2000 Honorable Mention Argumentative Essay

A Veteran’s Relationship with History

In 1944 the world was caught in one of the greatest wars of all time, World War II. The whole United States was mobilized to assist in the war effort. As history was being made overseas, as citizens learned to do without many amenities of life, and as families grieved over loved ones lost in the war, two students on BYU campus were beginning a history of their own. Chauncey and Bertha Riddle met in the summer of 1944 and seven months later were engaged to be married. Chauncey was eighteen and a half and Bertha nineteen as they knelt across the altar in the St. George temple five months after their engagement. Little did they know that in just the first years of marriage they would be involved with the effects of a significant historical event, the atomic bomb, as well as government legislation, the GI Bill, that would not only affect the course of their lives but also the course of the entire country.

Chauncey and Bertha honeymooned in the Grand Canyon late in the summer of 1945. Upon returning to Cedar City, they learned the news that “the United States [had] developed this wonderful bomb and [they’d] dropped it and it hopefully [would] shorten the war greatly.” The first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 7, and the second on Nagasaki on August 9. The official surrender came on August 11, 1945, officially ending the bloody campaign in Japan. The climate in the country was not one of alarm, in reaction to the bomb, but of tired relief. Bertha reflected this attitude. “Those people of our generation saw how many of their friends had died in bloody combat with the Japanese so they were grateful to see it ended.” The atomic bomb seemed the long-awaited answer to concluding the war quickly.

The bomb was not without its controversies and consequences, however. Before it was dropped, Leo Szilard, leading scientist in the development of the bomb, “opposed it with all [his] power” (Truman 68). His close contact with the destructive weapon caused him and others to argue against its use. It didn’t take long after the end of the war for scholars to assess the atom bomb and its potential in future warfare. In the Yale Review, 1946, Bernard Brodie looked in depth at its future implications and influence on the security of all nations. He recognized that the world could not fully defend itself against such a weapon (Brodie). Within a year of its use, the political effects of the atom bomb were felt. Its immediate result, the end of the war, was almost wholly embraced. However, the climate of the country began to change. Americans sensed there was less security in the world, especially as the beginnings of the Cold War began to take shape in American politics and society. The atom bomb and the end of the war affected the Riddles in quite a different way.

Before marrying in July, Chauncey was drafted into the military. He had previously tried to enlist and was turned down because he was myopic, or had poor eyesight. “A few months later they called [him] back and gave [him] exactly the same test with exactly the same results and drafted [him].” Chauncey entered the army the day after the war ended. The atomic bomb’s influence on ending the war made it unnecessary for Chauncey to fight in combat. Instead, for one year he worked mostly as a clerk in Salt Lake City. His first responsibility for six months was to separate servicemen, or write out job descriptions of duties performed in the army so they could take their credentials to prospective employers. All the servicemen from Utah, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming came to be separated from the military at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake. Nationwide, 1,000 servicemen and women were discharged within a month after the war’s end. By 1946, only a fourth, three million from twelve million, were still in the service (Bennett 5). After six months Chauncey was transferred to company headquarters to work on personnel records. By years end he was discharged from the army and free to return to his education.
The Riddles now found however, that they were returning to BYU under very different circumstances. Chauncey had just one year remaining before completing his BA but many of his school expenses were now covered by a pivotal piece of legislation: the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, or the GI Bill. Under the bill, those who had served in the armed forces on or after September 16, 1940 and before the end of the war whose education had been “impeded, delayed, interrupted or interfered with” were “eligible for and entitled to receive education or training.” Restrictions such as a necessary honorable discharge, a minimum of 90 days of service, and a maximum age requirement (related to the full education benefit), were the only barriers between millions of servicemen and a golden opportunity (Readjustment Act 288). Any veteran over the age limit for a full education was allowed to take a refresher course no matter his or her age or educational background (Manning 1003). Those who were under twenty-five years of age were allowed up to four years of schooling based on the amount of time spent in the service (Readjustment Act 288). These new students were given eight years after their discharge, or the end of the war, to take advantage of their benefits (Levitan and Zickler 42). For one year of service in the army, Chauncey now had assistance to help him complete his education.

