

History of Polly Ann Ross King

by Florence King Riddle

Polly Ann Ross King was born on the 18th day of October, 1858 in Provo, Utah. She was the first polygamous child and at the time of birth her mother was living with the family of the first wife of grandfather Ross. This would be a hard life for any of us, but with the loving and kind ways of grandmother she lived this life well.

Mother grew up in Heber City and that is where she first attended school. Being the oldest, she assumed it her place to help with the younger children. She learned to knit when she was seven years old. She made her first pair of long stockings at this age. From that time on she knitted for herself and the rest of the family. She also helped with all of the housework and learned to spin yarn. She cut and made shirts for her younger brothers before her mother owned a sewing machine. Mother has told us many times of how Christmas was spent and the gifts that the children received. These gifts were home knit mittens, polished apples, donuts and popcorn balls. Mother helped her busy mother to prepare these things when she was only nine and ten years old.

One day mother was left to care for the younger children. When grandma came home she had two friends with her. Mother was anxious to hear what they would say as she had scrubbed the floor, cupboard and chairs and everything in the house. She had done all she could and had even churned the butter. As they walked in, one lady said, "Just look at this clean house, and she has even scrubbed the broom handle." Who could ask for more of a reward than Mother received from her mother. Love, gentle kindness, and a word of praise was this reward. Mother was always helpful and obedient, respectful and had a tender love for her mother in return.

Mother learned to make cheese and butter while very young. She wasn't more than twelve years old when her father moved her and a younger brother up on the mountain to milk cows and do all the work, which included making a small cheese every day. During the summer she churned and made enough butter to fill several large jars, which was used during the following winter.

Mother lived in a small log one-room house with a dirt roof and floor. The two children read to each other and after Mother finished her work she sewed quilt blocks and carpet rags. She never complained. Their father visited them occasionally and took the cheese home to be cured and cared for. When it came time to move back to town, their father came with a pack horse. All of their belongings were put on one horse while they rode on the other.

Mother made the best of these conditions and was obedient to her father. He was very strict and expected a great deal from his children. Their work always came first, yet like most parents he loved to see them have their pleasure.

Mother said she remembered when the peace treaty was signed with the Indians. Also she remembered many times when they were frightened by hostile Indians coming to the home demanding food.

Mother's parents moved to Kanosh, Utah while Mother was in her teens. It was here that she first met my father. They attended the same school and ward. Mother lived in Kanosh until her

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marriage and birth of her first child. Mother has told us about her courtship many times. They attended dances, candy pulls and house parties. When Father came to ask for Mother, she was washing dishes and bare foot. Being a little shy and knowing about why he had come, she slipped out into the bedroom and dressed her feet and cleaned up. She was sure the answer would be yes because her father had always had a great respect for my Father. One time when mother had been dating other boys, grandfather learned of it and made a special trip to grandmother's to see Mother. He said to Mother, "I learned you were out with so and so last night, 'now my little lady' don't let this happen again. You wouldn't give Culbert Levi up for that trash would you?"

Culbert Levi King, my father, was born the 11th of June, 1856 in Fillmore, Utah. They were married 31 July 1876 in the Endowment House. They moved to Coyote sometime in 1879; Eva, the first child, was born 14 August 1877 in Kanosh. The second child was born 28 November 1879 in Coyote, his name-Culbert Levi Jr.

Father built a two-room house down by the river with a fireplace in the end of one room. Their first furniture was a bed, table and chairs, a home-made cupboard with very few dishes and pots and pans, and an up and down churn. Mother made the little window curtains. Her quilts were pieced block tops with wool bats and outing flannel linings. They had a trunk for their clothes. Father had one horse, a saddle and bridle, and a cow. They homesteaded the 100 acres of land where they lived in this little home until after their third child, Margaret Ruby, was born 11 March 1882. Father had worked and saved, planted his land in hay, etc. and bought several head of cattle. This was his start of cattle raising and farming which he enjoyed doing all of his life.

