

William Christopher's Marriage to Dixie Faucett: Raising his Family

(As remembered by his oldest daughter, Ora Maren Christensen Sharp. Also included, as noted, are excerpts from history written by Leona Christensen McGee.)

By this time Dixie Faucett was teaching school in a nearby town. She had never married. Papa started corresponding with Dixie in the hope that she still loved him enough to marry him with full knowledge of what her duties would be in helping to rear his five motherless children. She accepted his proposal of marriage with all strings attached. He was working in Montana at this time. It was the plan for her to meet him in Salt Lake City, marry in the temple, and go back to Montana with him. They were there a year. Thus it was that Dixie received her endowments and was sealed to papa on December 18, 1914 for time and all eternity and became our second mama. And it was always that way. Papa insisted that we all her mama and give her all the love and respect that went along with the title. She indeed was a wonderful mama to us as long as she lived and we were her children. Papa greatly appreciated how our new mama took hold of all the household tasks and gradually made a nice home for us. Everything had been neglected for so long. All our clothing was in a sad shape, sheets and pillowcases and bedding and etc. were worn out. Mama and her relatives, Grandma Bailey, Aunt Dolly etc, sewed for weeks filling our needs.

Papa and mama eventually became the parents of four children, Vaughn L born 1 March 1916 (married Irene Cardon). Leona born 22 July 1918 (married Jewell S. McGee). Clay Dixon born 3 June 1921-died 1 March 1928. Kurt J. born 28 October 1924 (married Lela Guyman). [Vaughn said he never was aware they were his half-brothers and sisters until he was older. Dixie treated all the children as if they were hers, and her family supported her by helping. Reo once told Irene that he sure appreciated her. He never had to worry whether he had clean socks or other clothes and they were always where he could find them. He was the youngest, and she was the only mother he could remember. He always remembered her birthday. In fact the day he crashed in his airplane, he had stopped in Farmington and had Dad meet him at the airport to get her gift. He was worried about a storm coming in, and didn't have time to give it to her himself.]

Mama was a very fine organizer. She distributed the housework among us children, according to our ability to do different tasks. She rotated the work so we wouldn't become too tired of doing the same old thing. She expected near perfection, and we tried hard to please. I am especially grateful that she taught me to need and love for sewing for others and myself. Papa was always proud of the way she handle the children and managed the home and gave her full support. I think mama Dixie made some kind of a record and should be honored as such. She raised her father's five children along with Heber Gaines, (her cousin left an orphan), five of Nellie's children, and her own four...making 15 in all! Papa and mama encouraged us to do our very best in our school classes and learn all we could. When we had parts in school or church programs, the most interested and loyal ones in the audience were our family members. We three girls were given the privilege of taking piano lessons. We would hitch up the horse to the buggy and drive to La Jara, 6 miles away. In trying to describe our house in town and the one on the ranch, I get a little confused. As I remember, the home on the ranch was nicer. [Leona:

When William lost his ranch during the depression, he decided to go to a lower climate. In 1929 he started on his way to Arizona. On the way he stopped to see his old friends Don and Mattie Christensen who lived in Kirtland, NM. Dan persuaded William to haul coal for hire. This eventually led to moving his family to Fruitland, New Mexico. Besides hauling coal, he along with his boys, farmed an eighty-acre farm. A few years later, William moved with his family to Ignacio, Colorado. There he had a beautiful farm and was especially proud of his wheat, yielding 54 bushels to the acre. When Kurt was in high school, they moved to Provo, Utah for 3 years and worked in the building of Geneva Steel Mill. Then they decided to go back to Farmington, NM where they could be closer to his children. He bought a five-acre farm, raised several hundred chickens, and had a small dairy herd. He sold milk and eggs to individual customers. Thus he made a host of friends, at the same time asking the golden question, "Do you know anything about the Mormons?" He was a great missionary and always an example. An oil company wanted to buy his farm and as the price was good and he was getting older and the work too much, he sold it and bought a home near the L.D.S. Stake house on Apache St. It was here that William and Dixie lived until he passed away on 29 Aug 1961.]

Papa provided well for us. Our home was full of love and kindness, but he was a strict disciplinarian when he needed to be. With nine children around the table three times a day for meals, there could have been family bickering, but papa would not tolerate any confusion like that. To keep our minds active, he would ask us different thought provoking questions. I will always cherish the home evening programs we had. Papa was so pleased when I could play "Love at Home" and other beautiful gospel hymns on these occasions, which we all joined in singing. Papa told us lots of faith promoting and character building stories. He loved dancing. He usually took part in the plays. He always sang in the ward choir. He and mama, Dixie, sang together for many occasions. She was a beautiful singer and sang solos too. They often sang "Down in the Old Cherry Orchard" together. In an earlier sketch of his life, papa told briefly of his church affiliations. I will record it here as he did: "When I returned from my mission I was selected by Ira B. Whitney to be 2nd Counselor to him in the Stake Sunday School. In 1924 I was 1st Counselor to Bishop Henry W. Valentine and also served as 1st Counselor to Bishop W. O. Crowther. During the depression of 1925, 1926, 1927, lost my ranch on the Conejos River, a part of the same ground my father gave us when I was 12 years old. Also lost my health. Decided to go to a lower climate. Moved to Kirtland, New Mexico in 1929 and was made [Leona: set apart by Melvin J. Ballard] Bishop of the Kirtland Ward in 1930. Moved to Ignacio. Was made Branch President there. Sold my half of the farm to Vaughn and move to Provo where I worked at Geneva Steel for three winters. Was Stake missionary at Provo. While at Provo, Dixie had a very serious operation. Bought a five-acre farm in Farmington, New Mexico where we have a few cows, pigs, and several hundred chickens. Dixie fell and broke her hip in November 1951. Have put all my nine children through high school. Sent my oldest daughter on a mission to the Central States in 1925-26, also my oldest son to the Southern States." [Leona: While serving as Bishop, he worked hard to carry out his duties, and will be remembered for the Pioneer Day Celebration *July 24th) dances and entertainment that he tried to proved for the young people. William demonstrated his love for dancing and attended almost all the dances in his ward up to his 85th year. He had many friends among the young people.]

Retyped by Camille Clifton (Great-Great-Granddaughter to William C.) July 24, 2015