One of the best benefits associated with the GI Bill was the money allotted to each GI. A “subsistence allowance” of $50 per month, $75 if there were dependents, was awarded on top of tuition up to $500 a year (Readjustment Act 289). Later, in 1948, the sum was raised to $75 a month (Levitan and Zickler 52). Veterans with a spouse received $105 and families received $120 (Bennett 243). The sum was small but the help was appreciated. “It wasn’t very much- fifty dollars or something to live on. But it was something.” There were plenty of veterans to help. Around 3.5 million servicemen and women were demobilized in one year (Donaldson 5). In 1945 1.6 million veterans entered the educational system and in the fall of 1946, 2.1 million were attending school. This made up 45% of students attending universities (Bennett 2). Many of these students would never have had the opportunity of going to school and receiving a higher education had it not been for the G.I. Bill’s assistance.

Chauncey especially benefited from the GI tuition money two years after graduating from BYU. After graduation in the spring of ’47, Chauncey and Bertha moved to Nevada where Chauncey worked as a taxi driver and a tour guide for his father. His father was the owner of Yellow Cabs of Nevada and Chauncey was the assistant manager. After two years working with his father’s businesses, Chauncey decided to further his education at Columbia University in New York. In 1945 Columbia had stated that it was open to veterans, when many other colleges were wary of the sudden influx, on the assumption that these veterans were entering school with the same education goals as every other student (Columbia 214). Chauncey would have to prove himself capable of excelling at the demanding university. At the time, political scientists believed that most veterans would go into vocational courses and register less in academic courses (Manning 1003). However, veterans were free to go into whatever field they wished. Chauncey chose to study philosophy in hopes of teaching at a university. Columbia’s high tuition was no longer a barrier. “When [he] got back to Columbia where the tuition was very high [the GI Bill] paid that too. [He] couldn’t have gone there without that.” Many other GI’s, it seemed, followed a similar path since 52% of veterans choose often more expensive and difficult private institutions (Bennett 19).

The Riddles were still starting out though, and they did not have the money to live in New York. While the GI Bill covered limited expenses, the income was not sufficient to support the whole family in New York City. Consequently for a school year Chauncey lived in New York and went to school while Bertha stayed part time with her parents and part time with his. Without the GI Bill, many men would have ended up working straight out of the service. However, because of the assistance from the government, a high percentage was able to pursue higher education. While this became a positive force for the future, it created many hardships. “[The Riddle’s] third child was born while Chauncey was at Columbia and [Bertha] was still in Nevada and that little boy died which was a very difficult experience.” Chauncey returned from Columbia to attend the funeral and spend Christmas holiday with his little family, but after Christmas he returned to Columbia to continue his studies and make up missed final exams. Once again the couple was separated for four months.
A full quarter of the students in higher educational institutions were still veterans at this time. That number had fallen from 49.2% in 1947, but Veterans were still a major force in the nation’s schools and the colleges were still trying to meet the extra demands placed on them. Students were placed in packed dorms, fraternities, sororities, boarding houses, ex-army barracks, and three trailer camps (Douglas 112). Housing, food, money, and teachers were all in short supply (Walters). “[BYU] jumped from 700 to five thousand a year and it kept on growing.” This was a typical scenario of U.S. colleges at the time. The huge influx of millions of veterans helped prevent strains on the job market but the strain on schools was tremendous. Many students were forced to accept substandard living conditions from universities that could not house them. However, the schools finally began to catch up to the growth and house more of their students.

Housing was a concern for those in and out of school. Predicting the desires of many young men to get a new start, the GI Bill provided housing subsidies for veterans. The immediate demand for housing was curbed by the large number of students not ready to invest in their own homes (Bennett 15). However, the bill provided guaranteed loans up to $2,000, and many veterans took advantage of the government’s offer (Readjustment Act 291). Housing starts in 1944 numbered around 136,000. They were increased to 325,000 in 1945, but jumped drastically to 1,015,000 in 1946 (Bennett 15). The sharp increase in demand was larger than the market’s capacity to fill the need. However, “the GI Bill created and filled the suburbs” (24). The housing industry began to reach proportions equal to the car industry, mainly due to a man named William J. Levitt (24). His entrepreneurial ideas about building quick, sturdy houses provided a way to keep pace with demand. Levitt’s company began building over 30 houses in a day. While they were all alike they were efficient and filled the need and even had trees, parks and playgrounds (Douglas 148). The economy responded to the needs of the veterans as it continued to expand.

