

## THE LIFE HISTORY OF LYMAN UTLEY LEAVITT

### PART I

Part I of the history of Lyman Leavitt was obtained from a history written by Ivan Watts, great grandson of Lyman Leavitt. It covers his life from birth until the time he left Kanosh to help settle Mesa, Arizona.

Lyman Utley Leavitt was born 24 May, 1831 at Compton, Quebec, Canada. He was the fifth child of John Leavitt and Lucy Rowell. Lyman moved with his parents when they left Canada to journey to Illinois. It was here that he met and married Ellen Adell Brown. Ellen was the daughter of Ruben and Debora Eno Brown. She was born 9 March 1836, at Auburn, Geauge County, Ohio. Lyman and Ellen were married by J. W. Taylor, believed to be an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as both Ellen and Lyman were members of the church. They were married at Palaski, Jackson County, Michigan, in 1857.

Two children were born to Lyman and Ellen in Cambria, Hillsdale County, Michigan.

James Elbert, born 12 May 1858  
Florence Debora, born 1 July 1860

Lyman and Ellen lived at Black Oaks, Illinois for a short time, and on 12 May 1863 they joined a company of saints and started for Utah. They traveled in one of the handcarts, walking all the way--pushing and pulling their cart and carrying the two little children when necessary. They let them ride whenever they could. It was necessary for them to get part of their food from the wilderness as they went along. They killed animals for meat and used the hides to make shoes, clothing and shelter. They also hunted nurching eatable greens and roots along the way, when they were available. On 26 July 1863 they arrived in Salt Lake City. Their stay there was short as they moved on to Centerville, in Davis County, in just a few days.

While living in Centerville, Utah, three more children were born to them.

Charles Alva, born 24 February 1864  
Girl twin, born 24 February 1864 (died an infant)  
Lyman Elroy, born 15 May 1867

Their stay in Centerville was all too short, during the Oct. Conference in 1868, Lyman was called by Brigham Young to take his family to help settle on the Muddy River. (do not know the exact location). In November, 1868, along with Alonzo Kimball and a small group of other men and their families, they started on their journey as missionaries to the indians. At that time the indians were very hostile, resenting the coming of the white men to their country. This little group of men and women and their families, set out to try and make friends with them--for the good of all the white settlements in that part of the state.



This was a very difficult journey for Ellen to make, as her six months old baby, Lyman Elroy, was very sick and was carried all the way on a pillow on his mother's lap. The journey was hard and cold, the mules slow, but finally on 5 December 1868 they arrived at their destination.

The weather was mild in the winter, hot in the summer. The houses were one and two room log and sod cabins in which, at first, two or more families lived. As the months passed by, their living conditions were slightly improved and new cabins were built. The indians continued to give them trouble, stealing horses, cattle, and especially mules. It was necessary to maintain a constant guard--the women, as well as the men and boys took turns.

The following is one of the incidents which took place during the troublesome times--as related by Ivan Watts.

One night a boy named Hakes (first name not known) was on guard when he saw three indians slipping into the settlement. Two of them kept watch while the third started to untie the horses. Hakes shot and killed the one, but the two lookouts escaped. The shot aroused the settlers. When they found out what had happened they knew they were in for trouble. While the women hurriedly gathered a few things together, the men met in Lyman Leavitt's cabin to decide what to do. A letter, from the settlers to Brigham Young, had been written some time ago, asking for permission to leave the Muddy--since the indians were still very unfriendly. All the settlers had been in constant danger the entire time they had been there. Now they knew the indians would use this incident to wipe out their little group.

About sunrise the indians, in full war paint, came riding and screaming around the cabins. The men had made provisions to take the lives of their own women and children, rather than have them fall into the hands of the savage indians. Lyman had been selected to act as the representative for the settlers. He, with two other men held a conference with the chief and some of his warriors. The indians demanded the person who had killed one of their braves--they wanted to punish him. Lyman pointed out that the brave was trying to steal the white man's horses, but this made no difference to the chief. The Hakes boy, fearing that all of the settlers would be killed if they continued to protect him, ran out of the Leavitt cabin--where all the settlers waited through the long, frightening hours--and gave himself up. The indians tied him to a stake, did their war dance, and burned him alive. The settlers were then told to go, and they lost no time packing a few of their belongings into waiting wagons and starting out for Utah.

