**A Full Life**

By Grace L. Marshall

Several friends have asked me why I didn’t write the story of my life, as I have had a life of so many varied experiences. My answer was always, “Who would be interested in my life?

Finally, I was persuaded that it might be a help to someone. I am writing for one special reason – to show how God can use a life given over to Him even though that life hasn’t the talent or ability to do great things. The victories that have been mine have come only through the love, mercy, and help of God. The trials and hardship I also consider as coming to me through his permissive will, for the development of my spiritual life.

The following is a true story.

Grace L. Marshall

Austin, Indiana

Date: 1961

My twin brother and I were all aglow with enthusiasm as we sat together in the country home. “Just think,” said Ernest, “we’ll get to ride on big boat up the Ohio river! Boy, that will be fun! I wonder how fast they will go?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” I answered, “but it sure will be a lot of fun!” We were named Ernst and Grace and were the children of George and Mary Harris. The family had lived for many years in the old Harris Home near Vevay, Indiana, in Switzerland County. We were very poor and could scarcely make a living on the little farm when an opportunity to rent a river bottom farm in Kentucky. Ther my parents would be able to farm more extensively, so they decided to make the change.

Preparations began and the days slipped quickly be. One could wintery day the furniture was loaded into a big wagon and the family climbed into a buggy and started to Vevay, Indiana. There the furniture was unloaded onto the wharf and in due time we were all on a large boat to our new home.

We never forgot that trip. Ernest and I had new matching suits and new shoes and of course we were very proud. Being twins, we attracted much attention among the passengers. The captain took us to a nice warm place near the engine room where we could be comfortable see many sights along the rives shore.

Before long we were established in the new home; poor but happy as we begin life in a new place.

There were two older brothers and one older sister named Edith.

The large farm demanded a lot of hard work; and all of us worked together and enjoyed it. Only two (illegible) passed when the older brother married and left the home nest. A few more short years passed and then the other brother left to start of home of his own.

We always attended church and Sunday School, sometimes going horseback, sometimes in a buggy, and at other times in a big wagon. In winter, when there was snow, the pon put the wagon bed on a large sled and we used that.

A Methodist Church was organized and services were held in a nearby schoolhouse. Ernst and I became members of the Church.

At the age of 15 I started to High School in Patriot, Indiana, a town across the river from my home.

The year I graduated, the older sister, Edith married. My brother and I were left ot carry on the work of the farm.

My mother had developed an incurable disease and was an invalid for ten years, always in a wheel chair. My father helped to care for her, but the housework fell to my lot.

My brother and I, unlike the youth of our today, found pleasure in the home. During long winter evenings we eat by an open firs playing guitar or singing and sometimes I played an old organ my uncle had given me.

While I had three offers of marriage, somehow I wasn’t impressed and so turned them all down. I felt my place was at home caring from my mother. I never regretted this decision. I learned many valuable lessons during these years that I would never have learned elsewhere. Many hard but valuable experiences came my way. Had I married then, I likely would never have entered Christian work.

But those happy days were not to last. My brother, Ernst, married and moved back to Indiana. I was left to care for my parents. They soon moved back to the old Harris Home, In a year, mother died and in a few more years my father married again. I was left on my own.

For years there had bed been a deep longing in my heart, a hunger to satisfy my soul. When a revival began in a large country church I soon made my way to the alter of prayer and found that for which I had longed for so long. And how my life was changed!

When the Pastor asked my if I would be willing to bear the sneers of the world for Jesus, I answered, “I would be only too glad to tell others about Him!” I didn’t realize what my answer would mean in future years.

For several years I had taught a Sunday school class, but now I felt better prepared to deal out God’s precious words to hungry souls.

In a short while God called me to Christian service. I felt I wanted to be an evangelist, but the way did not open. I left it all in God’s hands. In after years, I realized how the Lord had led me in a round about way to where he really wanted me. I wasn’t ready for that type of work then.

In the same year I was converted, I attended a Methodist Conference. There I met a young lade who was a Methodist Deaconess. As she told of her work and her training school it made a great impression on me, one I could not get away from. Later that year I attended an Epworth League Convention where I contacted anotehr Deaconess and heard her speak. I began to feel that for the present, at least, that was the place I could get my training.

Then the question came up: How could I go to school? I had no money and no one to help me.

Some of my girl friends helped me pick blackberries, which we sold for fifteen cents a gallon. That helped to get a few clothes.

The Pastor contacted the school and to my great surprise, I received a scholarship

The school was conducted in a large three-story building which also housed all of the Deaconesses who worked in the city. The building was called “The Elizabeth Gamble Deaconess Home and Missionary Training School.” The Home was named for the mother of James T. Gamble, the noted manufacturer of the well-known Ivory Soap. It was situated in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Home was beautiful with lovely homelike furnishings, which we all enjoyed.

After two years of preparation, the day of graduation finally arrived. There were twenty-two in the class. Graduation services were inspiring. Bishop Quale, of the Methodist Church, brought a challenging message on “The Task of an Angel.” We girls were thrilled as our superintendent, Miss Wardle, put the black Deaconess bonnet on our heads and tied the white strings under our chin. The Deaconess garb was very neat – a plain black dress with the high neck and long sleeves, a narrow white collar and cuffs and the little bonnet. We soon learned that the people with whom we worked with always respected the woman with the little bonnet.

