

## A Covenant of Marriage

(1964–1965)

After Bob returned home from his mission, JoAnn was at play practice at the stake center and came running down off the stage when she saw Bob. They had a joyous reunion; JoAnn had written to him throughout his mission and faithfully waited for him.

During high school, Bob and JoAnn had discussed marriage.<sup>1</sup> Even so, Bob didn't exclusively date JoAnn after returning home. This greatly upset JoAnn. She once wrote a delayed response to something Bob had autographed in her yearbook. She said in her response that she had waited for two years, and if he thought



*Joyous reunion upon Elder Holt's return from Georgia, Bob and JoAnn, at the Andy Winsor home in Enterprise, 621 N. Center, spring of 1964.*

1. See photograph of Robert Holt, ca. 1965, newly married, fixing up Charles and Etta Twitchell's home for rent.

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she was going to wait any longer for him, he was a “fool.”<sup>2</sup> JoAnn began to date others as well.

In the meantime, Bob helped his Uncle Jack Moyle farm on the old Moyle Ranch, located north and west of Beryl Junction.<sup>3</sup> To Uncle Jack’s dismay, an early frost in late August of 1964 destroyed the potato crop. Bob also helped Uncle Jack with his Amoco oil distributorship.

In October 1964, Bob was required to report to the army draft board at Camp Williams. He rode the bus to Salt Lake City and from there drove Uncle Hugh Holt’s car to Camp Williams. While driving into the parking lot of the camp, Bob ran the car into a fire hydrant. Water immediately gushed out of the hydrant. The impact of hitting the hydrant injured Bob. As he reported to an army officer, he had blood running down his face. The officer excused Bob from the military obligation without having him complete a physical exam.

This event, according to JoAnn, seemed to knock some sense into her beloved Bob. He left Camp Williams with one thought in mind. He went straight to the university football field in Cedar City to find JoAnn. Halfway up a grassy incline, Bob asked JoAnn to marry him. Without hesitation, JoAnn accepted his proposal.<sup>4</sup>

Although Bob and JoAnn were happy to be engaged, some of the townsfolk of Enterprise disapproved of their going ahead with the marriage. The reason was that Bob and JoAnn were related. This became a polarizing issue in town. Bob’s patriarchal blessing promised him that the marriage issue would be resolved. When Bob left to serve a mission in the Southern states, no marriage commitment had been made to JoAnn. JoAnn was conflicted over the prospect of marrying him. When she received her patriarchal blessing at Berle Holt’s urging, the blessing explained that in her

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2. Jared Holt, comp., “Memories of Robin (Holt) Horn,” 2011. When her children in later years found her response to Robert’s yearbook entry, however, JoAnn ripped it out, probably so any reference to it wouldn’t show up in the family history.

3. See photograph of Robert Holt, 1964, with friends after mission.

4. See photograph of Robert Holt and JoAnn Twitchell, ca. 1964, in Salt Lake City.

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preexistent state, she made a covenant of marriage with the man she was to marry. After they became engaged, Bob and JoAnn had put the question of their marriage to rest. Not only had they thought through the issue, but the law allowed them to get married.

However, townsfolk and well-wishers wouldn't leave the subject of their marriage alone.

Not even JoAnn's parents favored the union. When Bob and JoAnn went to tell JoAnn's father, who was digging potatoes on his farm south of the county line, his response wasn't encouraging—even though he figured that they would get married with or without his approval. Her mother was riding the potato harvester at the time she learned of their engagement. In a sharp manner, she asked Bob how he was going to support JoAnn. Her question stung him, yet he assured Etta that he would take care of her daughter.

When Elder LeGrand Richards came to Enterprise to preside at a stake conference, the issue had grown so large that he requested a meeting with the Holt and Twitchell families and local Church leaders. Elder Richards counseled Church leaders to support the young couple in their decision to marry. He considered Bob and JoAnn to be distantly enough related.

