

John Henry Davis,
Mary Anne Henderson
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A Family History
by Shelley Dawson Davies

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

PIONEER UPBRINGING	6
John's Childhood	6
Kanara	8
His Mother's Death	10
Boyish Mischief	11
Stolen Fruit.....	12
Food Fight.....	13

CHAPTER 2

FRONTIER COWBOY	16
Life in the Saddle	16
The Mountain Meadow Massacre.....	18
Dixie Wine	19
Working for the Kanarra Coop	20
New Settlements.....	21
Bucking Bronco	22
Mr. Berry Departs	24

CHAPTER 3

INDIANS.....	26
Native Friendships	26
Dealing with Death	28
Indian Culture.....	32
The Navajos	34
Apostle to the Lamanites: Jacob Hamblin.....	36

CHAPTER 4

A YEAR IN ARIZONA.....	39
Running Cattle at St. Johns	39
Dangerous Errand.....	41
Snowflake.....	43
A New Job.....	44

CHAPTER 5

RUNNING KANARRA CATTLE.....	47
Superintendent.....	47
Assuming Leadership.....	49
Back to Kanarra	51
Marriage to Mary Anne.....	53

CHAPTER 6

OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD.....	55
Marriage and Mission	55
Sister Wives	57
A Call to Serve	59
Into the Mission Field	61
Healing	63
Inspiration	64
More Work for the Lord.....	65

CHAPTER 7

THE TRIALS OF FAMILY LIFE	68
Living the Celestial Law	68
At Odds with the Law	71
Friendly Enemies	72
A Strange Illness	73
The Manifesto and Amnesty	76
On Trial	77
The Verdict.....	79

CHAPTER 8

BACK TO WORK.....	82
Growing Responsibilities	82
Davis vs. Davies.....	83
Life in Town.....	85
Compassion and Service	88
Jim Indian.....	90
Social Outcasts	94

CHAPTER 9

SUFFERING AND JOY	96
Enduring to the End	96
Mother to All.....	98
Sunset Years.....	100
The Dark Cloud of Death.....	102
Children and Grandchildren	105
Mary Annie's Death.....	109
John's Death.....	110

BIBLIOGRAPHY	114
---------------------------	-----

INDEX.....	119
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Chapter 1

Pioneer Upbringing

John's Childhood



The Sanpitch Mountains near Wales, Utah.

It was so early in the morning the sun had yet to rise over the dry, ragged cliffs of the Sanpitch Mountains in Utah's Sanpete County. John Davies¹ left his primitive dugout with two tin buckets in hand, headed toward the rough log corral where a pair of armed men stood guard over the community's cattle. John peered into the predawn blackness ahead of him in hopes of detecting any suspicious movement. The local Paiutes were known to appear out of nowhere and ride away with whatever animals or goods they could lay their hands on, and he could ill afford to lose one of his cows. He crouched on the ground and began the rhythmic ritual of milking, listening to the sharp sound of the milk as it hit the side of the bucket. Suddenly, a loud report rang out from over by the foothills, and then another from the opposite direction. The Paiutes had surrounded the small settlement and were closing in from all sides. John grabbed the buckets and ran, sloshing milk onto the ground with every step. "The savages started to shoot at him," recalled John's four-year old son Johnny,² who watched terrified from the steps of the dugout. "The fact that my father escaped being hit has always seemed to me to be a miracle. Musket balls were striking the dust on all sides of him as he ran. As he rushed down the steps with the two buckets in his hand I had not time enough to get out of the way and was knocked headlong out into the middle of the floor."³ The Paiutes were quickly driven way by return fire, but only temporarily. John knew it was only a matter of time until they returned for another raid.

John and his wife Maria⁴ had moved to the mining town of Coal Bed⁵ in 1864, after receiving an official call from Brigham Young to help settle the wilderness in southern Utah. John's skill as a weaver "was perhaps the principal factor considered in calling our family to move south," according to Johnny, who was also known as John H. among his siblings. "As there were no factories in the west at that time to produce cloth, there was an urgent need for men to teach people to make cloth in their homes."⁶ The Davies had only recently arrived in Coal Bed from North Ogden, where they had been comfortably settled since their immigration from Wales in 1854. Johnny had been born in North Ogden,⁷ as had his little brother Henry.⁸ Their older sister Martha⁹ was born somewhere along the Mormon Trail in 1854.

John was unsure about his ability to protect his family in the isolated coal town, and Maria wasn't about to give birth to her next baby in a dwelling that was little more than a dirt hole "built partly above the surface of the ground and partly below,"¹⁰ so by the spring of 1864,¹¹ the Davies family was headed toward Sevier valley, where they set up housekeeping at the present site of Monroe. Maria immediately began transforming their new log cabin into a warm, inviting home while John set to work seeding his fields. Martha helped around the house and kept an eye on Johnny and Henry while their mother tended to the milk cows and kitchen garden. By the time harvest was over that year, the Davies family was well-stocked for the coming winter. Maria settled in to await the birth of Phillip,¹² who was born in the double bed by the fire, four days before Christmas.

By the spring of 1865, the Paiutes were active in the Monroe region, but although the settlement was "molested from time to time by Indians, the men were able to mature and harvest the crops," recalled Johnny. "Undaunted by the trying experiences of the preceding year, they again planted crops in the spring. Summer came and passed and they were again able to harvest their grain and place it in stacks. Before they had time to thrash, however, the Paiutes launched an unusually vicious attack. In desperation, Father and Mother, as well as the other settlers, were forced to gather up a few household belongings and evacuate the town. We of today can scarcely imagine the depths of their feelings as they left their homes and crops in quest of new land with little assurance that security from the Indians could be found elsewhere."¹³



Mormon settlers on their way to colonize southern Utah in the 1850s.

Kanarra

The Davies' joined the Wilson family and started out for Kanarra, a small settlement just south of Cedar City. "The Wilson's had only one yoke of oxen and a wagon. Father had two teams of oxen and two wagons. He drove in front with one outfit while Mother drove the other team behind him," said Johnny.¹⁴

It was dangerous enough to travel across the vast desert with some knowledge of the route, but no one in the Davies/Wilson party had ever passed through the country before. The families simply set their sights in the general direction of their destination and proceeded with a combination of nerve and faith. "Over most of the way we had not a road to follow," said Johnny. "We went south over the hill to Marysvale and from thence south over through Circleville Canyon. Then we turned west over the mountains to Cedar City. Having no roads or reliable trails to guide us, we started up a certain canyon. Before we had reached the head of this canyon it became evident that it would be impossible to get out on top traveling as we were. It became necessary for the men to unload the wagons, tear them apart, and carry or drag everything out on top one piece at a time.

"After reassembling and reloading the wagons we proceeded along our way. We had not gone very far when we came to a spot where the ground was covered with dead mules and there were also two or three graves where men had been buried. That tragic scene was a matter of great wonderment to us. We later learned that it was the place where the pathfinder, Fremont, had had the misfortune of getting snowed in, and where a number of his animals and men had died of cold and hunger.¹⁵

“Nothing of importance happened until we reached the main thoroughfare from Salt Lake City to Cedar City. There we overtook old Uncle Pat Willis who was taking a wagonload of freight home. He had a team of horses and I remember how thrilled I was at the sight of them. I thought it was a wonderful privilege to be permitted to ride with him instead of being on one of the wagons with the oxen.”¹⁶

The Davies family arrived at Kanarra late in that fall and stayed with Mariah’s aunt, who everyone called Grandma Davies.¹⁷ The original site of this village proved to be a poor place to build a permanent town. The following spring the people there decided to move a mile further south “where the sand did not blow so hard.”¹⁸ Even without an unremitting wind, farming remained difficult with nothing more than hand-made plows to till the dry and rocky red soil. It wasn’t long before most of the men turned to raising sheep and cattle, relegating farming to a secondary status that was more suited to providing for individual family’s needs. The landscape was ideal for the stockmen who populated it. “One could ride almost any place across the country with the grass reaching over the stirrups of the saddle,” wrote Layton Ott,¹⁹ grass that the cattle could use for forage almost year around. Even so, John kept his eye on his fields, and began to settle in.



Mountains and foothills outside of Kanarra.

His Mother's Death

Johnny had turned six years old that year and was now old enough to begin his education. Kanarra's school was typical of the time and place, a one-room building where "all of the children were herded together in one room with only one teacher," according to Johnny. "There were five boys and three girls in my class. The children did not advance by grades. There were readers to be mastered, numbered from one to five. Spelling, arithmetic, geography and bookkeeping were also taught." Teachers were usually recent graduates of the same school, but for at least three years, the children were fortunate in having a well-traveled and educated teacher, a "Mr. Shopman, a world traveler who found himself financially stranded when he came to our town. After teaching for three years in Kanarra he moved to Cedar where he continued in that profession until he died. I shall always regard him as a very efficient instructor."²⁰

School became a temporary refuge from the family problems that developed with the death of his mother when Johnny was only nine years old. During the Davies' first winter in Kanarra, Mariah gave birth to Rachel,²¹ followed two years later by Margaret,²² but Mariah herself did not survive the ordeal of Margaret's birth and died the same day.²³ Martha, fifteen, was left to run the household and care for Johnny, Henry, seven, Phillip, four, two-year old Rachel and infant Margaret. The children were crushed by their mother's death and John found it difficult to go on without a companion. A year after his wife died, John married Betsy Williams,²⁴ Mariah's widowed cousin,²⁵ who brought four of her own children to the family.



John's stepmother, Betsy Davies.

Blending two families has never been easy and it was particularly difficult for the Davies household, with a total of ten children crowded into the home. To make matters even more complicated, three out of four of the Williams children were close in age and opposite in sex from sixteen-year old Martha. Reese,²⁶ nineteen, William,²⁷ seventeen, and John,²⁸ thirteen, were all attractive, strapping young men. Martha found a new friend in her fifteen-year old step sister, Elizabeth,²⁹ and she eventually found a husband in Reese, who she married three years later.³⁰

While Martha clearly adjusted well to the mixed family arrangements, eleven-year old Johnny did not welcome his new stepmother. “By that time I was of the age and temperament that I resented the idea of another woman coming into our home and expecting me to obey her. As a consequence, she and I did not get along very well together,” he said. “During later years I came to realize that I was entirely in the wrong, and that Aunt Betsy was as kind and loving stepmother as any boy could possibly have.”³¹

Boyish Mischief

Johnny’s days were filled with all the chores necessary to running a family and farm, but he found many opportunities to have a little fun with his friends at the same time. “Like boys in all ages and climes, my companions and I delighted in mischief, especially when a holiday or other celebration came along,” said Johnny. “One such amusing incident stands out in my memory. There was an old gentleman by the name of Day who lived at the north end of Kanarra and another old man who lived at the south end of town by the name of Allen. Mr. Day owned an old nanny goat of which he was very proud, and Mr. Allen happened to be the proud owner of a turkey, the only fowl of the sort in that section of the country. Using our idle minds as a workshop, the old man from Hades came forth with what seemed to us as a brilliant idea. To carry this idea into effect we went to the north end of town and ‘kidnapped’ Day’s goat, took it to Allen’s home and exchanged it for the turkey and proceeded to take the latter to Day’s home. The next morning Mr. Day went out as usual to milk his goat and to his surprise found a turkey tied in the pen and the goat gone. He knew, of course, who owned the turkey and he soon had a good idea as to the whereabouts of his goat. It was with a guilty conscience that I happened to see the old fellow walking by our place with the turkey under his arm, holding its neck, and heading for Allen’s place. While he had no trouble in making the exchange, I suppose he never learned the identity of the culprits who made it necessary.”³²

Stolen Fruit

Pranks came as naturally to the boys as snatching a snack from a local farmer's crops. John recalled one instance when he was caught liberating some peaches near the roadside one day. "Many of the pioneers who came to Utah in the early days were in a very poverty stricken condition. Some of them had no place and were dependent upon others to move them to a location where they could settle. Those that were to locate in the southwestern part of the state would usually come down through Cedar City. Men from Cedar City would then load these immigrants and their goods in wagons and haul them to Kanarra, and men from our town would take them on to Toquerville," he said. "I remember on one occasion that a group of them was brought to us from Cedar and it was necessary to use four wagons to take them on south. Four wagons and teams were procured, but there were only three men free to do the driving. I offered to go along if Father would give his consent. Much to my delight, he was willing for me to go. Nothing unusual happened on the way to Toquerville, except that the other drivers had to harness my team as I was too short to reach high enough myself.

"On the way back we were passing a peach orchard and noticed that the fruit was ripe. Being a boy, I was tempted to steal some. My wagon was behind the others and I knew that if I tied the lines that my team would follow the others without a driver. I did this, jumped off on to the ground and ran for the orchard. I took off my jacket and using it as a sack loaded as much fruit into it as I could. As I was climbing over the rock fence which surrounded the orchard I noticed that a man was also getting over the fence a little ways ahead of me. By this time the caravan of wagons was quite a little ways up the road. This man, who was the owner of the orchard, was thus between me and the wagons. Burdened as I was with the fruit, I tried to outrun my tormenter.

"For some strange reason he did not try to catch me. Instead, he merely tried to keep between me and my wagon. I started out through the brush and he did not try to catch me, but did likewise running parallel with me. In the meantime, the other three drivers were enjoying the show immensely. Finally, after a desperate effort, I was able to skirt out around the man and reached the wagon with my loot. The other drivers came back to levy tribute. At first I was of a mind to keep all the peaches for myself because of the manner in which they had laughed at me during the chase. Their pleading overcame my resolution, however, and I divided the spoils with them.

“A little later the owner of the orchard came to Kanarra peddling peaches. He drove up to where I was playing and we both recognized each other at the same time. The first thought that came into my mind was to run for safety, but he told me not to be afraid as he had chased me back on the road just for the fun of it and that I was perfectly welcome to the peaches I had taken.”³³

Food Fight

Johnny may have been perfectly willing to swipe fruit from someone else's orchards, but felt differently when his own food was threatened. One of Johnny's duties was herding a group of milk cows in the hills west of town with two other boys his age. “While out in the hills we often took some smooth boards that were rounded off at the ends and slid on them down a certain sandy slope. A tribe of Paiute Indians was camping a short distance away and the Indian boys discovered where we put our lunches while we played,” said John. “One day, while we were sliding, we observed a group of young bucks a little larger than ourselves approaching. That they were coming to steal our lunches was a certainty to us. We ran with all our might, grabbed up the buckets containing our dinner and started to cram the food down our throats, fleeing from the Paiutes at the same time. We were caught before we could finish the hurried meal, and of course, the natives soon relieved us of the remainder. What was left was given very willingly, otherwise we knew there would be a ‘booting’ in store for us.”³⁴



A pair of Paiute children in 1872.

ENDNOTES

¹ John Johnson Davies (1831-1906), #KWJD-869, www.familysearch.org, where verification of all vital dates can be found. Also see family group sheets at www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com

² John “Johnny” Henry Davies/Davis (1860-1947), #KWCC-4JS, www.familysearch.org

³ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 7.

⁴ Maria (Davies) Davies (1833-1869), #KWJD-86M, www.familysearch.org

⁵ The name of the town was originally Coal Bed, but was changed to Wales in 1869.

⁶ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 7.

⁷ John was born 17 April, 1860. “John Johnson Davies- Mariah Davies family group sheet,” supplied 1997 by Reta Davis Baldwin. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.

⁸ Henry William Davies (1862-1936), #KWCC-4JS, www.familysearch.org

⁹ Martha Maria (Davies) Williams (1854-1926), KWNN-YDL, www.familysearch.org

Another sister, Sarah Jane Davies (1857-1863), #KWVP-WQ3, www.familysearch.org had died in Ogden a year before the family moved south. “John Johnson Davies- Mariah Davies family group sheet,” supplied 1997 by Reta Davis Baldwin.

¹⁰ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 7.

¹¹ John states in his history that the family “spent the winter of 1864-65 in the little village of Wales,” but his brother Phillip was born in December, 1865, after the Davies’ had moved to Monroe in Sevier County. See “John Johnson Davies- Mariah Davies family group sheet,” supplied 1997 by Reta Davis Baldwin.

¹² Phillip David Davies (1864-1935), #KWVP-W31, www.familysearch.org

¹³ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, page 8.

¹⁵ Noted explorer John C. Freemont had passed through this area of Utah in 1853, attempting to find a suitable route for the transcontinental railroad. The expedition was difficult and the company was forced to eat their horses before finding shelter in nearby Parowan.

¹⁶ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 8.

¹⁷ It is not certain as of this writing which aunt John was referring to.

¹⁸ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 8.

¹⁹ Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 325.

²⁰ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 8.

²¹ Rachel Elizabeth (Davies) Allen (1867-1937), #KWBB-C4W, www.familysearch.org

²² Margaret Alena (Davies) Mulliner (1869-1897), #KWNK-LHW, www.familysearch.org

²³ 17 May, 1869. “John Johnson Davies- Mariah Davies family group sheet,” supplied 1997 by Reta Davis Baldwin.

²⁴ Elizabeth “Betsy” (Davies) Williams Davies (1829-1890), #KWVL-V3T, www.familysearch.org

²⁵ Betsy was married to Reese Jones Williams (1805-1860), #KWVL-V3P, www.familysearch.org from about 1849 to his death in 1860.

²⁶ Reese Jones Williams (1851-1933), #KWNN-YDK, www.familysearch.org

²⁷ William Reese Williams (1853-1927), #KW82-XGS, www.familysearch.org

²⁸ John Davis Williams (1857-1927), #KWZ3-B5Z, www.familysearch.org

²⁹ Elizabeth Margaret (Williams) Roundy (1855-1909), #KWZB-9JK, www.familysearch.org

³⁰ Martha married Reese 24 May, 1872, twelve days after her stepmother gave birth to the last Davies child, David Lorenzo Davies (1872-1936).

³¹ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 10.

³² *Ibid*, page 9, 10.

³³ *Ibid*, page 10.

³⁴ *Ibid*, page 9.

Chapter 2

Frontier Cowboy

Life in the Saddle



Mountain Meadows was used for grazing by both local ranchers and travelers on the California Overland Trail.

By 1874, fourteen-year old Johnny had grown to be almost as tall as a man, and with the departure of his favorite teacher, had lost interest in schooling. He described himself as “filled with an abundance of energy which demanded an outlet. Like a frisky young colt I needed to be broken in with some useful work and responsibility. Father was not able to keep me as busy as I should have been. My stepmother and I were having continued friction, and Dixie³⁵ wine was running rather freely at the time. After school was out in the spring of that year, a wonderful opportunity came into my life.

“A number of years before, a terrible destruction of human life had occurred out west of Kanarra known in history as the Mountain Meadow Massacre. A number of horses of the victims were allowed to run wild and in the course of time, they and their progeny became rather numerous. Men from our town would go out on the west desert and bring back bunches of these horses. They were usually kept in the stray pen for a period of ten days and then sold. A man by the name of Tom Woolsey was hired to care for the horses during this period.

“A number of us boys decided that we would like to have the fun of riding these mustangs. Mr. Woolsey kindly consented. At first we rode them in the stray pen which was a fairly good-sized corral. Finally we persuaded the caretaker to let us ride them out on the streets and he even gave us permission to do that. A thrilling adventure of this sort called for something stronger than water to spice it. Some robust, happy-go-lucky boys, a jug of wine, some wild mustangs to ride and everything was complete. I have often wondered what the people thought of us as we went tearing and yelling down through town.

“We happened to pass by the home of William S. Berry, who was watering his lot at the time. He scrutinized me closely as we went by. Before we took our steeds back to the stray pen I happened to pass by the Berry residence again. As I was going by, he motioned me to come over where he was. I obeyed his bidding, but with fear and trembling, for he was the bishop's counselor and I was afraid he would chastise me. I was agreeably surprised when he told me that I rode very well. The real thrill came, however, when he informed me that he needed a boy of my caliber to work for him as a cowboy. I lost no time in accepting his proposition. He then asked me to go and see if I could get my father's consent. Father was perfectly willing that I should accept, because he had a great deal of respect for Mr. Berry and was glad to have his son work for such a splendid man. When I returned to Mr. Berry's home and told him I was ready to go with him, he asked me if I had a riding habit. When I informed him I had none, he offered to buy me one and that I could repay him with my first month's wages. I gladly agreed to that sort of a deal. We waited until after the 24th of July to leave for the cattle country.”³⁶



William S. Berry



The original Mountain Meadows monument.

The Mountain Meadow Massacre

Tensions between the Mormons and Washington were high in 1857. Over fifteen hundred troops had been sent to Utah that year by the U. S. government to end what was seen as an anti-American lifestyle. Residents across the state were guarded around outsiders, and the pioneers of Southern Utah were particularly suspicious of the Baker-Fancher wagon train. Merchants in Cedar City had refused to sell provisions to the group of Arkansas and Missouri emigrants, considering them possible aids or even spies of the government.

As the party continued thirty-five miles south to a resting camp in the Mountain Meadows valley, a handful of local men prepared to attack them with the help of some Paiute Indians. When several emigrant men were killed, the party pulled their wagons into a tight circle where they defended themselves for several days. Eventually, one of the attackers, John D. Lee, convinced the emigrants to surrender, ensuring them of safe passage. Each emigrant boy and man was escorted by an armed militia member, who after walking about a mile, turned and fired on the emigrants, while the Indians attacked the women and children. Only seventeen children considered too young to be witnesses were allowed to survive. Subsequent investigations resulted in the indictment of nine militia members for murder; only John D. Lee was convicted and executed for the crime. The children were later returned to relatives in Arkansas.



The Dixie winery occupied the lower floor of John C. Nagle's home in Toquerville, Utah.