We were consecrated at a Conference in the Methodist Church at Lima, Ohio. It was a beautiful service.

I was place in the worst slum district in Cincinnati. Five Deaconesses and I lived as a family in the they called “The Neighborhood Home” right in the midst of those with whom we worked. Those years were full, but enjoyable. The Family learned to love the people and were untiring in their efforts to minister to their needy souls.

Every Deaconess received an allowance of ten dollars a month. We were supplied with all our needs by the Deaconess Association, except our clothes, which were inexpensive and not many were needed.

Religion was stressed in all of our activities. Children of all ages came. There was a kindergarten for the over three to five year olds. For the girls there was a sewing school, domestic science and classes in which they were taught to keep house, arrange furniture and wash and iron. For the boys there was manual training. All memorized Bible verses.

In a few years I was stationed in a large church as a Preachers Aid. I was not very happy as the church was modernistic in belief and I could not agree with their beliefs. I began to pray about it and God wonderfully answered my prayer. I received a call from home saying that my father was very sick and needed me. I immediately planned to go and help care for him. I sensed God’s hand in it and had the feeling I would never come back to that church. And I never did.

My father recovered and the way opened for me to enter the ministry. I attended the District Conference at Madison, Indiana, where I received my Local Preacher License. A pastor had resigned from a little church in Madison, and I was asked to fill out the year, which I did. It was a big undertaking and at first I had refused, but after an interview with the Superintendent, I reconsidered and accepted the offer. I felt the smile of God’s approval on my life as I entered into the new field of service. I filled out the year there and to my surprise was recalled for four more successive year.

On the first Sunday of my ministry came a new experience. A mother brought her baby to be baptized. I was rather nervous as this was all pretty new to me but managed to get by, and the baby didn’t cry!

The next week I had my first funeral service. This was an old lady who had requested me to preach from John 14:1. It took much study and prayer, but I knew I had to learn many things through experience, so got through with it too.

Another unusual event happened a few short weeks later. At 5:00 am on Sunday morning there was a knock at my door. I tremblingly opened the door, not knowing what to expect, and there stood an excited young man. He gasped breathlessly. “My father is very sick! He wants a preacher.” The lived in an alley in the back of the parsonage. I immediately put on my coat and followed the lad home. I found his father in critical condition. The home was very scantily furnished and everything looked like dire poverty. The poor man didn’t live very long but seemed comforted after I’d read him some scripture and prayed for him. After the funeral, the undertaker handed me $5.00 for my services. I looked surprised, but he told me they had found $1,000 sewed up in his clothing.

One experience I’ll never forget was the hardest and saddest of my entire ministry. A young man nearby had developed TB and was very sick. I often called at the home and prayed with him and we talked of spiritual things. Finally he passed away and I was asked to conduct the funeral services. I made all necessary arrangements and went back home. The next morning I received work that the young man’s father had passed away in the night after a heart attack, and that the arrangements must be made for a double funeral to be held in the home. The wife and mother was almost blind and as the crowd viewed the body she could only bend over the caskets and pass her hands over their cold (illegible). It was all so touching that I could hardly proceed without breaking down, but managed with God’s help to get through the ordeal.

I had many weddings while I was in Madison. One was the double wedding of my nieces, Margaret and Helen. This was a thrill when they both showed up at the parsonage with their fiancés to be married!

At the end of the four years at Madison I was appointed a charge of four churches. This kept me pretty busy and taxed my strength at times, but these were happy years and God blessed us in a wonderful way. The first year I had a revival in one of my churches and many young people found the Lord. As a result, forty members were added to the church.

Of course there were many problems to be worked out which required careful thinking and much prayer to God for Divine guidance, but there were many pleasant things along the way which encouraged me to press on in the work of God.

While on this same charge, we built four very beautiful Sunday school rooms at the church in Hanover, Indiana which added much to its appearance and usefulness.

My aged father had retired from the farm while I was pastoring my first church. He and my stepmother came to make their home with me. This certainly brought much joy to the home. Both were possessed with sweet Christian characters and I loved having them after they moved in with me but my stepmother remained with me for two years before she was called to her heavenly home and I was again left alone.

On one occasion I had a very unusual surprise. I had been calling on some members of one of my churches when I received a phone call asking me to be home by eight o’clock to officiate at a wedding. I hurried home all excited and rushed around getting everything reading for the wedding. Suddenly the doorbell rang. As I opened the door, the pianist swept past me saying, “I want to try this out on your piano,” and began to play the Wedding March. The to me surprise, the door opened again and in walked most of my congregation led by an older man and woman. He was carrying a can rubber to represent the wedding ring. She wore a long veil made out of a window curtain! How we all laughed at the sight of these two marching so solemnly down through the living room! The occasion wasn’t a wedding after all by a donation for the pastor and soon the dining room was heaped with an abundance of eatables and many household articles!

