

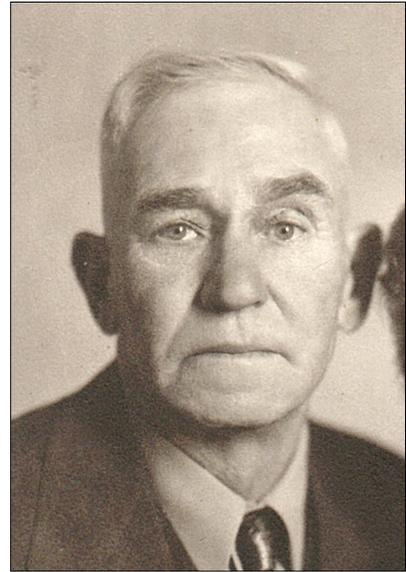
A life sketch of

Charles Aceil Randall

1884 – 1954

Charles Aceil Randall was born March 9, 1884, in Harrisville, Weber County, Utah. His parents, Charles Chapman and Harriet Lodeskie Woodhead Randall were farming in this area at the time. Although he was named in honor of his father, he was called Aceil and as he grew it was shortened to Ace.

In 1890, at the age of six, Ace moved with his parents and sisters Ellen and Rose, to Idaho. The family traveled with another family across the rough-cut trail worn between Utah and Idaho. They traveled in covered wagons and trailed their cattle and horses behind the wagons. Ace was only six years old, but was assigned to help with this responsibility, walking most of the way. It took seventeen days to make the trip.



The Randall Family assumed the homestead rights for a 320 acre parcel of ground in Poverty Flats, later known as Grant, Jefferson County, Idaho. This small community was located ten miles north of Eagle Rock, later known as Idaho Falls. Their property boarded the main road that wound its way through several small communities and later became known as the Lewisville Highway.

Sagebrush and dry, hard ground was all that greeted them as they pulled their team to a stop. The excitement of this new adventure and the challenge of making something of nothing stirred the family into long days of hard work. Ace tagged his father around the wide-open spaces as they laid out their new property and built a one-room, log hut they called home. This home met their basic needs and provided them with shelter from the cold Idaho winds and mountains of snow that soon piled in around them.

The first years brought their share of challenges, but the family worked together and progress was evident. Ace learned to work hard at the side of his father. Three more sisters, Sarah, Bessie and Myrtle, and two brothers, George, who died a few weeks after he was born, and Orval 'Orv', joined the family after their move to Idaho. Ace, being the oldest son, had a lot of responsibility in order to help care for the family. The Randall family shared the work and had many good times doing it. Their home was full of love and laughter. The family remained very close all of their lives.

Records show that Ace was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 20, 1892. He was baptized in the Dabell Swale in Grant, Jefferson County, Idaho.

Education was available to Ace in this little community, even though he was not able to take advantage of it for very long. He was often needed at home to help his father with the farming and chores. Ace did complete the eighth grade, but was not able to consistently attend school after that.

As the family grew, so did the need for a larger living space. Ace helped his father cut and haul logs, which they peeled, trimmed and stacked to build a new two-room house. As the years went on, rooms were added until the family had a comfortable home with plenty of space.

Ace enjoyed opportunities to gather with other young men his age and engage in a variety of activities. His favorite was baseball. He loved to play the game, and earned quite a reputation as the pitcher for the Grant team. Teams from Idaho Falls to Rexburg would travel to play each other. All outside concerns came to a stop when it was game time. The entire community would turn out to support their home team. Ace was one of those serious-minded players that always played to win. The rivalry between the teams, as well as their supporters, grew fiercer each year. Baseball provided Ace with many hours of enjoyment and life long friendships.

Ace learned to handle a gun when just a boy and loved to go hunting. He was always in pursuit of birds, squirrels, rabbits and wild turkeys. Some of his fondest childhood memories included the hours he spent tromping through the brush with his gun in hand.

Ace spent most of his time working with his father on the farm. Clearing the land of sagebrush, digging ditches for irrigation, plowing, planting and harvesting kept his youthful energy and ambitions tethered. The hard work and long hours kept him tough and trim, brown and handsome. His blue eyes and full head of brown hair made him a striking young man.

As Ace entered his teenage years, his interests grew and he found himself enjoying the activities that involved socializing with the young ladies in the neighborhood. Friday nights were spent at the Grant Hall dancing and having a great time with family and friends. It was at one of these weekly dances that Ace met Nettie Wilkins.

Nettie lived in the Coltman area, which bordered Grant to the south. Courting this young lady was an easy pleasure for Ace for she only lived a few miles from the Randall Farm. It wasn't long before the news was out and a wedding was planned.

