one for Craig's family. There never seemed to be shortage of nice trees in the national forest and they found what they were looking for. Rather than come back down after finding their trees, they spent the whole day and and came back down late in the afternoon. Then early Sunday morning they saw them off for their flight home as the kids and Wade had to go back to school on Monday morning.

On Monday the 29<sup>th</sup>, Sheffield and Ramona put up the Christmas tree and got out the decorations. While Ramona took care of the tree and the inside, Sheffield put up the outside lights. By the end of the day, they were already for the holidays even though they wouldn't be there to enjoy the lights and the decorations. The next day was spent packing for their trip.

Craig took them to the airport when he went to work on Wednesday. It made it handy that he worked there. He was now the chief of maintenance, which meant that he had a desk job and rarely got his hands dirty anymore. He waited around with them until they boarded their flight for Washington.

The first leg of the flight was short and they had a brief lay over before boarding their cross county flight for Oakland. When they boarded the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet, they settled into their seats in the center row and waited for the plane to depart the gate. Another couple, perhaps in their mid forties occupied the other two seats of the center row. They were quick to introduce themselves as Barry and Monica Mulder. Before the plane took off, they learned that they lived in Kensington, Maryland and were on their way to Oakland for her sisters wedding. They had three children who they had left with his brother and his wife. Barry worked for the US Department of Commerce as an economist and Monica was a hair stylist.

They were quite a talkative couple and engaged them in conversation, telling about themselves and asking all about Sheffield and Ramona and found the reason for their trip fascinating, particularly that both of them were Pearl Harbor Survivors. Naturally Barry wanted to hear their story and Monica was curious as to how they got together. They listened with great interest as Sheffield and Ramona told their story. Barry found Sheffield's naval career fascinating and Monica thought that Ramona's relationship to his first wife was intriguing. Even more captivating was how they came to adopt Craig, Norma, and Janet.

By the time they were crossing the Mississippi River, the subject of their mission in Hawaii came up which opened the door to discussion about the church. They asked a lot of questions and listened intently to the answers and all that Sheffield and Ramona told them. They knew all about the Washington Temple that

was being built near their home and wanted to know more about it. By the time they were over the Rockies, they accepted the copy of the Book of Mormon that Ramona had within easy reach. And before they landed, they agreed to meet with the missionaries and had given Sheffield their contact information. The long cross county flight seemed to have gone quickly as they conversed with the Mulders the entire trip. They had met as strangers and parted as friends, probably never to cross paths again.

After getting off the plane, they parted ways. A man approached Sheffield and Ramona and said, "I was sitting right behind and I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with that couple. What you were explaining is exactly what my wife and I have been looking for. If I gave you my name and address, would you ask the missionaries to come see us?"

Surprised at the request, Sheffield answered, "Of course." While he was writing down the information, Ramona dug through her handbag to retrieve a second copy of the Book of Mormon that she had bought, just in case they needed more than one. The man thanked them and promised to look into it as he hurried off to catch his connecting flight.

Satisfied with what they had accomplished, Sheffield and Romona made their connecting flight to Honolulu. They boarded another 747 and found themselves on the same flight as several other couples from various places who were also going to the reunion. This part of the flight also seemed to go quickly as the men, mostly younger than Sheffield, swapped war stories. Inevitably, Sheffield was asked to tell his. They were surprised to learn that Ramona had her own account of the attack.

When the plane landed it was early afternoon in Honolulu due to the time zone differences. The whole group were headed for the Sheraton-Waikiki Hotel, where the reunion was being held. The hotel had a shuttle bus standing by to bring them to the hotel. Rather than take the bus, Sheffield and Ramona checked out a rental car so they would have the freedom to go where they wanted. Naturally, the first place they went was to the hotel to get checked into their room and to rest up from the long trip.

Later in the afternoon, they set out in their rental car to drive around to some of their favorite places, including driving past Mililani. It looked pretty much the same as it did four and half years ago when they left to come home. They stopped off for something to eat and returned to the hotel and turned in for the night. The Sheraton-Waikiki was new since they were last there, having opened in the spring. Their room was on the twelfth floor facing east, looking out over Waikiki and Diamond Head.

