

Sylvinus Collett

Written from memory by a brother Charles M. Collett
October 8, 1965 in my ninetieth year in Salt Lake City, Utah

[Sylvanus Collett] as born a twin. December 15, 1866, in Smithfield, Utah. To Elthura Roseltha Merrill and Reuben Collett. The family remained there for some years as his father Daniel Collett owned 400 hundred of good land and 16 city lots. The Bishop was appointed in those early days to issue a deed to land. But as the Bishop wanted to marry Elthura and she refused to give Reuben a deed to his land. So he became angry, some years later sold for what he could get, and moved his family to Noerman Valley in Bear Lake county. As his older brother Sylvanus lived there. It was a beautiful valley thirty times three miles mostly meadow land. Timber came down to the edge of the valley. Plenty of game, thou a very cold place, snow often four feet on the level, much saw loggind was done in the winter. The snow often in the mountains often ten to twelve feet deep.

Sil had taken up a beautiful ranch of three hundred and twenty acres. The country was a wonderful cattle country. I think it was the year of 1873 that the family arrived there. But in 1875, Sil like most pioneers was anxious to move, so he and John Boren moved to Wyoming no better climate but more land and game. They both stayed there and raised large families and died there.

Reuben left Noerman too, but only went twenty miles to a village named Bennington, Elthura's uncle Phylmon C. Merrill, and cousins George Dudley Owen Merril lived there. The place was similar to Noerman and Wyoming.

Another boy was added to the family, 6 June 1875, he was named Charles. The moving fever hit again, this time to Wyoming to live by Sil. Wyoming was also a cold climate and lots of snow. The valley was about forty miles long by five miles wide. Lots of Indians lots of game, and six white people. So the whites gave a big pow-wow for the Indians Sil killing many deer. There was plenty of campground and pasture for the horses. So a week of good time, Indians were invited from all around, of course the twins were in the swim. Veau was always pleasant, was a

favorite. Indians are in for sports, especially horse racing, dogs galore. Sil and Rueben went south, forty miles and ten miles East. Called Sage Creek because of so many sage hens.

They took a coal mine, and finding it with coke, they built some coke ovens, so when they came home they called the place Cokeville which name it still has.

Father became restless again, so he moved to Southeastern, Utah the town of Esclanta in the fall of 1877. He brought home fixed up the front room for a store and postoffice, he also bought sheep and cattle.

There was good summer range, and they wintered on the desert southeast of town. Father was chosen as the Bishops first counsilar.

One night as four of the boys slept in the same room, Veane was out skylarking, after we had all been to sleep, Vest jumped straddle of the trunk and started to yelling to help hold him. Of course the twins had lots of fun and went to school. Father spent much time with the stock. He was deputy sherriff so he had to go after Mr. Phipps.

There was a lot of recreation for Veane and Vest the twins, beside house chores. A bundh of boys climbing cliffs and visiting caves and other sports.

Father was prospering, but in spite of that he had to move again, some of his sisters and friends had gone to Arizona, under the leadership of Dan Jones, whom married mothers cousin Emily Colton (Sterling Coltons sister, also mothers sister).

Father sold his sheep and bought cattle, so he had 300 head. So RS and Vest became the cowboys. They drove all those cattle for six months thru desert infested Indian land. The water was so scarce, they had to keep a sharp lookout for water signs made by the Indians. The water holes often had a scum on it filled with wigglers, so it had to be strained thru a cloth then boiled. I don't know much about the trip from Esclante to Lee's ferry, but we reached the ferry down the rough sand rocks and wagons had to be roughlocked by putting a log chain around the belly and to the axle, and only one team left hitched to the wagon for it was real steep. It was found the distance from the mouth of one to the other was short for the cattle to swim, so father and the boys, drove them down a side caynon, and crowded into the river they had to swim a mile down to the ferry, as all the wagons and hirses were

across, the cattle landed okay. We laid over sever days in the basin of good feed. It was very difficult getting out of the caynon. The wagons were rowed over on a flat boat, the horses swam, the family crosses in a skiff. A forty gallon barrel was lashed on each side, of each wagon to haul water for cooking and drinking. After getting out of the caynon the Navaoo Indian reservation desert started.