If others disapproved of the marriage, Bob never doubted his love for JoAnn. He would later write of the decision, "If ever I made a good move it was when we were married."<sup>5</sup> He recognized that "the Lord blessed me with a very special wife. She is a friend and a helper as well as a wife. I enjoy the company and the time we are together.<sup>6</sup> . . . [I] love her very much."<sup>7</sup>

Bob and JoAnn were married on December 19, 1964. Neither side of the family was present at the marriage ceremony in the temple. This is one reason Bob and JoAnn have been so insistent that

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5. Robert Jay Holt, *Journal* (1973–84), 3 (as compiled in 190 digital pages, entry dated December 2, 1973). Robert's mother agreed. See Berle (Bowler) Holt, *Journal* (1966–73), 39 (as paginated in journal).

6. Robert Jay Holt, *Journal* (1973–84), 49 (October 25, 1977).

7. Robert Jay Holt, *Journal* (1973–84), 72 (September 17, 1978).

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they support the receptions and weddings that they have been asked to attend. They had a wonderful reception with family and friends.

Bob and JoAnn honeymooned in Sunnyvale, California, where Paris and Camilla Robinson (Bob's uncle and aunt) lived. The newlyweds were too poor to rent a hotel.

After their honeymoon, they made their home at the Red Bluff Motel on 500 North Bluff Street in St. George, which has since been torn down. After spring quarter, still too poor to afford rent,<sup>8</sup> they moved



*Wedding photo of Bob and JoAnn Holt, December 19, 1964*

in with Jack and Georgia Moyle (also Bob's uncle and aunt). At that time, Uncle Jack taught Bob bookkeeping skills. Bob took his uncle's recommendation to take some business classes for two quarters.

Uncle Jack offered his Amoco oil distributorship to Bob, who readily accepted the offer even though the distributorship was heavily in debt.<sup>9</sup> At the time, gas prices were \$0.29 per gallon and diesel was \$0.16 per gallon. Bob made oil deliveries on the weekends and attended Dixie College on the weekdays. By so doing, he earned enough money to pay off the distributorship debt. This Amoco oil distributorship was in business until 2000.

After Bob and JoAnn leased her parents' home on Main Street in Enterprise, they moved out of Uncle Jack's house in Beryl.<sup>10</sup> That

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8. Talk by Robert Holt, "Funeral of Georgia (Holt) Moyle."

9. Robert Holt, interview by Jared Holt, April 2011.

10. See photograph of JoAnn Holt, ca. 1965. The Twitchells moved to another home for two years, and then moved back.

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*Amoco Oil representatives Bob Holt (with Randall) and his uncle, Jack Moyle, at the Enterprise parade on July 24, 1966.*

year, they took clothes to be dry cleaned back and forth to St. George to offset the costs of travel for their schooling.<sup>11</sup> Bob described this year of their marriage as the “least hectic” time of their lives.<sup>12</sup>

On September 18, 1965, Bob was sealed to his parents for all eternity in the temple. This was a joyous day in his life. His first-born son, Randall

Holt, was born about a month later, on October 12, 1965. At that time, health insurance policies had to be in effect ten months before the insurance would provide coverage for childbirth. Bob and JoAnn paid for an insurance policy one month before their marriage to be sure that the insurance would cover the birth of their first child. Randall was born nine months and twenty-three days after their marriage. The insurance company paid a flat \$250. The total bill for Randall’s birth was \$240, so Bob, using curious math, “made \$10 right off.”<sup>13</sup> Randall was named after Bob’s close friend Willard Randall, who started a savings account for Randall. Bob and JoAnn were excited to later learn that their ancestor Randall Holt was the first Holt in their family line to come to America.

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11. Charles W. Twitchell, interview by Jared Holt, May 2015.

12. Robert Jay Holt, *Journal* (1973–84), 4 (December 2, 1973).

13. Robert Holt, interview by Jared Holt, April 2011.