Thursday was pretty much planned out for them. They had some free time in the morning, which they spent at the beach. The reunion began with brunch, followed by a trip to the Arizona Memorial. Again, rather than take the shuttle bus, they opted to drive. As they drove past the spot where Sheffield had found Geannie's shot up car, he chocked up with emotion. The purpose of the trip came clearly into focus, and that was to "remember and never forget" just as he stressed to his children and grandchildren. They found the

ferry dock crowded with other attendees waiting for a ride out to the memorial. They stood out with the white and blue garrison caps that they wore which identified them as Pearl Harbor Survivors.

Sheffield and Ramona had to wait for the second boat before they could go across the harbor. Once at the memorial, the mood was one of somber reflection as men remembered and paid tribute to their fallen shipmates, whatever ship it may have been. After thirty years, it was as if it were yesterday for every one of them.

At the ferry dock, there was another boat offering tours of the harbor for three dollars a person. Sheffield and Ramona got in line and were soon cruising through the harbor, which was pretty much empty of ships, except for several destroyers and a few submarines, unlike that fateful morning.

After leaving the base, they drove around some more before going back to the hotel. Sheffield turned off and drove through the officers' housing neighborhood where he and Geannie lived. The house still looked pretty much the same, as did the one next door where Mace and Pat lived. Eventually, they went back to the hotel and got ready for the reception that evening.

For most of the attendees, Friday was a day to tour Oahu. Sheffield and Ramona, who knew the island like the back of their hands, opted to go out on their own again and spent the day at some more of their favorite places, including a drive out past where Ramona's beach house once stood.

Saturday was also a day for tours. This time they headed north up to Laie to spend the day with Manti and Iolani Morley. They had called ahead to make sure they would be home and spent the entire day with them and Takara and her family.

They had stayed in touch in the years since they left to go home, but seeing them again and rekindling their friendship was quite rewarding. Manti was still a purchasing agent for the church and had four years until he could retire. He had since been released as the stake president. Teancum had worked his way up to the business manager for the Polynesian Cultural Center. Their three kids were now twelve, ten, six. When they left to go back to Honolulu, Sheffield and Ramona promised that they would be back before they went home.

On Sunday, Sheffield and Ramona attended church in the ward that they went to when they lived at the mission home. Most of people still remembered them and welcomed them back. But no one was more happy to see them than was Sister `Auli`i, who was still the cook at Miliani. At church they met Larry Majors the Mission President and his wife, Rebecka. The Majors were from Santa Barbra, California and had been there for a year and half and had succeeded the president who had succeeded Sheffield. The Majors' invited them come to dinner one evening before they left.

Monday and Tuesday were the busy days for the reunion. On Monday morning, they attended the business meeting for the national association. During the afternoon, they had Ramona's hospital group get

together. She was surprised to see her old friend, Geraldine Reed there. She had only encountered Gerry once after she transferred to Bethesda, and that was when Gerry accompanied Sheffield when he was brought to the hospital after being injured at Salerno. The two of them had a lot to catch up on.

Later in the evening Sheffield met with the the two squadrons of the Enterprise Air Group which were involved in the battle. There was bigger turn out from the air group than there had been five years earlier. Sheffield was reunited with Grant Ewbank, the pilot of the Scouting Six Dauntless that he was riding in that morning thirty years ago. By the time Sheffield returned from Geannie's funeral, Grant had been transferred from the squadron, so this was the first time that they had seen each other since their plane was shot down. Some of the "old timers" had been part of the air group when Sheffield was the commander. That evening they attended a luau sponsored by the Aloha Chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association.

Sheffield's seventy third birthday took a back seat to all that was going on on Tuesday. They had breakfast early and left for the Punchbowl National Cemetery for the National Memorial Service, which started at seven thirty. It was a day of reflection for everyone who had been there.

Like everyone else, that day replayed in Sheffield's memory, every horrible detail. The day had started out with great anticipation of he and Geannie celebrating their birthiversary and taking them home to Roanoke where they would be safe. The day turned out to be entirely different than his expectations. Being caught in the attack and getting shot down was the least of it. It took a turn from bad worse when he found Geannie's shot up car. It went from worse to unimaginable at the hospital where he found his children dead and Geannie dieing.

In his remembering, he went back another twenty years to the day that he and Geannine were married. That was exactly fifty years to day. Then it occurred to him that it would have been their fiftieth anniversary. He could see her standing before him at the alter in chapel of the Green Memorial Methodist Church. He had never seen her look so beautiful as she did in her white southern belle wedding gown and wide brimmed white hat. Then his mind raced back to his earliest childhood recollections of her.