There was no one living within a mile for several years. Mother busied herself in this humble little home, knitting and sewing for her family of three children and her husband. There was a lot of hard work but they enjoyed life. I often picture them kneeling in prayer, as they always did, around the table both night and morning giving thanks to their Father in Heaven for his protecting care.

Mother sang old time songs, LDS Hymns, etc. As far back as I can remember she taught the little children songs as she went about her housework. A song my Mother taught to me when I was very small was Three Little Forms:

Three little forms in the twilight gray
Scanning the shadows across the way.
Two pair of black eyes and one of blue,
Brimful of love and mischief too.
Watching for pa watching for pa
Sitting by the window watching for pa.

Nell with her placid and thoughtful brow
Brimful of kindness and love just now.
Willie the youngest robust and gay,

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Stealing sly kisses from sister May.
Watching for pa watching for pa
Sitting by the window watching for pa.

Now there's a rush from the window seat
Now there's a patter of children's feet.
Gaily they rushed through the lighted hall,
Coming at last was the joyful call.
Welcoming pa welcoming pa
Standing on the doorstep welcoming pa.

Mother's hands were never idle. When she sat down to nurse her babies, she would pick up her knitting.

Just before Ervin, their fourth child, was born, they build a large four-room house on the east side of their property. It was close to the river from which they carried the water for the house. I believe I would be safe in saying that all ten of the children were baptized there, and all by Father. The members of the ward were also baptized in the river. It was always a special occasion to have a baptism. I remember when I was young of having the privilege of kneeling down with the group of children to be baptized in Mother's home before going down to the river and watching this ordinance performed.

Monday the 14th day of February 1887, Father was set apart for his mission by Brother Lorenzo Snow in Salt Lake City. In Father's words: "We had some good instructions given us, which I hope I can carry out through my mission. Tuesday, February 15 we left Salt Lake City and went to Ogden. We changed cars there and took the Union Pacific Railroad for the East. Our first night we slept in the cars. It was quite a sight to see the men curled up trying to sleep. We passed a monument of the first RR builders one hundred and sixteen miles from Ogden. We passed some beautiful farms on the Platt. Arrived at Denver and went to a magic lantern show, "Battle of Gettysburg." It was nice. We waited around for two hours then left for Kansas City. February 17th- a beautiful morning. Passed fields of dry shocks of corn, cribs full, and all over the ground. Met other boys and started for Memphis. On February 18th we traveled through forests and lakes of water, crossed bridges from two to four miles. The Mississippi river was a great sight. We crossed it on a steamer."

Father contracted malaria fever before he was away a year and had to come home. He had good care and was soon ready to get back to work. There was a great many things to do. Father's brother Volney had taken over the work on the farm in his absence. Mother's sister Marie lived with her most of the time. Marie and Volney were married in a double wedding with Daniel Ross, mother's brother and Elizabeth Ann King, father's half sister.

Ervin was born 31 March 1884. Lewis born 5 February 1886. Both were baptized 31 March two years apart. These two brothers were close to each other in their play and work and interested in all the things they did together. They slept together and always ate side by side at the table.

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Mother spoke of them as the "two little boys."

The first real sorrow mother and father experienced was in the month of January 9, 1901.

Lewis was accidentally shot in the back with a 22. He and a classmate and neighbor were hunting ducks up the river. The bullet went through the spinal cord and lodged, cutting this cord so badly that nothing the Doctor could do would relieve him. It was thirteen months before he passed away. All of the time he was paralyzed from his waist down. He was taken to Salt Lake City to the St. Mark's Hospital but returned in six days. Mother cared for him, lifting him from bed to chair and turning him in his bed. He was well cared for and we had hopes that he would recover. He was administered to by the Elders. Father administered to him many times. Our family prayers were said and we never forgot him. It was our wish that our Father in Heaven would spare him. He himself kept up his hopes and was cheerful and so patient most of the time.