On November 26, 1903, Charles Aceil Randall married Nettie Luella Wilkins in his parent's home, by Bishop A. K. Dabell.

Ace and Nettie made their first home with his parents in Grant. Later, Charles and Harriet deeded 80 acres of ground to them and they began the construction of a three-room home. Ace was excited to have property he could farm. Even though he continued to help his father on the original home place, any extra time was spent establishing his portion of the land. He and Nettie worked hard to complete their home and looked forward to becoming more independent.

On September 21, 1904, they welcomed the first addition to their family. Ace was the proud father of Hazel Luella. Dreams began to materialize for this young couple. They finished their home and moved in with what few belongings they had into it.

Seasons filled with hard work kept Ace busy. His cattle herd grew and he always had pigs, chickens and horses to round out the farm life. Farming and tending to his animals were daily routines that Ace enjoyed. He had a knack for making friends and always had people around him who valued his company and appreciated his hospitality.

In the fall of 1908, Ace was called to serve a mission for the Church. This was considered an honor and privilege although it required quite a sacrifice, especially for married couples. Ace and Nettie agreed that she should move in with his parents while he was gone. Nettie was pregnant and they felt the Randalls could help care for her and Hazel, as well as support her with the new baby. They arranged for their home to be rented and made the necessary moves.

On October 13, 1908, Ace was set apart as an official missionary and set out for Chattanooga, Tennessee, which was the headquarters for the Southern States Mission to which he had been called. He traveled by train most of the way and upon his arrival was assigned to labor in Alabama. He left for that area with several other men he would serve with during the next two years. These men grew very close and maintained their friendships after their release from missionary service.

Ace faithfully kept a journal of his mission. His entries reflect a close look at his day to day experiences. He served at a time when missionaries were sent with 'no purse or script'. He carried with him a 'grip', a small suitcase, which contained all the belongings he had. Along with efforts to tract and teach, the missionaries spent a good portion of their day trying to secure a place to sleep and something to eat. Often they worked for their board and room. Picking cotton and sweet potatoes, helping with chores and doing odd jobs were common projects Ace and his companions did in trade for their keep.

One recorded experience told about the day he and his companion teamed up with some other missionaries and young ladies picking sweet potatoes. They worked pretty well for a time and then they found themselves engaged in the sport of a potato fight. He writes how those little potatoes could really sting, but he did not feel sorry for anyone compared to the

black man driving the tractor. They had all ganged up on him and pelted him with little cull potatoes.

Most days required walking to appointments, or to the nearest town for groceries and mail. It was usually 8-16 miles of walking each day. Blistered feet and reoccurring bouts with rheumatism were troubles that plagued Ace.

Ace was always anxious to get his mail. News from home was a welcomed 'shot in the arm' for him. No letter may have been as welcome as the one he received shortly after June 24, 1909. This letter informed Ace of the birth of his second daughter, Alta May. It was comforting to know that all was well and things at home were fine.

Ace's skill as a good hunter and fisherman spread throughout the mission. When food was scarce, he would be sent out at night to hunt rabbits, wild birds and possum. He usually brought back supper. Quite often he would tie a string across a river or stream; baited hooks were tied to the string. By morning he would supply fish to fry for breakfast.

Once, he and his companion went fishing. They were staying with a family who bragged about the good fishing in the nearby stream. Off they went for a successful trip, bragging about their ability and trophy fish caught in the past. After several hours, they returned to the house empty handed and very disappointed. The lady of the house talked them into watching her children for her. She told them she would be gone a short time and off she went. She kept her word and in a short time she returned with a large mess of good-sized fish she had caught. Ace and his companion were sufficiently humbled and eager to receive the blessings of her fish fry.

Ace had many experiences with strong willed and opinionated southern people. He found them to be stubborn and set in their ways, whether it was farming, religion or political beliefs. He could talk with the best of them and as his experience grew, so did his eagerness to engage in conflicting conversations. He claimed he "could hold his own pretty well and quite often sold a Book of Mormon or two." His first baptism was Sister Maggie Ezekiel on March 26, 1909.

He and his companions were called on to administer to the sick and conduct Sacrament Meetings. His journal recorded the visit of Apostle George Albert Smith who conducted and trained the missionaries at one of their Mission Conferences.

Ace looked forward to the times the missionaries in his area gathered together for a few days. They would “study and sing, and go to a few shows and see the sites.” They would empty their pockets and share the cost of a room in a boarding house and give each other haircuts and shaves. When they had enough money they treated themselves to dinner and had their pictures taken.