Dixie Wine

It may be surprising to think of the Mormon Church officially producing wine for consumption by members and for sale to Gentiles, but that was Brigham Young's objective when he announced in October, 1862, that settlements in southern Utah "should supply the territory with wine for the Holy Sacrament, for medicine and for sale to outsiders." Thanks to the rich soil and warm, dry climate in Washington County, Toquerville became the center of Dixie wine making, and soon 500 gallon casks were shipped to the church's cooperative stores around the state.

While the primary reason for local production was to provide pure sacramental wine for Mormon congregations, the economic benefits of selling the drink to the nearby miners of Pioche, Nevada, and Silver Reef, Utah, could not be overlooked. The Dixie Wine Mission became one of the most successful of the self-sufficiency projects developed by Young, thanks to Gentile sales.

The Saints themselves were expected to use restraint. Until the Word of Wisdom became canonized as scripture in 1880, the injunction against consuming "strong drink" was considered good advice that was not binding on the membership as a commandment, but warnings against "the habitual drunkard...[and] he, who for gain, or otherwise, puts the cup to his weak brother's lips" were issued from Salt Lake headquarters.

However, the temptation of such large and easily available quantities of good, aged wine proved too great, and eventually several local church officials were released from their positions due to drink. As the abuse of sacramental wine increased among the LDS population, water was substituted for wine by a St. George Stake directive in 1892. The final blow to Dixie wine was the rapid decline of Gentile markets with multiple mine closures and imports of superior wine from California.

Working for the Kanarra Coop

Johnny began his life as a cowboy on The Blue Fly Ranch, an operation owned by the Kanarra Cattle Coop, located several miles northwest of Bryce Canyon. Composed of local stockholders and managed by a board of directors, the company's elected superintendent was responsible for running the large cattle herd in the country around Tropic, Cannonville, and Henrieville. It so happened that William S. Berry was Superintendent of the Kanarra Cattle Coop. Johnny was delighted to spend the summer with Mr. Berry, "breaking horses, branding calves and doing other work incident to cowboy life," until it was time to return to school in the fall.³⁷

By the next spring, he was fifteen-years old and ready to resume his cowboy life. "When school was out in the spring of 1875, I packed my books and put on my chaps and spurs to ride the range once more," said Johnny. "Mr. Berry took his family out to East Creek for the summer to run a dairy herd. Instead of 'punching' cattle I had a rodeo all of my own throughout the summer. A man called Spanish George brought some mules out from California to sell. Mr. Berry bought twenty five of these mules and requested that I spend the next few months breaking them.

"My only help was a young lady by the name of Louise Berry, the superintendent's daughter. Every morning I would round the mules into a corral. Then I would separate one of them from the bunch and chase him into a chute provided with a gate at either end. I would next put my saddle on the brute and cinch it up tight, tie a halter on his head and mount him. Louise would then open the outer gate to the chute and the mule would go through every possible bodily contortion to rid himself of his unwelcome burden. My helper would jump on her horse and stay near me until my long-eared steed had concluded that bucking was just so much wasted effort.

"I had considerable difficulty providing myself with spurs. Some of the mules were actually able to reach up and kick them off. Sometimes they would even take the skin off my heels along with the spurs. A few of the mules, after they had ceased bucking would stop and sulk. When one of them would resort to a tactic of this sort, Louise would approach him from the rear and whip him across the rump with a quirt. This was the only means we had of getting some of the mules back to the corral.³⁸



The Pariah Valley became home to a trio of Mormon settlements in the late 1800s.

New Settlements

“During the five years I worked for Mr. Berry, I went through the whole gamut of duties that are generally assigned to cowboys: breaking mules, fighting bulls, roping and branding young calves, heifers and steers, wrangling horses and driving stock to market,” said John.³⁹ “I had the opportunity of helping a teamster pull the first wagon over the Colorado-Sevier divide and down into the section in which the settlements of Tropic, Cannonville and Henrieville have been made.

“One summer day I was riding all alone on a flat to the north east of Bryce Canyon when I saw in the distance a strange object moving slowly along. There was not the least sign of a road thereabouts, yet the object was longer than any animal native to this country could be. I spurred my horse towards it and before I had traveled very far it became evident that the mysterious object was a team and wagon. A vehicle of that kind lumbering along in such a locality was an utter surprise to me.

“When I finally reached it I found the driver to be a man by the name of Orley Bliss. When he informed me that he intended to cross the divide and settle down on the Paria Creek, I thought he was crazy. I told him I thought it would be impossible for him to drive the wagon down the mountain, but as he was determined to make the attempt I decided to help him as much as I could. Upon arriving at the jumping off place he locked all four wheels of his wagon. I was riding a mule at the time and I tied one end of my lariat to the horn of my saddle

and the other to the wagon. Thus prepared to oppose the force of gravity, we made the descent. I am sure that the first two miles of jolting and jerking down the rugged decline would have given even Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders a thrill.

“The first settlement on the headwaters of the Paria Creek was near a place that is now known as Wooden Shoe, where this creek and the Henrievile Creek join. There was insufficient water there to make a permanent town feasible. Because of this some of the people moved up the creek from the east and founded Henrievile and the remainder of them moved up the Paria Creek and settled Cannonville.⁴⁰

Bucking Bronco

“From the time that I was fourteen years of age until I was nineteen, I spent a large part of each of those five years in the employ of William S. Berry. He was the best judge of horses I have ever known. He owned a particularly good mare, except that she never quit the bucking habit. One of her colts also grew into what looked to be splendid horse. When he was three years old Mr. Berry said, ‘Johnny, I want that horse broke for my own personal use, but I don't want him to keep on bucking like his mother has done.’

“In due time, I caught him, saddled him and put a hackamore on his head. Mr. Berry thought it would be wise for him to lead the horse for the first few times while I was riding him. I jumped on him and he immediately began to churn around to get rid of me. There was an empty wagon bed lying on the ground not far away and he bucked right into the rear end of it. His head was lowered, of course, and as he was going out over the front end of the box the top of his head scraped over the boards and pulled the hackamore off. Berry also let go of the rope which gave the horse perfect freedom to go in any direction that he liked. He started running toward the section of the range where he had been grazing as a colt and after covering a number of miles ran into a band of horses. They became scared of the rope he was dragging from around his neck and began to run, too.

“In the meantime two cowboys and Mr. Berry were doing their best to catch me. It was over an hour before there were able to separate the horse I was riding from the remainder of the band, and even then they were unable to catch me because my mount had racing blood in his veins. I tried several times to reach down and grab the rope which was tied around his neck, but each time he would lower his head and commence bucking again. He happened to go past a willow patch and I thought that it would be a good idea to jump off. I had a second

thought, however, and I concluded it would be better to remain seated to avoid getting kicked. As the horse continued to run, the cinches on my saddle began to loosen and it was not long until my saddle blanket went, the horse giving it a farewell kick before it reached the ground. My companions were close enough by then to recover the blanket.

“Riding a bucking horse is very hard work and the exertion coupled with the heat had made me exceedingly thirsty. My steed finally began to approach a cold spring I knew about and the temptation became too strong to resist getting a drink. Just as I reached the water, I pulled one foot out of its stirrup and using the other stirrup as a footing, I was able to jump clear of the horse, even if I did not make a very graceful landing.

“The saddle had become so loose that it reversed its position and was now under the animal's belly. The foolish creature then made the mistake of getting one leg caught between the saddle and his stomach, which brought his progress to an abrupt stop. To cap the climax, I showed myself to be even more foolish than the horse by drinking far too much of the extremely cool water. Within a short time I was very sick. The two cowboys and Mr. Berry rode up to the spring and rescued the horse from his predicament, but they could do nothing to relieve my suffering. After resting for some time I felt able to ride the long, weary miles back to camp. Mr. Berry told one of the cowboys that he would either have to ride the horse I had been breaking back or else walk the whole distance, because I was in no condition to ride him. The poor fellow elected to walk, however, while I rode his horse. The other cowboy took turns with him, riding and walking. The unbroken horse was led by Mr. Berry.

“The following morning I felt perfectly well again and I decided to give my unruly pupil of the day before another lesson. This time I requested that no one take the trouble to lead him. After he had bucked and run for some distance I noticed that everything began to grow dark. Vague feelings of alarm began to crowd into my mind. I was fearful that something had snapped inside of me and that I was losing eyesight. I said to my companion, Joseph Ingram, ‘Good Lord, Joe, I'm going blind!’ He replied, ‘Oh, no, Johnny, it's just an eclipse of the sun.’ Never before or since did any words bring me a greater feeling of relief. In the course of a few weeks the horse ceased bucking altogether when I rode him. From that time on, for three years, Mr. Berry reserved him for his own personal use.⁴¹

Mr. Berry Departs

“In the year 1879, William S. Berry received a call from the church to fulfill a mission in the southern states. I went to Kanarra to be among those who bid him farewell when he left home. The night before he left there was a little farewell party at his residence. He invited me to attend it, saying, ‘You are just like once of the family to me, Johnny.’

“A wagon carrying his luggage had gone on ahead during the day. The following morning I rode with him to catch up with the wagon. He rode the horse which I had broken for him. When we overtook the wagon Mr. Berry dismounted his horse and climbed up into the seat. I shook his hand and bid him goodbye, never dreaming that I should never again see him alive. A number of months later he and Elder Gibbs were killed by a mob in the state of Tennessee while conducting a religious service in a private home. Shortly after they were buried, President B. H. Roberts of the Southern States Mission disguised himself as a tramp, dug up their bodies and brought them to their homes in the west.

“I rode all night from Blue Fly to Kanarra to attend the funeral of William S. Berry. For five years he had been my trusted friend and employer. He taught me all the efficiency I ever gained as a cowboy. He gave me a splendid start in life as a stockman, but I value above all else he did for me, his kind and fatherly counsel. Ours was much more in the nature of a father and son, rather than an employer/employee relationship. Both by precept and by example he taught me those principles of honesty and integrity that have guided me throughout my life.

“Shortly before leaving for his mission he instructed his wife not to sell the horse I had broken for him, as he wanted the animal for his own use after his return. The horse was never sold, and he died of old age in a barn on the Berry Homestead.”⁴²

ENDNOTES

³⁵ Southern Utah has been nicknamed “Dixie” due to its milder climate than the northern area of the state.

³⁶ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 12.

³⁷ *Ibid*, page 13.

³⁸ *Ibid*, page 13-14.

³⁹ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, page 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, page 22-23.

⁴² *Ibid*, page 24.

Chapter 3

Indians

Native Friendships



Paiutes sitting outside their wikiups in southern Utah.

John's childhood experiences with local Native American tribes had been limited to tension filled and hostile encounters, but the nature of his relationship with the Paiutes changed as he reached adulthood. He eventually learned to respect and care for them, even learning their language as he rode the range. "As interesting was the cowboy life, perhaps of even greater interest was the experiences I had with the Indians," said John. "There were numerous Paiutes living on the same range over which our cattle roamed. There was a tribe of about two hundred and fifty living in the section south and east of Bryce Canyon. I came to be well acquainted with their culture.

"As they were living in a semi-arid climate, they had to resort to much hard work and cunning to provide themselves with food. I have seen them some upon the East Fork hunting for ground dogs. Sometimes they would hide about ten feet from a burrow and when the little animal came up to do his customary barking there would be the swish of an arrow and the ground dog's life would be at an end. On other occasions the Indians would provide themselves with long

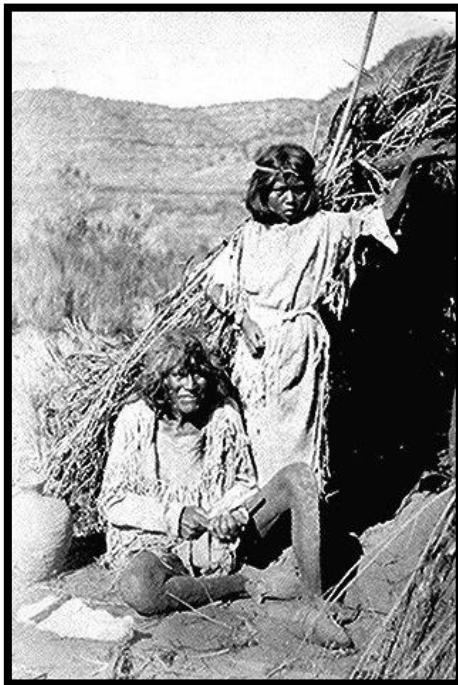
sticks with a little fork at one end. They would hold the forked end over a hole and when the ground dog made his appearance the hunter would swiftly pin him to the earth with the stick. They also were able to catch mice with a forked stick.

"I have seen a fairly large group of Indian boys deploy themselves in a large circle to hunt rabbits. Once the circle was complete the young hunters would begin to close in and any bunny that was scared up within the circle would usually run wildly about within the human enclosure until a number of arrows had brought his life to a close. It was a rare thing for a rabbit to escape such a trap. The Paiutes I knew also used the same method to kill chipmunks and other small game. They even used in a modified form to kill deer down on a ridge near Sheep Creek.

"There is a narrow ridge there, walled in both the eastern and western sides and ending in a perpendicular cliff at its southern extremity. Hence, the only way a deer could leave this ridge would be on its northern end. Whenever they could the Indians would chase a deer south on to that ridge. Then they would begin to station themselves along the ridge, about fifty yards apart. Once this was done, two or three of them would go to the southern end of the ridge to scare the deer back. Like the charge of the light brigade he would have to run past the line of hunters. Before he had reached the last one he would usually be so perforated with arrows that death would be a sweet relief from his pains. Each Indian would likely be able to get two to three shots at the poor creature.

"Having killed the deer, they would proceed to pull all the arrows out of it and would then have a roast. The portion of the meat that they were not able to consume before it spoiled they would cut into strips and dry in the sun. Salt, of course, was unknown to them. The smaller animals were usually barbecued. As soon as possible after ground dogs, rabbits, and chipmunks were killed the unskinned body would be buried in hot coals. After a time it would be taken out and the skin which still remained on would be peeled off and the meal could commence. Everything but the bones was eaten. When a very young animal was cooked in this manner little balls of milk would usually be found partially solidified by the heat. These were looked upon as rare delicacies and were given to very young children as their portion.

"During the late summer and early fall months the squaws made it a practice to gather grass seeds. They would make a kind of apron into which they would knock the seeds from the grass. To prepare the flour for eating they would generally mix it with water into dough and bake the cake on a flat rock placed on the fire. Sometimes, however, they would wrap strips of dough around a stick and roast it in that fashion.⁴³



Paiutes at the entrance of their dwelling.

Dealing with Death

“Whatever virtues may be attributed to the Paiutes, I know it cannot be said that they had a kind or humane way of caring for their tribesmen who were old or demented, or for the bodies of those who had died. How well I remember the condition of a feeble minded Indian who was left to shift entirely by himself. He was likely in his early thirties when I knew him, and I encountered him on quite a number of occasions as I rode about the country caring for the cattle. I always gave him all the matches I could spare as he could not make a fire by any other means.

“The last time that I saw him alive was late one fall in Bryce Canyon. There was not a stitch of clothes on him. A student of anatomy would have found him an excellent specimen for study. He was so very poor that nearly every bone in his body was easily discernible. When I rode up to where he was I found him prodding into a large bush with a long stick, forked at one end. Closer observation revealed that he was trying to catch a large lizard, but it had thus far been able to keep on the other side of the brush from him. I told him to stand still and that I would scare it around to a place where he could catch it. With my help he succeeded at last. And before the lizard has scarcely ceased

kicking the poor demented Indian had swallowed it. When I rejoined my companion that evening, I told him that old Bushead, the name we had given to this Indian, would not live through the winter. The following spring as I was riding through Bryce Canyon again I decided to look for him. Not far from where I had last seen him the autumn before I found his skeleton crouched up under a brush. I had no tool suitable for digging purposes so I buried him as well I could with rocks and sticks.⁴⁴

"I came to be pretty well acquainted with the adult members of the tribe. With a few of them I became very friendly. When my friends among them commenced to become old, I made a special effort to keep in touch with them in order to see to it that they had as good a burial as possible when death came. The Paiutes I knew seldom, if ever, troubled themselves about burying their dead. I recall to mind three old friends of mine that I was able to give a fairly decent interment. One of them was the chief of the tribe for quite a number of years. His Indian name was Nahab, but we whites called him by the name of Bishop. In due course of time he became too old to continue with the responsibilities of tribal leadership, and finally he became so feeble and ill that I knew that he was near the end of life's uneven road. When I last saw him in the valley east of Tropic I saw that death was very eminent.

"A few days later I was riding over in the mouth of a canyon called Wild Cat, east of Cannonville. While looking toward the west I saw the tribe coming south out of another canyon called Indian Hollow. Viewing them from a distance was a rather picturesque sight. They had no domesticated animals. The squaws were plodding single file along a narrow trail. Most of them were fat and short in stature. Each of them carried on her baby, a large bag containing all her family belongings, and some of them were even carrying babies. In order to carry their burdens as comfortably as possible they walked with a stooped posture. As I gazed at them from a distance I must confess that they scarcely looked like human beings. The papooses who were old enough to walk were straggling along near their mothers and older sisters. The men and the older boys were scattered out on either side of the squaws and children hunting rabbits and other small game.

"As I was very concerned over the welfare of my old friend, I rode over to meet the Indians and to question them about his health. When I came close enough to get a good view of all of them I discovered that old Bishop was not among them.

'Ha Kaba Nehab?' (Where is Bishop?)

'Nini kocha pe-tuj-a-wa.' (I don't know.)

'Imi o-shup!' (You lie!)

'Nini kocha pe-tuj-a-wa. Pigo yak-wa.'

(I don't know, maybe he's dead.)

"This was all the information I was able to get from them. I immediately began to follow their trail back up Indian Hollow. About a mile north I found him, dead, but he had not been dead when his people had left him. He had been able to trudge along with them for several miles over a rough plateau country from where they had been camped in the valley east of Tropic. When his tottering feet could carry him no further, he stopped and his superstitious tribesmen had gone on and left him to face his fate. From the place where he stopped on the trail he tried to crawl to a grove of trees a short hundred yards away, but his aged heart quit beating before he could reach the shade. I carried his corpse on up the hollow to a cave to protect his remains from the wild animals. I also visited this crude tomb on a number of occasions after that, and the last time that I saw him he was resting in peace and safety.

"I happened to be in close contact with the tribe when another of my old friends among them was about to finish his mortal days. I was camping with a companion near Promise Rock, about two miles southeast of Cannonville. The tribe was camped up the Henrieville Creek, a ways to the east. As I was leaving camp on my horse I noticed that the tribe was performing a rapid exodus from their crude wickiups, leaving the latter in smoking ruins. I immediately feared for the safety of poor old Kibe, the sick Indian. When I reached their camp I found him within a buring wickiup with his emancipated body frying. I put out the fire as quickly as possible and began to look around for a suitable place to bury him. He died near a creek on a sandy sagebrush flat and I had nothing along with which to dig a grave. The best I could do was to carry his body to a dry gulch and cover him with brush, rocks and dirt beneath a place where the water fell off when it rained. To prevent the flood water from falling down on him, I dug two ditches with sticks to divert the water from where it fell off into the gulch to a place below. In time, of course, the flood water did reach old Kibo and I suppose by now that his tabernacle of flesh and bones has become one with Mother Earth.

"My duties as a cowboy made it necessary for me to ride over a fairly wide radius of country. It was therefore impossible for me to be near the tribe every time it was visited with death. When I came across the corpse of a dead Indian in my travels I was neither surprised nor alarmed. One day I was riding in a rough, broken country a few miles to the southwest of Cannonville. I discovered a two-year-old unbranded heifer belonging to our herd. Naturally, she was rather wild. In trying to catch her to put the company's brand and earmark on her, I had quite a chase. While in hot pursuit of the heifer my horse jumped over the body of a squaw who had been dead for months. Soon afterwards I caught the animal and ended her career as a maverick. I was in a hurry to reach my camp on East Fork that night, and as I had no shovel along, I decided to postpone for a few days the burying of the squaw. About a week later I came back, dug her a grave and buried her. It was on a level piece of land and ever since the place has been known as Squaw Flat.⁴⁵



*Indians from one of the tribes near Kanarra.
Photo courtesy of Lark Reasor.*

Indian Culture

“Much as I deplored the manner in which the Paiutes in this section left their dead behind without burial, I never felt moved to censure or condemn them. This custom had its roots in a deep superstition they had relative to dead bodies. They seemed to have a childish and nameless dread of a corpse. In general, they were a kind and peace-loving people. I associated with them at fairly frequent intervals over a period of many years and at no time did I entertain any fear of them. As with all classes of people, a few of them would steal if a good opportunity presented itself. The most of them, however, lived lives of honesty and integrity. While they chastised their children in no uncertain terms when the need arose, I never did see a parent whip a child among them.

“I became acquainted with a number of their songs after I had learned their language, and I sang with them when I was a boy in my teens. As I am now in the seventy-seventh year of my life and I am able to recall only one of them to mind.

Pui-chatch, pui-chatch,
Kocha el wino!
Nu-ne-ish shut-cup Tirai-ki,
Steva nini kuni-ki.

(Mouse, mouse,
You're no good,
You keep stealing my food;
Now get out of there before I see you.)

“The only game I ever remember seeing them play was one in which they used a rabbit skull with the upper teeth knocked out. They took a string a yard or more long and fastened it to the back part of the rabbit's cranium. The other end of the string they fastened to a stick whittled to a sharp point. The object of the game was to throw the skull up in the air and stick the point of the stick through the holes where the teeth had been knocked out.