However, in other ways the economy was slow to respond to postwar demands. Newsweek reported in 1946 the great frustration Americans had due to continued shortages of mainly household goods (Goods: Sorry). It was not surprising that the economy hadn’t fully switched back to peacetime production from the war machine it had been for the last four to five years. From 1940 to 1945, factories produced 300,000 aircraft, almost 75,000 naval ships, over 40 billion rounds of ammunition, and over 2,000,000 trucks. While war products never exceeded 40% of the gross national product, war production was a major force in American economics (Douglas 5). Citizens were not only worried about empty store shelves but rising prices. Worries about inflation came in response to a 22% price hike from June of 1946 to December of 1948. Even though wages also went up and unemployment stayed below 4½%, Americans worried over rising costs on basic goods (Bennett 14). There was also initial concern that there would be another recession similar to the one that followed the First World War. However, the GI Bill “painlessly reabsorbed 12 million veterans into the economy” (14) thus preventing many of the previous generation’s problems. Seven point eight million veterans went to school and the rest, if they were unemployed, collected benefits of $20 a week and generally were working within a short period of time (14).

The GI Bill’s solution to the Veteran’s rush on the economy had another great effect. Just after the war, labor problems broke out. What began as a Ford supplier strike in 1945 led to a GM, steel worker, soft coal worker, and railroad strike in subsequent months.

If the veterans hadn’t been absorbed in getting on with their lives, drawing unemployment while applying for school, looking for a job, or starting a business or profession, the automobile, rail and coal strikes might well have had cataclysmic effects. Idle, without money or prospects, the veterans would have inevitably been drawn into the rail and coal strikes on one side or the other. (17)

Without the GI Bill to distract veterans, the country might have taken a completely different course with a great deal of confusion and disorder. Instead, the economy survived the influx in the workforce and even grew exponentially.
Families were greatly affected by the GI Bill. The Riddles were finally able to afford moving together to New York. They packed up their wood body station wagon and drove from Utah to New York City. Because GI housing was 25 miles away, the little family lived in the bell tower of an old chapel that had been purchased by the LDS church. Not only were they given the apartment but also a custodial job for the building. This provided extra income and the apartment’s convenient location made it easy to get to meetings on time. They lived in their tiny apartment for two years with three children. Bertha never finished college but instead focused on raising her family. She took the children to Hudson River, Central and Riverside Parks as well as to the American Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She exposed her children to as many diverse experiences as she could. Because most museums were free, her limited budget was not strained yet the children were well entertained. Millions of women chose to return home to their families as soon as the veterans returned. Between 1945 and 1947, 2.5 million women quit their jobs (Bennett 13). However, from 1947 to 1952, the percent of working mothers was up 400% (Douglas 98). While Bertha chose to stay home with her children, many other women were choosing to enter the work force. Still, families boomed after the war. In 1948, one out of every five students was married as opposed to one out of every twenty one just nine years earlier (98). The birth rate went from 2,315 per 10,000 of the population in 1936 to 3,817 in 1947 (Bennett 24). Families all over the nation were growing and experiencing many challenges, similar to the Riddles, in making a start for themselves.

A great difficulty for many young couples was the strain of school demands on the family. While Bertha watched the children, Chauncey was still working toward his degree in Philosophy. Because he hadn’t studied philosophy at BYU, he had to catch up while he was learning his current class material. He also met up with fierce competition. The students were “90% Jewish, very hard workers and very bright. [He] had to stay up all night to keep up with them.” He would often study 12-14 hours a day. At the end of his schooling he was required to take comprehensive exams. There were two of them and each lasted two days for eight hours each. “[Chauncey] passed the first one and the second one everybody flunked. So [he] had to slow down and re-study everything and take it again. That time three passed- everybody else failed. [Students] only get two chances so it was a real weeding out.” Chauncey was lucky to be one of the three. He had finally completed his education largely due to assistance from the GI Bill.

While there was much praise of what the GI Bill was doing for veterans like Chauncey, there were also concerns and complaints related to the new legislation. American Magazine reported that veterans were running into red tape from administrators that were keeping them from receiving their full-entitled benefits (28). On the other hand, educators often worried about the effects of free education. William Randall of the University of Missouri speculated that GI’s would see education as a “reward for past services” rather than a reward for academic achievement (Randel 412). Most universities had reservations concerning the large influx of veterans but found the majority of GI’s were good students. The immense benefits to the country and to the veterans far outweighed the concerns voiced by various small groups of critics.

