



EVELYN MARY MCGREGOR ROMRELL 1907–1965

Evelyn Mary McGregor was the oldest daughter of John Johnathan and Evelyn Leona Woods McGregor. She was born 20 February 1907, in Ogden, Weber, Utah, the day after her parent's fifth wedding anniversary. She was named and blessed by her father when she was 8 days old. Her grandmother, on her mother's side, was also named Evelyn; she was the youngest daughter of Parley Parker Pratt.

Her father built the house where Evelyn was born. It had the first cement foundation built in Ogden City. Her grandfather, Francis Charles Woods, did not think it would last, but her father had faith in this new material, and the foundation was strong enough to hold up a three-story building that is located at 3219 Grant Ave.

Evelyn had two brothers, John Lowel McGregor (1905), and Charles William McGregor (1910). She also had two sisters; Afton Leona (1910), and June (1913). All of the children were born in Ogden.

When she was 3 years old, Evelyn's father built a house of cement blocks located at 2909 Washington Boulevard. This was her home for 18 years. As a young girl, Evelyn enjoyed playing on the old board walk in front of their home. She also liked going to Sunday School in the First Ward. She learned what she referred to as a "memory gem" when she was young that helped her through many problems in her life:

If a string is in a knot,
Patience will untie it,
Patience will do many things,
Have you ever tried it?

When Evelyn was 6 years old, she started school at South Washington Elementary Public School. The first day of school was frightening for her - to see so many strange children. The next day, she took so much time walking to school that she was late and would not go in. She went back home where her mother scolded her and took her straight back. She was never late for school again. The second year of school she went to Pingree Elementary, where she attended until the fourth grade. She was then transferred to Lewis School where she finished junior high. She then attended Weber Academy for one year, then two years at Ogden High School. She had a wonderful art teacher in high school who taught her appreciation for color harmony, drawing in all phases, oil painting, water colors, pastels, pen and ink, and etching. She did them all and enjoyed it so much that she decided to make art her career. However, she did not graduate, as she left school to take care of her cousin's son, Dilworth Young. His mother, Gladys Pratt Young, was a school teacher.

Throughout her life, Evelyn's parents taught her the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. She was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on 6 May 1915. Her parents were very strict about keeping the "Word of Wisdom." She never tasted coffee, and only had a swallow of tea one time when she was in the hospital and they gave it to her as medicine. The children in her family were taught to pay their tithing, and to attend Sunday School and Sacrament Meeting. Her father called a deck of face cards the "Devil's Bible," and would not allow them in the house.

When she was 17 years old, she was asked to be the assistant secretary of the Sunday School in the 11th Ward. After six months, she was asked to be the secretary, a position she held for two years. She was then asked to teach in the kindergarten. She received much satisfaction and joy from teaching the children.

In July 1928, at the age of 21, Evelyn was stricken with a ruptured appendix. She was in the Dee Memorial Hospital for four weeks, having a special day and night nurse for two of those weeks. She was then taken home, and for the next four weeks she kept losing weight until she weighed only 90 pounds. Every day she had a fever. Also during this time an abscess formed on her back. The poison throughout her body seemed to gather in the abscess. In September, she went back to the hospital. Doctors made an incision in her back and drained the poison. She spent six weeks in the hospital at this time. The LDS Elders administered to her in the evenings, and she knew her life was spared through these administrations, along with the faith of her parents, relatives, and friends. When she began to get better, her hair started falling out. It broke her mother's heart to see so much hair stay in the comb when she combed Evelyn's hair. When her hair came back in, it had changed color from golden brown to black, and was curly. It stayed that way until she grew older and it turned grey.

In 1929, the McGregor family moved into the 18th Ward of the Mt. Ogden Stake. Evelyn was asked to teach a class and play the piano in the Junior Sunday School. She enjoyed both callings. Her mother died 11 April 1934 while Evelyn was working at Shupe Williams Candy Company. She felt she could not keep house, work, and serve in Junior Sunday School, so she asked to be released. Because she had more time in the evenings, she accepted a calling in the Mutual Improvement Association, teaching the Beehive girls. She taught with her aunt, Margaret McGregor for three years.

From 1935 to 1938, Evelyn had a membership in the Weber gymnasium, where she learned to swim. She passed the test for life saving, and for three years was enrolled as a Senior Member of the Red Cross Life Saving Service. Swimming was her favorite sport, and she spent many pleasant hours in the water.

In 1938, she attended a dance at the Berthanna Dance Hall, where she met Hyrum James Romrell. The two were married 1 February 1939 and made their home on Hyrum's farm in Harrisville. Evelyn had never lived on a farm, so she had a lot to learn. Hyrum had five children by his first wife, Ruby R. Taylor Romrell. They were Belva, Mildred, Fern, Leonard, and Roland. The girls were married when Evelyn joined the family, but the two boys were still living at home. She loved each one of them very much, and they all got along well together - doing all they could for each other.

Evelyn enjoyed living in Harrisville, even more than in the city where she was raised. The people of the LDS Ward were good people. They were friendly, and had a wonderful spirit of helping each other. She became a member of the Harrisville Ward Relief Society a few days after she was married, and became the organist of that organization. She enjoyed the calling, which gave her an opportunity to practice music which she would not have done otherwise.

Evelyn loved to travel, especially to the national and state parks. She especially loved Yellowstone, and she and Hyrum visited the park many times. She also enjoyed playing the piano, sewing, knitting, crocheting, doing all kinds of fancy work, and working in her flower garden. She also continued to enjoy her art work.

Hyrum’s children loved and respected Evelyn. They never called her “mother,” she was too much their same age, but the grandchildren called her “Grandma Evelyn.” She died 28 October 1965 and is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery. Hyrum died three years later, 1968, at the age of 88.

SOURCE:

Romrell, Evelyn Mary McGregor. *The Autobiography of Evelyn Mary McGregor Romrell.*

Berthana Dance Hall	Romrell, Fern
McGregor, Afton Leona	Romrell, Hyrum James
McGregor, Charles William	Romrell, Leonard
McGregor, Evelyn Leona Woods	Romrell, Mildred
McGregor, Evelyn Mary	Romrell, Roland
McGregor, John Johnathan	Romrell, Ruby R. Taylor
McGregor, John Lowel	Romrell, Velva
McGregor, June	Woods, Evelyn Leona
McGregor, Margaret	Woods, Francis Charles
Pratt, Evelyn	Young, Dilworth
Pratt, Parley Parker	Young, Gladys Pratt
Romrell, Evelyn Mary McGregor	