He was like a pebble in a sling shot. He had stretched back as far as could go. When the slingshot was released, he was flung forward in time. His entire life flashed forward through the years. Twenty years passed in a split second. They were such good years full of happy times with Geannie, Sandy and Austin. Those times had their mix of sadness as well; most notably when they lost Charles Emmett. Then came that awful day when it all came to and end. The next two years seemed long and unbearable at the time, but at the speed his mind raced, they didn't even register as he zipped through the next thirty years, brining him that very moment in time.

But it didn't stop there. He raced through what the future, how ever long that might be, may have in store until the time that he would be rejoining Geannie and she would again take her place at his side. He

couldn't even imagine what that might be like. He even went beyond that to the time that Ramona rejoin him at his other side.

After the national memorial, Ramona treated him to lunch for his birthday. They had a little free time during the afternoon, but in the evening they attended the memorial banquet which included a fabulous floor show featuring singer Kate Smith.

The banquet concluded the reunion and on Wednesday the participants either went home or went off on their own. Sheffield and Ramona continued with their vacation and switched gears from the Pearl Harbor reunion to revisiting their mission in Hawaii.

Over the next several days, Sheffield and Ramona went to more of their favorite places in Honolulu and around Oahu and called on old friends, such as Dwight and Cindy Galloway. One evening they were treated to some of Sister `Auli`i's home cooking and got better acquainted with the Majors.

"I assure you," President Majors said, "Your legacy and influence lives on in the mission. Your name is mentioned often."

They wrapped up their stay on Oahu with another trip up to Laie to attend the temple and the Polynesian Cultural Center and spent a couple of days with the Morleys before going to the other islands.

Sheffield had called the charter service that he had used while he was the mission president to see if they had a plane that he could use for a week. They remembered him and yes they had a plane. After leaving the Morleys, Sheffield and Ramona drove to the Honolulu airport and checked in their rental car and and checked out a 1971 Piper Cherokee Arrow.

They loaded their luggage into the storage compartment, filed a flight plan for Kauai and and took off for the next part of their trip. As arranged, Frank and Olina Alapia met them at the airport in Lihue and took them home. Sheffield and Ramona spent two days on Kauai visiting places and people. Everywhere he went on Kauai, especially in Hanalei, Sheffield was still referred to as "Oia Kauoha ke Moana", which means, "He who commands the sea."

From Kauai, they flew to Maui and spent a couple of days then onto Hilo on the Big Island where they stayed with Max and Aloha Mahaulu and then over to Kona where they stayed a couple of days with Dick and Connie Kaaloo. At each place they visited places and people as they had on the other islands. While in Kona, one afternoon Dick took them out deep sea fishing in one of his charter fishing boats.

Then it was time to go home. Early on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, they flew from Kona back to Honolulu, returned the plane and boarded their flight home. As nice as their trip was, it was good to be going home, but on the flight home, they were already making plans to return again in five years. Late that night, Craig met them at the airport in Roanoke and took them home. After having the kids home for Thanksgiving and spending three weeks in Hawaii, Christmas and New Years were pretty low key and 1972 began as had the year that had

just slipped away.

Sheffield continued giving blessings on a regular basis. In February, Ramona was released from her primary class and was called to serve as the gospel doctrine teacher in Sunday School. The round up took place on the third Saturday in March as spring was coming on. During April, Sheffield followed the Apollo 16 moon landing. Then school let out for the summer and Craig went to get Gean and brought her home in time for Memorial Day.

Sheffield decided that it was time to trade in his 1966 Buick. When he began looking around, there was only one thing he would consider and that was another Buick. He never went for new cars, preferring one that had been broken in. He ended up buying a white 1971 Buick



LeSabre with only eleven thousand miles on it. Naturally, it was a four door sedan and looked quite similar to the one he traded in, only this one was green with a dark green roof.

Ramona on the other hand always liked buying new cars quite frequently, but of all the cars she ever owned, she loved her red 1967 Ford Mustang and didn't want to trade it in for a newer model. She said that it made her feel young. She always got a kick out of the look on the faces of young men when they pulled up alongside a hot car only to find the hot chick behind the wheel to be an old lady.