Little of what society is today is independent of the GI Bill’s effects. From education to economic security, the GI Bill laid the foundation for post war expansion. It also paved the way for social change. “The GI Bill was America’s first color-blind social legislation” (Bennett 26). It was a means whereby many future Civil Rights leaders were educated (26). John W. Manning could not have been more correct when he speculated in 1945 that “the veterans will be a factor to be considered in public life after the war. . . . Many of these will take advantage of the free education offered them under the GI Bill.” The education provided by the bill, that might not have been available otherwise, led to a more educated and independent generation of Americans who shaped postwar society and culture.

Six years after graduating from Columbia, Chauncey returned to earn his doctoral degree with a dissertation on Carl Pearson’s philosophy of science. Without the atomic bomb to end the war, Chauncey might have seen combat. Instead, his service amounted to enough work to pay his way through school at BYU and also Columbia. The GI Bill and its many provisions was a springboard to the Riddles’ lives. The nation’s history intertwined with their own to shape their future. The GI Bill was one of the greatest pieces of legislation to
come out of the government because of its far-reaching positive effect on the country’s development. It was the proper solution to the close of a historic period of history.

Works Cited

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“Columbia University’s Policies as to the Admission of War Veterans.” School and Society 2 Apr. 1945: 214.


Riddle, Chauncey and Bertha. Personal interview. 18 Sept. 2000.

Riddle, Chauncey and Bertha. Personal interview. 14 November. 2000.
Interview with Chauncey and Bertha Riddle 11-14-00

I have a question about the GI Bill. Didn’t they provide cheaper housing?

We never go any use of that. At Columbia they had a housing project for students but it was way up, 25 miles away in Shanks village. It was cheap but it would you more in transportation than it was worth. We got a job as custodians in the chapel. We got to live in the chapel. It was neat. We had a very exciting time back there. We never missed church. Unless we were sick or something, you know what I mean. We were right there for it.

So did you just have a room off to the side?

No it was a little- there was a bell tower in it. The first floor was the kitchen and the bathroom. Ours were the second and third floors of the bell tower. There were lots of steps to go up. The church had bought an older building and then they built this little apartment for the custodians. It was an experience.

How long did you live there?

Two years.

It was probably pretty small wasn’t it?

Oh, it was small.

How many kids did you have at that point?

We took two back and had one there. Actually the rooms were big. And there was a kitchen and a bathroom on the bottom and then you went up twenty-seven steps to a big bedroom. The thing is they were good size rooms but the ceilings were ten feet tall. They were very, very high and on one landing we had a television set. It was the first in the whole ward there too, at least among the students. Chance’s mom had won it on one of these things- oh it was one of those calling programs so she shipped it back to us. It was one of those where you lift it up and look at it on a mirror. They’re very old. You tipped it up and looked at the reflection on the mirror. The neighbors even came and watched it.
How long did you date before you were engaged?

About nine months. We started dating in the summer and didn’t get engaged until March.

How much older are you (Sis. Riddle)?

Six months.

An older woman!

Yeah, how about that. He’s been the junior companion all these years.

You were a junior when you met right?

That’s what threw us off.

How did you end up a junior at that age?

I went through high school in three years and went to BYU nonstop until the summer we got married.

He also got a double promotion in grade school.

I got held back a grade too.

Oh, kindergarten, you didn’t either, they just changed the deadline to enter.

I spent two years in kindergarten.

What ages were you when you got married?

I was nineteen and Brother Riddle was eighteen and a half.

Which temple?

St. George.

Did you go to BYU for another year after you got married then?

I went into the army for a year then went and finished at BYU one more year.

Tell me about the army

I went to- I was inducted in Salt Lake City.

Were you drafted or did you enlist?

I tried to enlist and they turned me down.

Because he was myopic- bad eye sight.
A few months later they called me back and gave me exactly the same test with exactly the same results and drafted me.

While we were on our honeymoon we went to the Grand Canyon, and by the way nobody was at the Grand Canyon in those days- they dropped the atomic bomb and so the war ended after that. And everybody knew then that the war was over. He was still drafted and they sent him to a separation center-

the place (Fort Douglas in Salt Lake) where all the people from Utah, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming came to be separated and my job was to write up their job descriptions

Separated?