"The Paiute Indians of southern Utah used to have pow-wows at some central gathering place. On a number of occasions they had these meetings near enough for me to attend them. I took a real delight in joining in with them in their dances, songs, and confabs. One summer they were having an especially big pow-wow on East Fork. Paiutes from as far east as San Juan County came to participate in the ceremonies. As a convenience and favor to them, I permitted them to put their horses in the company pasture until their festivities were over and they were ready to disband.

"During the last day of the pow-wow I decided to spend a few hours with them. The Indians I knew had no objections to my presence, but a young chief from over in the eastern part of the state came to me and told me they wanted to be alone on the last day they were together and that all whites were unwelcome. While he may have had a justifiable reason for making such a request, I still resented the idea of leaving. Perhaps it was the belligerent manner in which he made the demand that made me feel that way. I said in reply that I was perfectly willing to go, but if I did I was going to round up all their horses and put them in the stray pen and that they would have to pay a pasturage bill on their mounts. The young buck was not expecting a turn like this. He conferred with the other braves who owned horses and it was not long before he returned to tell me that it was all right for me to stay.⁴⁶



Paiute men repairing their bows.

The Navajos

“William S. Berry was never a man who was troubled with needless fears, but he did have sufficient justification to feel apprehensive toward the Indians. Two of his brothers had been killed by redskins a number of years before. One of the men who was responsible for this bloodshed was a Paiute called Cold Creek John. On a number of occasions Berry tried to get in a position to kill this Indian, but the latter was always a little wary.⁴⁷

“I never had any real fear of the Paiutes, but I did get a genuine scare from a band of Navajos during the latter part of July in 1874. It was in connection with this incident that I first saw and camped with the noted missionary and peacemaker among the Lamanites, Jacob Hamblin.

“During the fall of 1873, a group of four Navajos had left Arizona, crossed the Colorado, and come north into Utah to trade with the Ute Indians. When they arrived at the present site of the town of Antimony on the east fork of the Sevier River, they were caught in a snow storm. To protect themselves from the inclement weather they entered a cabin belonging to a non-Mormon named McCarty. They also killed a calf owned by this man to replenish their dwindling food supply.

“Mr. McCarty and a few of his associates, having learned of the theft, attacked the Navajos, killing three of them and shooting the fourth through the breast as he was making a hasty retreat. How this wounded Indian, shot through and through, was able to make his way from the scene of the tragedy over miles of rough wilderness country to his home in Arizona in thirteen days without food or matches has always been a marvel to me. He even had to swim the Colorado River on his way south. To his fellow tribesmen he conveyed the information that the slayers of his comrades were Mormons. The wrath of the Navajos over the killing was soon stirred to a white heat against the Mormons.

“[Jacob Hamblin was sent on to pacify the Indians at a council at which Hamblin was threatened with death.] The Indians then made a demand of Jacob Hamblin that the Mormon Church recompense them with 350 head of cattle for the loss of their tribesmen. He declined to make a settlement of that kind, but promised to present their proposition to the church authorities. Hamblin and his two white associates were released to go home after they had promised to return in twenty-five days to confer with a Navajo chief over the killing. An Indian chief named Hastole was the leader of the group who would

make the journey to the murder scene and acquaint themselves with the facts. Hastole and his group met with Jacob Hamblin at Kanab, asking him to join them the rest of the way. He declined, but after the party left, had second thoughts about it and rode out to catch up with Hastole.

"The next day in the middle of the afternoon, Hastole and nearly a score of other Indians rode up to our camp on Flake Bottoms, about twenty miles south of Grass Valley, the place where the Navajos were killed. We were camped in a small corral about four logs high and the Indians decided to spend the night with us. Mr. Berry and I had good reason for not feeling too contented in the midst of such company. By means of the Paiute interpreter, Berry was able to ascertain the mission of the party. We had heard of the ordeal to which Hamblin and the Smith brothers had been subjected by these same Indians and this knowledge did not tend to lessen our nervousness. Even the Navajo who had been wounded and had found his way back home was in the party and Mr. Berry and I were permitted to see his wound.



A group of Navajo horsemen riding across the desert.



“Apostle to the Lamanites:” Jacob Hamblin

Jacob Hamblin was a noted missionary and diplomat to various Native American tribes in the Great Basin. He was instrumental in establishing Mormon settlements in Southern Utah and Northern Arizona where he was seen as an honest negotiator between the whites and the natives. He survived numerous dangerous encounters over the years, often dealing with hostile Indians with no companion and carrying no weapon to defend himself.

During a particularly trying period in 1874, three Navajo Indians were shot by a member of the Butch Cassidy gang in Central Utah, but the Indians mistakenly believed the Mormons were to blame. Hamblin, who had previously promised the Navajos safe trading with the Mormons of the area, was directed by Brigham Young to avert hostilities by counseling with the natives, but Hamblin’s local bishop made two desperate attempts to keep him from walking into a “certain death-trap.” Hamblin refused to return home, stating that “I have been appointed to a mission by the highest authority of God on Earth [Brigham Young]. My life is but of small moment compared with the lives of the Saints and interests of the Kingdom of God.” One eye-witness to the events that followed reported that “no braver man ever lived.”

"That night we made our beds as usual, within the small corral, and the Indians slept on their blankets outside. Mr. Berry crawled in bed with me, but not for the purpose of sleeping. Spending most of the time with his head propped up on his elbow and with his gun at his side, he lay watching the Indians through the spaces between the logs. I believe he stayed awake all night.

"The following day Jacob Hamblin caught up with the Navajo band before they had left our camp. I remember very distinctly of hearing him converse with them with the assistance of the Paiute interpreter. He talked in a low, quiet and measured tone of voice that inspired close attention. Everything he said carried with it a conviction and a seriousness that deeply impressed his listeners.

"After spending an hour or so with us and eating a meal with William S. Berry and me, Mr. Hamblin accompanied the Indians on their journey northward. While we regretted to part company with old peacemaker, we saw the Navajos leave with a feeling of genuine relief. As we could not be sure as to what the red men would find out on their trip down to Grass Valley or the nature of their temper when they returned, Mr. Berry concluded that it would be much safer to go a considerable distance west to do some work that needed to be done on Asey Creek rather than meet them on their way back to Arizona. Our fears were ill-founded, however, because the Indians learned to their complete satisfaction that gentiles and not Mormons were responsible for the slaying of their tribesmen."⁴⁸

ENDNOTES

⁴³ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 14-15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, page 15.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, page 16-17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, page 17-18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, page 20-21.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, page 20-21.

Chapter 4

A Year in Arizona

Running Cattle at St. Johns



The first home built in St. Johns, Arizona.

Efforts by the Mormons to colonize the Little Colorado River Valley in Arizona began in 1876, when five hundred pioneers, well prepared for the arduous experience, founded four settlements⁴⁹ along the river's lower valley. William S. Berry's brother John was among the settlers living in St. Johns, Arizona by 1879, when William was called on a church mission. Berry's departure left Johnny unemployed, but only temporarily. "John Berry and his son owned three hundred and sixty-four head of cattle in the Kanarra Cattle Co-op and also ninety-six head of horses. Despite my youth, being only nineteen years of age, I was offered five hundred dollars to drive this livestock from the Escalante Desert to St. Johns," said John. "I hired two men, Dan Allen and Roy Spencer, to assist me. Before leaving for the long drive south there was an arrangement made in which we were to try and meet the Berrys at Lee's Ferry on a certain date.

"Nothing of an unusual nature transpired until we reached that crossing. We planned on swimming the cattle and horses across, but this proved to be an impossible undertaking. We hired two Navajo Indians to help us and for two whole days we tried every available

means to get the herd to swim. Finding this to be a hopeless task, we finally concluded that we should have to take them across in the ferry boat. As luck would have it, we had to do this work on Christmas Day. We were fortunate in being able to obtain the services of two young men to help us in the undertaking. They had arrived at Lee's Ferry⁵⁰ by wagon from St. George and were giving their teams a rest. Of added interest was the fact that they had just been married in the St. George temple and were returning home with their brides.

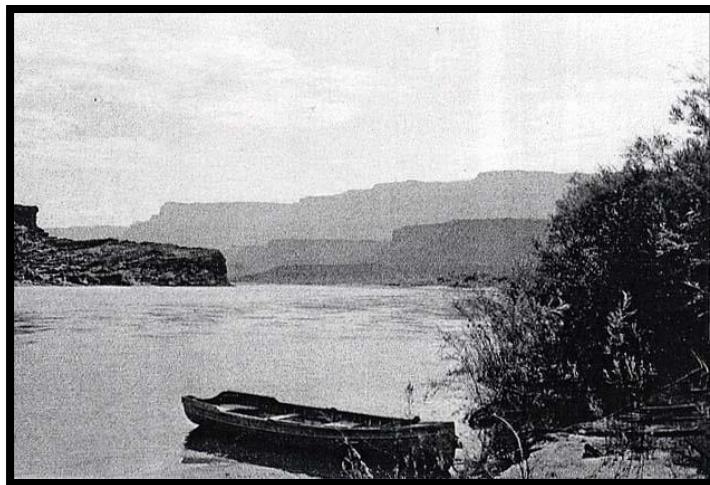
"While we were engaged in the unpleasant labor of ferrying the cattle and horses across, these two young ladies were in a row boat on the river watching us. Then an unexpected thing happened. The rope which anchored the row boat to the shore broke loose and the craft was swished out into the main current of the Colorado River. Its two occupants then proceeded to do the usual feminine maneuver in the face of danger: they stood up in the boat and started to scream. They rocked the boat so hard that I was fearful it would capsize. We unloaded the cattle we were ferrying across at the time as soon as we possibly could and rushed to the rescue of the frantic young women.

"The Colorado is a treacherous river over most of its long length and the strip at Lee's Ferry is no exception to the rule. Immediately below the place where the ferry boat crosses there are some rapids, and just below these rapids the stream enters a narrow box canyon. Before anyone could reach the girls they had gone over the rapids and were headed for the canyon. Mr. Johnson, the ferry caretaker, dived into the icy water and swam with all his might for another rowboat to enable him to reach the girls, if possible.

"By the time the ferry boat reached shore, Johnson had already gone down over the rapids. We ran down the bank of the river to see what progress he was able to make and to do anything in our power to help him. He rescued the young ladies at last from their boat and attempted to row them upstream to a place where they could land safely, but his efforts were all too puny against the mighty flow of the river. We rushed up shore, found three ropes, fastened them together, tied a stick on one end and floated the stick down so that Johnson would be able to catch it. It was necessary for us to stand up the river from the rapids in letting the rope out to enable us to pull the boat back to safety.

"To our dismay, the elongated rope still lacked about fifteen feet of reaching the place where Johnson was making an almost superhuman effort to hold his own against the stream. It was plainly evident that someone would have to wade out into the stream and let the rope far enough down the river for Johnson to get hold of the other end. I elected to do this. The mother of the two brides was there and she ran to her wagon to get a quilt. Using it for protection I stood behind it

and hurriedly undressed. After disrobing, I grabbed the end of the rope and jumped into the water. Mr. Johnson got hold of the other end at last, and standing waist deep in the stream, I was able to pull the boat far enough upstream for the men on the bank to get hold of the rope. It was but a short time until the three were safely landed, and if I ever saw a happy group of people, it was then. The two brides, their mother and the two grooms almost overwhelmed each other with hugs and kisses.⁵¹



The crossing at Lee's Ferry, Arizona.

Dangerous Errand

“We started on south with the livestock the day after Christmas. There is a desert country south of Lee's Ferry and in crossing it the cattle had to go two days without water. They became so restless that night herding became necessary. The three of us who were driving the herd took turns at this. During the second night my turn came, and when it became light enough to distinguish objects fairly well, I noticed that an old pinto mare we were taking with the herd was missing. I told the other two men to continue on our established route and wait for me at a place called Willow Springs and that I would go back in search of the mare.

“The ground over which we had been traveling was of a hard limestone formation. For long stretches tracking was well-nigh impossible. I assumed that the old mare had headed for home and I therefore followed the route we had come. On parts of the trail where

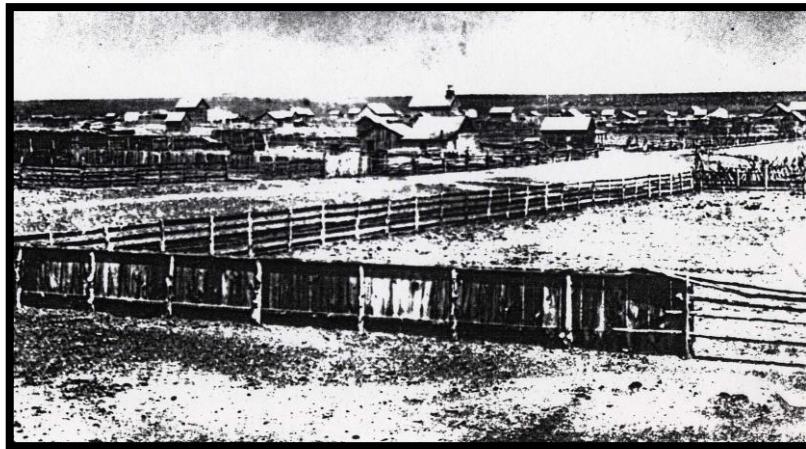
the ground was soft I found her tracks headed north. When I left the main herd I believed that I should be able to find the object of my search in a comparatively short time, and I did not take any food or blankets to serve the purpose of a bed. I tracked all day and nightfall still found me searching for the old pinto. That night I protected myself as well as I could from the wintry air by wrapping myself up in my saddle blanket. My hunger had to go unappeased. With the light of dawn I was again on my way, but the sun was sinking toward the west before I overtook the old mare. By that time the pangs of hunger had left me. The idea of spending another night without bedding, however, was not the least bit thrilling.

"Old Pinto had strayed off from the main traveled route when I found her, and when I was driving her along the regular trail south I came upon a man, his wife and his daughter camping for the night by their wagon. I related to them the details of my experiences in hunting for the old mare. When they learned of my thirty-six hour fast and the exposure of the night before, there was nothing they could do that was too good for me. The man told his wife to prepare extra food for me and then he proceeded to help me catch the pinto in a gulch nearby. The prolonged lack of food left my digestive organs in such a condition that I was unable to eat much for supper. It was very plain that the woman thought I had been telling a falsehood about my recent experience. The man seemed to be very pleased to have someone to sleep with him that night. The following morning I ate a very hearty breakfast, as my appetite had fully returned and the good wife looked upon me with greater favor as a result. In fact, she put me up enough lunch for three men.

"I left this generous family with a feeling of thanksgiving in my heart and rode as fast as I could for Willow Springs. I knew that my two companions would be very worried about me. When I came within four miles of Willow Springs I met them coming back to hunt for me. They were very fearful that I had been killed or wounded by the Indians, and they were so delighted when they recognized me they began to yell and throw their hats into the air.

"South of Willow Springs a ways we had the misfortune of losing five head of cattle and a colt in the quicksand. That was the sum total of our losses during the entire trip. We reached the vicinity of St. Johns, Arizona, and corralled the cattle outside of town a ways. I rode in and informed the Berrys that I had their livestock to deliver to them. When John Berry asked about the nature of the losses I told him about losing the five calves and the colt in the quicksand, which constituted the total loss. He was highly pleased with the success of the trip.

"On our way back to town I began to talk about the roan horse I was riding. I had picked him out of the Berry string of horses when we were on the Escalante Desert and had broken the animal on our drive south. I began to make some overtures to him about purchasing the steed. As an expression of his pleasure over the smallness of our loss on the journey, John Berry made me a gift of the roan horse and said that he was very glad that I wanted the animal.⁵²



The earliest known photo of Snowflake, Arizona.

Snowflake

"I stayed with Wes Willis, a friend of mine, that night. He requested that I go to a dance with him that evening in Snowflake. I replied that I should be delighted to go, but I had no clothes with me suitable for such an occasion. His mother then offered to let me take her son Am's suit. The suit fitted fairly well, so I accompanied Wes to the dance. He began to introduce me to the girls he knew. In a short time he presented me to a girl with a familiar face. In a moment we both recognized each other; she was one of the brides that I had helped rescue from the row boat at Lee's Ferry. She was so glad to see me that she said she would have kissed me had it not been in a public place.

"I lived in Snowflake for nearly a month. It was wintertime and I had plenty of money with which to have a good time. During the latter part of January, word came that a dam down at St. Joseph had gone out and that it had to be replaced or the people there could not raise any crops the following summer. The men in Snowflake were asked to help out in the emergency. Pole Roundy offered to furnish a team and I offered to drive it. I worked for two weeks on the dam. All that I took in payment for this work was my board.

“Jack Williams and I obtained work hauling ties from the San Francisco Mountains. We were making considerable money at this job when misfortune overtook us. While we were asleep one night some rustlers stole both our teams. We returned to Snowflake and Jack concluded that he would go to his home in Utah.⁵³

A New Job

“Despite my bad luck in losing the team, I was still loath to leave Arizona. I still had one horse left and I desired to see some new country. I went down on the Gila and Salt rivers and in time visited every Mormon settlement in the state. My fund of money began to run low, so I decided to look for work. I was going towards Winslow when I noticed a well-dressed man hunting rabbits. Playing a little hunch I had, I asked him if he would give me a job. He replied that he might be able to favor me, but that I would have to wait for a while. I started on toward town, but the gentleman overtook me before long. He said that he had reconsidered and that he would give me work for sixty dollars a month and my board. I gladly accepted his offer.

“A short time previous to this I had turned my roan horse into the Willis' pasture at Snowflake and I was afoot at the time. I walked into Winslow with a roll of bedding on my back. The man who had hired me to work had instructed me to board at the hotel until I was ordered elsewhere. I carried my roll of bedding to the side of the hotel and sat on it to await developments. It was a new experience to me to stay in a hotel and I was extremely timid about doing anything on my own initiative.

“My boss came, presented me to the hotel clerk and asked him to give me a meal ticket. I took the ticket, ate my dinner and started to walk outside. The clerk called me back to punch my meal ticket. I discovered it was good for twenty-one meals. I stayed at the hotel for a week without being asked to do any work. This made me very restless, as I had never been used to lying around idle.

“During the second week a little celebration occurred. A railroad bridge had just been built across the Canyon Diablo. All the townspeople of Winslow were going to see a train cross the structure for the first time. I rode out to the canyon with some other men on a flat car. A large locomotive was sent across the bridge at first with nobody on it. Some inspectors watched the crossing from down in the canyon and gave their approval to the completed span.

“Once it was possible to cross the bridge, my work began. A large amount of railroad supplies had been piled up on one side of the canyon to await the completion of the bridge before being taken to the place where they were needed. My job consisted of loading ties, nails, bolts and other such material back on to flat cars. After I had been working at this task for some time I was put in as foreman. This was a genuine surprise to me because I was the youngest man in the outfit. I still continued to work at the side of the other men, however, until my boss ordered me to quit. From that time on I only sat around and instructed the workers what to do, except for a little bookkeeping the foreman was expected to do. After several months of this I began to get a little homesick. One day I told my boss I was going to quit. He was very sorry to hear it and informed me that he would rather lose any two of his men than to lose me. Naturally, this pleased me very much.

“My roan horse was still at the Willis ranch. I went and got him, bid the Willis family adieu, and headed for Utah. The shades of night had fallen the day I reached Lee's Ferry. Mr. Johnson, the caretaker, was in his house on the other side of the river. I gave voice to a mighty yell, but he was not aroused by the sound. I then pulled out my revolver and began to shoot into the air. This brought Johnson to life. I shouted across the river that I was without food or bedding. He rowed to my side with a small boat and took me back to his home to stay for the night. I had been sleeping under the stars with only my saddle blanket ever since I had left Snowflake and the bed in Johnson's house was therefore much appreciated. We arose early, ate our breakfast and ferried my horse over to the north side of the river. I continued on my journey and reached home the day before Christmas. Slightly more than twelve months had elapsed since I had left for Arizona, a year that left no regrets and many satisfying experiences.”⁵⁴

ENDNOTES

⁴⁹ Of the eventual twenty settlements in the area, only St. Johns, Snowflake, Showlow and Heber exist today.

⁵⁰ Lee's Ferry, Arizona, the only place in hundreds of miles where the Colorado River could be easily crossed, is located nine miles south of the Utah/Arizona border.

⁵¹ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 25-26.

⁵² *Ibid*, page 26-27.

⁵³ *Ibid*, page 27-28.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, page 28-29.

Chapter 5

Running Kanarra Cattle

Superintendent



Open grazing lands near Kanarra, Utah.

By the time John returned to Utah, he was twenty years old, and intended to celebrate the fact. "I was rapidly coming of age and the impulse to celebrate the occasion was especially strong. With carefree indiscretion I enjoyed the round of dances, parties and other social events to my heart's content," he said. "One of my favorite pastimes was to join with the other young people in a good, old fashioned songfest. My special delight was to sing bass. Dixie wine ran freely and it was not hard to take. A barrel full of it with a dipper handy was a familiar sight at many a dance. We had our times of merriment and hilarity that are seldom, if ever, surpassed by the youth of the present in real, unrestrained fun.

"Spring came and with it a compulsion to leave for the open ranges. For almost seven years I had been going and coming pretty much as I pleased. Still, as April the seventeenth neared, I could not help but look upon it as a significant event: it was my twenty-first birthday. During the five years I had worked for the cattle company I had spent but very little of my earnings except for actual necessities. During the winter and spring of 1881, the desire came over me to divest myself

of my wealth and commence my majority from the grass roots. On April 17th of that year I gave my father seven hundred and forty dollars' worth of stock in the Kanarra Cattle Coop and also a mare. All that I had left was a horse and riding outfit.⁵⁵

"William Pace had been appointed to succeed William S. Berry as superintendent of the company and I began to work for him. A year later, Pat Willis was appointed to succeed Mr. Pace, and Mr. Willis hired me to work for him, as well. Cowboy life had become pretty much of a routine affair with me by then.