Ellen, Lyman's wife, held baby Ellen Adell, who had been born the 20th of May, 1870--at this time she was about eleven months old. The company had traveled about eight miles from their little settlement when the indians were again seen approaching their group. At the cry, "indians" the men drew the wagons into a circle, ready to die fighting. The chief and two warriors rode up to the Leavitt



wagon and demanded the pale faced baby with "hair like sunshine" (baby Ellen Adell). Despite the pleas of the frantic mother the baby was snatched from her arms, and the indians rode off with her. The men knew it was almost hopeless, but plans were laid to try and rescue the baby. While they were waiting for darkness, to carry out their plan, a cloud of dust again signaled the return of the indians. The chief rode up to the Leavitt wagon, leaned over from his horse, and placed a bundle wrapped in indian blankets in Ellen's arms. Afraid that her baby would be impaled on a stake, as was the custom of the indians, Ellen did not dare to look in the blankets. The chief, leaning forward, turned back the blanket-- there lay baby Ellen sleeping quietly. Lyman was informed that the baby now belonged to the tribe and must be brought back once a year for them to see, until she was old enough to leave her mother and join the tribe. Once again they were told to go, and the indians rode off. As Ellen looked down at her baby, dressed in indian clothes and ornaments, safe in her arms again, her heart swelled with thankfulness.

The settlers started once again, soon crossed the Muddy river and were in Utah--but with many weary miles to travel before they would reach Long Valley, near Cove Fort, and relative safety. They arrived there 1 April 1871. Here they stayed a little over two years, farming and building cabins. Lyman built a two room cabin, which sheltered his own family of seven, and his widowed sister-in-law and her three children. They moved to Kanosh, 28 August 1873, where Lyman bought a little farm, and a one-room cabin--he soon added another room. The next year he built a new two-room brick house, adding one room and a kitchen later. Alonzo Kimball did the brick work, Lyman did the carpentry and plaster work for himself. They later helped build many of the homes in Kanosh. Lyman owned two lots in town, an acre and a half each. He also owned twenty-five acres east of town about eight miles. This was known as the Leavitt ranch.

During the years he lived in Kanosh, Lyman was called as second councilor to the first bishop of their ward. He was active in church and civic affairs, and contributed a great deal to the community. It was in Kanosh that he met and married his second wife, Ann Eliza Hakes--daughter of Collins Rowe and Mable Ann (Morse) Hakes. They were married 27 December 1875. One year later Lyman was called to go on a mission back to Illinois. He visited his former home and recalled the many happy years he had spent there. The old home was still standing, but sadly in need of repair. It was a large two-story house. In his youth there had been two large trees in front, a lotus and an oak; but they were both gone. He visited the cemetery, finding it in a very run down condition. The graves of his father and brother were both covered with weeds. His mission was very successful, and he received much joy and many blessings from it, as did all the members of his family.

While in Kanosh, Lyman was co-owner of a molasses mill with Ammon Rappley and Andrew Ross. The people had no sugar, but raised a lot of sugar cane---so they had plenty of molasses. The mill never stopped during the season, except to change horses and workers.



It was run by horsepower, having a horse hitched to a long pole or sweep, and moving slowly around and around, turning the rollers which crushed the juice from the cane which was fed into it by hand. The juice was then run into a large vat over a fire and slowly brought to a boil. A thick scum formed on top, which had to be skimmed off. Children in the community brought their containers to get the skimmings, which they used to make candy. Sometimes the women brought their peaches down to the mill and when the molasses was about half done, they would cook the peaches in it, making preserves which they sold or traded to the other towns for produce.

Most everything they had in their home, food, furniture, clothes etc. was made either by Lyman or Ellen. Lyman was a good farmer, carpenter and plasterer. Ellen corded and spun wool into yarn, wove it into cloth, cut her own patterns, and made clothes for her own family--as well as other people in town. She also made men's suits. She made her own dye for wool yarn; using madder root for red, rabbit brush set with alum for yellow, and squawberry bush set with alum for redish brown. She knit stockings, mittens, gloves, and shawls.

Lyman took his second family and moved to Mesa, Arizona, in response to a call from the president of the church, leaving all his property to his first wife Ellen. She had chosen to remain in Kanosh with her children. He had to start all over again to raise a family and aquire a home and live stock. Ellen Adell, the youngest, was thirteen and Lyman Elroy was sixteen. He rode pony express, carrying the mail to Cove Fort--this was about twenty miles over very bad trails. He and Charley ran the farm until Charley got married, then Elroy ran it alone.

Ellen kept bees and cared for them herself, selling the honey. This and her dressmaking, together with the farm, kept things going. She was never too busy to answer a call to a sick bed, day or night. She was very active in the church, and held many important offices. She loved her family and neighbors and was well loved by them.

Ellen lived alone in her later years. She died of pneumonia, while visiting her youngest daughter, Ellen Adell Leavitt Paxton. She was sixty-six at the time of her death and is burried at Kanosh, Millard County, Utah.

## PART II

As told by Avis Laverne Leavitt Rogers, the daughter of Lyman and Ann Eliza Hakes.

Jeremiah Leavitt and his wife Sarah Shannon lived in Canada. He was of English descent and she was Irish. They had ten children who's families have spread all over the United States. My grandfather John Leavitt was their seventh child. He married Lucy Rowell who was our Grandmother.