Separated out of the army. I had to write up their job descriptions of the work they’d done while they were in the army so they could take that to their prospective employers. He had to tell them about insurance. I did that for six months then I was transferred to company headquarters.

What did you do at company headquarters?

I was working personnel records.

What was your initial reaction to the atomic bomb when you heard about it?

When we got back to Cedar City I remember Aunt Abby said the United States has developed this wonderful bomb and they’ve dropped it and it hopefully will shorten the war greatly because it was obviously a very powerful bomb and the Japanese didn’t want many of them dropped. People have criticized Truman greatly because so many people were killed but when you compare that with the amount of people that would have been killed to take, or to finish the war out the bloody hand-to-hand way, it saved a lot of lives. Everyone expected that that would end the war soon and it did. Japan surrendered within two weeks. Three days. Those people of our generation saw how many of their friends had died in bloody combat with the Japanese so they were grateful to see it ended.

Where did you live when you were in the army?

Salt Lake City.

Then you lived there for a year then back to BYU?

Yes.

Then we moved to Las Vegas for two years after he graduated and worked for his father.

What did you do?

He owned the Yellow Cabs of Nevada and I was the assistant manager of the cab company. He also had a tour business so I conducted a lot of tours- sight seeing tours- I did a lot of driving. I drove seven passenger limousines.

I bet Las Vegas was different then.

There were only about ten thousand people then. Now there’s fourteen stakes. It has grown so greatly.
Did you get a lot of business because of the strip?

Yes.

Las Vegas has always been a cab town. People there are on vacation and they spend a lot of money. Even the local people would often just ride cabs to work. During the war they couldn’t get gas for their cars so they would just ride cabs.

The government then allowed cab companies to get more gas?

We could get all the gas we needed.

Was it expensive or was it controlled?

23 cents a gallon.

When was your first child born?

He was a honeymoon baby. He was born nine months and two weeks after we were married. He was born on Mother’s Day. The 12th of May, 1946. Nice day to have a baby.

At that time what were you doing (Brother Riddle)?

I was still in the army.

When you went back to BYU were you on GI Bill money?

Yes.

What did they pay for?

They paid tuition and a stipend of so much a month. It wasn’t very much- fifty dollars or something to live on. But it was something. The main thing was the tuition because when I got back to Columbia where the tuition was very high they paid that too. I couldn’t have gone there without that.

So you went to Columbia after the two years you were in Las Vegas?

Yes.

And you (Sis. Riddle?)

I stayed in Las Vegas and in Regale with- part time with his parents and part of the time with mine the first year he was back there ‘till he found an apartment to live in and this little job in the church. The apartment went with it by the way. The first year was difficult but we survived it.

When was your second child born?

He was born while Chaunce was still working for his father in Las Vegas. 1948, March. The third child was born while Chaunce was at Columbia and I was still in Nevada and that little boy died which was a very difficult experience. The fourth child, also a boy, was born while we were in New York.
Tell me about school in New York.

Well, it was scary. I didn’t know if I had the stuff to get through or not. The first time I took the Comprehensives- after you get through your course work you take the comprehensive exams- there are two of them- each one lasted two days for eight hours. I passed the first one and the second one everybody flunked. So I had to slow down and re-study everything and take it again. That time three passed-everybody else failed. You only get two chances so it was a real weeding out. So I passed that and then I got a job offer at BYU. I didn’t have my dissertation even started- I just had the topic. I decided to go to BYU and take the job and do my dissertation here. I did that for six years and it didn’t work.

What was your topic?

Carl Pearson’s philosophy of science. He is the father of modern statistics.

After we had been here two years they made him the Bishop so that slowed down his work on the dissertation greatly.

So I finally decided I had to go back there and finish it there so after six years I did- took a sabbatical. I did it in one semester.

That must have been a lot of work.

It was. But at least I did get through and I had to pass the final oral examination. I didn’t know if I could pass that.

He passed it really high. Everything was just great. He had studied hard and it paid off.

You mentioned I think last time about the competition you had at Columbia?

Yes. 90% Jewish. Very hard workers and very bright. I had to stay up all night to keep up with them.

Only three people passed the second exam. Out of how many took it?

There were about 25.

The terrible thing is that you only get two chances. They had to go over somewhere else or do something else.

What was life for you during the time he was in school (Sister Riddle)?

I helped take care of the chapel. I was a helper. I took the children to the park every day. It was lots of fun for me. I enjoyed it back there. We had to budget very, very carefully. It wasn’t easy but it was possible.