One day the water sign was missed, so we had to travel two days and one night to find water, the cattle became crazy, one cow chased Vean and on the edge of a steep gully he managed to dodge her, she went down the hill to her death, he barly escaped. One night we made fires around the herd, then made our beds between the fires to hold the cattle, but seventeen head got away, so R. S. was sent to hunt them he did not return that night, so father went the next day neither returned that night, but an Indian who had been shot through the arm came running into camp. And ask mother to do up his arm, then ask to sleep between the beds, he was gone in the morning. Just imagine two boys just fourteen years old mother and several little ones alone, the Indian had been shot in battle and was very scared, Next day he met father and told him that his squaw had tended his arm, and he had sleep there. Father and R. S. returned the third day with the lost cattle.

We camped at a beautiful ranch, with meadows and trees, it was beautiful after crossing so much desert. The ranch had just been raided, R. S. Vean Vet, hired out to hunt and gather his cows and horses, we were there about two weeks, Father sold seventeen head of steers, among them was a yearling, it was determined not to leave. The dog would catch him by the nose and throw him, but he keep coming back to camp. Vean was grinding an axe, Charles was turning the grinding stone, the steer made for us, Vean got away but Charles lay on his back kicking and yelling and using the bucket on his head, when R. S. arrived and rescued him. The Whole wagon shook after Charles crawled up in it. After gathering a lot of the stock the camp moved on. Finding some rain water in a draw, in a sort of well in the rocks, so the night was spent by all three boys to draw water and pour in a flat basin rock, so the stock could drink. Charles who was always trailing around, trailed up the hill and dared not go in the dark revine, was eventually lost thinking the camp was Indians, began to howl until rescued. After a few more weary weeks we landed at St John,

Arizonia, but on the way we crossed the little Colorado River way above where it began to form a canyon, it was wide low banks and shallow, but had quick sand. If crossed rapidly it was safe. But a mule stopped so Veau put a rope on his neck and a team on the rope, mule came out badly stretched. After arriving at St John we stayed with the Marsh Hunt family, he had a wooden leg and he married grandmother Merrill's sister. She and grandmother were the only Runions to join the LDS Church. One of the Runion Grandsons is doing a lot of genealogical work on the Runion line, and has written some books on it though he isn't a Mormon. Marsella has corresponded with him. (Back to My topic) The government refused to let the family go by the way of Snowflake, on account of the Indians, so they had to go back somewhat west to Flagstaff, a soldiers post then. A sawmill center now, then thence by the way of Wickenburg, a mining town, in the low hills, it was named after the first miner who struck it rich. Prescott was then the capitol of Arizona.

It is now off the new highway, There was a very rich mine on top of the mountain, in unaccessible then by a wagon, called Globe, some years later Wiley Jones a nephew to Sterling Colton and a partner, formed a company and bought one-hundred pack mules, they loaded three-hundred pounds on each pack mule, the ore sacks were two feet long and twelve inches thru, two sacks were loaded on each side of the mule. Long, each pouch one on each side and the one crosswise across the pack saddle. They would not move at night. One man stood on either side of the mule, Then each unpacked, the one taking the crosssack, the other taking the packsaddle all was dropped on the ground. The mule turned loose and so took each mule as they stood in line for loading and unloading.

A fine highway was made but it really scares one to see the houses built on those steep hillsides, not safe to walk in ones sleep, Well again I am off the journey, the family arrived all okay.

At Jonesville now Lehi, Arizonia November 1, 1881, six months and four days from Esclante, passing Indians all in war paint now the boys must of shook when seeing them, but strange to say, not a hoof of cattle or a single horse was stolen. That was the effects of President Young teachings feed the Indians don't kill them.

Almost the first word any chief spoke, Mormans, Mormans good. Mesicats? no good, that was why that little family was so safe, and left alone with so many loose animals.