Another of my churches asked me to come to the church on a certain night for a little social get together. All were there when I arrived. Before long, someone suggested that we play a game and let me be “it” first. I played into their hands doing whatever they asked. I was blindfolded and let to a chair on the platform, and I was not to peep until they told me to. The people began to scramble around and pretty soon I heard the squawk of an old hen! This sort of gave the whole thing away; nevertheless, when they finally told me I could look, I’ll have to admit I was still rather surprised to see the church alter piled high with all the things that can be found in a country home in the way of eats.

After four years of service on the (illegible), I married a retired Baptist preacher. When he first asked me to marry him, I said no, that never intended to marry, but time went on and I prayed and studied over the matter and finally said yes.

Thus, I enter a new epoch of my life. He helped me in the work , sharing in the preaching and planning for the churches. In a few years, I retired from active service, but still found plenty to keep me busy. I worked in the Epworth League, Ladies Aid, and other activities.

Later we moved to Austin, Indiana. Here we gave our time to work in a nearby Methodist church where we made many friends. Time went swiftly by and in three years, my husband passed away. Again I was left alone.

Added duties came then, such as caring for a garden and large yard by myself. I did most of my redecorating and painting my garage and part of the house.

God seemed to give me added strength as the years went by. I continued my work in the Methodist church. I acted as Sunday school superintendent for several years, was president of the W.S.C.S and taught a Sunday School class.

At this time a close friend, Lura Harred, gathered a few children from underprivileged homes and began having church services under a large hickory tree in her back yard. For two years I helped her in this work. We had no money, so I went with my Ford to a nearby barn and brought several dozen orange crates home, which we covered and used for pews. The results were worth all the effort we put into it because out of it grew the present Pilgram Holiness Church in Austin.

A few years later, with the help of others we started a Junior Church in the basement of the Methodist Church. We had a worship center in one corner with a neat little pulpit which was built by one of the young men, John Carr. Lura Harred secured some church pews from a disbanded church. The children enjoyed having their own church and we soon had an enrollment of ninety.

At this time came another change in a new line of work. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Keith and family of eight children, missionaries from Africa came on a furlough. Through the influence of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Harred, the bought property in Austin, near my home and started a mission. It shortly became a church and was organized into the Pilgrim Holiness Church in 1948.

The membership of the new church was small so I was called to fill many places. I had charge of Young People’s Society, taught a Sunday School class, acted as Treasurer and Secretary of the church, and also acted as Trustee and Pianist.

Despite all this work, I felt those were probably the happiest and busiest years of my life. A new pastor came to the church and later developed a sickness which kept him from his work for three months. His wife and I carried on the work – each preaching once every Sunday. We led the prayer meetings and looked after the things which needed to be done.

During these years I contacted many in the locality. Each year I canned fruit and vegetables to give to the needy, and there were many. I sought to help in the finances by selling greeting cards and fancy work which I had made. I often walked miles in selling those articles. In this way I contacted many homes which I never would have been able to reach otherwise.

At the age of seventy-nine my twin brother came to make his home with me as he too had been left alone. We spent many happy hours together but evidently this wasn’t God’s plan for our lives , for he also passed away in a little while. So again I was left alone – the last one of a family of nine children.

While I didn’t question God, I often wondered why One night God spoke to me saying “I want you all for myself.” This encouraged my soul and challenged me to press on, although I was now eighty years old. Later, as I was grieving over the loss of my brother, again I heard the voice of God as he spoke to me through a song:

“Does Jesus care when I’ve said goodbye.

To the dearest on earth to me?

Oh yes he cares, I know he cares;

His heart is touched with my grief.

When days are dreary,

The long nights weary,

I know my Savior cares.”

This drew me nearer to Jesus and I felt his tender lover and care as I never had before.

At the age of eighty-one my mind began to turn to the Heavenly Home and the loved ones over there. I still did some work in the church, teaching a class, leading prayer meetings, calling and occasionally preaching, but I gave up the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.

In my lonely hours again, God spoke to me through a song, “Looking this Way.”

“Brother and sister gone to that clime,

Waiting for the others coming some time;

Safe with the angels, whiter than snow,

Watching for dear ones waiting below.”

I felt that my work was about done, yet I longed to help others find their way to God. Only one avenue opened. That was by writing. I wrote a few short stories. Many of those were returned almost as a fast as I sent them to publishing houses. Finally, one story was accepted and printed in our “Sunday Messenger.” This has encouraged me to continue writing.

At the age of eighty-two I still teach a class in Sunday school and act as pianist.

At times I look back over these many years. There have been clouds and shadows, but there has also been so much joy and sunshine along the way. God has never failed me through all these years. I am trusting him to lead me on to a Better Country. I can truly say I have had a full life

**Note**

This story has been retyped from a photocopied document found in the archives of Hanover United Methodist Church as part of its 175th birthday celebration. Thus, there were a few words that were illegible. Mrs. Marshall was the first female pastor to serve Hanover United Methodist Church, serving from 1925-2928. Hanover did not have another female pastor until Reverend Betsy Baxendale in 1988!

Mrs. Marshall passed away in 1966 at the age of 86.

Leonard Lichlyter, a member of HUMC was her great, great step grandson.