

## Judith Ellen Pye Smith

*An Autobiography – Written in early 1955*



Nell Pye Smith

I, Judith Ellen Pye (known as Nell), was born in Garston, Liverpool, England, 26 June 1896 to William and Margaret Ann Williams Pye. I had ten brothers and sisters. Three died as babies. Eric, a brother, passed away at the age of 16 - seven years after I came to the U.S.A.

I entered school at the age of 5 years at the Banks Road School. In those days, we were through school at the age of 14 no matter what grade one was in. The day I was 14, I got a job at the Wilson Brothers Bobbin Works. I worked there steady, working from 6:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. until World War I (1914) when all girls were called to military service. I was then 18 so I volunteered for the munitions service. I filled shells at the filling factory in Aintree, England. I worked there until I got a sickness from

T.N.T. poisoning. I was discharged and was home until I got well. After about 2 months, I went back again to my old job and worked there until I was 22.

In 1918, I met Stanley G. Smith who was serving with the U.S.A. army in Aigburth, England. We were married 13 April 1919, at St. Michael's Church in Garston, England.

We had been married only two weeks when Stanley was shipped back to the U.S. The wives were not allowed to sail on the same ship as their husbands, so I had to sail later. Stanley sailed May 1<sup>st</sup>, and I sailed May 21<sup>st</sup>. I sailed on a very small boat called the "Lewisville". I was on the ocean 12 days. I didn't know anyone on the boat, only made friends after we sailed. It was very lonesome.

When we arrived in New York, Stanley was not there which made things worse. We were in New York two days when they told me to go on to Utah. Well, I didn't know where I was going or whom I was going to meet when I got there. As we were pulling into Chicago, I received a telegram while on the train saying Stanley was going to meet me there. That made it better. We were on the train about 3 days. We arrived in Ogden, Utah, 7 June 1919.

We went on to Kaysville where Stanley's folks lived. It was a very small place at that



Stan & Nell Smith  
Wedding Picture - England

time. I received a very warm welcome by all I met. We lived in Kaysville about 4½ months when we bought a farm in Fairfield, Idaho. We farmed about 7 years then moved to town where we lived until the fall of 1945.

We had three beautiful children born to us - Margaret Jean was born 8:00 a.m. March 24, 1920; Arthur Stanley, 15 months later at 9:00 a.m. June 27, 1921; and Avis Mae at 9:00 a.m. December 13, 1933. At the age of 11, Arthur passed away September 11, 1932 with ruptured appendix and peritonitis - leaving sweet memories.

We had many, many swell friends in Fairfield which we still miss. We moved to Gooding in the fall of 1945. We bought a home on Idaho Street, remodeled it and are still living there.

In 1937, Stanley, Jean, Avis and I made a trip back to England to see my folks. We were gone about 7 months. In 1949, I made another trip back home. Florence Lee went along with me. We were only gone 2 months this time. Since then, my dad, mother and sister, Georgina, have passed away.

- December 15, 1955 - Had uterus removed in Gooding hospital. (cancerous)
- 1956 - Was in a car wreck and received a bad cut on my head.
- 1957 - Had cervix removed. (cancerous)
- 1959 - Had a cancer taken care of in the Twin Falls hospital followed by 20 treatments of x-ray which turned out a success.
- January 1960 - Took 48 hours of radium treatments in Twin Falls hospital.
- Spring 1964 - More radium treatments in Boise.

Nell died of cancer September 17, 1964, in the Gooding hospital. She was buried in the Layton-Kaysville, Utah Cemetery.



*It is important to note that Nell had a son, Frederick (Fred) Pye, born to her on 14 March 1916 in England. He was 3 years old when she left for the States with her new husband, Stanley G. Smith, leaving Fred behind. Fred was legally adopted and raised by Nell's parents, William and Margaret Pye.*

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I, M. Jean Smith Vandiver, will add a little more about my mother. She told me that she was often kept home from school to help care for the younger children. From visits with family

in England the past years, I learned that Nell was her mother's little slave, but her father's fair haired girl.

There was much concern when she landed in New York. Many of the war brides were never met nor had messages from their husbands. Many of the people living in Kaysville, Utah had originally come from England and gave her a warm welcome as one of their own.

Her brothers, John and Arthur, passed away after the above was written but before she died. Brother Bill died in 1967. Her oldest sister, Mary, passed away in January 1993 just three weeks short of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I remember the many people she helped – particularly the women who at that time had to stay in bed for two weeks when they had their babies. She would prepare food to take in, bathe the babies and mothers and keep their homes clean.

She had a nice singing voice, although untrained. She sang solos at many church functions and funerals.

My mother loved to have fun, tell jokes and friends called her a jolly person.

After she came from England in 1919, it would be 18 years before she would return to see any of her family. She was lonely many times. The death of her son, Arthur, was devastating for her. She fought through what was called a nervous breakdown.

As a child she had bronchitis; she suffered with hay fever and several times had a bout with asthma. In her later life, she had many signals that there were health problems that should be taken care of but was prudish and hesitated to see a doctor. When she did, cancer had already begun its deadly work. For ten years she fought it, but it was the final winner.

## To Nell Smith

A sweet little mother in England had a daughter named Judith Pye,  
She fell in love with a Yanky, and the mother gave a sigh.  
The wedding bells rang in the church yard, the March the organ played,  
The minister gave the ceremony, but the mother for Judith prayed.  
She sailed across the ocean, left her loved ones all behind,  
Just to find a Yanky soldier she thought so big and fine.  
After days of weary travel she reached the promised land,  
In her quest for happiness to find this soldier, Stan.  
Of all the people in New York not one was there she'd take,  
Passed right through Chicago and landed in Salt Lake.  
Twenty years she's loved and lived her life with its ups and downs,  
But never has she quite forgotten Old England and her crown.  
As she travels homeward the car will go too slow,  
I hear her say to the captain, "Say, what's wrong with this old boat, ('ell),  
I'm in a hurry, let her go."  
When she sees fair England her heart will harder pound,  
From the dear Father and Mother cries of joy with sound.  
The feast of the prodigal son will be out-done by a mile,  
For every brother and sister will greet her with a smile.  
When the greetings are all over, and she her breath can take,  
We hope she'll think of America, and the pretty speech then make.  
We hope she will think of her many friends, who have met to wish her well,  
And when she tells the folks of us, say we're swell, not ('ell).

- Unknown Author and Date