Jonesville was small, as Phylemon C. Merril and Rhoda Collett Merrill, William Wamsley, Mary Ann Collett Wamsley, Dudley Merrill, Princety Merrill Christencen had gone on. Dan Jones was presiding elder, later Dan Jones Jounior was made Bishop with Edwin E. Jones counsilor, Ed Jones 2nd counsilor. The Maricopia, stake was organized in Mesa with A. F. McDonald, President, I. C. Robinson 1st counslor, Henry Rogers, 2nd counsilor. Reuben Collett Senior one of the high counslor.

Father having \$3000.00 in cash and David P. Kimball (son of Heber C. Kimball) had a 160 acreas of farm north a mile from the church, with a nice five room house on it he wanted to sell so father bought it. Turning all the cattle in the alfalfa field, soon 16 were bloated. So R. S. Vean got busy sticking a hole in each near the hip to let the gas out, all were saved.

Well now the fun started, they are a lot of maskett bushes and a lot of those pretty quail. They are strange if a female gets in a trap and the male digs her out, but if he gets caught he doesn't dig out.

Vean and Vest built a quail trap, it was like the roof of a house of willows, so they could see in and out, the trap was raided at one end on a short six inch stick, then a stick running from a trip by the stick and wheat put near the trip. Sometimes seven quails caught at once, This let's the trap fall so they are in it. It was a lot of sport and quail was excellent eating. So like all boys all had sport. Grandfather Collett with his four wifes he never had two at once, but they kept dieing. Father built them a house some distance from ours. One night the kids put a tie tack on their window, they came up to the house nearly scared out of their wits. Father said one day to grandfather why did you marry her, well she had good teeth. In 1883 R. S. was called on a mission to England, he was in his nineteenth year he was kind of wild. He and Wiley Jones his cousin was keeping compant with the Pumory sisters. R. S. taking Gertrude, R. S. said I will go as far as Salt Lake City, after getting there he wrote back, I am going on my mission, he spent three long years with S. R. Bennion,

as compainian, I shall only tell of two experiences: Once they were to hold a meeting on a vacant corner from a church, after singing a hymn the church dismissed, the minister lead his congregation over to where the elders were, not to listen but to try to tramp them, by going around and around to knock the elders over. R. S. said I was just ready to grab the minister when I was carried away in a vision, where he saw the ministers punishment, and when I came to the crowd was gone. He said I couldn't have done him harm, after I saw what he would suffer. Then another: President Daniel H. Wells, was preaching in a building, when a man came up the aisle and tried to catch President Wells foot, when R. S. reached over caught him by the collar and seat of the pants and pitched him out on the congregation, telling the others he would hold them and he did. After returning a powerful speaker he was called by the first presidency to be the first councilor to ? Bennion in the Presidency of the new stake to be organizes in the new county of Uintah. Necessitated a move from the new country of Arizioia, he persuaded his parents to move back to Utah, a sad mistake, for his father was getting rich and had to dispose of his cattle, and take horses for his home and land. The horses were a failure and his father never recovered. One of the twins Sylvester was called at that time to take a mission to Mexico, he died as his mission was only about two weeks to his realease. The other twin Sylvanus took a different mission that of matrimony, for he married the oldest daughter of Sy Simkins, Sarah, the twins were only nineteen years old. What a wandering life they had, but that would be last journey that either twin would make together. Veane and his wife Sarah decided to still go along with Reuben his father, over the same lonely parrie, Veane had so recently travelde, but this time in a wagon, beside his new lovely wife and four head of horses. The younger boys and cousins driving a band of horses for their were four families now instead of one.

Reuben Collett, Rhoda Collett Merrill, Sylvanus Collett, Wm Wamsley family. After traveling for days, a snow of October hit as they were near Carmonville/Cayonville, so the Bishop gave them the use of the church house, with a large stove in it which they could cook on and keep warm. The beds were everywhere for sixteen to sleep. The storm lasted four days, after which they went

up Posly/Possy Caynon, twenty nine miles long and very narrow with cliffs 300 feet straight up. And the snow blew off those cliffs constantly. We would select a large bushy pinetree then tie three wagon covers end to end and stretch them around the tree and tie it up as high as they would go, this made a room large enough for all.