Mother enjoyed caring for him and cooking special dishes. She read to him and did all she could to make him happy and comfortable. After he died Mother said she could have given him this same care for the rest of her life, if he had lived, and she would not have complained. He himself said in his passing, "I am going to die, but I'm going to live." He died 9 February 1902. His work was done in the Manti Temple by John E. Riddle, Ruby's husband, 26 November 1902.

Elbert Ross was born 9 April 1888, died 1 May 1888. Florence, 18 July 1889. Lyman, 27 April 1892. Maud, 13 January 1895.

Levi filled a one and one half year mission in California and Ruby, a year and one half in Denver Colorado. During this time Ervin was in Provo attending BYU. Mother was so brave and humble. She kept her troubles to herself and trusted in God in all things. She made sacrifices while the children were away to school, but never did she neglect her happy home.

While the older children were in school she still had small children around her, but she worked as first counselor in the Primary with Aunt Clarinda Black, Father's sister. One Christmas during this time, the Primary officers took over the responsibility of a Christmas program, tree and treats for all the children. They called it a homemade tree. Everything that was placed on it had to be homemade. Mother made knit mittens, little dresses, scarfs, dolls, and helped with sacks of candy and cookies for all the children in the ward.

During this year, Mother gave birth to a stillborn baby, christened Myrtle, May 1898.

Mother's health was poor. She was prayed for and was healed. She remembered the blessing given her in 1894 by Brother Blackburn. Loa, Wayne Co., March 29, 1894- A Patriarchal blessing given by E.W. Blackburn upon the head of Polly Ann King born October 18, 1858 Provo, Utah. It is as follows: Sister Polly Ann; in authority of the priesthood I lay my hands upon you and seal upon you this patriarchal blessing which through your faith and obedience it may prove a blessing to you. Your lineage is of the house of Joseph and descendant of Ephriam. You are greatly blessed of the Lord. Thou hast been born under the new and everlasting covenant; therefore, through thy faith and obedience thou shalt be blessed of the Lord. And he will have mercy on thee, and heal thy body, if thou will have faith thou mayest be healed in thy body.

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Satan desires to destroy thy body but if thou will put thy trust in the Lord thou will overcome his powers that thou may become strong and healthy for remember that there is nothing impossible with God. Remember that the Lord is merciful. Thou shalt be blessed in they body and spirit; only trust in God. Let thy heart be comforted for all thou art called to pass through will be for thy honor and glory in the Celestial world. Therefore fear not and cast thy doubts far from thee. Thou art laying the foundation of a great work.

Thou shalt be blessed in thy family, and thousands will call thee blessed. Be humble and faithful, the angels are watching over thee, and will surely aid thee. Thou will be blessed in thy household. Blessed to be a Savior upon Mt. Zion. Blessed to do your work in the house of the Lord. Thou may commune with the departed spirits. Thou wilt become a preacher of righteousness blessed with good things of the earth, until thy soul is satisfied. Blessed to overcome all earthly summons. Blessed to come forth in a glorious resurrection, to inherit a crown of eternal life.

I seal upon you these blessings through thy faithfulness. In the name of thy Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

I have heard Mother say it pays to count your blessings often and never forget your prayers. Mother was quiet and held things like this very sacred but throughout her life she had to depend on guidance from Heavenly Father many times.

In the year of 1890 mother moved up on the mountain east of Coyote with her family of six children, a hired girl and other help. Father had previously built and fenced a cattle ranch here. They made cheese and butter during their stay of two months. Mother did this every summer for twenty years. Many happy years were spent here as the children grew up, all learning to milk cows and make cheese. Riding horses and many other things were enjoyed. Other homes were built to accommodate different members of the family. Father and mother and some of his sisters and families shared the house and milked cows in the same corral. As for close neighbors there were none.