"There was a stagecoach line running north from St. George at that time. There were stations at convenient points along the route where the horses had to be fed and groomed. A man experienced with horses had to be hired for this task. To relieve the monotony of working with the cattle, I obtained a job of this sort in a station south of Kanarra during the winter of 1882-3. During the latter part of the winter, Lem Redd, who had replaced Pat Willis the fall before as superintendent of the cattle company, came and asked me to work for him the same as I had done for his predecessors. I had learned to dislike the man, so I declined his offer. He told Bishop Wilson D. Pace, president of the company, about my refusal and added that he absolutely had to have me in order to successfully care for the herd.

"Bishop Pace then made a special trip to see me and tried to get me to change my mind. I knew that Redd had a bad temper and was domineering and that trouble was sure to arise between us if I became his hired hand. I fully explained to the bishop how I felt about the matter. As a compromise measure we made an agreement in which I was to work for him as president of the company, and not for Mr. Redd. The latter was not informed of this arrangement at first. Accordingly, when we rode east to Blue Fly together, he was under the impression that I was his employee. Redd hired William Bryce to help us in the work.

"The company had built a corral about a mile south of the present site of Tropic. One day while we were trying to run some cattle into it a young bull broke loose from the herd. He did not have a brand or mark on him of any description, so it was very essential that something should be done to help identify his ownership. I had considerable trouble catching and roping the brute. After tying him down, I found that I had left both my branding iron and knife behind. I was finally able to earmark him with a sharp rock. Fully an hour had passed before I returned to the corral. Mr. Redd evidently thought that I ought to have brought the bull back long before then. He had even told Bryce that he would fire me if I did not commence behaving myself. Bryce informed me of this and it roused my temper to the point that I was ready to speak my mind at the first good opportunity.

“A short time later Redd took me to task for not bringing the bull back. I retorted that I had done what I thought was right with the critter and that I would do the same thing over again if another bull happened to break loose that needed such attention. The superintendent then replied, with considerable heat, that I had better be more careful about what I said and did, if I wanted to keep my job. It was with a kind of malicious joy that I informed him that he had not hired me, and neither could he fire me; that I was employed by President Pace, and he was the only man who could discharge me. Mr. Redd's anger immediately subsided and he showed me every possible kindness from then until he was released from his responsibility as superintendent.⁵⁶

Assuming Leadership

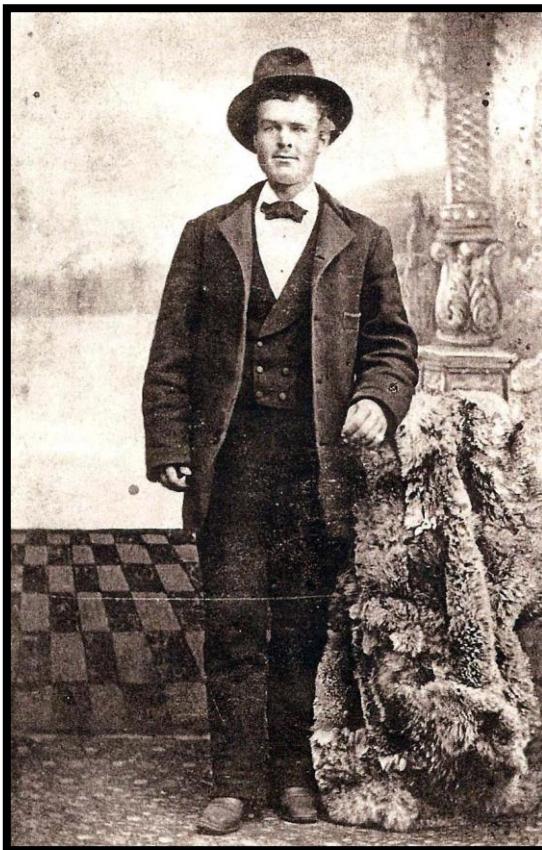
“When fall came there was a meeting of the stockholders in the company which I attended. There was an election of a board of directors, most of the old officers still retaining their positions. When the stockholders adjourned, the directors held a meeting of their own. Almost their first order of business was to appoint a new superintendent. To my great surprise and satisfaction, they chose me to succeed Lem Redd. I should not have been nearly so pleased, however, had I known about the hardships I was soon to endure. The winter that followed was one of the most severe ever known to this country. The snowfall was exceptionally heavy. I had great difficulty in keeping the cattle and horses from getting snowed in and losing their lives through exposure to the cold and starvation. For weeks at a time I used snowshoes, made by the Indians, to travel from place to place.⁵⁷

“I hired William Bryce and William J. Henderson, Jr.⁵⁸ to work for me. They were both very good hands with the cattle. Bryce worked for me over a period of four years whenever I needed him. I labored the hardest I ever did in my life that winter. To make the situation even more unpleasant, it was a difficult matter to obtain suitable food. The only thing resembling a store in Cannonville was run by a Mr. Elmer. He had freighted in a few goods during the fall, but it was not long before he had almost completely sold his stock out. When I was badly in need of suitable food all he had was dried squash to sell. I purchased some and induced Joe Ingram's wife to boil it into a paste. She also made me a batch of yeast dough. With the squash paste and the yeast dough as a grub stake I spent a week on Sheep Flat, floundering through the snow hunting cattle and horses. The paste and the dough were both frozen stiff. When meal time came, all I had to do was to make a fire, chop out a piece of squash and a piece of dough and cook them to suit my taste.⁵⁹

“One incident stands out in my memory as rather amusing in the midst of those days of trials and difficulty. There was an old Paiute Indian named George who lived with his tribe in the vicinity of Cannonville. He told me about seeing some of our cattle snowed in up at the head of Indian Hollow. I gave George a mule to ride, as he had offered to go with me, and I rode a horse. When we reached the cattle we noticed there was a white cow with them that was very angry and wished to fight. We made a trail to the place where the critters were standing and I proceeded to tease the white cow so that she would come after me. Old George was not very far behind me sitting on the mule. The cow rushed for me and my horse jumped off into a side trail that I had made for that special purpose. She went by me and made a lunge toward George. The poor old fellow was caught unawares as the mule jumped from under him and he tumbled head over heels into a snow bank. The mule ran off down the canyon with the white cow in hot pursuit. The remainder of the cattle began to follow. The hapless Indian held on to my horse's tail until we were able to overtake the mule.⁶⁰



Kanarra's Coop building in the 1880s.



John posed for this formal portrait in the mid-1800s.

Back to Kanarraville

“During my stay in the vicinity of Cannonville I became attached to a young lady, Miss Mary Anne Henderson.⁶¹ One early spring day I decided to go spend the Sabbath with her. On my way to town I saw some strange horses and riders. After catching up with them I learned that they were from Escalante and were going to Panguitch. A feeling of homesickness swept over me and I decided to go with them and continue on to Kanarra. I stopped with my girl's parents that night. Mr. Henderson⁶² had just killed a steer for beef and I ate so much I was ashamed of myself.

“Early the next morning I started north. I caught up with the men from Escalante after riding about four miles. It was in April, but the snow was still so deep that it took us until dark to reach the top of the divide, about nine miles from the place where I overtook the men. We waited until three a.m. for the snow to get frozen into a hard crust and

then proceeded on our way. By the time we had reached the head of Red Canyon, the snow had begun to melt and our horses broke through the crust. We broke a trail with our legs and elbows for quite a distance before camping for the night.

“I reached home April 15th, two days before my twenty-fourth birthday. Bishop Pace came up from Harmony to see me and inquire about the welfare of the cattle. I related some of the difficulties I had encountered and that I had done everything in my power to save the herd. He expressed his confidence in me by saying he knew that I had done my best.

“During the summer I commenced to get the cattle in a position to count them. That there would be a heavy loss was certain, and with this knowledge came the fear that I would be discharged from my position as superintendent. When the count was finally completed, the loss turned out to be thirteen per cent. Bishop Pace had reassured me that if I had as much as a fifteen per cent loss that I had done mighty well, but I was apprehensive as to what the other directors would think about it. The annual stockholder's meeting was held again in the fall and I made my report to them. When I sat down I thought, ‘That's the last report of that kind I shall ever make.’

“All of the old officers were re-elected and they held a meeting after the stockholders were dismissed. They had been together only a short time when they called for me to come. I was informed that I had been appointed by a unanimous vote of all the directors to be superintendent for another year. I was so overjoyed and filled with emotions that I was unable to utter a word. I had been so ambitious to succeed in the position, and failure had seemed eminent for so long, that the news of their decision literally overwhelmed me.⁶³



Mary Ann Henderson at the age of twenty.

Marriage to Mary Ann

"I continued as Superintendent of the Kanarra Cattle Coop for nearly seven years. Fortunately, the first year was by far the most difficult of them all. From the second year on there were few new or unusual experiences connected with my work. I began to associate with Mary Anne Henderson as frequently as possible, and we were finally engaged to be married. The date for the ceremony was set for November first.

"Late in September a man by the name of Stevens, a stockholder in the co-op, notified us that he was going to withdraw his share of the cattle from the company and run them over in the Henry Mountains. I had not informed the company officials about my marriage plans and they made arrangements with Stevens to count out the cattle on November first, my wedding day. Conditions were such that my help in making this separation was very necessary. In view of all the factors involved, I decided it would be better to let the marriage wait until the counting of the cattle was completed. We were so rushed with work that I had no means of sending word to my bride that I could not be there on the appointed date. All day long, November the first, I was helping to throw cows and steers in order to vent their brands and ear marks and put Steven's brand and ear mark on them. When the day's work was done I walked up to Bishop Pace, who was

lying on a bed and said, ‘Well, this has been a fine wedding day.’ He raised himself up and replied, ‘It’s your wedding day, you say! What in heaven’s name are you doing here?’ I then explained as well as I could my reasons for staying with the job until it was done.

“Early the next morning I saddled my horse to go to Cannonville and try to explain to my future wife the cause of my failure to appear. Bishop Pace walked up to me and said that the stockholders present at the counting had met together and decided that the company owed me a wedding present. He then pulled out eighty dollars in greenbacks and handed them to me. I thanked them heartily and reined my horse towards Cannonville. And so, on November 2, 1884, I was married to Mary Anne Henderson. She became the mother of eight children, seven of whom we reared to maturity. She remained my faithful and devoted wife until her death, fifty-three years later.”⁶⁴

ENDNOTES

⁵⁵ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 30.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, page 30-31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, page 31.

⁵⁸ William would later become Johnny’s brother-in-law.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, page 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ Mary Anne “Annie” (Henderson) Davis (1866-1937), #KWCC-4JQ, www.familysearch.org.

⁶² William Jasper Henderson (1840-1919).

⁶³ *Ibid*, page 32-33.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, page 33-34.

Chapter 6

Obedience to the Lord

Marriage and Mission



Mary Anne Henderson and her family in 1886. Back, left to right: Mary Anne, William Jr., Laura Jane, Alvira. Center: Frances, Alvira Aurelia, William Sr., George. Front: Maggie, Frances, Lucy.

Mary Anne, affectionately called “Annie” or “Mary Annie” by her family, was the second child and oldest daughter of pioneers William and Alvira Henderson.⁶⁵ Both of the Hendersons had been born in Nauvoo, Illinois, crossed the plains as children, and settled with their families in northern Utah where they later met and married.

Annie spent her early years on the family farm in Richville, attending the nearby school with her old brother William⁶⁶ and younger sisters Alvira Aurelia⁶⁷ and Laura Jane.⁶⁸ Annie and her sisters naturally helped their mother not only with daily household chores, but tended little James⁶⁹ and Lucy,⁷⁰ as well.

In 1878, the Hendersons decided to pioneer Utah's wilderness, loading their six children and all of their possessions onto wagons and headed south to the red rock county near Cannonville, a few miles southeast of Bryce Canyon's rim. "Some of the route they followed traversed some wild and primitive territory," said Annie's son Vernon.⁷¹ "The sharp decline just to the east of Bryce known as the 'Dump' was especially treacherous, requiring unusual precautions to help prevent the wagons from getting out of control."⁷²

William built a three-room log cabin⁷³ near the center of town⁷⁴ where six more children were born.⁷⁵ The area was considered a good place to winter livestock, but life was difficult in red rock country, with one hardship after another. "I remember Mother saying that when she first moved here, Grandma Henderson wondered why they had ever come to such a forsaken place," said Annie's daughter, Maud Wheatley.⁷⁶ Both food and clothing were scarce, forcing the half dozen families of the settlement to make do with what they had. They nearly starved the first winter until a productive vegetable garden could be established.⁷⁷ "Just about everything they had was handmade, hand sewn, hand grown, cooked, bottled or dried," according to Maud. "At that time, if one didn't raise and preserve their food the family was likely to go very hungry. I'm sure their life was never easy."⁷⁸

Annie, who was twelve years old when the Henderson arrived in Cannonville, finished her schooling in the one-room log building that served as both a school and church.⁷⁹ The Henderson children received their most important education at home, where their parents schooled them in moral and spiritual matters every day. It wasn't long before William was called as a bishop's counselor and later bishop of the Cannonville ward, with Alvira set apart as Relief Society president.⁸⁰

As Church leaders were often encouraged to take a second wife, it came as no surprise when, three years after he accepted the position of bishop, William married Lydia Drucilla,⁸¹ who at the age of seventeen was only a year older than Laura Jane. William built Lydia a home one block away from Alvira and the children, who immediately accepted her into the family. Even though there was a twenty-four year age difference between Alvira and Lydia, they reportedly "got along very well."⁸²



Laura and Mary Anne Henderson

Sister Wives

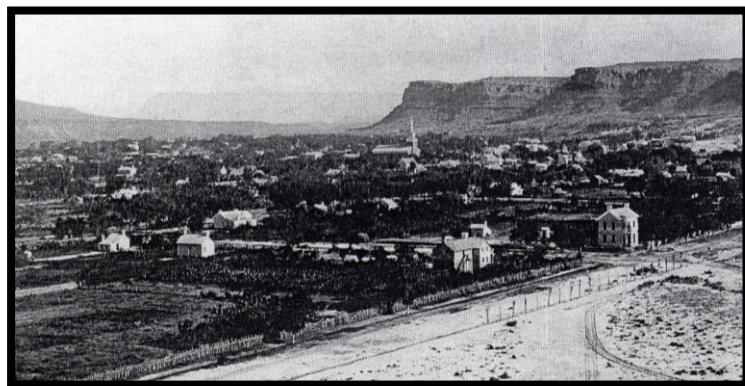
Plural marriage was seen as sanctioned by the Lord and was an arrangement that many members of the church not only respected, but accepted as a higher calling. Mary Annie agreed with her husband of three years when he proposed he take Annie's sister Laura Jane as his second wife in November, 1887. Annie was of the same mind as Johnny, who "had been taught that plural marriage was ordained of God from the time I was a boy. The men for whom I had the highest respect were nearly all polygamists. My conversion to it was a perfectly natural outgrowth of teaching and my observation of honorable men who were practicing it," he said.⁸³

While the Mormon community was comfortable with the concept of plural marriage, non-members, or "Gentiles" as they were called, were not. Polygamy was coupled with slavery as "the twin relics of barbarism" by the Republican Party when the Morrill Act was passed in 1862, prohibiting plural marriage, disincorporating the LDS church and restricting the church's ownership of property. In 1882 the Edmunds Act was passed, restating that polygamy was considered a felony punishable by five years of imprisonment and a \$500.00 fine. In cases where actual plural marriage could not be proved, men were prosecuted for unlawful cohabitation, a misdemeanor punishable by

six months in prison and a \$300.00 fine. When these measures proved unsuccessful in ending polygamy in Utah, the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Bill was passed, requiring plural wives to testify against their husbands and making it possible to confiscate church property. Federal marshals were charged with tracking down and arresting suspected polygamists throughout the territory, forcing many men to go into hiding, or “on the underground,” as it was called. When Johnny, Annie and Laura Jane agreed to their new marriage, they were all breaking the law. “[For] those of us who went into polygamy, it was a choice between the laws of men and the law of God. We deliberately chose to obey the latter,” said Johnny.⁸⁴

“Reports came to us that there was serious trouble ahead for polygamists, and this clouded my life with new and perplexing worries,” Johnny recalled, “but despite the risks and dangers involved and the added responsibility, I entered into plural marriage. I did so because I was sincerely converted to the idea and because I had fallen in love with a beautiful young lady, Laura Jane Henderson, full sister to my first wife. After Laura had given her consent, I consulted with the girl’s parents and they were perfectly willing that the marriage should be consummated. Anne, my first wife, was also agreeable to it. For obvious reasons, the engagement was kept strictly a secret among five of us: Laura, her parents, Anne and myself.

“Sometime later, Anne, Laura and I started for St. George. The people of Cannonville supposed that Laura was going for an outing with her sister. We left home in a new Cooper wagon. When we reached Kanarra I told Father, and him only, of my intentions. He decided to accompany us to St. George. The four of us went through the temple together, November 3, 1887, to do work for one of his deceased relatives and the remaining three of us to get our endowments. Anne and I were married for time and eternity [sealed] by President McCallister. When I told the latter about Laura’s and my plans, he



A view of St. George, Utah, in the late 1800s.

notified us that we could not be married in the temple, as the ceremony had to be more secret. He asked me to get my watch and set it exactly with his. Having done this, he instructed us to walk to a certain residence a block west, a block north and on the west side of the street. We were given very strict directions to walk to that place at exactly seven p.m. and a man would be waiting for us on the sidewalk.

At precisely the appointed time, we reached the place designated. A man met us and inquired about our names. Having told him who we were, he led up us a walk and into a side door of a medium-sized house. In the first room we entered we were presented to another man. The latter ushered us into another room where there was an altar, but he remained outside. From somewhere there came a voice from an unseen person which asked us to kneel down at the altar. We obeyed and then the voice conducted exactly the same kind of marriage ceremony that Anne and I had gone through during the day. When this was finished, we stood up and the voice complimented us and wished us happiness. Lastly, it instructed us to leave the house the way we had entered. The second man we met greeted us as we were leaving the altar room and led us outside the house. The first man we met led us from there to the sidewalk and bid us farewell.”⁸⁵

A Call to Serve

Laura Jane quietly moved into the four-room home where Johnny and Annie had been living in Cannonville. “This circumstance undoubtedly caused many of our neighbors to believe we were living in polygamy,” said John, although the marriage had not been announced.⁸⁶ Annie welcomed Laura’s help with little Laura Maria,⁸⁷ who had been born nine months earlier. Sadly, Annie’s first baby, John,⁸⁸ had died two years before. “He was a handsome and robust baby, but when he was month old, a serious illness seized him,” said Johnny. “Expert medical help was not available, but his mother and the other women folks did everything they possibly could to save him. To our great sorrow, their efforts were of no avail. He died September 6, 1885.”⁸⁹

Laura Jane became pregnant during the spring of 1888, and spent the summer and fall preparing to welcome her first child. In early December, the Davies were visiting their friend Pole Roundy and his family in Escalante, where little Allie⁹⁰ was born six days before Christmas. Johnny returned to Cannonville with Annie, Laura Jane and the children soon after the new year, 1889. Much to his surprise, Johnny found a letter waiting for him, “which was a call to fulfill a

mission in the middle states. Every Later-day Saint boy is taught that it is a privilege to go on a mission in the service of his Church. I was taught this both at home and in Sunday School during my early boyhood," said John. "When I grew to be a young man, however, I was spending so much time out on the range, entirely removed from the direct influence of the Church, that the idea of going on a mission seldom entered my mind. In fact, I did not look upon myself as being worthy of such a divine call.

"Following my first marriage at the age of twenty-four, the prospects of being called to the mission field seemed to be coming more and more remote. After my second marriage, at the age of twenty-seven, the thought of leaving on a mission scarcely entered my mind. Children came and with them added responsibilities. Reports came to us that there was serious trouble ahead for polygamists, and this clouded my life with new and perplexing worries.

"Scarcely anything could have given me a greater shock or surprise [than a mission call]. My immediate reaction was a feeling that I simply could not go. I conferred with my father and mother-in-law and they thought it would be well for me to accept the call. Anne, too, was willing that I should go. In spite of their attitude I was still severely shaken with doubts and uncertainties. What would my wife Laura think? How could I give up my position as Superintendent of the Kanarra Cattle Company? Who would take care of my two families and my livestock while I was away? Had the rough life I had lived unfitted me for missionary work? Was I the kind of a man to make a success of such an undertaking? These and other questions surged back and forth through my mind after I retired to bed that night. Sleep was very much out of the question. I felt myself being torn between two loyalties. For hour after hour the battle raged on within me.

"I thought of my parents and their acceptance of the gospel in the old world; how my father had to choose between the new religion and the respect of his mother's brothers, and how he was almost driven from his home for the gospel's sake; how my father and mother had sacrificed everything to come to Utah; and how devoted and loyal they had been in accepting every call to service the Church had made of them. Then the compelling thought came to me: I could not let them down. I could not reject this call and thus ignore all they had done in the name of their religion. I simply could not!

"The stars were still shining and the cocks had scarcely begun to crow when I climbed out of bed. Anne awoke and asked me what the trouble was. I told her I was going to accept the call. After eating a hurried breakfast I harnessed up my team and mounting one of the horses I commenced the long ride to Escalante to get Laura and her

young baby. The ground was covered with snow and it was impossible to take my wagon over the road I had to travel. Having reached Escalante I hired Rile Porter to construct me a sleigh. I tucked my wife and baby in this vehicle with as many quilts as I could get and started for home. We had to camp out twice on the way back. Despite the cold and the snow, Laura and the child stood the trip very well.

