

CHRISTMAS ON FIFTH AVENUE, SALT LAKE CITY,

Home of JAMES WRIGHT AND

JAMES WRIGHT SAVILLE AND

ELIZABETH NESLEN SAVILLE

by

their granddaughter, Grace Saville Bryson

Mar. 1, 1956

Christmas is coming! Christmas is coming! Christmas is here! I am speaking of a Christmas that lives only in the fond memories of those who were there, the celebrations that time cannot replace.

I, Grace Saville Bryson, am the first grandchild of James Wright Saville and Elizabeth Neslen Saville. I can just remember Grandmother as she used to stand by the big cookstove with one leg resting on a straight chair while she watched the cooking of the huge meals she prepared for her large family. Childlike, I wanted to know why she stood on one leg. She would laugh and tell me that a stork stands on one leg to rest the other. The truth was that she suffered tortures with her vericose veins. Then she would start singing Tara Rara Boom Di-Aye which always tickled the children and everyone would laugh.

She had raised her family in a small house on the north side of Fifth Avenue, between B and C Streets, Salt Lake City, Utah. When the older ones had left home to make homes of their own Grandmother and Grandfather started to build a beautiful two story house at 265 - Fifth Avenue, which was next door and on the same lot. It was completed in April, 1903 but Grandmother never lived to spend Christmas there where everything was so lovely, convenient and handy as she died of pneumonia, December 24, 1903. She had overworked but made the trip up to our home at #340 C Street daily to bathe and take care of my new sister Mary Elizabeth, and my dear mother, Amelia Anhder Saville.

Their children were James Maurice Saville, my father; Mabel S. Wright, Winifred Irene Cannon, Sidney George, Clarice S. Kingdon, Ethel Dean Young, Melvin Stevens, Leslie Howard, Edith, who died when a baby, and Vernon.

Grandfather was a wonderful man, so kind, thoughtful and considerate and loved by all who knew him. He loved his church, children, music, flowers and his home and family were his all. He had that understanding of children that delighted everyone. He had a magic touch with flowers that just seemed to compel them to respond to his gentle touch. His garden, trees and plants around the house were a tribute to him. The trained lacey runners of dainty smilax made a beautiful and unique frame around the large picture window in the dining room.

This two-story home on Fifth Avenue was full of rare articles from all over the world. A handsome tapestry, a scene of the crowd gathered at the Market Place in one of the European cities, graced one whole wall in the dining room. Upon examining it closely one could detect the varied expressions upon the faces thereon. Exquisite glassware, rare china, silver, beautiful rugs, pictures, draperies and choice pieces of furniture, all in their proper place and each with its own story to tell. The valuable mirror above the mantel piece reflected the joy, happiness and holiness of those within. Grandfather was manager of the silver, china, glassware and crockery department of Z.C.M.I. for many years. He went east on buying trips many times and he would buy choice pieces for his lovely home while there and those he did business with knew of his love for the finer things, and would present him with fine gifts, too. Then too, many coming back from missions would remember Grandfather and also add to his splendid collection.

When the youngest daughter, Aunt Clarice, married Joseph Kingdon and left home to make her own home, Grandfather was very much alone. He had met a school teacher by the name of Phoebe Scoles in whom he was very interested. They were married June 4, 1907. We all called her Aunt Phoebe because she was not really our grandmother. From the time she came into the family we were always known as the "Savilles" (with the accent on the last syllable. That was the way our name should be pronounced, the same as Seville, Spain. She made a lovely home for Grandfather and a fine wife and was very capable and versatile too. It is these Christmas's that I am about to report in detail that are so memorable in my past.

Christmas was indeed a co-operative venture. Everyone helped with not only the cooking of pies, cakes, breads, salads etc., but helped with the expense of such festivity. It was an all day affair with the children eating in the spacious kitchen around the old oak dining room table. The large dining room was filled with the adults and the adjoining pantry together with the other side of the large kitchen were

the busiest places of all. Everyone helped until the last dish was picked up and everything put away and what a meal! One would sure think the army had moved in to see the food that was brought in, prepared and tucked away.

A large shapely tree was gay in holiday splendor in the reception hall and underneath it Santa had emptied his sack for sure as the gifts there for the adults looked more like a gift shop. The tree was decorated with popcorn, gay colored paper ornaments, bright colored ribbons and bits of lace, cards and candles in small holders.

It wasn't long after dinner when sounds were heard on the front stairway. Someone shouted that Santa was here and everyone rushed into the living room and reception hall. Sure enough, there was Santa coming down the beautiful winding stairs in his best Yuletide regalia and with a full sack. Children scampered from everywhere to get a front seat and amid top shouting, exclamations and glee Santa received a royal welcome. Such gifts, something for everyone, and strange to say, it was something that individual wanted too. When Santa had distributed his last gift in the bag he turned to the tree and proceeded to remember the adults.