Father and the men folk gathered the cows off the range, gentled them so the womenfolk could milk them. One summer when Wells was a baby of 7 months, (He was born 5 February 1900) he had cholera fever and mother had to go home with him. She was his nurse and doctor too. The neighbors offered their help and everything was done for him that could be done. Many a prayer was offered and the Elders blessed him. Early one morning he came so close to passing away Mother removed the poultices and thought he was gone. Father had stood still with head bowed over the baby and soon Wells cried out. This was the first cry for several days. He reached up for mother and from then on he improved and was considered healed. He was left with crossed eyes. Grandfather King gave him a blessing and in two or three months he was completely well. Grandpa always said he had been spared for a great purpose.

Many other accidents and illnesses happened where we lived on the Mountain and Mother was the only one to nurse and care for the family and see them restored to health. The pleasures and blessings we witnessed more than balanced all the trials.

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Mother taught all of the children to sew, even the boys. They would sew in the afternoon when they had finished their outside work. The girls pieces quilt blocks and braided rugs. They crocheted lace to finish edges of underwear, pillow slips and nightgowns. When Sunday came we rested, read stories, and sang songs. Sometimes we would listen to Mother sing old love songs such as, "After the Ball," "Pretty Little Girl in Blue," "Maggie May," "Juanita," etc.

In later years there were other ranches built south of us. The children came down and Mother held Primary. She kept the minutes and they were given to the President of the Primary to be recorded.

Mother sewed for the family. She made all of the girls dresses and some of their coats up to the time when the older ones went to Provo to school. She never had a purchased pattern. She just cut a plain pattern to fit the neck and armholes, waist and bust. She then designed collars and other ways to adorn them. Often times her friends made the remark that she should have been a designer. I have heard Ruby say that her school friends at BYU asked where she brought her pretty clothes. Mother made some of Ruby's clothes without having her there to fit them.

School days were happy ones. I remember while walking that long old road home how I would wonder what good things would be in the cupboard to piece on as soon as we would get home and hang up our wraps. Oh, how we were received with welcome and kind words by our parents. The one day we didn't enjoy was wash day. We were glad if the boiler was off the stove and out of sight. We knew then it was time to hang the last batch of clothes, which we didn't mind. Dear mother washed on the board until after her last baby was born. When she did get a washer it was one that had to be turned by hand.

Our parents provided good books. Many of them were given for Christmas presents or birthdays. There was an old gentleman by the name of Farmer, who sold church books. Mother always bought one or two each time he came. The Juvenile Instructors were kept and bound. Also, we had the Era and many other magazines. One large book that was always in our bookcase was

"Golden Gems of Life". Mother give it to Ervin and he was to pass it around to others in the family, giving it very careful care. The family Bible was given to Levi. It was destroyed in a flood years ago before his family were grown. Many other books and pictures were destroyed at the same time.

Lyman and I always called ourselves the culls. We were in the middle of the family and no one had time to spoil us. We have always loved one another. When small, we played dolls one day, and rode stick horses the next. We learned to ride horse back on the same old horse (Old Weasle) that all of the older children learned on. We rode horses together when we had to herd the cows. Herding cows was easy. We watched that the cows didn't cross the river into the meadow and when they came home at night they came straight up the lane and went into the corral where they were milked.

Mother had a great many different experiences with the sick and was called out to aid others which she did gladly. While the family was on the mountain she nursed some of the family to

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health many times. One day soon after we had moved to the ranch, the boys were gathering cows off the range. It was a pleasant sight to see the cows and their young calves. Levi was coming down a little hill that led to the corral above the house, with a cow and calf. He was leading his horse and Wells went up to help, so he thought. Wells was about four years old. Levi put him up on the house to ride a short way. The horse got frightened and Wells fell off. His foot caught in the stirrup some way and he was dragged down the rough hill over rough rocks before Levi could rescue him. Wells was hurt badly and was unconscious for over twenty four hours. While Mother worked faithfully to revive him again she exercised her faith and prayer for him. I remember seeing her go down the hill back of the house and under a big pine tree she knelt down to pray. When she came in she immediately put cold packs on Wells' head and said quietly I wasn't sure which to put on until I prayed. The only way he could have been taken to town was on horse back. Father's foot was caught in the grain binder one summer and was badly bruised and swollen. He came to the ranch for Mother to care for him and after several days was able to go on crutches. No bad effect followed. Another time Father was kicked by a horse and it cut one ear almost off. Mother bandaged it up after putting it to place and dressed it with a salve she always kept in the house. It healed perfectly.