"I wrote to Kanarra for a man to come and take my place in caring for the cattle and for him to bring two hundred dollars in money. Preparing to make Anne and Laura and the two children as comfortable as possible during my absence was no light undertaking, but it was nothing compared with the heart pangs that went with parting with them to be gone two years among a strange people nearly two thousand miles away."⁹¹

Into the Mission Field

John wasn't the only member of the family who received a mission call that January. Not long after John's letter arrived from Salt Lake City, William Henderson was also called to serve, leaving Annie and Laura Jane without the support of the two most important men in their lives. Neither sister would hear of anything but full acceptance of such responsibilities, however, and gave their blessings to their father and husband as the departed Cannonville later that winter. William and John travelled together to Salt Lake City, where the two men boarded separate trains after being set apart for the Lord's work.⁹² "I went east on the Union Pacific Railroad to Council Bluffs, Iowa. The presiding officer there, Elder Harris, assigned me to the Southern Illinois Conference to labor with Elder Stringham," said John.

"We were privileged to use the home of a Latter-day Saint as our headquarters. Most of the time we spent out in the country district, returning to headquarters to get out mail, bathe and get a change of clothes. At our religious services I usually pronounced the invocation and benediction and sang the hymns. The sermons I tried to give were very brief at first, but with increased study they naturally became longer. The first person I baptized in Illinois was in the city of Norris, and that person was a beautiful half-breed Cherokee Indian woman.

“As I have mentioned heretofore, I had serious doubts as to my worthiness to labor as an elder in the mission field. This feeling of uncertainty still continued to plague me and to dampen my enthusiasm now that I was actually at work. While I never doubted the truth of Mormonism, I was convinced that the Church had made a mistake in calling me to do what I was doing. I was sagebrush reared, and I felt that my place was back in the sagebrush, punching cattle. Night after night, for several months I bowed down in humble prayer and asked the Lord to give me a testimony that I was engaged in His work and that I was doing the things He desired me to do. My prayers continued to go unanswered.⁹³



John posed with fellow missionaries Hyrum Elmer his father-in-law William Jasper Henderson before leaving on his mission to Illinois in 1889.

Healing

“One summer afternoon Elder Stringham and I returned to our headquarters for our mail and found a letter from our mission president Charles Hyde. He asked us to meet with him at the home of a family of Saints, twenty-five miles from where we were. That night I retired in good health, but the next morning I arose with a terribly sick headache, an affliction I had suffered with at intervals for many years. I told my companion that I did not feel well enough to go and meet President Hyde. After considerable persuasion, Elder Stringham convinced me that I should make the trip. We commenced the journey on foot. The suffering I endured as we trudged along is difficult to describe.

“Towards evening we arrived at a spring within a half mile of our destination. I crawled to it, drank and washed myself. I felt that I was too weak to continue on. My companion encouraged me as much as he could. He finally was able to buoy my wavering spirit to make a last desperate effort. As I floundered forward, each step seemed as if it would be the last one. Somehow I mustered enough strength to reach the home of the Saint family. Elder Stringham had been there before and he introduced me to the family. One of the girls, seeing my condition, asked me if I was ill. I informed her that I was a very sick man. She led me to a bed. Oh, what a wonderful relief it was to lie down! President Hyde came to my bedside and we were introduced to each other. After commenting on how ill I appeared, he inquired into the history of the malady for which I suffered.

“While we were conversing together supper was being prepared. I told the mother of the household I could not eat. Very much against my will President Hyde led me by the hand to the table and helped me sit down. I whispered to him that I would try and sit there, but it would be impossible to eat anything. What happened next I shall always regard as a remarkable and miraculous event. He stood at the back of my chair and placed his hand on either side of my head. Without uttering a word he kept them there for fully two minutes. During that time all the pain and weariness gradually left my head and body, and when he removed his hands I was feeling normal in every way. A sensation of genuine hunger came over me and I ate a very hearty supper.

“When the dishes were cleared away two of the girls and I formed a trio and commenced to sing. The girls sang soprano and alto, and I sang bass. Singing, talking and laughing together, we had a wonderfully happy evening. For the first time since coming to the mission field I retired to my bed with a feeling of perfect peace. A strong and abiding testimony had come to comfort my soul. All my prayers had been answered. I knew that I was called of the Lord; I knew that he approved of the labor I was performing.⁹⁴

Inspiration

“While we were eating breakfast the following morning a boy came with a telegram addressed to President Hyde. As he read it a pained and troubled expression came over his face. Without saying a word to any of us he left the room and entered a corn patch growing nearby. About five minutes elapsed before he reappeared and took his place at the table. All of us were wide-eyed with curiosity because of his strange behavior. The look of worry and suffering had completely vanished from his countenance. He handed me the telegram to read. It was a message from his brother, which stated that his mother could not live three days and to come home at once. I mentioned the fact that there would not be a train heading for the west until the following morning. To our great surprise, he remarked that he was not going to leave until his mission was completed; that he would yet have many years of happy association with his mother. This knowledge had been revealed to him during the few minutes he was in the corn patch.

“Elder Stringham was unable to travel because of trouble he had with his feet. President Hyde and I started for a certain city on foot. It took us two days to complete the trip. We stayed at the home of a Dr. Brown, a member of the Church. After eating supper with him and his wife he asked us if we would preach to them and some of their friends. Elder Hyde replied that we should be delighted to, because that was our main business. Dr. Brown then inquired as to how many meetings we would conduct. President Hyde answered that it would take nine meetings to tell the whole story.

“Arrangements were made for us to hold two meetings during the day and one at night for three successive days. At first our audiences were not very large. They began to increase in size, and on the last night the house was filled to overflowing. There were two men with full beards who had come to all three of the evening meetings. The last talk Elder Hyde gave was on the subject ‘Salvation for the Dead.’ It was a most inspiring sermon. After thanking the people for their attendance and kind attention, he sat down. One of the whiskered

gentlemen arose and told Brother Hyde they wanted to hear some more of that doctrine. He favored them by giving another talk, about fifteen minutes long. A delegation of people from the town came the following morning and asked President Hyde to stay and hold some more meetings, but he was scheduled to go elsewhere. This was likely the most inspiring series of meetings I ever attended.

“The association I had with President Hyde was a great turning point in mission. I now had a burning testimony within me; all my doubts had vanished and thereafter I derived an immense joy from my work.⁹⁵

More Work for the Lord

“Elder Stringham and I were traveling through a rural section and we planned on stopping at the home of a family of Saints for a few hours. We arrived at the residence about ten a. m. The father was away, but the mother was there with a little daughter who was deathly sick with a fever. After visiting with the mother for a short while my companion lay down on a bed, as he was indisposed. The mother excused herself and went out to pick some peas for lunch. While sitting on the edge of the bed that Elder Stringham was lying on I felt impressed to go and administer to the little girl. I went and asked the child if she wanted me to lay my hands on her head and pray for her so that she might get well. She indicated she wanted me to, so I performed the ordinance. No sooner had I finished than she jumped out of the bed and ran out to her mother. The latter was so shocked that she hardly knew what to think. She came into the house with the child and I explained to her what I had done. She was filled with almost unspeakable joy. Her husband was equally surprised and delighted that evening when he came home from work and found out what had happened. When my companion and I left the following day the child seemed to be in excellent health.

“Toward the latter part of my mission I was assigned to work with an Elder Esplin. We had labored in and around New Albany, Illinois, about four months when we decided to change our headquarters. We struck out through the country. The sun had sunk behind the western horizon and the twilight shadows were deepening into night. As we had found no place to stay I suggested that we retire to a grove of trees by the side of the road and pray. After emerging from the grove we walked on and encountered a man with two or three of his boys. I felt impressed to ask the man if he would take us in as boarders. Despite the unpopularity of Mormon Elders, he was willing to take us to his home. He and his wife charged us only forty cents a day a piece for board and room.

"Their oldest son, Jim Belcher, was very provoked, however, to see his parents welcome Mormon Elders into their home. Mrs. Belcher, his mother, introduced him to us but he refused to acknowledge the introduction and turned away without speaking. When he had left our presence the mother apologized for his conduct. We tried to comfort her by telling her that we were used to such treatment and that it no longer bothered us. Whenever I passed Jim thereafter I gave him a kindly greeting, which was never returned.

"We had stayed at the Belcher home almost a month when the father became very rushed with business and was short of men to work in the timber. Seeing his predicament, I volunteered to help. He was amazed that a preacher should offer to do manual labor. An axe was found for me and Mr. Belcher instructed me to go over a certain ridge and go to work. On the other side of the ridge I found Jim. He looked at me with a dumbfounded expression on his face when I informed him I was there to go to work. I seized one handle of the saw and we went to pulling it back and forth. It was a hickory tree and after it had fallen I remarked about the high value that would be placed on it if it were cut west. I went on to explain that all we had in Utah was soft timber. What I said seemed to touch a responsive chord in Jim. He was surprised that I knew anything about timber. He began to question me about my home. To my surprise and amusement, I learned that he thought Mormons were foreigners and that I had come from across the ocean.

"I worked with Jim until the rush season was over. A most remarkable change came in his attitude toward me. We grew to be fast friends. A short time later my companion, Elder Esplin, became very ill. It was decided that he should return home, and by the mission authorities I was assigned to accompany him. We made him an improvised bed in a buggy and started for the railroad station early one morning. Jim and I walked behind the buggy. He reached out his hand to me and began to ask my forgiveness for the cool, uncivil manner in which he had treated me when I first came. I replied that he was a bit late, as I had forgiven him a long time ago.

"Two of the Belcher girls were desirous that I should cut a hole through the ice and baptize them the night before I left, but I thought it advisable for them to wait for warmer weather. I learned through correspondence that the whole Belcher family joined the Church after I had returned home. The day they joined, they wrote that if I had only been there to do the baptizing it would have been a perfect day. The last time I heard about the family they had moved to Idaho.

“I reached Salt Lake City safely with Elder Esplin and proceeded as fast as I could to my wives and children in Cannonville. It need hardly be said that it was a most joyful homecoming to me.”⁹⁶

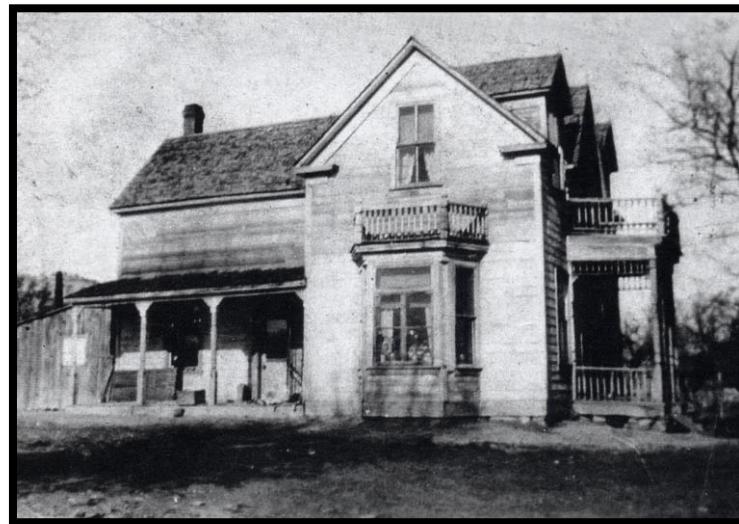
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- ⁶⁵ Alvira Aurelia (Dickson) Henderson (1846-1924), #KWJY-8NR, www.familysearch.org
- ⁶⁶ William Jasper Henderson Jr. (1863-1945), #KW81-S95, www.familysearch.org
- ⁶⁷ Alvira Aurelia (Henderson) Elmer (1868-1885), #KWJY-82N, www.familysearch.org
- ⁶⁸ Laura Jane (Henderson) Davis (1871-1911), #KWCJ-8L1, www.familysearch.org
- ⁶⁹ William Jasper Henderson Jr. (1863-1945), #KWC1-M9P, www.familysearch.org
- ⁷⁰ Lucy Henderson (1877-1901), #KWJY-822, www.familysearch.org
- ⁷¹ Vernon Davies (1906-1981), #KWZD-YBL, www.familysearch.org
- ⁷² Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 315.
- ⁷³ Maude Johnson Warren Stevens, “Alvira Aurelia Dickson,” undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ⁷⁴ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 191.
- ⁷⁵ George Albert Henderson (1880-1882); Francis Eveline (Henderson) Whitney (1883-1930); Maggie Mae (Henderson) Fletcher (1886-1967); Sarah Maria (Henderson) Johnson (1888-1913); Wallis Dickson Henderson (1891-1947); Elda Maud Henderson (1897-1903).
- ⁷⁶ Elda Maud (Davis) Wheatley (1911-2003), # Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 193.
- ⁷⁷ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 185.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, page 187.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, page 191.
- ⁸¹ Lydia Drucilla (Johnson) Henderson (1870-1936), #KW81-S9T, www.familysearch.org
- ⁸² Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 192.
- ⁸³ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories*, (self-published, undated), page 42-43.
- ⁸⁴ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 57.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, page 42-43.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ Laura Maria (Davis) Mangum (1887-1971), #KWCD-DX3, www.familysearch.org
- ⁸⁸ John Henderson Davis (1885-1885), #KWVW-R2N, www.familysearch.org
- ⁸⁹ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 311.
- ⁹⁰ Mary Alvira “Allie” (Davies) Caffall (1888-1980), #KWZY-B4B, www.familysearch.org
- ⁹¹ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 35-36.
- ⁹² John and William Jasper Henderson were both set apart by apostle Franklin D. Richards, 23 April 1889. Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 187.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, page 36.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 37.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 38.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 38-40.

Chapter 7

The Trials of Family Life

Living the Celestial Law



One of the homes John built for his wives Annie and Laura.

John's family had grown while he was away preaching the gospel. Annie discovered she was pregnant with her third child a few months after John left for Iowa. Annie and Laura Jane excitedly prepared for the birth of Emily Arilla,⁹⁷ who was born 7 Oct, 1889. Even though there were two mothers in the home, Annie and Laura Jane had their hands full with the care of three children under three years of age. Not long after Emily's birth, their home somehow caught fire, spreading so quickly and generating such panic as the women fled the house that Annie "forgot her baby and went back in after him. Mr. Willis rushed into the flames and saved my mother," according to Emily's son Sam Pollock.⁹⁸ Unfortunately, the house itself could not be saved, and it quickly burned to the ground. Annie, Laura Jane and the three children found shelter and companionship nearby in their mother's home, where they stayed until John's return.

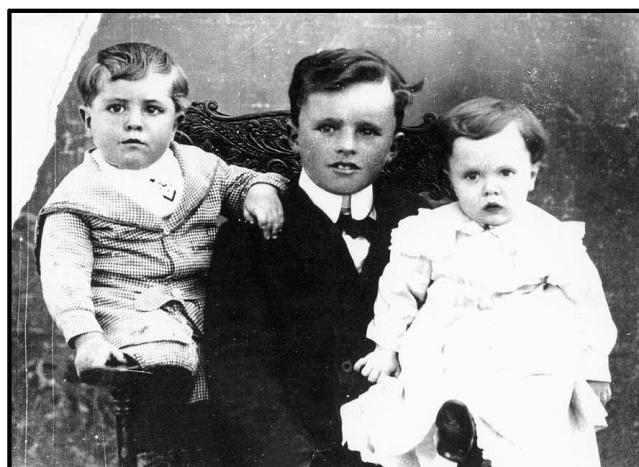
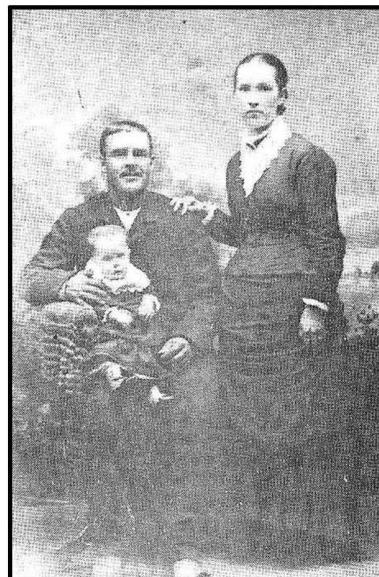
A remarkable harmony existed in the Davies' marriage, due not only to the fact that both wives were sisters, but because John went to great lengths to treat Annie and Laura Jane equally. He claimed that he did not recall one quarrel between his wives during their marriage, as he "made it a ruling to buy the same things for each wife."⁹⁹ However, in the best relationships, there are differences, and when John disagreed with one of his wives, he found himself sleeping in the cellar in between the two homes.¹⁰⁰

Soon after John returned from his mission, he built identical homes for each of his wives. The pair of houses stood on opposite corners of the same lot, surrounded by what might have been a lawn if anyone had had the time to cultivate one, but as it was, the yard consisted of a few patches of unkempt grass surrounded by weeds and patches of bare red earth with a large root cellar dug into the ground in between. The entry to the homes was graced by a small front porch trimmed with turned railings and pretty front door that opened onto a formal parlor to the left, where the ladies could receive visitors in proper style. The parlors were furnished with heavy, a hard-stuffed sofa and chairs and a beautiful foot pumped organ with ornate carvings. The creaky wooden floors were covered with carpet and the walls were papered. The room was flooded with light from a beautiful bay window framed with lawn curtains and dark green shades. The window shades were generally in the down position so the sun would not fade the furnishings. The women's second floor bedrooms featured a delightful balcony over the front porch with matching turned railings. Mary Annie's bedroom was always neat and clean, with a white bedspread, ruffled curtains and lovely dresser topped by a large mirror. John's bedroom was toward the back of the house. He often slept on the floor because he rested better on a hard surface.

A large kitchen in the rear of the house spilled out onto an informal back porch, little more than wood planks with peeling paint, and a lean-to tacked onto the house in later years to serve as storage for pantry overflow and items that had fallen out of use, but were still "too good" to throw away.¹⁰¹

So it was that Laura Jane was comfortably settled into her new home when she gave birth to her second child in February, 1891. Hyrum Jefferson,¹⁰² or 'Jeffie' as he was called, "was a strong, healthy boy," John proudly recalled. "He was with me at the age of two when I was corraling some calved on East Fork. Grabbing a stick he tried to help me drive them through a gate. Suddenly one of the calves kicked the lad and knocked him flat on his back. Without making a whimper he regained his feet, seized the tick which had been knocked from his hand and with a most determined look on his face he went straight to the calf which had kicked him and began to whip it. I have often marveled at such a manifestation of courage by a child of his age.

Sadly, little Jeffie did not live very long after his outing in East Fork. He came down with “mountain fever” (Rocky Mountain spotted fever), a tick-borne disease that is dangerously fatal even now. His high fever, pain and vomiting was accompanied by a rash of small, red spots on his wrists and ankles that spread up his arms and legs as his condition worsened. The little boy didn’t have a chance. “Despite our prayers and efforts to help him, he was taken from us,” said John.¹⁰³ Jeffie died on 8 October, 1892, at the age of twenty months. Two months after Jeffie’s death, Annie gave birth to her third daughter, Dicy.¹⁰⁴



Above left: John and Annie with baby John. Right: Laura with her first child, Mary Alvira. Below: Laura's sons Douglas, Ammon and Vernon.

At Odds with the Law

Ever since John returned from his mission, his efforts were focused on supporting his wives and children, all the while keeping an eye out for his own protection from the federal marshals searching for polygamists. “A few years after the passage of the Edmunds law an interesting experience came to me which gave me an inkling as to the trouble which was ahead for polygamists,” said John. “I was camping at Blue Fly when Elder Jesse W. Crosby, president of the stake, rode up accompanied by two strangers. He introduced them to me as Brigham Young, Jr. and Bishop Sheets. President Crosby requested that I keep the identity of these two brethren secret and to introduce them by fictitious names to anyone else who might come to my camp. He even furnished me with the names which were to be used. He then returned to Panguitch, the other two men staying with me a week.

“I learned that they were both polygamists who were in hiding to escape punishment for violation of the Edmund’s law. I neglected my work somewhat to show them about. I took them to the rim of Bryce Canyon and Brigham Young, Jr. was amazed at the scenery there. He related had he had been all over America and Europe, but Bryce Canyon was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen. Incidentally, I had some dried beef which I pounded into little pieces between two rocks and then put the pieces into gravy. The two men took a great liking to this dish.¹⁰⁵

“A little over a year later I left on a mission for the middle states. I was subject to arrest under the terms of the Edmunds law during the whole time I was on my mission. It is not surprising, therefore, that I had the best of reasons for studiously shunning any discussion of polygamy while I was away. Had the people in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky, the states in which I labored, known that I was the husband of two wives and that I was seeking converts to the Mormon faith, something drastic, if not tragic, would likely have happened to me.¹⁰⁶

“After returning from the mission field I withdrew my cattle and horses from the Kanarra Cattle Co-op and started running them myself. I owned two hundred and sixty four head of cattle and twenty five head of horses. My future looked exceptionally bright, except for the fact that I was at odds with the law. A warrant was issued for my arrest and a United States Marshal was placed on my trail. The officer who was able to capture me was to be given a reward of fifty dollars. Truly, it was an open season on polygamists.

“From the fall of 1887 to the fall of 1893, a period of six years, I was a fugitive from Gentile justice. The prison sentence and the heavy fine which hung over my head naturally caused me to be extremely watchful and cautious. Careful as I was, however, to keep out of the clutches of the marshals, it was not my elusiveness which prevented my capture. More than anything else the kind intervention of friends I had made enabled me to remain at liberty until the time came when it was safe to give myself up.