What a bazaar that would have made with fancy dresser scarfs, embroidered pillow slips, crocheted edged towels, glamorous boudoir caps and dressing sacks to match in the exotic pastel shades; revealing camisoles; handmade bedroom slippers with hard soles; doilies, aprons galore, combing jackets - all of these for the daughters and daughters-in-law. For the men; tools, ties, hankies, socks, arm bands, cravats, garters, suspenders, shirts, gadgets, books, and the like. Last but not least was a special gift for Santa, a bag of peppermints. That really proved that Uncle Tyler Young was Santa, if there was any doubt, as he was jolly, stout, filled the suit to the nth degree and always had peppermints in his pocket whenever you met him anywhere.

After that session was over we heard shouts from the dining room. The fishing season was open and everyone had to try their luck. A corner of the dining room was curtained off and one by one we would go up to that curtained wall, pick up the fish pole, throw it over the top and lo! What

a prize we would get. This was primarily for the children but the grown ups had to show their skill in the art, too. Aunt Clarice was back of the curtain and would know who was trying to fish and she would choose the appropriate gift for the fisherman. The children would get some small toys that had been brought in by their parents but the adults would get some funny gift. I remember Aunt Hattie Whitney Saville got a tiny jar, resembling a tiny crock, of mince meat. Others got a small tool, a note book, a miniature garden gadget, an old shoe a tiny pot with a flower planted inside, a bar of soap, small bottle of spring tonic, box of long hairpins, some smelling salts or the like.

Then came the community singing of all the old songs, Christmas carols and the singing of Grandfather's favorite songs which included Silver Threads Among the Gold; Oh, My Father, and Rock of Ages.

These songs put us in tune for the elaborate program of the day in which everyone large or small, old and young, had to take part; either tell a funny story, sing, dance or speak a piece, a recitation we used to call them. What a variety show! What talent! What fun! Uncle Mel was MC and he would call on each and everyone in turn and no one knew when his turn was. When he reached a certain point in the entertainment he arose, bowed and announced that we were indeed favored to have the Black Pants Hansons with us tonight, Grace, Geneve and Mary. How revolting! Our faces lit up with varying degrees of embarrassing red. How did he really know that we DID wear black sateen bloomers all of the time. We managed to regain our composure and got through our dancing and singing number very well and then each did some number by ourselves.

Uncle Tye Young played the fiddle to the accompaniment of the singing by Uncles Mel, Sid and Les. My father, James Maurice, told of several funny incidents that happened in the store. He started as cash boy in Z.C.M.I. and later became manager of the department. Others told jokes or read a poem or a jingle and mothers told of the funny sayings of their children or something that happened in their neighborhood that was of interest.

Some one said they were hungry. What again? So we partook of the leftovers or just fruit, candy, nuts, popcorn and the like. Everyone would rather take home the empty dish or utensil than to try and balance a bit of salad, piece of pie or cake and we sure did justice to all.

When everyone had gathered up their little broods, pots, pans, dishes, gifts, etc. we gathered in a group and sang Auld Lang Syne before leaving with light hearts, filled stomachs and arms filled with belonging incident to the sumptuous repast of the day.

These were the days of the middie blouse, blue serge pleated skirts, white pinafore aprons to keep our clothes clean, long black bicycle hose, button shoes, hat pins, muffs, collarettes of fur, mittens and button hooks.

What a page in history! And to think of reviewing such a Christmas years hence, many many miles away and at a Daughter of Utah Pioneer Christmas Party by a granddaughter, who was there.

Grace Saville Bryson

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE LIFE OF JAMES WRIGHT SAVILLE.

From "One hundred Years in the Heart of Zion" by Ruby K. Smith:

"The Sunday School was also in good hands, with James W. Saville as superintendant, ---"

"The other organizations of the ward had also been making history. In looking back over the record of the Sunday School, it was interesting to remember that James W. Saville had served as Sunday School Superintendant for twenty-seven years, before he was released in 1907."

From the personal history of Ethel Dean Saville Young:

"My father was James Saville, born May 17th, 1850 in England."

"My father was Sunday School superintendent for many years, and was beloved by children as well as adults."

Our Christmases were wonderful too, when Aunts, Uncles, and cousins would get together for a celebration. Father was clever at impromptu entertaining, and as there were no movies or television at that time, he made silhouettes of little people and animals cut from cardboard. He would string them together, and parade them across a darkened doorway, with a light behind, and make them move sort of like puppets, to the delight of the children."