Ervin was thrown from a horse when it stumbled and fell. It injured his stomach. We had been in town for the Fourth of July celebration and was on our way back to the ranch and had stopped to see Eva when this happened. Ervin had to stay there for a few days. When we reached the ranch, Mother came out and said, "Ervin was hurt this afternoon wasn't he?" She said this before we could tell Mother about the accident. He was brought up to Mother and again as with the others through her good care and prayers, he recovered.

Ruby had an appendicitis attack. The old doctor they had gave medicine for inflammation. Mother did other things that helped her better than his remedy. Through faith and prayers of the family, Ruby went through extreme suffering and lived.

Maud and Wells were small children when they were in an accident. A large team of horses ran away with the running gears of the wagon. It was turned over as it turned the corner of the road that led down the lane to our home. They were seriously hurt. Wells had a large cut. Maud was bruised all over. Her arm was broken and one hip was badly bruised. Mother had just got up and around after having milk leg following the birth of her last baby Mazle Q. who was born the first of August 1902.

Mother never had the care of a Doctor with her twelve children. She just had midwives and neighbors. With the faith and love of a good husband she went through life with a great mission to perform. She not only helped father in a financial way, which she did in different ways, but she gave him support in his church duties as Bishop and all other church positions he held. Her home was open to anyone in need or for entertainment in the ward and stake. While father was Bishop the visiting Stake and General Authorities always stayed overnight at our home.

In the year 1906 the family moved into a new eight room home with a large cellar. This one was on the highway. Father built a large barn, moved the old granary, later he built a carhouse and machine shed. There were six of the children still at home. Eva, Levi and Ruby were married.

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Ervin and I went to Provo to school for the two years following, then Ervin filled a mission to England.

For a few years previous, Mother had given her time, when called, to caring for and delivering babies. Her first experience was assisting Miss Adams from Marysvale with the birth of LaFonda, Levi's oldest child. Her first to deliver alone was Lanevia Frost. They named the baby Florence. From then on she delivered babies from one side to the other of the little town of Antimony and north to the ranches in North Fork. Sometimes she had problems such as caring for women who didn't have the necessities for the baby and themselves. She made clothes and diapers for the babies and took food and other necessary items. At times people would have a doctor care for them in the delivery and Mother did the nursing. One time when Mother was visiting me in Bicknell, a neighbor lady took sick and her doctor was in Salt Lake to a convention. They sent for Mother. The lady was delivered and Mother had just finished breakfast when another young woman sent word for Mother to come in a hurry. This was a first baby for the young woman. Everything was over when the Doctor from Salina came sixty miles. He asked who the nurse and was told. He said he couldn't have done better. Mother was with me with our first two children and fifth one. I had seven others and wish my Mother could have assisted instead of the doctors who cared for me. No one could care for sick children just like she could. Many times Lester would say, what would your Mother do if she were here, or I wish your Mother was here.

Mother took care of Louisa (Levi's wife) with all but one of her twelve children. She cared for Eva with her last two, and her own sister, Matilda, with six, two of them were twins. I wish we had kept a count of all the babies Mother delivered, but I would say it was into the hundreds and she never lost one case. She said many times, "I keep a prayer in my heart all the while, asking for guidance and I never get frightened or the least bit nervous until everything is all over.

Mother was devoted to her children. Nothing was too hard of a job if it made them happy. They went away to school. Levi went to Logan before going to California on a mission. Ruby attended BYU before going to Colorado on a mission. Ervin also attended school in Provo before he filled a two and one half year mission in England, 1908-1911.