“At the time the warrant was issued for my arrest Jim Pace was the sheriff of Garfield County. He and I had played as boys together. As long as he was sheriff he kept warning me when danger was near. It was he who first notified me that my warrant had been issued and gave me the name of the marshal to whom it was given. This officer was a man named Ed Thompson. Once, I was at home in Cannonville when I noticed Thompson coming down the road. Without losing a moments time I saddled up a horse I always had ready for such an emergency and hurried to Georgetown. On my way I dispatched a messenger to Henrieville to warn the polygamists living there. At Georgetown I broke the news to the men living there and we all took to the tall timber. These men included Al Asay, Joseph Asay and Seth Johnson.¹⁰⁷

Friendly Enemies

“United States Marshal, Ed Thompson, gave us considerable cause for worry. He did not remain in office very long, however, because he became a little too handy with his gun. There was a polygamist name Dalton who was exceptionally skillful with his fists. He was killed, more out of fear than anything else, by Thompson. For this cowardly act the latter lost his commission.

“My warrant was transferred to a marshal name Tom Lowe, a friend of mine. Sheriff Pace notified me of the transfer about the time of the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple.¹⁰⁸ Laura, her parents, and a few others decided to go to the state capitol for the occasion. I took them as far as Salina in my wagon and they completed the journey by train. As I was bidding them goodbye on the train I looked through the window and saw Tom Lowe walking along the track. I stepped off the train just as it was pulling away and Lowe recognized me. He motioned me to come where he was. As we shook hands he noticed that I did not act natural. He asked me if I was afraid of him. I answered that I had no fear of him, but I was scared of that paper he had in his pocket. We then went to an old building where we were not likely to be seen by passersby. In the conversation that ensued Lowe

asked me if I was very well known there. I answered in the negative. He added that he was not acquainted in Salina either. We walked to a saloon together and had a little drink. When we parted he requested that I keep our meeting together strictly under my hat. With a feeling of great relief I gladly promised.

A Strange Illness

"Not long after the warrant had been issued for my arrest a most unusual thing occurred. I began to have trouble with my stomach," recalled John. "At times I would have a loss of appetite and occasionally I felt very much like vomiting but could not. During the time that this ailment was getting the most serious I went with a Mr. Ed Clark to help him buy some steers. After he had purchased quite a number we started to drive them towards Parowan. I was riding along near another cowboy named Jim Emmet. Suddenly I took desperately ill. Jim came to me after I had dismounted and diagnosed my case as the regular old Dixie chills and fever.

"We saw a strange horse coming from a distance and I was fearful it was a United States Marshal. Ill as I was, I climbed back on my horse and rode for cover. This was in the forenoon. The time came for lunch and I lay down while Jim was preparing the meal. We were stopping in a small cabin. Suddenly, I began to choke and go blind. A fainting spell followed this and soon I lost consciousness. As soon as I commenced to choke Jim watched me closely to see what the difficulty was. He said that I went down on my hands and knees and something began to come out of my mouth. It kept curling and jerking this way and that while I was choking and going black in the face. In a short while the struggle was over and the creature fell onto the floor: it was an amber colored snake about fourteen inches long. When I fell over in a prostrate position and unconscious, the snake started to crawl towards the edge of the cabin. It acted as if it were going towards a hole in the floor. Jim Emmet jumped and scared the reptile in another direction. Then it curled up on the floor and died. The boys sent down to Seth Johnson's store in Georgetown and got a bottle of alcohol. The snake was put in that and we kept it around for about a year. By then I had become tired of seeing it and threw the bottle and its contents away."

“Following her return from Salt Lake City, Laura went over to Escalante to visit with the Roundys. While she was there I freighted some goods to Arizona by wagon. While on this trip I let my whiskers grow rather long, and when I shaved I left some heavy sideburns on my face. After returning from Arizona I went over to Escalante to bring Laura back to Cannonville. On my way over I camped and ate dinner with Alma Roundy and a Mr. Sergeant in Potato Valley. While we were eating Tom Lowe rode up to our campsite. I thought to myself, ‘This time I don’t escape.’ I did not raise my eyes from the ground to look at him after I recognized him. Roundy and Sergeant asked Lowe to eat with us. They were in a hurry to reach Escalante, so they hurried away after some tea was put on the fire to boil for Lowe. While he was caring for his horses I hurriedly finished my meal and, using it as an excuse to keep from getting near the marshal, I went and greased my wagon. I was acting on the theory that my sideburns disguised me well enough so that he would fail to recognize me. I made very slow work of the greasing job and avoided conversation as much as possible. Tom evidently thought I was poor company, for he hitched up and drove on to Escalante after sipping a little tea.



The town of Escalante was thirty miles from Cannonville.

"I knew then that he had not recognized me. I decided to return, to turn back and go to Cannonville rather than risk meeting him again in Escalante. I had not gone far, however, when I turned and went in the direction of Escalante again. It looked too much as if I were playing the part of a coward. In the meantime, Barney and Sergeant had gone on to their destination and informed Laura that Tom Lowe had taken me into custody. When I reached there I found she had hidden and one can imagine her surprise when she learned I was still free. We left Escalante and reached Cannonville in safety.

"A short time later I was on my way to Panguitch when William Prince overtook me and told me that Tom Lowe was coming along behind a ways. It was a simple matter to dodge out into the cedars and watch the officer go by. While I was in Panguitch there was a snow storm. This made it necessary for me to start south for home. I kept on sharp lookout for anyone resembling a U.S. Marshal. About a mile before I reached the head of Red Canyon, I saw Lowe and another man coming along the road towards me. I reined my horse back down the canyon and headed for Panguitch. Lowe knew, of course, it was someone he was after. I kept a safe distance ahead of the men until I reached the road that goes west towards Hillsdale. I rode along the Hillsdale road for about four hundred yards, stopped and turned my horse around to face the men. More as a bluff than anything else, I pulled my revolver out of its holder and placed it in a position so they could see it. Lowe and his companion reined in their horses at the juncture of the two roads and remained there for at least five minutes, then headed for Panguitch. Without much hesitation I retraced my steps towards home.

"The business of apprehending, arresting and bringing polygamists to trial was seldom a pleasant one. If we feel sorry for the men who were chased, we should shed a tear of sympathy now and then for the officers doing the chasing. To most Mormons the Edmunds Law was just another method of persecuting the Saints. Its unpopularity inevitably mitigated the success of its enforcement. There was some opposition to the law even among the Gentiles. During the time I was subject to arrest I rode up to the ranch of an old, rough-shod non-Mormon named John Kitchen. After he had shaken hands the old fellow gave voice to an oath and then added, 'So you've gone and made yourself a damned polygamist. I never thought you'd do it.'

'Yes,' I replied 'That's exactly what I have done.'

'Well, now you have got yourself into that kind of a fix,' he remarked. 'I guess the officers are hot on your trail. Now if they ever get to chasing you through these parts I want you to go into my pasture and get the best and fastest horse I've got to get out of their way.'

“How long I might have been able to elude capture is a matter of conjecture. Those of us who were living in plural marriage knew the country too well, had too many friends and were too well organized for the enforcement of the Edmunds Law to be made effective. Fortunately, a spirit of reason and tolerance began to grow, where only hatred and revenge had existed before.¹⁰⁹

The Manifesto and Amnesty

“To the great benefit of all concerned President Wilford Woodruff issued a Manifesto in September, 1890, which brought to an end the authorized performance of plural marriage ceremonies by the Church. The Manifesto was sustained by the general conference of the Church in October and following that a sentiment began to grow among the more liberal and broad minded of the Gentiles that men and women who had entered polygamy prior to the issuance of the Manifesto should be left unmolested to rear their families in peace.

“Late in the year 1892, President Benjamin Harrison visited Utah and was thus in a position to study conditions in this State. He evidently became convinced that the LDS church no longer authorized plural marriages, and he joined in the sentiment that men who had entered into that relation prior to the issuance of the Manifesto should not be compelled to leave their wives and children by being sent to prison. On January 4, 1893, he issued a proclamation of amnesty to polygamists for all their past offenses, excepting those who had entered plural marriage since November 1, 1890. In the application of the amnesty by the courts it seems that it was not to be applied to any polygamists who had children under three years of age by their second or third wives.

“Laura's second child, Hyrum Jefferson, was born February 3, 1891, and died October 8 1892. His birth coming when it did, I became fearful that the amnesty did not apply to me. I heard of a number of other polygamists giving themselves up for trial under the terms of the amnesty and this prompted me to go to Panguitch to interview John F. Chidister, an attorney to ascertain what my chances were of being acquitted. I told him I was convinced that if the grand jury found out about the birth of Jefferson it would lead to my conviction and punishment for violations of the Edmunds law. Despite the risk of this information if coming to light, Chidister advised me to give myself up for trial. On my way back home I decided to turn myself over to the officers. U.S. Marshal John Fulmer held my warrant at the time. Like Tom Lowe, he was an old friend of mine. It happened that Fulmer was in Cannonville at the time. I went to the residence where he was staying and called him outside.

‘I am ready to give myself up,’ I said.

‘I am very glad to hear that,’ he answered. I explained to him that I was very anxious to avoid the expense and trouble of getting bonds in order to keep at liberty between the time of my arrest and my trial. Like a Good Samaritan, he was willing to omit that formality. In lieu of it, I promised to appear in Beaver before the grand jury upon a week’s notice. Fulmer also made me promise to bring Laura with me.¹¹⁰

On Trial

“During the early fall I received word from him to appear in Beaver before the grand jury upon a week’s notice. James N. Henderson, my brother-in-law, consented to go to my trial as a witness. Laura, James and I made the trip to Beaver in a wagon. Once we had found a place to stay I went to the business section of town to try to find out the personnel serving on the grand jury. That body was already in session trying some other polygamists. Late in the forenoon I found out where it was sitting.

“One great question kept coursing through my mind: have I any friends on that jury? As has been related heretofore, I had depended so heavily on friends during the preceding three and a half years in escaping arrest. It scarcely seemed right and natural for me to be placed at the mercy of complete strangers in this hour of need. For what seemed a long time I walked anxiously and nervously back and forth along the sidewalk opposite to the building where the jury was meeting. Just at high noon the jurors began to slowly file out for lunch. The first one to appear was none other than William Redd, a man I had known for years from my home town. The next juror to appear was Heber Wilson, an old camping partner who had worked with me for the Kanarra Cattle Coop. Soon another Juror came out who was an old friend of my parents. He had, in fact, emigrated from Wales with them. After waving me a greeting, these three joined in a group and started around a corner. As they were making the turn they turned and looked at me as if to say, ‘Come on.’ I started to follow them, with a jug of wine in my hands, keeping about a block behind. They meandered around quite a bit until they came to a lot filled with wild plum trees. In a moment they had climbed over the fence and disappeared from view. In a short time I was with them.

"After exchanging greetings we got down to serious business. They knew, of course, that my case was coming up for investigation. It was Heber Wilson who expressed the sentiment of the group when, with great determination in his voice, he said, 'I'll stick by you until the damned maggots carry us out of the keyholes.' Once again in my life I was so filled with happiness that I was unable to talk. I had felt that I should be lucky if I had just one friend on the grand jury. To have three was beyond my fondest expectations. Now they had promised to hang the jury if necessary, until I was granted my freedom.

"I hurried to the residence where Laura was staying and related the good news. She was so happy that she clapped her hands with joy. The hour for the hearing arrived. I instructed Laura and her brother Jim to avoid, if they possibly could, any mention of Hyrum Jefferson. I was not permitted to be present during the hearing.

"After returning from my mission I had built two houses on the same lot, one for each of my wives. During the hearing the prosecuting attorney kept trying to get either Laura or Jim to say that there was a fence between the two homes. During the cross questioning he peppered them again and again with the question, 'Now isn't there a fence of some description between the two homes?' Each time they would have to answer with the simple truth that the only thing of importance between the two houses was a cellar, used conjointly by both families. There was an old Englishman on the jury who grew very impatient over the continued repetition of the question about the fence. 'What's the 'ells the odds (H)---couldn't a man crawl over it or under it!' This caused the whole court to burst out into a peal of laughter. Not only did the prosecuting attorney cease asking the question, he seemed to act as if the back of his argument were broken. In a short while he sat down and the investigation of my case was ended. Hyrum Jefferson name was not mentioned.¹¹¹



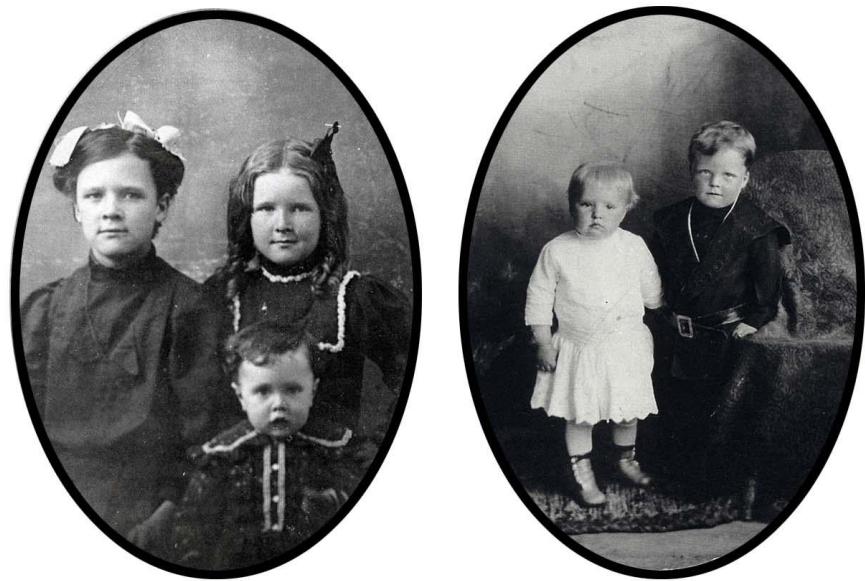
The Beaver County courthouse.

The Verdict

"At ten a.m. the following day the prosecuting attorney to the judge was to announce the findings of the grand jury on the cases brought up for hearing the day before. There were seventeen of us polygamists sitting on a long bench in the court room awaiting the announcement of the findings in our respective cases. After the court was to order, the judge ordered us up one at a time. One by one the men were either dismissed or else placed in the custody of the United States to await court trial. The man sitting to the left of me kept expressing his hope that his case would be dismissed, but the poor fellow was held over for trial. My turn was next. 'Will John H. Davies please arise?' requested the judge. When I arose the prosecuting attorney said, 'Mr. Davies, for lack of evidence your case is dismissed.'

"I shall not attempt to describe the greatness of my relief and happiness over this dismissal. I shall always regard what happened at the hearing as a wonderful testimonial to the value of friendship. I took Laura and Jim into the county clerk's office and they each received thirty dollars for coming as witnesses at the hearing. We went to a fair being held in Beaver at the time and while there I met Marshal Fulmer. I jokingly asked him for half of the fifty dollars reward he received for taking me into custody. He laughingly refused. In later years, while I was assessor of Garfield County, I stopped at a hotel he owned and operated in Circleville. When I would go to pay my bill he would always answer, 'Let's charge it up to the fifty dollar reward.'

"While I was at the fair in Beaver I also came across Tom Lowe. He said he had a crow to pick with me. Then he went on to tell of our meeting in Potato Valley, the time that I was wearing sideburns and avoided him by greasing my wagon while he was drinking his tea. He said that the disguise worked at the time, but he was finally able to place me before he had reached Escalante. While there he found out that I had come to town, but he did not trouble to hunt for me. The fair ended and I started for home, and the days ended in which I was at odds with the law."¹¹²



Above, left: Mary's children Lois, Maggie and Vernon. Right: Laura's children Maud and Byron. Below: Laura with Douglas and Ethel.

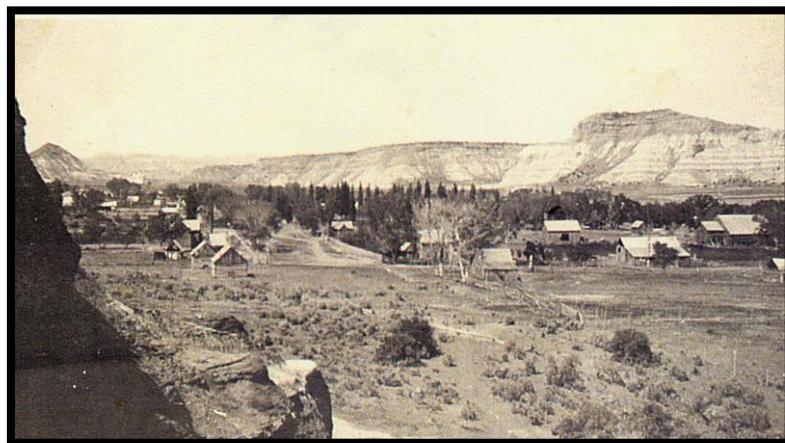
ENDNOTES

- ⁹⁷ Emily Arilla (Davis) Pollock (1889-1974), #KWZQ-78D, www.familysearch.org
- ⁹⁸ Samuel Herman Pollock (1910-1996), #KWZ7-5QX, www.familysearch.org
- ⁹⁹ Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 326.
- ¹⁰⁰ Conversation between Michael Monte Davies and Fern (Reynolds) Harris in 1993, as related to Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ¹⁰¹ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 327.
- ¹⁰² Hyrum Jefferson “Jeffie” Davis (1891-1892), #KWVR-KFG, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁰³ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 57.
- ¹⁰⁴ Dicy (Davis) Hickman (1891-1927), #KWC3-S7M, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁰⁵ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 42.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, page 43-44.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, page 44.
- ¹⁰⁸ The Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in April, 1893.
- ¹⁰⁹ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 45-47.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, page 47-48.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid*, page 48-49.
- ¹¹² *Ibid*, page 49-50.

Chapter 8

Back to Work

Growing Responsibilities



Cannonville nestled in against the Escalante Mountains.

John arrived home from the Beaver courthouse with relief and happiness over his trial dismissal. "I felt like a very heavy burden had been lifted from my shoulders," he said. "No longer would I be hindered in my movement from place to place; no longer would I have a prison term facing me in case I were caught, tried and convicted. I returned to my home in Cannonville free from the old worries, but faced with the responsibility of providing for my two families. This undertaking has occupied almost my whole time and attention ever since. For a number of years I had been accumulating a little property. My holdings consisted of a small herd of cattle, some horses, and a little land."¹¹³

John continued to live with both his wives as if he had never been arrested for polygamy, fathering nine more children after his release by the grand jury. Mary Anne gave birth to four more children: Lois (1894);¹¹⁴ Maggie (1897);¹¹⁵ Vernon (1906); and Sherman (1908).¹¹⁶ Laura Jane added five more to the family with the birth of Ammon (1895),¹¹⁷ Ethel (1899),¹¹⁸ Douglas (1903),¹¹⁹ Byron (1909),¹²⁰ and Maud (1911).¹²¹

Davis vs. Davies

John's father, John Johnson Davies, had emigrated from Wales, where the family name is commonly pronounced as "Davis." John grew up with some of his Utah neighbors calling him "Davies," while others pronounced the name as "Davis." This misunderstanding apparently didn't bother his father very much, but John finally tired of the confusion and dropped the "e" from his name. According to his grandson, Monte Davies, "everyone started calling him Davis instead of Davies, so one day he got mad and said, 'Well, if everyone's going to call me John Davis, I'm going to be a Davis.' So he changed it, just like that."

John H. is buried under the name of Davis, between his two wives. Mary Anne's stone reads Davies, while Laura Jane's stone reads Davis. The controversy continues among John's decedents. Of Mary Anne's seven surviving children, only Vernon later reverted to the Davies name, while three of Laura Jane's six children changed their name to Davies later in life: Mary Alvira, Ethel and Byron.



Mary Annie's five daughters (left to right, back to front): Lois, Maggie, Emily, Laura and Dicey.

With so many new additions to the family over the next eighteen years, there was almost always a baby or toddler to be cared for, and a seemingly endless stream of teenagers as the children matured. As in any family, the Davis' experienced the usual challenges common in raising children, all the while rising above those difficulties with affection and devotion. "I have become the father of fifteen children, thirteen of whom grew to maturity. Needless to say, all is not a bed of roses in rearing a family, especially a polygamous family," said John. "I have made a most determined effort to be impartial in my treatment of Anne's and Laura's children. When the vicissitudes of time and change have prevented me from being fully impartial, it has pained me deeply."¹²²

There was a bond in the family that naturally developed as the family lived and worked together. "Many failed to live polygamy properly, but I am happy to say that our two families lived as I fell it was intended to be lived," said Laura's daughter Allie. "Our two families lived side by side and Father showed no partiality. Both of our families shared alike, each woman working for the interest of the family as a whole."