Ace and dogs became a standing joke among the missionaries. He was not always able to outrun them and as a result spent many hours mending his pants.

When a place to stay was not available and they had nothing to eat they would retreat to the trees. A bed of pine needles and a cool bath in the stream was sometimes the best they could do. They ate what they could shoot or scrub up. Watermelon season was a real treat as they could eat all the melons they wanted. Many days, watermelon was all they had to eat. Such a steady diet of watermelon made it hard for Ace to eat watermelon after his mission.

The opportunity Ace had to serve a mission for the Church was always a treasured experience in his life. It required great faith on his part. He left his growing family to sustain themselves in his absence and he did not know where or how his support would come. A record of contributions to his mission showed \$25.00 from home each month. This was the only income he had other than an occasional \$1.00 or \$5.00 from a friend back home. He was proud to share the message of the Gospel and valued the testimony that grew from his two years of service in the Southern States.

Ace returned to his anxiously awaiting family in the fall of 1910. It was a wonderful time as he moved his family back into their home, got acquainted with his daughters and began the work on his farm.

About this same time, Ace heard of a young man who had been abandoned in Idaho Falls. Ace found the young man and brought him home. Ace and Nettie opened their home

and hearts to Walt Winters. This young man, who was eleven years old, became a son to the Randalls. Walt was always treated as a member of the family. Although the Randalls never legally adopted him, he was known as Walt Randall all of his life.

Ace continued his activity in the Church, serving as President of the Mutual for several years. His zest for life and ability to promote fun afforded the young men in the area many good times and a friend for life.

No one enjoyed a good joke better than Ace. He often instigated practical jokes on those around him. Sometimes his victims tried to get even. One night, Ace stepped out on his back porch to take in the fresh night air. As he stood there, he heard a quiet commotion out back. As he studied the shadows, barely noticeable in the darkness, he could see a major undertaking out by the barn. Several of his young men friends had disassembled his buckboard and were lifting the pieces and parts to the barn roof.

Ace quietly sat on the porch and watched as these young men worked to reassemble the wagon atop the barn. He could hear them softly chuckle and joke back and forth about how surprised old Ace would be come morning. Finally, the wagon was again put together and the jokesters were overjoyed with their clever scheme.

Ace approached the barn and as the young men were about to climb down off the roof, he let his presence be known. The men were startled and could not believe he had watched the entire project. He supervised his young friends as they disassembled the buckboard, lowered each piece to the ground, and again built the wagon. As was the usual case, Ace got the last laugh.

On November 8, 1911, Ace became the father of a son. They named him Charles Milton. Ace loved his family and was understandably proud of this newest family member who would carry on the Randall name.

Ace continued his busy life style. Days were filled with hard work, family activities and friends. Ace was an active part of the growing, changing Grant Community. He was called to serve in the Grant Ward Bishopric as a counselor to Bishop John Lee.

Family life changed too as Ace and Nettie welcomed another family member into their home. On February 18, 1916, a daughter was born. They named her Ora.

As his family grew, so did his responsibility to care for them. His farm and ranching interests were not quite big enough to support their needs. An employment opportunity presented itself, which proved to be a way of life Ace maintained over the next fifteen years.

A group of ranchers decided to run their cattle to the Roberts area to graze during the early spring to late fall season. Ace, along with the other men, would brand the cattle to be grazed and then join the cattle together and drive them to the range land. The herd would be trailed approximately fifteen miles to the Roberts area. There the wild grass served as good feed that sustained hundreds of cattle for several months.

Ace stayed with the cattle while they were on the Roberts range ground. A sheep camp was his home and with the company of his horse and dog, he spent his spring, summer and fall keeping the cattle together. As often as possible, his family would visit and he enjoyed friends who found him and spent time catching him up on the news of home. He enjoyed the open spaces and the life of a 'cattle-puncher'. For his visitors it was a treat to have him stir up a meal and share his baking powder biscuits fresh out of the Dutch oven.

When the cool fall weather started to slow the grass and the feed became harder to find, Ace and the other cattle owners would round up the cattle together and trail them back to Grant. The cattle were held in corrals on the Randall home place. The men would sort the cattle by brands. Once a man's herd was separated, the cattle were trailed to the different ranches for winter-feeding. This activity took several days and involved men, women and children in order to get the cattle moved, separated and home.

Ace had a distinct brand that he used through the years. He called it the 'Triangle R'. It was a necessary practice to brand the animals and the only way to keep the different herds identified. Ace registered his brand and used it during his many years of ranching.

The months Ace spent on the range were sometimes quiet and lonely, but he had a way of picking up the pace. He took advantage of these times to hunt ducks, geese and wild birds

that nested in the marshes. He liked to ride over the countryside, not only keeping the cattle collected, but he loved to see the open spaces and breath in the sage scented air.