(SECOND PART) (After six weeks of hospital and recuperation at the home of a daughter Marcella, in Salt Lake City, I shall try to finish this sketch of Sylvanus.) After arriving in Escalante valley we found to farm ranch houses, three miles from town and also three miles apart. These were secured for winter use. Each had a large fire place and as there was a abundance of pitch, dry pinion pine it was a mint. Wm. Wamsleys family occupied one, R. S. , Aunt Rhoda, Dan and Tom went on to Vernal. Veane and Sarah went into town, and Sarah got a job teaching school, so Adelbert (Del) boarded with them and attended school.

While we other woodchucks scouted the hills and explored the caves. One large cave about 80 feet from side to side and 150 foot from the ground, and 150 feet from the top of the cliff, was fenced from side to side with double cedar posts, four pine poles high and four panels across. Willows were used to hold the poles, eighteen inches apart. The cave seemed very large, possibly a hundred head of cattle could be in it. (Years later Charles went back to the cave and estimated the size of the cave with field glasses across the canyon.) A half mile further down the canyon the same height from the ground, as these cliffs are 300 feet high we found a Indian corn crib on the face of the cliff. It would possibly hold 500 bushel. A side canyon after following it along way, in a cave were many beautiful painted crockery ware dishes, cups, saucers, plates and others. In another was a burying ground all graves were cemented over. The horses winter out spring finally arrived in 1887, School was out. The Colletts including Sylvanus and Sarah, with their four horses and wagon and the Wamsleys started over the North mountain for Vernal. In Rabbit valley they stopped at the Blackburn ranch, to get twenty five cows. Father had traded horses for so to avoid the long drive. One day a large cloud and roaring noise arose in the north west. Father ordered all wagons to get on the highest ground. All riders

prepared to drive the stock in a circle, all teams were tied to the wagons when the storm hit it was a hard job to hold the stock.

When it was over six inches of hail was on the ground. In a half an hour two feet of water was on the flat and eight feet in the washes. When it settled all wagons pulled out. About ten miles on they came to a large forest. A full half mile swath was swept clean. So one can imagine what the family would have suffered if they had reached that spot. A beautiful night and several large fires brought cheer. In a few days we reached the little town of Price, Utah., the nearest railroad to Vernal. Sylvanas and Sarah built a two room cabin in Merrill Ward. They afterward moved to Maeser, Vean was away working a lot. He also freighted from Price, with six horses and two wagons. Sarah had chores and cows to milk. A son Wiley came, so she got a large black dog, so she had him lay across Wiley feet while she chorded. One night a Indian came but the dog wouldn't let him in. Sarah was a great leader.

In 1893 a man by the name of Wallie came to Vernal, and took up claims of phosphate south of the valley. He hired Vean as forman and hire men to work assessment on the claim each fall. I worked each fall and gave father the money I earned. I also stayed and helped work on the farm instead of working away, to save father from doing it. In 1895-6 R. S. Collett, Sterling Colton, and a man by the name of Garvis, bought what was known as the Dire Strip on Taylor Mountian, it was copper Cloriding as working the top of the ground it was high grade. They made about thirty thousand dollars. They hired Vean as foreman and Sadie hired Princetta to help and they boarded the men. I also worked there in 1896. After the claim was all worked the same three men bought a prospect in Colorado, named the Promide also copper. It was a true vein. Vean again was foreman. I came nearly losing by life there. I had worked day shift., Vean asked me to work night shift, in the bottom of a 250 foot shaft, had to climb straight up I put in 3-3 foot holes and 2-2 foot holes I made the mistake of cutting the fuse to short, so I was almost running up the ladder, when one foot missed the round and I fell the full length of my arms, but fortunately my hands held, I just got the fifty foot doors down when the blast went off. One day Vean, Bob Green and I went hunting deer on Taylor mountain.

Veian killed a deer, then he and Bob Green went to Island Park. I was to take the team to them but I took the wrong road and they laid out all night.