Duties were divided between the upkeep of the family's kitchen garden and orchard in town by Annie and her children, and the dairy operation run during the summer by Laura Jane and her children from the nearby Willis Creek Ranch. Milk was transformed into butter and cheese for the winter months by Laura Jane, who "packed the butter into large crock jars. A brine solution was always kept on top and poured off and returned as each new layer was added. Our family cellar was just half way between the two homes. It was always well stocked for the winter due to the combined efforts of both families."¹²³

Summers on the ranch were fondly remembered by the children, who when they weren't busy with milking, found fun and friendship with offspring of neighboring families. They loved "fishing from the clear stream of mountain water that flowed down through the beautiful green valley," Allie recalled. "We roamed over the nearby hills and mountains, picked gun from the pine trees, rode horse back for the cows in the early evenings. We enjoyed our lives, free from cares and worries. The John Holly family from Tropic lived a few miles up the canyon from our ranch and often on Sunday afternoons we would ride up there for a visit and we always enjoyed it. Aunt Lydia Jolly, as we called her, was a cheerful, optimistic person and always made us feel so very welcome. Everyone loved her. She was a sister to Aunt Drewsy [Drucilla] Henderson,¹²⁴ Grandfather Henderson's second wife. Aunt Drewsy lived just across the street from Mother [Laura

Jane] and they were good friends. Aunty Drewsy was blessed with a jolly disposition and was well liked by everyone. The same can be said of my dear mother. Father would come up to the ranch quite often and bring us fresh vegetables. The long green ears of corn always looked good to us. Spread with ranch butter, they were a real treat. Mother would make buttermilk biscuits that would melt in your mouth. I liked thick cream on mine, and there was always plenty of it,” said Allie.¹²⁵

Life in Town

When fall arrived, Laura Jane returned to Cannonville to prepare for the upcoming winter and settle the children into school, as education was important to both mothers and John, who declared, “No one can accuse me of not being a friend of education. I have sent children to school in Cannonville, Tropic, Beaver, Cedar City, Monroe, Ephraim and Provo. I greatly regret that I have not been able to give them more schooling.”¹²⁶

Allie remembered how her mother, Laura Jane, “always upheld the district school teachers. I used to wonder why she would take their part instead of mine. One day, several pupils were corrected for some mischief and I was one of them. As I remember it, Aunt Cora Henderson¹²⁷ was the teacher. She lined us up in a row and had us hold out our right hands, then she hit us with a ruler that had a tin edge, but the time she got to me, the rim had worked lose and it cut my hand. How I did bleed! I thought, ‘Well, my mother will give her a piece of her mind.’ It was near noon time, so we soon went home. When Mother saw the blood and I told her how it happened, she said, ‘If you don’t behave yourself this afternoon, I hope she cuts the other hand.’ I soon learned I couldn’t expect any sympathy at home for punishment I deserved in school.”¹²⁸

Autumn also brought extra work at home as the harvest came on, and everyone who was able to help was required in the fields. “Father had more than he could handle alone, and with a family of girls and no boys [old enough to work],” said Allie. “We girls had to help him cut and weed the corn, and stack the hay. He was very proud and it hurt him to see his girls working like boys. One day, Laura and I were in the field with Father cutting corn and he could see a large herd of cattle coming down the road that passed by our land. He felt sure that he knew the men with the cattle and he did not want them to think his girls had to do boys’ work, so he told us to hurry to the wagon box and lie down flat so they couldn’t see us. We did as he said and enjoyed the rest until the herd passed by.”¹²⁹

Another task that had to be completed before winter set in was the accumulation of enough wood to last until spring, an undertaking dutifully performed by John and fondly remembered by the children. "Father would haul a lot of wood from the nearby hills. Some of it would be pitch pine and what a lovely blaze it would make in our fireplaces. A fire could be started in a hurry with a few pitch pine chips," said Allie, who also remembered the drudgery of hauling water home during the winter from a creek on the south side of town. "A bob sleigh made to carry a large barrel was used for this purpose. Father's work kept him away from home much of the time, so we girls had to get the water from the creek. We would hitch old Queen or Kate to the sleigh and off we would go, often joined by others going to the creek for water with the same set up we had. No, we didn't have a monopoly on all of the fun. To keep the water from spilling over we had to stretch a canvas cloth over the top of the barrel and hold it on with a steel hoop. Many a cold night the water in the barrel would freeze nearly solid. It would have to be cut out with an axe or hatchet and then melted on the stove. Do you wonder just how fortunate we are today to be able to have a good bath each day?"¹³⁰



*Laura's daughter Maude, left, with
Mary Annie's daughter Lois.*

Bathing wasn't the only winter water challenge, as there was always laundry to be done with so many small children and babies requiring a constant supply of clean diapers. "I often wonder how my mother ever managed as well as she did," said Allie. "She was a splendid housekeeper and we always had clean clothes. We managed better for wash water when the snow was on the ground and then the melted snow water was much softer. We had to use lye with the creek and ditch water."¹³¹ Any leftover water from the laundry was often used on the hardwood floors. "Mary Anne was a stickler for cleanliness. The kitchen floor had to be scrubbed so that it would truly be clean and she and Maud made window washing a Friday routine," remembered granddaughter Reta Baldwin.¹³²

New clothes were hard to come by, but both Annie and Laura Jane loved to sew, and saw to it that their children "had the prettiest clothes of anyone in town."¹³³ "I remember the pretty organdy and lawn dresses we used to have, especially for the 4th of July," Allie said. "That was a big day for the youngsters. The girls would keep the kind and color of the dresses they were having for the Fourth a secret. We tried to outdo each other.

"A lady teacher from the school in Logan came down to give a course in dressmaking to the women in the small towns of southern Utah," Allie remembered. "Mother took this course and learned to draft and cut patterns for dresses. She also made sunbonnets out of chambray, pink, blue, yellow and green. She charged a small fee for the patterns and bonnets. One day, a little old lady came for a pattern, Mother measured and cut it and wrote her name on it after she had tied it up. She read the name, Mary Barney Pearce, and handed the pattern back and said, 'Sister Laura, I want you to write Member of the Church on my pattern, too. So Mother did and she was all smiled when she saw 'Mary Barney Pearce, a member of the Church' on her pattern. She was always quite religious."¹³⁴



The Cannonville Ward building.

Compassion and Service

The Davis family may not have been as meticulous about their membership as Sister Pearce, but Allie recalled that “Sunday was always a special day of rest as the butter and cheese making stopped on the Sabbath.”¹³⁵ Church, like everything in Cannonville, was just down the road from the Davis home and both families faithfully attended services every week. John was especially interested in “taking an active interest in the affairs of my Church. Much real joy has come to me through seeing my children take part in different church capacities. Especially have I enjoyed hearing them speak, sing and play musical instruments.”¹³⁶ John was musical himself, singing and directing the ward chorister for a number of years.

John also served as first counselor in the bishopric for six years, from 1894 to 1900, a calling that came to him as quite a surprise. Following the custom of the day, after the ward was asked to sustain their new bishop, the visiting general authority announced the counselor’s names from pulpit. It was only then John knew he had been selected for the position. “This was a genuine surprise to me because I had resumed the smoking habit again,” said John. “The feeling came over me that I was not worthy of officiating in such a position, a feeling similar to the one I had had when I first went on my mission. The more I pondered over the question the more troubled I became. Before Elder Lyman left town I went to Hanson’s residence where he was staying and had a private consultation with him. I did not hesitate in telling him exactly how I felt, that I was the wrong man

for the position seemed very evident to me. In answer to what I said he remarked that one may feel down one side of a man's body and find that it is perfectly straight, but on the other side he may find a number of bumps, and there are very few men who are perfectly straight on both sides. Then he assured me that despite my imperfections I was the man for the position and to go ahead and do the best I could. I worked with Bishop Willis for a number of years as his first counselor and never at any time did we have any serious differences or trouble.¹³⁷

Annie and Laura Jane were active in the Relief Society, helping the ward raise money for the construction of a new building just after the turn of the twentieth century. Everyone in town was excited about the plans, which called for a chapel, an organ on a raised dais for the speakers and classrooms with four-paned windows. The building itself was trimmed with decorative molding and topped with a bell tower.

Laura Jane managed to juggle running her household and having a new baby with her position as Relief Society counselor in 1909. "At the time she and Aunt Cora Henderson, were counselors to Sister Harriet Clark. Each of them had a baby born in June. They were called the Relief Society triplets: June Clark, Wilma Henderson and Byron Davies," said Allie.¹³⁸

Religion meant far more than attending meetings, as the Davis family demonstrated in their everyday lives. Laura Jane often accompanied her neighbor, Mary Caffall, the town's midwife, as she cared for women in confinement. "One day the Justice of the Peace, Mr. Hyland, came for Sister Caffall to go to the Indian camp of Sheep Flat and take care of one of their women who was very ill in confinement, so Sister Caffall came for Mother to help her," Allie recalled. "Mr. Hyland sent a light wagon and a driver to take them to the camp about ten miles away. The poor Indian woman was in great distress. Mother said she had never seen a woman suffer that much in confinement. Sister Caffall and Mother soon had her delivered of the child. It was a large, healthy baby, but not a stitch of clothing for it. The two women nurses went out behind a bush and took off their white chemises and did what they could to make the mother and baby comfortable."¹³⁹

Laura Jane sprang into action during the diphtheria epidemic of 1903, which took a heavy toll among the children in Cannonville, including Laura Jane's six-year old sister, Elda Maud,¹⁴⁰ Allie's two-year old niece, Delca Johnson, and a young daughter from the Hyland family. "Father worried about Mother going out so much to help with the sick children. He was afraid she would bring the dread disease home to her own children," said Allie. "She told Father she just couldn't refuse people who were in such distress. Mother was a very sympathetic

person. Her heart went out to anyone in distress. A girl from our home town had been away to school. She had returned home in trouble. The fellow married her before the baby was born. I said something smart about the girl being a disgrace to the town. My mother said, ‘Now, you please keep your mouth closed. You are born, but you are not buried yet.’ She gathered up clothes for the baby. Diapers were then often made of bleached flour sacks. Mother had some she had bleached for dish towels, but they were hemmed and with other articles went to the girl.”¹⁴¹

Jim Indian

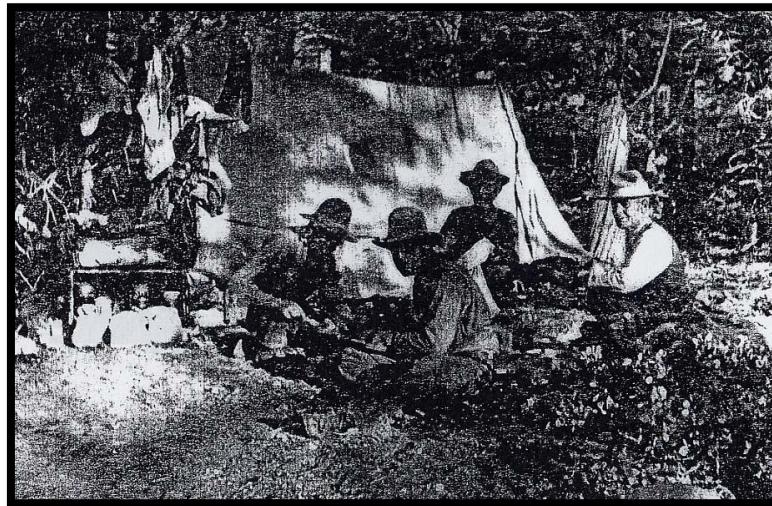
As much as John worried about Laura Jane travelling around the countryside helping others, he spent much of his own time lending a hand to the local Paiutes. “My father was a great friend to the Indians who roamed through our country. He was real fond of one Indian we called Jim,” according to Allie. “Often on his trips to and from the ranch he would bring him along. He would say to Mother, ‘Now Laura, I’ll have him wash good with warm water and soap and I want him to sit with us at the table,’ and he always did. He was very much a gentleman in every way. Jim lived at Sheep Flat. He took very ill one summer and sent for Father. Father did everything he could to help him get well, but he passed away. Father took one of his suits to put on Jim and had him buried in our town cemetery. Jim was only one of the many friends Father had among the Indians. Mother and Aunt Annie always joined with him to help them when in need.”¹⁴²

John described his friend Jim as “a true a gentleman as ever lived. Although he had a dark skin and spent his life among his fellow tribesmen, the Paiute Indians, he had the traits and qualities which characterize a civilized person to a fuller extent than many a white man. He was affectionately known among his white friends as Jim Indian.

“Jim was about my age. When he was a child of around four or five years of age his father was killed north of Beaver in a war with the pale faces. Soon after this tragedy Jim was brought over to the Cannonville section of country to be reared by his uncle, an Indian called Nehab. When I first came here as a cowboy in the employ of the Kanarra Cattle Co-op, I frequently camped with the local tribe of Paiutes. Jim and I soon became chummy with each other. Whenever I rode up to where the Paiutes were staying Jim was always ready to care for my horse.

“During the years that I was superintendent of the cattle company I hired him to work for me on quite a number of occasions. He obeyed my orders as faithfully as any man could. As my friendship with the Indians deepened and after learning their language I decided to explain to them the Book of Mormon story of the origin of the American Indians. Jim, especially, took a great interest in what I said. He even brought some of his companions with him and I related to them the account of the Nephites and Lamanites in considerable detail, using maps in an old Cornell Geography Book to assist me. They seemed to have considerable faith that the story which I told was true.

“During the time that Jim and I rode and worked together we talked on a wide variety of subjects. He was a very observant person and thought a great deal about the customs and conventions existing among the white settlers. When he came to compare the manner in which we bury our dead with the crude way in which his people disposed of the bodies of their dead, the desire began to grow on him to be buried in the white man style. As I was likely more friendly with him than anyone else outside of his own tribe, he expressed a desire a number of times to be buried in a coffin and in a grave after his spirit was called to the happy hunting grounds. I promised him I would do as he wished if I happened to outlive him.



*John, far right, in camp with unidentified hunting
companions around 1916.*

"The time came that Jim's health began to fail him. He was afflicted with what I now believe was consumption. When the disease had reached its final stage and death was eminent, the Paiutes were camped about a mile south of Cannonville. He kept sending his son-in-law to town to see me, but I happened to be away on a trip at the time. As soon as I returned and found out that Jim was in such a critical condition I immediately went to see him. As I rode up to the Indian camp I noticed that Jim's wife was sitting in front of the tent making a basket. I began to ask her where Jim was and he heard me talking from his bed within. With a feeble voice he called me.

"With words that were low and hesitating he began to reminisce on our years of friendship. I told him of the confidence and trust I had placed in him. Then he repeated again his desire to be buried like a white person, and again I promised him I would see that this was done.

"Out of curiosity I asked him why he had never learned to speak English. He replied that I was the only white man he ever wished to talk with, and that I knew how to speak Paiute. The poor man informed me that he was going to die and I asked him why he had such a thought as that. Then he told me of a dream that had come to him. In this dream he had gone into a strange and beautiful land and had seen some of his dead relatives, but they had refused to speak to him. Nevertheless, he was very happy there and wished to stay. However, he had to come back, and when he woke he was still very sick. This dream was repeated. Because of it Jim was convinced that death was near. I tried to console him by saying that white men had dreams, but they did not die right away, but he was not to be comforted. He stated that whenever Indians dream they always die.

"I tried to get him to take some medicine I had brought with me, but he refused. Somewhat to my surprise he remarked that he wished to die on Sheep Flat, a plateau region a few miles to the southwest. In explaining this desire he said that when his uncle had taken him as a child from Beaver Ridge where his father was killed, that they scarcely stopped until they came to a certain knoll on Sheep Flat, and that place had always seemed like home to him. I helped the Indians place him in a buggy, and then he asked me to go with him to the top of Sheep Flat hill. As we rode along I saw that he was in an extremely weakened condition.

"I rode out to Sheep Flat the following day and found that Jim's life was fast ebbing away. My responsibilities at home were such that I could not remain with him to the end, so I sent word for his brother and sister to come to me. After informing them that Jim could not last the night through, I instructed them to straighten his body out as soon

as he had died. After considerable coaxing they reluctantly promised to do this. Knowing the danger of coyotes or other animals molesting the corpse, I tried to persuade them to stay with the body until I could return the next day, but the poor, superstitious creatures would not think of staying with Jim after he had died. I was able, however, to get them to promise to build a number of fires in a wide circle around the camp to protect the body from animals.

"The next morning an Indian called Moon rode swiftly to our gate, his horse wringing wet with sweat. Without his having to tell me I knew that Jim had passed to his great reward. I saddled up my horse and headed for Sheep Flat. As I was going through town I stopped and asked Kendall Fletcher and George Anderson to construct a coffin. The Indians had straightened Jim's body as I requested and had moved their camp a mile away. They had kept fires burning around the knoll all night, however.

"I procured a tub from James N. Henderson, who was farming nearby and washed the body with Cy Mangum assisting me. We dressed Jim in a suit of clothes I had bought for myself a short while before his death and took the corpse to town in a buggy. All of the Indians consented to come with us. I sent a boy, Squire Mangum, ahead to tell the town's people to accompany us to the cemetery. We reached town, placed the body in the casket and proceeded to the grave. Just before the burial I asked Jim's wife if she desired to see her husband as we opened the coffin for the last time. Instead of doing this she lay on her stomach and wept as if her heart would break. William J. Henderson, Sr. gave a short, inspiring talk and then dedicated the grave."¹⁴³

Social Outcasts

Many white residents of southern Utah in the late 1800's and early 1900's still harbored prejudices against Native Americans developed during pioneering days. Most people saw Indians as racially inferior, treating them either with indifference or cruelty. John Davis was an exception to this rule, having developed a deep respect for the natives over the years. His reputation among the Native Americans was recalled by one of John's grandchildren. "One of the great joys of my childhood was when the Indians would come to Gramp's. If two people get into heaven for befriending the Indians it will be my grandparents. The Indians loved and trusted them. I remember seeing many Navajos camping at their place. Mother told me she once heard the Indians were selling pine nuts, so she found a few nickels and went to the Indian camp. Mother went to the squaw and asked for so many nuts. The old squaw said, 'You Davis papoose? You set down. Me come soon.' When she returned, she had a fifty pound flour sack full of nuts for Mother and would not take a cent for them. The squaw then asked, 'Where you live?' Mother told her. 'See soon,' she said. The next morning there was a large hindquarter of a buck deer on their doorstep. Grandmother never went hungry for meat that year." Alice S. Pizza and Enid H. Thompson, William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982 (Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983), page 56.

Unfortunately, the Davis' did not have the same kindness and understanding for the mentally ill. There was nothing unusual about this attitude at the time. Families of the day were expected to care for members with mental disorders, which usually meant simply feeding and housing them. People with mild cases were generally ignored and left to cope with their condition as best they could, while those with more severe problems were hidden away and virtually forgotten.

John's younger brother Phillip was afflicted with an unidentified mental illness, rendering him incapable of living a normal life. He was kept busy tending the kitchen garden, but was allowed in the house only for scanty meals of leftovers after the rest of the family had eaten. "Phillip was kept out in the granary because he had lost his mind," said John's granddaughter Reta Baldwin, who remembered her great-uncle occasionally making his way to her family's home one block north of the Davis home, his legs wrapped in gunny sacks against the elements. "He would hobble up to our house and then hobble back again, just to see a familiar face, I imagine," she said. "It was pitiful. He was the saddest case. I never knew him when he wasn't that way." Phillip lived in the granary for many years, sitting in the dust outside the building where Monte Davies remembered joining his cousins in throwing rocks at his hat in an effort to knock it off. "Grandfather caught us and that's how we learned how stern Grandfather could be. He spanked us and cussed us out." Phillip lived in the shadows of the family until his death in 1935, at the age of seventy-one.

ENDNOTES

- ¹¹³ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 51.
- ¹¹⁴ Lois (Davis) Johnson (1894-1966), #KWCZ-F94, www.familysearch.org
- ¹¹⁵ Margaret "Maggie" Alena (Davis) Baldwin (1906-1981), #KWCQ-X81, www.familysearch.org
- ¹¹⁶ Sherman Davis (1908-1976), #KWZM-H42, www.familysearch.org
- ¹¹⁷ Ammon Davis (1895-1960), #KWCT-ZP8, www.familysearch.org
- ¹¹⁸ Ethel (Davies) Johnson (1899-1981), #KWC8-CNW, www.familysearch.org
- ¹¹⁹ Wales Douglas Davis (1903-1932), #KWVR-KN6, www.familysearch.org
- ¹²⁰ Byron Davies (1909-1981), #KW8K-QG8, www.familysearch.org
- ¹²¹ Elda Maude Henderson (1897-1903), #KWJY-82P, www.familysearch.org
- ¹²² Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 55.
- ¹²³ Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 320-321.
- ¹²⁴ Lydia Drucilla (Johnson) Henderson (1870-1936), #KW81-S9T, www.familysearch.org
- ¹²⁵ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 320.
- ¹²⁶ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 56.
- ¹²⁷ Cora (Evans) Henderson (1876-1924), #KWCQ-JPY, wife of James Newton Henderson (1874-1967), #KWCQ-JPT, www.familysearch.org
- ¹²⁸ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 322.
- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹³² *Ibid.*, page 327.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, page 323.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, page 321.
- ¹³⁶ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 55-56.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, page 55.
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, page 322.
- ¹³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁰ Elda Maude Henderson (1897-1903), #KWZQ-Q4R, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 321-322.
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴³ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 52-54.

Chapter 9

Suffering and Joy

Enduring to the End



John in his later years.

John was well known throughout Garfield County as an honest, hard-working man with a solid character. He was also a likeable cowboy with many friends, which at one point led to his election to a position on the county's Board of Education¹⁴⁴ and a successful run on the Republican ticket for county assessor. "The election returns were in my favor and I began to take over the duties of this office," said John. "I was reelected four years later, and again eight years later. After twelve years of this public service I declined the nomination for a fourth term in order to more adequately care for my livestock and agricultural interests.

"The years in which I was assessing the value of property all over Garfield County were not without their interesting experiences. My work brought me into contact with quite a variety of personalities. People are usually very sensitive about anything which comes along to empty their pocket books. The valuation placed upon their property vitally concerns them, because this valuation placed upon their property concerns the amount of taxes paid. There were a few, of course, who would resort to almost any subterfuge to avoid paying their just dues to the government.

