MEMORIES OF JOSEPHINE MAY LIVESEY

By Grandchildren Lois Blackley and Joanne Nunley

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Grandma Josephine May Livesey Kendrick had all the characteristics that all grandchildren love and cherish. We describe her as “an amazing woman and the best grandma ever”.

**Born**: Salt Lake City, May 6, 1875 Died: Salt Lake City, December 10, 1950

**Daughter** of Joseph Livesey and Jane Smith

**Sister** to Annie Viola Livesey Wooton Gallyer, Beatrice Clemens Delamater, and Georgie Irene Markham

Following are examples and stories about Josephine May written by us and our mother, Anne Gurney, which show the wonderful characteristics of our sweet loving Grandma:

AS A CHILD

When we understand the very disruptive early years of Josephine May’s life, it is absolutely amazing that she became the wonderful, dear person that she was. Those who knew her well called her May. We will too.

Tragic events began when her father, Joseph Livesey, died in a lightning accident before she was born. May’s mother, Jane Smith, was left alone with a 19-month old baby and pregnant with our Grandma. In the next 5 years her mother gave May’s older sister up for adoption, married two other men, and had 2 more children. At the age of 5 May’s mother left her with a Hudson Family and moved to San Francisco with her husband and the two youngest daughters. May never saw her mother again.

We believe she was with the Hudson Family for 4 years. They must have treated her kindly because she used the name “Hudson” as her maiden name for many years, including on our Mother’s (Martha Anne) Certificate of Blessing in 1914. We unfortunately don’t know anything about the Hudsons but would like to. We do know that they sent her to school, and probably taught her many life skills at an early age. . Her education was at the St. Mary’s Academy in Salt Lake City.

At the age of 9, May was taken into the home of Edward and Caroline Kendrick. They had homesteaded a farm in Granger on 3100 South and 2200 west. She was made to work hard on the farm. She was told by Caroline, “We did not get you to make a lady out of you, but to make you work.” She was not allowed to continue schooling. We’re not sure where or when the term came from, but Caroline was known as “The Witchy-poo”. The Kendricks had one child, Thomas, who was 17 years older than May and who she later married.

At 9 years old May milked and herded 30 head of cows twice a day, tended and herded sheep, churned butter, sewed, irrigated, gardened, washed (on a washboard), cooked, tended turkeys, chickens and ducks, bottle fed lambs and calves – no time for friends or things she wanted to do.

May had only three years of schooling but she taught herself to read, write, sew, make her own patterns and crochet

At 18 she fell in love with the hired hand and they were planning on eloping; but her stepmother found out and he was driven away at gun point never to return, which broke her heart.

About 3 years later Tom Kendrick proposed to May after a party as she sat on the wagon and Tom on the tongue riding along in the moonlight. They were married the next day which was 6 January 1896. The hardships did not cease because the newlyweds remained on the farm with her step parents, who were now her in-laws. She continued to do the same chores and answering to Witchy-poo’s every whim.

Although Caroline was strict, she had many qualities that May must have picked up from her. Caroline was the link in the Kendrick Family to the Church. She had been a member since 1851. She was known to have read her scriptures every day. Caroline lived a long life of 94 years. She and May coexisted for 44 years. Edward Kendrick was not a member of the Church. His baptism and other ordinances were performed 6 months after he died in 1903 because of Caroline. On September 2, 1903 Caroline received her own endowment and on the same day all the ordinances were performed for Edward including the Sealing of their marriage ordinance. May was not baptized and confirmed until 1904 at the age of 29 years.

Tom Kendrick was confirmed a member in 1877. He died in 1925 at the early age of 58, just 29 years after they married. He was known to have had a problem with alcohol. Temple work was performed for him after he died.

WORK, WORK AND SAVE WAS MAY’S MOTTO

Tom and May Kendrick became the parents of nine children. They were poor farmers and Grandma learned to make use of everything on their farm to make ends meet.

With the help of the children May would gather asparagus and black currants and with her butter and eggs they would sell them to her customers. May made beautiful round pounds of butter with a decorative rose press on top. If she had anything that her regular customers didn’t want, she would take it to the Henry Notts Grocery and trade it for groceries or to William Wood and trade for meat.

They raised a lot of white ducks on the family farm. In the fall they would gather them up and bring them in the barnyard and feed them grain to fatten them up. Our Uncle Frank said “You should have seen my mother handle the boat. Dad was in one boat and mother in another. This was quite a sight to see about 150 ducks being herded on the lake.”

In the winter May hauled huge barrels of water in the wagon to the dry farm where the sheep were.

She always had a vegetable and flower garden. We all learned to weed between the carrots, radishes, lettuce, parsnips, cabbage, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, onions, peas, and rhubarb.

She never wasted any food and prepared leftovers very tastefully. Whenever anyone came to visit there was always plenty of food for all and company was always invited to stay and eat. On holidays we had fried chicken, new potatoes and peas. May always provided homemade bread and homemade ice-cream.