Ramona celebrated her sixty eighth birthday and the following Thursday they flew to Chicago for the Reprisal reunion on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. They had missed the previous one while they were in Hawaii, so it had been ten years since they had attended. The ship was still in commission after thirty years. During that time, tens of thousands of men had served aboard her. Most of those who were in attendance had been aboard since Sheffield had. But still, many of the old timers that he knew were there. The next one would be in New York City in five years.

Having been a seafaring man for all of those years, Sheffield understood the awesome power unleashed by storms, as he had been through many, many of them during his naval career. He took serious the forecast of approaching storm systems, especially tropical storms and hurricanes. Roanoke was far enough inland that they didn't take a direct hit from such storms, but as with Camille three years earlier, they did feel the far reaching affects.

So, when it was reported that Hurricane Agnes was approaching the Florida panhandle, he took note. Now that the Weather Service had eyes in the sky with orbiting satellites tracking the storms, they were able to project their movement and give advance warning.

As predicted, Agnes, a Category 1 hurricane, made landfall near Panama City, Florida on Monday June 19<sup>th</sup>. By late afternoon the leading edge of the storm front brought light rain to the Roanoke Valley and continued into the evening. Rather than walking the short distance up the road to Craig's house to celebrate Geoff's seventeenth birthday, they drove.

During the night and the next day, the storm intensified bringing heavier rainfall, even though Agnes weakened as it moved across Georgia and into South Carolina. By Wednesday morning, Agnes regained strength over Eastern North Carolina.

By daybreak on the 21<sup>st</sup> the Roanoke River was at flood stage. A flash flood watch was issued at five thirty, which was ungraded to a warning forty five minutes later. It was received with apathy by some people who did not believe the water could rise high enough to bother them. Others, however, took action to reduce property damage.

With the river rising a foot an hour, Sheffield was one of the latter group. Despite the pouring rain, he donned his raincoat and rubber boots and ventured out to do what he could. Rather than confine the livestock to the coral and barn, he left them in the pasture which was higher.

He started up his tractor and hitched up the scraper blade and went to work building a berm between the swollen river and the house using the gravel in the driveway. At times it was slippery and the tractor spun its wheels as they grabbed for traction. Fortunately the gravel afforded the traction that he needed.

By the time he was done, the driveway was pretty much unusable. Just in case they needed to evacuate, he parked his car out near the road. Satisfied that he had done all he could, he went back in the house to watch and wait. By that time, the water had reached the barn and flooded half of the coral.

As the rain continued, the river rose further. By mid afternoon, water was lapping at the base of the berm. Late in the afternoon, the rain let up, but just in case they had to leave, they began gathering some things to take with them. As the sun began to set, water was at the top of the berm, with a little coming over the top. Just after the sun had gone down, there was a noticeable drop in the water level.

"Maybe its crested." Sheffield suggested.

Rather than leaving, he kept an eye on the water level during the night. Each time he checked on it, the water level was going down. By about two o'clock in the morning it had receded enough that he felt the danger was past and went to bed.

The next morning, the rain had stopped and Sheffield went out to take look. The river was still over its banks and running swift, but the bridge was still intact. As he looked around, there was standing water in

puddles everywhere, including in the barn. The bottom layers of the haystack was soaked and most likely ruined. But over all, the ranch had been spared. So had Craig's house, which sat on higher ground.

He went back into the house to listen to news on the radio and have breakfast. It was reported that the river had crested at nine point six feet above flood stage at around nine o'clock the night before. Agnes had moved out to sea and had regained hurricane strength as it moved on up the eastern seaboard. In its wake was a lot of flood damage along not only the Roanoke River, but everywhere in the path of the storm. Agnes did not pack with it the high winds accompanied by storms of its type, but it was real rainmaker.

As it dried out over the next couple of days Sheffield tore down the berm and smoothed out the driveway so that it was usable once again. Agnes had dissipated after making landfall again in New York and moved through New England and out into the North Atlantic.

Now that Geoff had turned seventeen and would be a senior in the fall, he began to think hard about what he would do after high school. What he wanted to do was go to Ricks College and then serve a mission. He hadn't quite figured out what he wanted to do after that.

But the reality was that so many young men were being drafted for the war in Vietnam. It was inevitable that he would get a draft notice, so he considered an alternative to what he really wanted. During the summer he talked to a Navy recruiter and had pretty much decided to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and enlist in Navy and put his own plans on hold until he had fulfilled his military obligation.

