I decided to learn as much as I could about my father’s first wife–Alice Jenette Cook, and write some history about her. I have searched through records and talked to Uarda Whiting, who knew she and Melba, their daughter.

First of all, her name is spelled 4 different ways. Her family put her name on the family group sheet as Alice Janet Cook. When she went through the Salt Lake City Temple to be sealed, it was spelled Alice Janet Cook. When they adopted Melba, the Ammon Ward records show her name as Alice Jennet Cook. When they adopted their second child, Deon, the Ammon Ward records shows her name as Nettie Cook. When she passed away, the Ammon Ward records show her name as Ball, Nettie Alice. On her tombstone, her name is Alice Jeanette. During her married life, she was known as “Nettie”, so I will refer to her as Nettie.

Nettie was born in Bountiful, Utah in 1883, and as far as I know, she grew up there. She would have been 9 years old when her grandfather, Daniel Wood, died. He is the Daniel Wood that Woods Cross, Utah is named after. According to The City Beautiful, by Leslie T. Foy:

One week after the transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory Point, Utah, ground was broken 17 May 1869 for a spur line to be built from Ogden through Bountiful to Salt Salt City. Brigham Young had received $600,000 worth of railroad material as partial payment for the work done for the Union Pacific Railroad Company. It was used in the construction of the Utah Central Railroad. On 10 June 1869 Brigham Young and 100 prominent men of Davis County examined the point where the Utah Central Railroad depot would be located. Brigham Young favored the northwest corner of Daniel Wood’s property. Daniel Wood had other ideas. Brigham Young consulted with Bishop Stoker and a site was picked. Daniel Wood’s anger led Brigham Young to name the area west of 500 West, Woods Cross, by which it is known today.

Daniel Wood had several wives and many children. 2 of these children, Mary and Martha, were Indians, orphaned during the Black Hawk War, and were adopted by him. Nettie grew up having 2 aunts who were Ute Indians. Daniel Wood also built a school house on his property and Nettie likely got some of her early schooling there.

Nettie’s mother, Emma Adalade Wood, married Amos Cook in 1881. He was born in Salt Lake City and grew up in that area. Amos Cook was Mayor of Bountiful during 1910 and 1911 and was credited with making many improvements.

I have never heard how my Dad and Nettie met or anything about their courtship. I know that after my Dad’s family came to Utah from Manassas, Colorado, he lived in the Kaysville area. Phineas and Nettie were married 30 April 1902 in the Salt Lake Temple. They came to Idaho by horse and buggy. While traveling to Salt Lake a couple of times with my Dad, he would point out a couple of camp sites they had used on their 5 day trip to Idaho, which was their honeymoon. One was in the Marsh Valley area (north of Malad pass) and the other was in the Brigham City area.

They lived in a two room house just north of the brick house that they later built (and which I grew up in.) I’m sure it was a dream fulfilled when they moved into their new home. Nettie seemed to fit right into her new way-of-life of farming and was always helping where she could. She was an especially good cook. Uarda Whiting said that she loved to eat at Netties, and even stayed overnight as often as she could. Nettie and Phineas were both active in the Ammon
Ward. Nettie also had 2 brothers and a sister, (Joe and Earl Cook, and Bertha McDonald) that lived in the area, so she felt very much at home.

It turned out that Phineas and Nettie could not have children, and Nettie really loved children. She wanted children so badly, that after 17 years, they finally adopted a little girl born 24 Aug. 1919. They named her Melba. She was a very bright and active little girl. Uarda Whiting said that Melba was always about doing things with her mother and dad. Nettie had just 4 years of joy with Melba. On 4 Oct. 1923, Melba was out in the field during potato harvest when she was run over by a wagon and crushed to death. I can only try to imagine what the heart broken parents felt at the loss of Melba. After this, Nettie’ health began to fail somewhat, maybe in part because of the loss of Melba.

Even though her health wasn’t the best, Nellie still wanted children. They adopted another baby girl, Deon born 29 March 1925. Although Nettie was happy again, because of her failing health, she didn’t get to enjoy Deon as much as she really would have liked. Only 2 ½ months later, 14 June 1925, at the age of 42 years, Nettie died of “Tuberculosis of the Lungs.” Ammon Ward Records.

The Idaho Falls Daily Post (forerunner to the Post Register) ran the following obituary. “Mrs. Phineas Ball, well-known resident of Ammon, passed away yesterday afternoon in a local hospital, after an illness of several weeks duration. Mrs. Ball, who was 42 years of age, has been a resident of Ammon for over 23 years. She is survived by her husband and by an adopted child, Deon Ball, aged 2 months. Her father and mother, Amos and Emma A. Cook of Utah, are also living, as well as the following brothers and sisters: Mrs. Laura Ray, Mrs. Emma Deazer, Mrs. Annie Hodson, Mrs. Bertha McDonald, Mrs. Hanna Beesley, Mrs. Elizabeth Bennett, Joseph Cook, Earl Cook, Walter Cook, Alvin Cook and Leonard Cook. Funeral services for Mrs. Ball will be held at 2 o’clock on Wednesday afternoon in the LDS Church at Ammon. Burial will follow in the Ammon Cemetery. Mrs. Ball had many friends in the vicinity of Idaho Falls. She was an active participant in the Post Subscription campaign held this spring.”

After Nettie’s death, Earl and Della Cook adopted Deon and raised her. Deon married Emery Heath and they have lived all their life in the Ammon area.

History written by Gary Ball son of Phineas Ball
Typed into the computer by Kathleen Jardine Woolf 16 Dec. 2002