What kind of things did you do?

I was president of the primary. It wasn’t a very big primary; there were only about 20. It was when they had it during the week- on a weekday. We had primary during the week. Relief Society too. In fact we had Relief Society at night. On Tuesday night the two years we were there. But then after a while people didn’t even dare ride the subways at night and they totally discontinued that and had it in the daytime and then of course they went to the consolidated schedule.

You had how many kids while you were in New York?
One child was born there, our fourth little boy.

You had three with you?

One had died so we had three.

I think you mentioned going to museums.

Oh yes. That was a wonderful thing. Our apartment was 142W 81st Street and was between Riverside Park and the big Hudson River Park on the one end the Central Park on the other side. It was also very close to the American Museum of Natural History and the Planetarium- the big Haden planetarium which is the one of the finest planetariums in the world- at least it was at that time. And then just through the park was the Metropolitan Museum of Art. And all these things were practically free. There are many things in New York that cost a lot of money but there are lots of things there that are free. I took the children and we saw every exhibit and they were very child friendly. They even had strollers- we had our own stroller- they encouraged people to come with children when some museums don’t. Well, the planetarium didn’t. I never took the younger children. You would go at night and see a planetarium show, it wasn’t something you took children to. I thoroughly enjoyed the parks back there. They were lovely and our little boy turned five while we were there- the second year we were there he turned five and I took him to school every day. I had to take him down and bring him back unless you could afford pick up service, which we couldn’t. So I would bundle the baby and Neil and take him to school and at noon you would have to do the same thing and bring him home. It made an interesting day. It was a beautiful place to live. We used to love to go down and walk through the Riverside Park and see the big Palisades on the New Jersey side and visit Grant’s tomb. I mean there are lots of wonderful things to do and see there. I wouldn’t have wanted to raise a big family there but it was a very nice place to live and we enjoyed it. Chaunce was busy all the time. When he wasn’t working or at school he was reading a book. So I had the family all to myself, a lot of the time.

Tell me about after the war- after the war cars were pretty scarce weren’t they? So what did you have?

Well, my father gave me a 1941 Plymouth when we got married- just before we got married. So we had that.

When we went back to New York we had a station wagon.

We took a wood body station wagon back to New York with a big rack on top that was used in the airport business in Las Vegas. We put a new engine in it and a new transmission and new tires and took it back to New York and it did us a great job.

The only thing was we would have been better off without it in some ways because we didn’t drive it anywhere except once a month we would drive it somewhere but we had to move it all the time because if it was parked overnight in the same spot too many nights the police would take it. And so we spent a lot of time moving that car around.

Twice somebody would come down the street smashing every car window with a hammer. When they got to ours they stopped.

Yeah, we really felt grateful because we missed the vandalism twice when they smashed them all the way down the street. That was the thing even then in New York there was a big vandalism problem and when we would hear these big ruckuses at night we didn’t ever go down and see what was going on. We would just go to the phone and call the police because it was a wild and wicked city. Ours was- it had been a good neighborhood but it was very rapidly deteriorating. It was a Puerto Rican and Black neighborhood by the time that we left. They eventually moved the church for that very reason. They built a big new chapel down by the Lincoln Center. The church in fact built a big building and they rent the upper stories and use the bottom part for the church.
Because the neighborhood got so bad that the people didn’t want to live in it, didn’t want to travel through it or go through it. It had been a beautiful, wonderful neighborhood for a long time. They’ve reclaimed a lot of it too with housing projects and things that have kind of rehabilitated it.

Tell me about staying in Nevada when your husband went through school.

It was hard.

It was a very difficult time.

We were very poor.

Oh, don’t complain darling.

I’m just saying we didn’t have any money because we didn’t.

We couldn’t afford to go back together- that’s the point. It would have taken a great deal of money so I stayed part of the time with my parents in White Pine County, Nevada and part of the time with Chaunce’s parents in Las Vegas.

Your baby died while your husband was at school?

That was a very difficult experience but I felt that I really gained a testimony of the gospel through that difficult experience. I felt that Heavenly Father looked over- watched over us and blessed us. Every grief has its compensation, I guess.

I think you mentioned that you did go back to Nevada after the baby died and that you missed something at school?

I missed all my final exams.

So you had to take those when you got back?