To help him sort things out, Geoff meet with Bishop Moncur and got a recommend to receive his patriarchal blessing, and then made an appointment with his grandfather. At the appointed time, he put on his suit and brought his family with him to receive his blessing. After his sister Gean, Sheffield had given scores of blessings, Geoff's would be number 287. Once Kathryn had typed it up and he had reviewed it, Sheffield personally gave it to him.

In July, President Joseph Fielding Smith passed away and Harold B. Lee became the President of the Church. Sheffield and Ramona first became acquainted with him several years ago when they gave him a ride from Richmond to Roanoke. Then again in New York City when they traveled there to meet with President Brown to received their call to Hawaii. Then lastly, his abbreviated mission tour that was cut short by the death of his daughter. Not only were they personally acquainted with him, but also both of the counselors in the First Presidency as President N. Eldon Tanner and President Marion G. Romney had also toured the mission.

In August, Sheffield and Ramona took a trip out west to see the girls. First, they spent ten days with Janet's family in Clarkston. While they were there, Janet had a visit from Takara and Teanucm and their

children. They had come to the mainland because Teancum had a job interview in Salt Lake for a position with the Church Finance Department. He had gone about as far as he could as the business manager at the Polynesian Cultural Center. When he saw an opening in Salt Lake, he thought that it would be a good career move and applied. He felt good about his prospects. While they were that close, Takara had to come and see Janet.

After their time with Janet, Sheffield and Ramona spent another ten days with Norma's family in Rexburg. Wade picked them up at the airport and brought them home. As they pulled into the driveways, Norma and the kids came out to meet them.

"Wow, Norma!" Ramona said as she got out of the car. "What have you done? You look great."

Norma held out her hands and slowly turned around for her parents to see her new body. "I've lost thirty seven pounds." she said proudly. "Another thirteen pounds and I'll be at my goal."

"You mentioned that you were on a diet, but you never said how you were doing."

"I wanted to surprise you."

"Well you sure did. I'm impressed." Ramona said. "How did you do it?"

"Well, there is this lady here in town by the name of Sybil Ferguson who came up with a diet plan that really works. I've known others who lost a lot of weight on her program so I decided to give it a try. It's a strict diet but I meet with Sybil once a week for counseling and to weigh in."

"She's franchised her program." Wade said, "A lot of people around here are getting on board and buying franchises. We've talked to her about buying the rights to the Western Virginia Region and open some centers."

"Who would run them for you?"

"Oh we would hire people to do that and bring them out here for training. By having some centers back home, we can write off our travel expenses as business deductions."

"What's this outfit called?" Sheffield asked skeptically.

"Diet Center."

"Well," Sheffield concluded, "I'd think long and hard about it before you put up any money."

"If you ask me," Ramona said getting the last word, "If their program works that well for others, I don't see how you could loose."

Wade helped Sheffield bring in their luggage and took it to their room. The first order of business was to give all their attention the the grandchildren.

Teresa was also going to be a senior in high school in the fall and wanted her patriarchal blessing. In anticipation of her grandfather coming for a visit, she met with her bishop and had a recommend to receive her blessing. Although Sheffield was called as the Patriarch of the Roanoke Stake, he was authorized to

give blessings to his direct descendants, regardless of where they lived, providing that they met the qualifications and had a recommend from their bishop or branch president.

While they were there, Craig and his family flew out in his Bonanza to bring Gean back to school. Before returning home, they all got together at Granite Creek, including Janet's family, for their annual family reunion and spent three days together. After getting Gean settled for her second year at Ricks, Craig and Edith flew back to Virginia on their own as they did the year before, leaving the kids to come back with Sheffield and Ramona a few days later.

A few weeks later, Norma left Wade and the kids home and flew to Roanoke with a woman who she had hired to run her Diet Center. She was one of several applicants that had applied to an ad that Norma had placed in the Roanoke Times. After narrowing down the selection, she invited her to come to Rexburg to be trained by Sybil to be a diet counselor and to run the center. Norma stayed for a week while she found an office to work out of and got it set up. She placed an ad in the paper featuring her own success story of how she had lost fifty pounds on the program. Before she left, she already had several women signed up on the program.