One sport he really enjoyed was coyote hunting. Ace had angora chaps that he wore when he worked the cattle. With his sweat stained hat, angora chaps, spur strapped boots and bullwhip in hand, Ace would mount his horse and give chase to intruding coyotes. Hooves would pound and dust would fill the air as Ace chased coyotes across the land. He would crack his whip over their heads and send them running, wild-eyed, back to where they came from. Most cowboys would have chosen to exterminate them, but Ace looked forward to the next chase and liked the whip better than the gun for these critters.

Ace was one of a number of real cowboys in the valley. Each day was filled with branding animals, breaking horses and punching cattle. Neighboring men gathered together to help each other with this work. At some point, the Grant Rodeo began in the Randall corrals. Ace, with his father, Charles, brother Orv and brother in law Vern Crystal, were some of the first organizers of this annual event. Its popularity grew until people traveled great distances to compete in bareback riding, bull dogging, roping and the popular 'Indian Races'. Food provided by the ladies made 'Rodeo Time' an unsurpassed event. The rodeo became so big it eventually had to be moved to the Rodeo Grounds in Rigby and was then called the Jefferson County Stampede. The Crystal Brothers Rodeo and the War Bonnet Rodeo got their start at the rodeos Ace helped organize and manage. He served on the committees to keep these events going for several years.

After his years of herding and driving cattle, Ace returned to farming. Times were changing and with his family close by to share in the work, they combined efforts to work the ground, plant crops and harvest what they planted. Ace, with sons Milt, Walt and son-in-law Vic Oswald, shared the workload of their farms, which were all located within a mile of each other. Their families were not only located close, but they were close in thought and deed. Ace and Nettie were the hub of their growing posterity. Holidays, weekends and many weekdays were spent in the company of their family members.

Ace seldom turned down an invitation to get away. Days away in the woods for a picnic or any excuse to go fishing were vacation days for Ace.

On December 25, 1939, Ace and Nettie spent the day with their family. In the afternoon, Hazel and her family left for their home. Shortly after they left, Randalls received word that their daughter, Hazel, had been killed in a car-train accident. This was a devastating turn of events for the entire family. Hazel's three year old daughter Patsy, came to live with Ace and Nettie. Once again, their home and hearts were opened. Patsy was raised as a daughter and was afforded all the love and support her grandparents could offer. A special and mutual bond developed between Patsy and Ace that otherwise may not have happened.

Ace was a generous, good-hearted man. His home was always open to those who needed a square meal and a place to stay. Each year as the Grant Rodeo took place or the harvesting began, Nettie could plan on Ace bringing home strangers to be fed and bunked down. There was seldom a time their home did not stretch to accommodate new friends. As their children married, Ace and Nettie moved over to make room for them until a home of their own was established. Several of Nettie's brothers lived with them at different times, and Uncle Heb lived with the Randalls for ten years.

Ace had a great sense of humor. No matter what the occasion or situation was, he could lift the spirits of those around him. He was a good storyteller and would include accents when needed and facial expression that could not be duplicated. It did not matter if you were hearing the story for the first time or the tenth time, tears of laughter would roll down cheeks, including his own, as he delivered the punch line. Ace loved to laugh and he loved to make people happy.

In 1950, Ace started to experience trouble with his health. He suffered a heart attack in 1953, which left him weak and unable to work as he always had. Over the next few months he continued to have difficulties and suffered from a series of strokes.

On November 26, 1953, Ace and Nettie celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary. It was a wonderful day as they greeted family and friends and relived memories they had carved out of the years they had shared.

The winter months kept Ace indoors where Nettie tried to nurse his ailing condition. On March 12, 1954, Ace suffered another heart attack and a brain hemorrhage. This left him unable to get out of bed and struggling with memory loss. Months later he suffered a severe stroke, which brought to a conclusion the life of Charles Aceil Randall on May 23, 1954. He was buried in the Central Cemetery, at Grant, Jefferson County, Idaho.

Ace Randall was a lot of things to a lot of people. His was a unique personality that could bring wisdom and good judgment to a tough situation, or humor and foolishness to the every day ho-hum routine. He was a friend to all, willing to share what he had with friend or stranger. He was forever devoted to his wife of fifty years and his children and grandchildren. His life was eventful, colorful and a cherished moment in time for those who were fortunate to have associated with him.

This author of this Life Sketch of Charles Aceil Randall is unknown. Names, dates and some events have been added and verified from stories, documents and other records collected and kept in the Family History Library of K. Oswald.