I, Florence attended school at BYU, was married in 1911. Lyman and Ervin were married in 1914. Maud attended school in Provo and was married in 1915. Ruby was the first one in the family to move away from the old home town. This made Mother very sad. I was the second one to move away, but when Maud married they went to Mesa, Arizona for the first year. Mother was really broken-hearted when she left, thinking they would make their home there, and it seemed too far away.

The saddest chapter when we think of moving, was when Father sold the old home and moved to Idaho Falls. (Feb. 1919) To leave part of the family in different parts of Utah and to leave old friends and relatives was a breaking part of Mother's life. She would have accepted this to a certain extent but on January 7, 1921 Father passed away very suddenly. This was hard to take, and so far away from what was really home. The remaining twenty years of Mother's life was extremely lonely. All of the children tried to comfort her in their homes and make her happy, but she was never the same. She loved her home and was never satisfied with any one very long

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at a time. Often times she would remark how much better she would feel if she were in her own home in old Coyote (now Antimony). She let Wells have the home in Idaho Falls. It would have pleased her if she could have had a home of her own in Utah. Mother spent her time doing things for the children and grandchildren. She made beautiful quilts, and all kinds of needle work. The children and grandchildren all have some of her knit lace. She made doilies with knit lace and other choice work for all of the grandchildren. These are all cherished treasures of a sweet, industrious grandmother. She could read the newspapers and tell us what she had read and part of the time she didn't even use her glasses.

Our children laughed with Mother and thought it quite a joke when she thought she had lost her glasses and found them up on her forehead.

On Mother's birthday, October 18, 1926, Ervin composed a poem. In the poem he expresses his love for Mother, and recalls the beauty and love of our home.

Thoughts of Home and Mother

Tonight as I sit here thinking
And turn the leaves again,
I see in that memory's album
A home at the end of the lane.

I see the fence, the rudely made,
It guarded the crops that grew.
I see the house I visited first,
The world that first I knew.

The river with its willow banks
As it moved along its way,
The meadow and its waving grass,
The stacks of new mown hay.

Green pastures and still waters there,
With the Psalmist's song again.
In memories of that sacred place,
The home at the end of the lane.

In that home the glorious light of day
First came into my view.
Gems of life were given me,
I owe it all to you.

Again I enter that dear old home
And close that same old door.
I see the pictures on the wall

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And the rugs upon the floor.

In a rocker by the fireside,
Close by the chimney place
My mother sits with longing arms,
Love glowing in her face.

I started out to find you dear—
Nor have I searched in vain.
I found you there, was sure I would,
In the home at the end of the lane.

As you sit there in that chair
With that mother's look at me,
I want to live again the past,
A boy upon your knee.

Those thoughts again you'll give to me
In words of comfort and advice.
I know now better than I did,
You need not tell it twice.

Others would contribute here
And laud this sweet refrain:
Thank God for the Mother who welcomed us
In home at the end of the lane.

Mother spent her last birthday with us. We were living in Blackfoot, Idaho. On the 18th day of October 1939, she was eighty one years old. While she was there she enjoyed the little children, read to them and listened to their experiences and stories. One morning one of the older boys turned on the radio. A waltz was playing. Mother met Dean coming into the dining room. She put her arms around him and they danced several times around the table. She could dance and keep perfect time to the music.

On Thanksgiving we had Mazle and Rose and their two boys come over for dinner. Mother was so happy to see them. She remained with us until almost Christmas time but didn't feel well, so she wrote to Ervin and asked him to come and get her.

Mother's health had not been good for several years. She never recovered or was like herself after Father's death. She kept her troubles to herself, never complained and always tried to make others happy.

Ervin made her comfortable and did everything he could to please and care for her but in the latter part of December she was moved to Salt Lake City with Wells. She remained there until her death January 20, 1940. She was taken to Manti for burial by Father who had passed away twenty years before.