They were living in Canada when my father was born 24 May, 1831. His parents moved to Illinois and then to Michigan. It was here he met and married Ellen Adell Brown of Ohio in 1875.

12 May, 1863 they left their home arriving in Salt Lake City, 26 July, 1863 with one of the handcart companies with 2 small babies. After a long hard trip he was soon called to settle other places and finally arrived in Kanosh with his family in 1869. He was Sheriff of Rio Virgin, Utah, before he was called to go south. It was in Kanosh that he met Ann Eliza Hakes. They were married 27 December, 1875. She was the daughter of Collins Rowe and Mable Ann (Morse) Hakes. It was in 1883 that Lyman was again called to fill a mission for the church to help colonize Mesa, Arizona. He left Kanosh taking with him his second wife and three children born in Kanosh.

Mable Clair, born 23 September 1876, died 25 December 1902

Avis Laverne born 17 June 1878

John Rowe, born 4 October 1880

It was a typical pioneer journey from Kanosh to Mesa. The trails were not too good, the way was rough, long and hard with teams and wagons. Father's pioneer spirit and training, along with their faith in the Lord, made the journey possible. It took several weeks for the journey, and all rejoiced when they arrived in Mesa.

During the months it took to build our home in Mesa, we lived in a tent--just across the street, north of the present city Library. However, at that time it was the Jail house. (The property where our home once stood is now owned by the Catholic Church). Father used to walk across the street to the jail and sit on the ground outside the windows and sing to the prisoners. He felt this was an opportunity to do a little missionary work and to bring a little brightness into the days of the prisoners.

It was during the years they lived in Mesa that the other eight children of Lyman and Ann Eliza were born.

Lucinda Helen, born 9 June 1883

Lyman Hakes, born 13 June, 1885, died 18 September 1885

Lucy Pearl, born 13 August, 1886, died 19 March 1922

George Wilford, born 18 June 1888, died 7 November 1949

Clarence Edgar, born 25 August 1891, died 18 September 1891

Joseph Collins, born 20 June 1892

Francis Harry, born 8 April 1896, died 6 July 1896

Arthur Floyd, born 6 April 1898, died 24 December 1926

Father planted one of the first orange orchards in the valley. The first year the trees grew fine, but the second year there was a killing frost, and he lost all of them. He had a large peach orchard and always kept a lot of bees.

Father was always helping others, materially and spiritually. A friend and he were talking one day when the friend said he didn't have the money to send his son who was on a mission for the church. Father didn't say very much, but went home, got the money and gave it to the man to send to his missionary son.



As far back as I can remember, Father was in much demand as a singer and story teller. He had an unusual gift for writing original readings, as well as a special talent for giving them. He wrote many readings and poems. He always had plenty of listeners--especially among the young boys. Whenever there was a party or program, he was called on to sing or give a reading or both. He never told smutty stories or read dime novels. The Bible, Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants were his favorite books. He read many other church works.

It seems father liked to live out where he had room to breathe, so to speak. So, as the town grew around him he wanted to get out into the country again. He sold our home in town and built another house just north of the present Mesa Temple across main street. At that time this was really out in the country--it was just thick mesquite, palaverde and shaparell, clear to town. This was the family home until 1899.

At the age of sixty-eight, father again received a call from the church. This time he was called to be bishop of the Pine Ward. He was set apart as bishop of the Pine Ward, February 26, 1900, by Collins R. Hakes, who was at that time President of the Maricopa Stake. Once again father gladly left all he and mother had spent some nineteen years building, to do the Lord's will. In Pine he and mother made another home, where they spent thirteen happy, full years. Here they finished raising their family, happy with their blessings and opportunities. Father acted as bishop of the Pine Ward until 18 November 1903. He lived in Pine until his death 23 February 1912.

In his blessing father was promised that he would be told of things that were to come concerning his life and the welfare of his family. There were many incidents in his life where this happened.

One such incident was when father was warned in a dream that his son, John, would be bitten by a mad dog. The next morning father decided not to let John go duck hunting with his uncle, but took him with him to gather wood. Father watched him closely so he could protect him if danger should come. Once while they were out John got a little further away than father realized. Just as father turned to find him he saw a dog come out of some brush. John was between him and the dog and before father could do anything the dog bit John and turned back into the brush and got away. Father rushed John back home but little could be done, as it was impossible to get treatment this side of Chicago, for rabbies. Father mortgaged their home to get money enough to send John to Chicago for treatment. Grandfather, Collins Rowe Hakes, took John and a boy by the name of Wallace--who had also been bitten by the dog--and made the trip. Fortunately they were able to get the treatment in time to save both the boys.