I had to take those after I got back from Christmas vacation.

What was the climate of the country after the war was over? What had changed?

People were very glad to have the war over.

There was a shortage of everything right after the war. There were jobs and things seemed to bomb so they were some good times.

Did BYU have a big surge in students after the war?

It jumped from 700 to five thousand a year and it kept on growing.

How did they accommodate that?

They had had that many before the war and then it went way down because the men were all drafted but then it grew greatly after that. Many GI’s came back to school.
When I came on the faculty there were a hundred faculty at BYU, now there are between 1,000 and 2,000. The GI Bill gave the whole economy a great boost.

A lot of wonderful things have happened in the last fifty years. Nowadays, people fly a lot more readily and so much more cheaply than it used to be. And telephone service- long distance services are sometimes about as cheap as writing a letter- well not that, but anyway, it’s possible and everyone can talk on the phone all they want to, which we do. And e-mail. We love e-mail. It’s wonderful- it’s almost miraculous.

Interview with Chauncey and Bertha Riddle 9-18-00

How could you, Brother Riddle, be a Junior and yet be six months younger than Sister Riddle who was a Freshman?

Brother Riddle skipped a year in grade school and a year in high school and so started at BYU when he was sixteen.

How long did you date before Brother Riddle proposed?

They met in the summer of 1944 and were engaged about seven months later.

What age were you when you got married?

They were married in the summer of 1945 at the age of eighteen.

What was the country like during your early years of marriage?

The country became more prosperous but there were still a lot of shortages. It was hard to buy a lot of manufactured goods, especially cars, for a while. A lot more people went to college because of the GI bill and a lot got married right away and started families.

When did you go into the army?

In 1945, the day after the war ended.

What did you do during you time in the service?

He processed soldiers’ records so they could use their service for job applications, then was moved six months later to do clerical work.

When did you graduate BYU?

1947

Did Sister Riddle ever finish school?

No, as soon as they were married he went into the service and they soon started a family.

When was your first child born? Second?
The first was born while Bro. R. was still in the service and the second just over a year later. Both were boys.

What did you do after you got out of college?

He worked for his father for two years both in his taxi business and driving limousines for his father’s tour company. They were in Nevada at the time and bought a cute little house.

Why didn’t you stay in the business?

Bro. R. wanted a different life so he decided to go to graduate school.

Where did you go to graduate school?

In New York. When he left for graduate school they sold their house and Sis. R. went to stay with her/his parents.

When did your baby die?

The baby died when only five days old while Bro. R. was in New York attending graduate school. He was able to come back for the funeral. That was at the beginning of December so he missed finals and had to make them up when he went back in January. It was a particularly hard time for Sis. R., especially since he wasn’t there when it happened.

How did you support your schooling?

The G.I. Bill paid tuition and some living expenses so his senior year of college and first year of graduate school he didn’t have to work while he went to school.

Sis R.- how long were you with your/his parents while he was at school?

Bro. R. was in school for about eight months so that time was split between the two families.

What did your kids think about Bro. R. being gone?

They were too young to really notice but he wasn’t really gone long enough for them to forget him at all.

When were you finally able to join him?

The next year the whole family drove back and lived in an apartment at the church building in the bell tower. They had a big wood paneled station wagon but they weren’t allowed to park it anywhere so it became more of a hassle than a blessing. Brother R. would have to get up early to move it before the police came. However, they were never late for church.

On average, how much studying did you do a day?

12-14 hours. There were a lot of Jewish students at the school and you simply couldn’t out study them so it was a very competitive environment. They had to take a certain test in order to complete their degree. The first year he took it no one passed so he studied six months and passed it the second time along with one other person. Plus, since he had almost no Philosophy background, he had to catch up what he was expected to know coming into the program on top of what he had to do for his classes. He did a lot of reading his first year.
Sis. R., what did you do while your husband was at school and studying?

She would take to the kids to the museums and the aquarium since they were free and the kids loved them. The museum of art used to change its exhibits quite often so there were always new things to see and the museum was friendly towards children. They did a lot of walking in those days. Because of his demanding academics, Bro. R. did his school work and Sis. R. took care of the children.

What was the ward like?

The ward was pretty small and covered a large area. Sis. R. was Primary President and Bro. R. was Elders Quorum president. People had to come from pretty far places in order to get to church so usually weekday primary didn’t have a lot of kids.