The pigs were slaughtered and cut up at home. She made head cheese, which is rendered lard from fat which left chunks which were called crackling. These were used for making cakes.

Fruit cake – Grandma only observed once how to make it and with her good memory and skills she created a delicious fruit cake that she always gave away and served at Christmas time.

Grandma made all of her children’s clothes. Nothing was wasted. Pants, shirts and other things were patched and mended until sometimes all that was left was the patch. Good pants were used for carpet rags. Old coats and pants were used for quilt blocks. Sewing was done after chores, mostly at night by coal oil light until the wee hours of the morning. The cutest Easter outfits ever made were for Lois and Joanne Gurney. They were gold colored wool suits with pleated skirts and green top coats.

Grandma saved $500 to build a new house, but they built a big barn instead and she never did get her new home. She lived in the old house with coal oil light until 1925.

WOMAN OF FAITH AND COURAGE

Grandma went through life-threatening experiences with quite a few of her children. She lived very close to the spirit and knew the power of prayers and priesthood administrations. When her son Frank was severely injured, gangrene set into his leg. The doctor said the gangrene would move up to his heart and there was nothing more he could do.. May quickly left for the temple and put his name on the prayer roll. As she left the temple a voice behind her said as she walked along the wall of Temple. “Everything will be alright.” She turned around and no one was there. Grandma said it was like angels singing to her. She hurried home and found Frank sitting up alert in bed eating soup. It was a miraculous answer to a prayer of a faithful mother.

She used mustard plaster; steam tents other home remedies. She loved helping others to heal and always wished she could have become a nurse. When we were younger I remember standing in our garage with tears running down our faces watching our dear, beloved cat with distemper, fighting for its life. Grandma had built a small fire with a wool blanket as the fuel which smoked but did not flame. The cat lay under a tent where grandma was using the smoke to clear his lungs and heal him. And yes, it worked. Grandma told us she had used this method frequently to heal sick horses.

When Bill was a little boy he fell and his chest was punctured by a picket fence. Soon after the accident he got pneumonia and was not expected to live. Through the faith and prayers of May and Priesthood blessings, his life was spared

Bessie’s life was saved by mother when she was not thinking of herself, but only to protect her daughter from a mean bull. As she went to save Bessie from the bull, the bull came at her and injured her with his horns. Mother was able to turn the ring in his nose which caused him to retreat long enough for mother to roll under the barbed wire fence.

All of May’s children were baptized members at a young age. Most of her hundreds of posterity are now active Church members.

May received her endowment when her son Frank went to the temple prior to his mission. She was a woman of great faith who loved the Lord and wanted always to serve Him by serving others.

WARM AND LOVING PERSONALITY

It was said of May that she was always forgiving and never held grudges.

Our Mother described Grandma as “loving, sweet, humble and was forever giving of herself. She was 5 feet tall and a little on the plump side. When she wore her green velvet dress and her little hat, she looked like a queen, which she was.”

Grandma loved her grandchildren. She was so excited when Rose, her first grandchild was born. She helped deliver her and all of Nettie’s children.

Clint would always say, “Feed me, Grandma”. She fed him until he was two – she thought that was the only way he would get enough to eat.

May’s memory was always very sharp. The family would come to her for information about things gone by like births, deaths, parties, etc.

Grandma had a special way with the baby animals that would not eat. She would coax them to do so by putting sugar on the end of her finger and then in the animals mouth, all the while lowering the animal’s head into the bucket of milk

Grandma raised a stallion from the time it was born. She fed him a bottle and then got him to drink out of a bucket. He was so obedient that she could do anything with him.

She didn’t like sweets and always wanted her cake without the overcoat (frosting). She was a very good cook and seldom used a recipe.

May made little pig cookies for Christmas to sell so she could buy presents. She would sit up all night and make these.

GRANDMA LIVING WITH US FOR A DECADE WAS A GREAT BLESSING

Grandma came to live with us in 1940. Our home had only 2 bedrooms and 1 bath. She slept with Lois and Joanne in a double bed until they were 12 and 15 years old.

In 1941 her daughter, Bessie, died giving birth to her 4th child. Grandma moved into their home to care for the children until Uncle Newell remarried. Then Grandma came back to live with us.

Lois, Clint and Joanne were the lucky ones. On many Saturdays Grandma would take Lois and Joanne on the bus to a movie downtown and afterwards she would take us to Kress’s for chocolate cake and ice cream. She taught us the way to eat this dessert. We mashed the cake and ice cream together before we ate it. It really tastes better that way. And we still eat it that way.

She tried to teach Lois and Joanne how to be a Lady. No whistling or loud laughing. She always reminded them by saying, “a whistling girl and a cackling hen are not fit for God nor man”.

Grandma loved to go to the temple. We watched her each week ironing her temple clothes and neatly putting them into her grey suit case and then seeing this beautiful little 5 ft. lady walking down the sidewalk to the bus stop.

Our blessed grandma, Josephine May Livsey, died December 10, 1950 in our home. She left a great legacy of forgiveness, love, charity, never giving up, faith and hope of Eternal Life.

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