Another time my brother, George, was ill with pneumonia--near death. Father was told in a dream that George would live, and he soon recovered completely from the illness, to live a full and useful life.



At the time many of the saints were being persecuted because of the practice of plural marriage, father was living in Mesa with his second wife, his first wife being in Utah. Because of this, father was not bothered by the officers. Things were going along fine until an uncle of mother's and another man decided to appoint themselves as informers for the officers--in hopes it would help to gain them favor. What they told on father we do not know, but they were going to arrest him. Before this happened father slipped quietly out of town, with the help of grandfather Hakes and a few others. He went down to Old Mexico. There he lived for several months. Feeling was running high at that time and many of the saints were not permitted to have a fair hearing and had to spend many many weeks and even months in jail before they were cleared and allowed to return to their families. Rather than risk this, father and mother decided it would be better for him to go into hiding until things could be cleared up.

While in Mexico he lived with my mother's sister, Jane Johnson, and her husband. It was difficult to get along without father, but mother knew how to save and father worked and sent everything he could to us. They were so good to father while he was there. Things were hard there too, but father paid his way so he would not be a burden to them. He slept out in a tent with some of their boys. He said on cold nights Jane would slip into the tent and put a hot rock, rolled up in cloth, to his feet. This would keep his feet warm all night. No one could have been better to father than Jane and Benjie were. I guess that is the reason I have always loved Aunt Jane so much. After they were driven out of Mexico and came back to Mesa to live I would rather go to her home than any place else.

One morning while father was in Mexico, our big red rooster came up onto the back door step and crowed loud and long. I remember mother saying "we are going to have company today". Along in the afternoon a man came to the house carrying a valise and asked if this were the home of Lyman Leavitt. He was one of my father's near relatives, John Adams, from Centerville, Utah. He had also left his families to avoid persecution until the church and the government could decide what was to be done. He was in need of a place to stay. Mother gave him the little room on the west of the house, opening into the back yard. She put up a small stove and made things real comfortable for him. While he stayed in our home he hauled wood. Many a morning he would get up at 2:00 in the morning and be gone until late afternoon. The evening before, Mother would put up a lunch for him for his breakfast and dinner. It was always a pleasure for us kids to carry it around to him or walk to town for his mail. He was a wonderful man and was quite old with a long white beard. He didn't have to stay long, but when he left we had a wonderful stack of mesquite posts that lasted several years for firewood. It was a pile of neatly stacked wood that I shall never forget. Mother was thankful for it many times.



There was a joyous reunion when father came home to stay. The joy of having him near to care for us, to love us, and to teach us was a blessing which we doubly appreciated. It wasn't long until the sad memories of our separation were put in the background by the good times of having him home with us again.

Distance was great in those days and we had little news of Ellen's family. In 1892 my brother, Jim, and his wife and their little girl came to visit. They lived with us for about a year. Grace, their little girl, was a sweet, light haired girl. While they were with us their daughter, Mary, was born. In a few weeks my brother Joe was born. We used to call them twins. It was a joy to have them with us, to get to know them and to learn to really love them. Father was so thrilled to have Jim and his family with him for a while. It was in 1898 that Roy, another brother, came out for a visit. I remember that he loved to fish and go rabbit hunting. We used to go quite often. We all enjoyed him very much.

It was in 1927 that Florence, a sister, came down to the dedication of the Mesa Temple. We surely did enjoy having her with us. She was very sweet and lovable and I wished many times that she could have made the visit while father and mother were alive. We surely enjoyed the letters she wrote us. It was sometime later that Ellen, the youngest sister, came to the Mesa Temple on a special excursion with a group from Kanosh. I had the pleasure of meeting her in the Temple. My husband and I took her around to visit the family--all except Joe. Joe was working with the police department and had been sent out of town. I knew that he would be sorry he missed meeting her, and Ellen said if she could have met Joe she would have been satisfied. After saying our goodbys, George and I started for home, but remembered something we wanted to get so went across the street and there we met Ellen on the sidewalk. They had forgotten something and had come back into town for it. While we were visiting with her again, Joe walked up. We were all very happy that they were able to meet after all, but sorry that Ellen could not stay with us longer.

In 1942 my husband and I and daughter Mabel had the privilege of visiting with Ellen in her home, for a few hours, on our way home from conference. The family had gathered at her home and had a wonderful lunch prepared for us. We had a lovely visit. One that I look back on with fond memories. We took pictures of the family, then I had the pleasure of taking the picture of the house I was born in and also of my grandfather Hakes' house.

As this is being written in 1958 there is 6 of father's children living. Leroy 91 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Ellen 88 in Kanosh, Utah. Laverne 80 in Mesa, Arizona. John 78 in Phoenix, Arizona. Lucinda 74 in Pine, Arizona. Joseph 65 in Mesa, Arizona.