Teancum did get the job for the Church and had moved his family to Salt Lake and settled in Bountiful, which put Takara less than ninety miles away from Janet. After having lived in Laie, the Salt Lake Valley was a bit of cultural shock.

1972 was another presidential election year and the campaign moved into high gear after the Republican and Democratic conventions. President Nixon was being challenged in his re-election bid by Senator George McGovern of South Dakota. This was one of those rare occasions when Ramona actually agreed with Sheffield when it came to voting. She didn't care much for McGovern and joined Sheffield and more than sixty percent of the voters who voted for Nixon.

Sheffield and Ramona joined Craig and Edith's family for Thanksgiving with Stirling and Mary Ann. The next day, they went up to the cabin for an overnighter and to get their Christmas trees. They decorated for the holidays with the anticipation of Norma and Janet and their families coming home for Christmas.

Sheffield celebrated his seventy fourth birthday on Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup>. He spent the morning and when he could over the next twelve days following the final moon landing flight of Apollo 17. During that same time, Sheffield and Ramona went to an open house of the new Lewis Gale Hospital located on the land across the river that had once been part of the Two Star Ranch. The new hospital opened on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

The anticipation of Christmas and the kids coming home built up, and then on the evening of Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, they arrived. Both Norma and Janet and their families arrived on the same flight. Gean came with them and brought someone home with her to meet the family.

It didn't take long to get to know him. His name was Nathan Betts from Burley, Idaho and was a member of her student ward at Ricks College and had served a mission in Mexico. Wade, who was his bishop, was able to put in a good word for him. His family owned and operated a large farm south of Burley. His plan was to go to the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho and get a bachelors degree in agribusiness.

Nathan didn't waste any time in finding time to talk to Craig to ask for Gean's hand in marriage. Craig could tell that he was a fine young man and gave his consent. When the family got together on Christmas Eve, Gean and Nathan announced their engagement. All of a sudden, planning a wedding was included in the holiday celebrations.

Nathan got to know Gean's family and they got to know him. He seemed to be a good fit. The only downside was that she too would be living out west. At least her Aunt Norma and Aunt Janet would be reasonably nearby. Gean had got to know his family, as she had gone home with him on occasion and had spent Thanksgiving with them. Their initial plans were to get married the same weekend that they both graduated from Ricks. They would have a reception in Idaho the next evening and one in Virginia later in the month around Memorial Day.

While Edith and Gean were engrossed in wedding planning, Sheffield and Ramona got to spend time with Norman and Janet, their good husbands, and the grandchildren. Of course, Norma and Wade had to spend time with his family as well, and Norma looked in on her business, that was doing quite well already, much to Sheffield's chagrin.

After welcoming in 1973 on New Years Eve, they all had to fly home on New Years Day because the kids had to be back to school on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Another year had slipped away, and yet as always another one took its place. Three weeks later, Sheffield and Ramona celebrated their twenty ninth anniversary on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January

Then all of a sudden, Geoff's plans changed and he was able to resort to his original plans. The reason for this reversal was because on January 27, 1973, all of the warring parties in the Vietnam War signed a ceasefire agreement which ended hostilities. Sheffield commented that it was much like the end of the Korean War, without a clear victory. With the end of the war came an end of the draft. With the end of the draft, came and end to missionary quotas. With the war over, the troops began coming home and by the middle of February, the prisoners of war who had been held captive in North Vietnam began coming home as well.

Geoff now set his sights on attending Ricks College in the fall and serve a mission when he turned nineteen. He didn't really know what he wanted do beyond that. In the meantime, he had to finish his senior year and graduate. Even before that, he wanted to have a good finish to the wrestling season and hopefully get a scholarship to Ricks. He worked hard to be competitive and each year he had improved as both his

father and grandfather coached him, and it paid off. He won the district tournament in his weight class which granted him a berth in the state championship in Richmond. With his family cheering him on, he finished second at state, which was enough to secure the scholarship that he wanted.

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Larry Majors, the Hawaiian mission president, and his wife Rebecka are fictional characters. The agenda for the 1971 Pearl Harbor Survivors Reunion is from a brochure in my Dad's stuff.

The information on Hurricane Agnes is from the Final Report of the Disaster Survey Team on the Events of Agnes found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CZIC-qc877-n3-no-73-1/html/CZIC-qc877-n3-no-73-1.htm>