

Prologue

Bill and I met up with his friend Wes at the foot of Spanish Fork Canyon where the men prepared their guns and hunting gear. I was wearing the red sweater my mother had given me. She was determined to protect me. No way could I be mistaken for a deer! Wes led us up the side of the mountain, Bill followed him, and I trailed behind, carrying food and supplies. As we hiked deeper into the woods, there was a shuffle of dead leaves and a deer approached. Bill began loading his rifle. When I realized it was a baby deer, I tried to get his attention. I called out to him, but my voice cracked like I was in a dream. Suddenly, a bullet flew through my sweater and into my heart. In a flash, I saw my mother. She was sitting at the kitchen table, sobbing, both hands clutching her heart.

—WANDA CHAUS (CLEMENTS)

MY AUNT WANDA did not live to tell her story, so I am telling it for her – and for my grandmother, Katina Liviakis Chaus, whose heartstrings were woven into that red sweater. There are few details about the events leading up to the moment of her death, most of which appear on the front page of the October 17, 1948 edition of the Salt Lake Tribune, where a small headline reads, “Young S.L. Matron, 23, Killed in Rifle Mishap.”