"I recall, in this connection, an experience I had while assessing property over in the Henry Mountains. There were a number of sheep herds that grazed in that section of Garfield County eight or nine months out of the year. Five herds of these sheep were owned by a man named William Bowns. Rumors had come to me that Bowns was avoiding the payment of taxes by permitting only a third of his sheep to be assessed. It happened that his superintendent was a friend of mine. Without consulting with Bowns at all I persuaded this friend to allow me to count each of the five herds of sheep. Incidentally, I counted his mules and horses as well. Having made the count I called Bowns, who was at his home, and announced myself as the county assessor. He wished me to assess him for only eight mules and horses, when I knew he owned at least fifteen of them. Over his determined opposition I put him on the tax rolls as the owner of twelve head of such livestock.

"I then asked him how many sheep he owned and he said the number was four thousand head. My count showed that he owned about fifteen thousand head. When I told him that I felt that he should be assessed for fourteen thousand head he became exceedingly angry. After such bickering back and forth he finally agreed to raise the count to eight thousand head. I proceeded to fill out two sets of assessment blanks. On one I assessed him for eight thousand head of sheep and on the other for fourteen thousand head. Having done this I told him to sign either one that he wished. He signed the paper on which he was assessed for owning eight thousand sheep. Nevertheless, when I returned to Panguitch I placed on the county records the number fourteen thousand as being the amount of sheep he owned.

"Not to be outdone, Mr. Bowns took the case into the courts. In the trial held in the county court at Panguitch the decision was rendered against him. He then appealed his case to a higher court and the new trial was conducted in Salt Lake City. His luck was no better there and he again lost. His total expenses in this litigation amounted to about sixteen hundred dollars. Needless to say, I was never numbered among his circle of friends.

"While this trouble was brewing, my work took me to Boulder on several occasions. I acquired a great liking for the little group of people living in that isolated settlement. Among other things, their school facilities were extremely poor. I encouraged them to build a new school house. Some of them were not so sure that they could afford one. I explained to them that by raising their school tax levy just two mills that the increased taxes on Mr. Bowns' sheep would

just about pay for the new structure. They became convinced that my advice was good and proceeded to carry it into effect. So while I lost Mr. Bowns' good will, I found myself being warmly welcomed into the humble cottages of the good people of Boulder.

"It was my policy, as an assessor, to be lenient with the poor and to assess the rich to the fullest possible extent. Perhaps this was not exactly just, but I do know that my friends soon began to greatly outnumber my enemies. In fact, with the exception of Mr. Bowns, I doubt if I ever made any real enemies during the years I was county assessor. When the people of Boulder heard that I did not wish to be nominated for a fourth term, they sent a man all the way to Cannonville to try and persuade me to run again."¹⁴⁵

Mother to All

Laura Jane was expecting her seventh child in June, 1911, and the future seemed bright. Laura's brood was growing up nicely, and with Allie planning on an October wedding, there was plenty to do to get ready for both important family events. The entire family was delighted when Laura Jane gave birth to Maud on 23 June, "but those moments of felicity could not last forever," said John. "Fate never intended that any human should have uninterrupted happiness."¹⁴⁶

Laura Jane became ill a few weeks after the baby was born. "Doctor Clark, who was caring for her, informed us that she had a blood clot and that if it did not reach her brain there was a chance for her to get well," according to John, but despite the doctor's care, Laura Jane died on the 18th of July. "God called her from us. She left six little children to mourn her loss, to whom she had been a most devoted and loving mother," he said. "My grief was so deep and overwhelming that it was a long, long time before I felt like myself again. Genuine love is a passion that deepens with each passing year until it becomes the most beautiful and wonderful joy known to the soul of man. While it brings to him the most exquisite and heavenly happiness, he can never know when the object of his affection will suddenly be taken from his side, only to leave an aching void as vast and as painful as his joy was full. These words describe to me, imperfectly to be sure, what my loving wife, Laura Jane, meant to me in life and in death."¹⁴⁷

Ammon, who was sixteen at the time, was assigned to care for the family sheep herd and left for the range soon after his mother's funeral. Allie married three months later as planned, leaving Ethel, twelve, Douglas, eight, Byron, two, and baby Maud in the care of

Mary Annie, who didn't hesitate in taking the children under her motherly wing. Including her own four children still at home (Lois, sixteen, Maggie, thirteen, Vernon, four, and Sherman, three), Annie ran a combined household of eight.

"There have been very few women who have rendered more humble and loving service than did Mary Anne Davies," wrote John "She was blessed with eight children, seven of whom she reared to maturity. In 1911, she assumed the responsibility of caring for five of her sister Laura's children and did everything within her power to be a mother to them. In her declining years, after my children were all grown, she took under her tender care two of my orphaned grandchildren: John Ammon¹⁴⁸ for a period of several months and Doris Mae¹⁴⁹ for a period of several years. My brother Phillip also spent over twenty years with us. So besides mothering her own children, she tried to take the place of four other mothers."¹⁵⁰

Annie loved her sister's children as much as her own, and those affections were returned. "Maud loved Mary Annie so much she thought she was her real mother," said Toni Davies,¹⁵¹ wife of John's grandson Monte Davies. "One day at school some kids started teasing her and told Maud that Annie wasn't her real mother and it just broke her heart. When she went home crying, Annie took Maud on her lap and loved her and told her that while she wasn't her real mother, she loved her every bit as much as if she was. Maud said to me, 'I couldn't have loved my own mother any more than I loved her.'"¹⁵²



Mary Annie Davis



*John and Mary Anne Davis in their
Cannonville yard.*

Sunset Years

With Ammon now running the sheep herds, John was left with enough time to concentrate on matters at home. He enjoyed tending his farm animals and garden and was known for “the sweetest melons, the biggest winter squash and more carrots than could possibly be used. He always saved some of the carrots for the milk cow. Just outside the back door was a crab apple tree. He made sure he and his large family always had plenty to eat and would willingly share what he had with his less fortunate neighbors. Mary Anne would say that he ‘would go up to the head of town at Bull Dog and wait for a beggar to come by so he could bring them home for a meal.’”¹⁵³

Whenever John wasn’t attending to chores, he filled his time braiding lariats from calf hides he had tanned and split into strips himself. “He soaked the lariats for a few days in a bucket of calf’s blood, then

stretched them between two trees until they broke. He then mended the break so it couldn't be found. At this point the lariats were deemed ready for sale at sixty dollars each.¹⁵⁴

John was described as short man with "a tanned, weather beaten face, snowy white hair and black, busy eyebrows. One time he came in from out of doors with an arm load of fire wood. At the time it was snowing large, lazy flakes and as he entered the house one couldn't tell where the snowflakes ceased and the hair began," recalled Reta.¹⁵⁵

The Garfield News was delivered to the house every afternoon with the mail. After reading the national and local news, John spread the comic pages out over the kitchen table and settled in for a few laughs. His favorite comic strip was "Maggie and Jiggs." He often said that if he had a wife like Maggie, he "would do something about her!"¹⁵⁶ John kept active in the church with various duties such as reporting stake and general conference news at Sunday services, bore his testimony and spoke at funerals and "divine service,"¹⁵⁷ even though he was never able to conquer his smoking habit. "John never hid the fact that he smoked hand-rolled Bull Durham 'cigereets,' but he did try to hide the wine bottles because Mary Ann would fuss at him for that," according to Reta.¹⁵⁸

After all those years punching cattle in southern Utah, John was renowned for his knowledge of the red rock canyons and was frequently hired as a guide to various parties, including an expert in search of oil.¹⁵⁹ He wasn't averse to travelling through the countryside in any kind of weather. He and his son Sherman braved a particularly bad storm in the spring of 1929, when they "spent all day bucking snow across the mountain" on their way to Panguitch. The storm "played havoc with the roads around Panguitch... The field road north of town was blown full of snow and was impassible. People going to their farms had to use horses to move the cars through the lane. It was reported that in places it was drifted until men were forced to lead their horse through the drifts," reported the local newspaper.¹⁶⁰

In good weather, John and Annie drove their "new Buick, quite a class car,"¹⁶¹ from one end of the state to the other in order to visit their children and growing brood of grandchildren¹⁶² and attend important occasions such as Vernon's 1930 graduation from Snow College in Ephraim.¹⁶³

The Dark Cloud of Death

Death visited the family again in 1927, when their daughter Dicy died in childbirth with her sixth child. Five years later, on 18 November, 1932, John and Annie received word that Douglas had been killed “by an outlaw and a coward without a chance to defend himself,” said John.¹⁶⁴ Douglas had given John and Annie plenty to worry about during his twenty-eight years. He was only eight years old when his mother, Laura Jane, died and he took it very hard. “The loss of his loving mother when he was a mere boy was an irreparable loss to him,” said John. “There was no one left who could gain his love and confidence and lead his wandering footsteps out of the shadows into the sunshine.”¹⁶⁵

Douglas apparently walked a stony path for some time, moving from place to place looking for rough labor and construction jobs. By October, 1924, he was working in the northern Utah mining town of Park City, where he lived for the next four years.¹⁶⁶ It was here he met and began a relationship with seventeen-year old Maxine Sullivan.¹⁶⁷ A daughter, Doris Mae, was born to the couple on 21 November, 1927, in Park City.¹⁶⁸

Although John claimed in his personal history that Douglas and Maxine were married,¹⁶⁹ they apparently were not. In a letter to Maud discussing sealing Doris to Douglas in the temple, John questions how that would be possible, since “Doris...will have to be adopted and there is not a mother to take the place.”¹⁷⁰ Posthumous endowments were completed for both Douglas¹⁷¹ and Doris,¹⁷² but without a marriage for Douglas, sealings were not possible.

Douglas and Maxine travelled to Cannonville to introduce their four-month baby to the Davis family in March, 1928.¹⁷³ Near the end of June, John brought Maxine and Doris back to Cannonville,¹⁷⁴ possibly with the intent to settle with the Davis’ in Garfield County, but Maxine abandoned Douglas by the end of August. After reporting Maxine’s return to Park City,¹⁷⁵ *The Garfield County News* did not mention her again.

Douglas remained at his parent’s home where he could count on Annie’s help in caring for little Doris while he looked for a job.¹⁷⁶ He found more than work when he signed on at Zion National Park near St. George, Utah, in 1930.¹⁷⁷ At some point, Douglas became involved with Grace Adams, the twenty-eight year old wife of Jimmy Adams, from nearby Kanab. In September, 1932, Grace reportedly left her husband and headed for Las Vegas with Douglas, where the pair lived together for several months before setting up house in a

cabin at the Shady Inn tourist camp in Rockville, Utah. Jimmy finally tracked them down in November when Douglas was away at work.

"After considerable argument, the woman admitted her indiscreet relations, which knowledge 'burnt me up inside,'" Jimmy was reported to have said, and he moved to the foot of the bed where he "squatted on his haunches...awaiting the return of Davis for lunch." Douglas arrived at the cabin at 11 o'clock, his jacket slung casually across his shoulder, not expecting to see Adams, who shouted, "You better git a -goin' from here!" as he walked through the door.

Douglas immediately lunged for Adams, who grabbed a nearby Remington rifle and shot Douglas through the heart, "merely to stop him," Jimmy said later at his murder trial. "He was a prize fighter and I was afraid, so I shot him." Evidence presented at the trial led to a not-guilty verdict, and Adams was released on 9 March, 1933.¹⁷⁸

John spent the remaining years of his life mourning his wayward son, wishing he had chosen to live differently. "He was gifted with a beautiful tenor voice and was known as a strenuous and conscientious worker," said John.¹⁷⁹ "I grieved over him so much."¹⁸⁰



Mary Ann and John, center surrounded by their children. Back, left to right: Maude, Ethel, Allie, Maggie, Lois, Laura, Emily. Front, left to right: Ammon, Vernon, Sherman, Byron.



Above, left to right: John and his sons Ammon, Douglas, Vernon, Sherman, Byron. Below, John's daughters: Maude, Ethel, Emily, Annie, Allie, Laura, Lois.



John with his daughter Lois.

Children and Grandchildren

John and Annie eventually put the tragic events of 1932 behind them and turned their attentions to their many surviving children, thirty-eight grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. They often drove across the state and back to celebrate birthdays or just to spend time visiting over the weekend.

Attendance at family reunions was a summer highlight once the family became scattered. The Davis' were among those turning out for a large Henderson reunion in Cannonville spanning a three-day weekend in 1928, in which more than thirty-seven people enjoyed a canyon picnic supper, dancing and non-stop visiting. A group photo was taken on Sunday morning followed by a spiritual evening program in the ward tabernacle. The next day seven carloads of assorted aunts, uncles, cousins and grandchildren headed over to Bryce Canyon for a tour of the hoodoos, followed by lunch "in the grove of trees by Ruby's Inn...Everyone present pronounced it a wonderful success."¹⁸¹

John and Mary Annie regularly sponsored reunions at their own home. Activities for the August, 1935, reunion included dancing and a Saturday evening social. "As there will be quite a number in attendance, it would be well to bring a few quilts to prevent any

discomforts in sleeping,” Annie’s postcard invitation advised. “I certainly hope that you can find it convenient to come home at this time as, judging from the past, this gathering may be our ‘Last Round-up’”¹⁸²

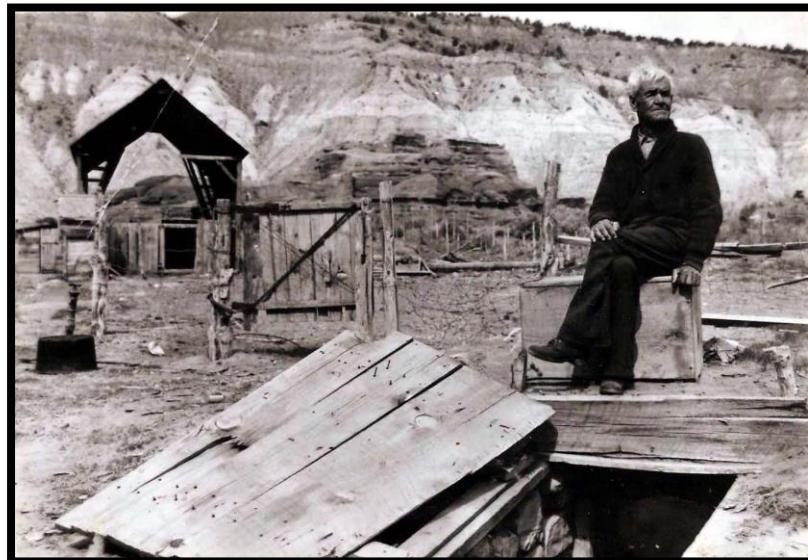
All of the grandchildren remembered John and Annie fondly, and often told tales of Johnny “singing songs in the Paiute tongue, along with the song, “The Old Sow” and one about a maiden with a ‘nose of sky blue pink.’ They enjoyed it when he loosened false teeth and wiggled them when he made the rasping sounds of the ‘old sow.’”¹⁸³ Grandson Samuel Pollock¹⁸⁴ recalled “when Uncle Ammon came home from the first World War we all went to Grandma’s for the best and greatest family gathering that I remember. It was good to have him home. Phillip sang some beautiful songs in his silver, heavenly voice. Then Granddad got up to the old pump organ. He began in his deep bass voice, “Home on the Range.” The beautiful Welch came out in a happy cadence, with his children. I was asleep in my grandmother’s arms. It was truly my home on the range.”¹⁸⁵

John was always good for a tale about his life on the range and his experiences with the Indians. “My grandfather was an old man when I was a young man, but he used to tell us stories about living with the Paiutes and the Navajo,” said Monte. “He had a lot of Indian arrowheads and spears that he had collected, but when the house later burned down, they never bothered to find them all. If you ever got on the bad side of him, he would give you a Scotch blessing in the Indian language, which made me stand back in awe.”¹⁸⁶

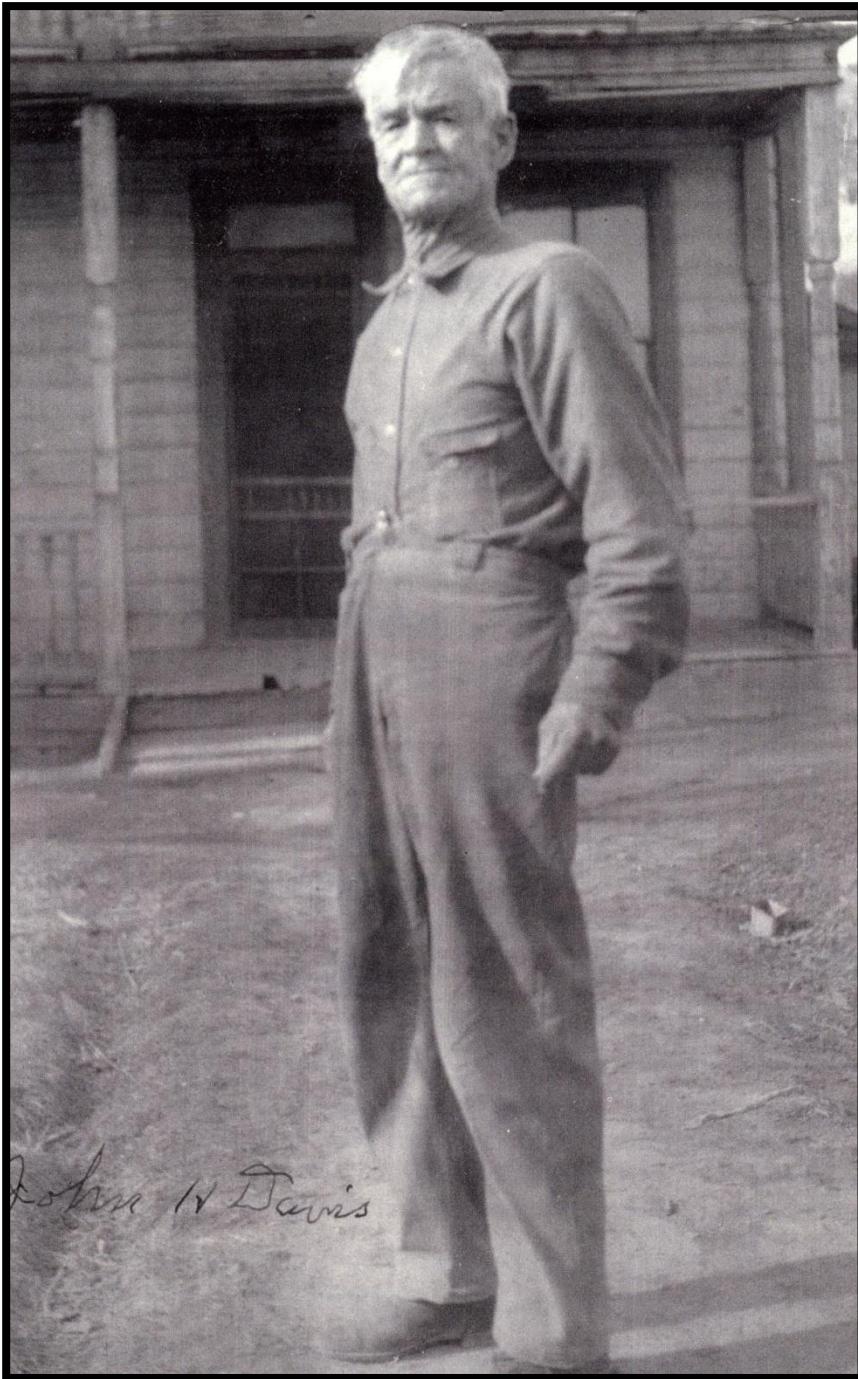
John had a naturally sunny disposition and liked to make other people smile along with him with jokes and tongue-in-check stories he tell with a poker-straight face. Sam Pollock remembered an exchange between his grandparents at the breakfast table one morning after the family had attended a local dance. “Grandpa came in saying, ‘By George, Annie, I’m tired, I’m bushed.’ She set a hot cup of coffee before him. Again he said, ‘Annie, I’m tired.’ At this, Grandmother scolded, ‘Johnny! How could you be so tired? You done nothing but sit on your seat all through the dance. You are just a put on.’ Gramps looked up at her, never cracking a smile, saying, ‘Annie, it was that awkward son of ours (Vernon). He never got straddle of one of them dance tunes. Dancing is fun, but he sure made a lot of work of it. It made me tired watching him. Annie, I’m give out. By George, I’m tired.’”¹⁸⁷

Everyone loved telling their favorite family stories as they gathered around the dinner table. "How Grandma would laugh when she told me about their pioneer life," said Sam. "Grandpa got a pup coyote, which was a great pet until it became too big for its appetite, for one morning most of their chickens were dead. She said, 'I told Johnny what that cussed thing would do.'"¹⁸⁸

Sam also recalled John's inexperienced driving skills in his beautiful new black and white Buick. "Grandpa built a garage out of inch lumber facing the large stack yard. When he got it to his liking, one morning he drove it into the garage. Grandma was busy with her housework when she heard, 'Whoa! Whoa!' in Grandpa's loud voice. Then she heard the crash of breaking boards. She ran out the back door and there was Gramps at the wheel, swearing in his good old Western way. 'Whoa, you damn thing, whoa!' By this time he was in the lush garden and the back end of the garage was completely out. Another time the car got away from him and he backed up on the family cellar, which broke down with the car on its top and Grandpa had his car in the cellar."¹⁸⁹



John sitting above the cellar in his yard.



John W Davis

Mary Ann's Death

It turned out that the Davies reunion of 1935 was indeed the last one. During the winter of 1936, Annie's health began to fail and she was more often sick than not, and she finally faded away from old age. "The many years of work in rearing her own children and the younger ones in her sister's family, coupled with periodic illnesses had taken their toll," said Vernon. "Her heart finally weakened and gave way, bringing rest from the heavy load of care she had borne for so long. Her love had sometimes spread too thin and her strength had so declined that she fell short of doing all she wanted to do. As was true of her sister, Laura Jane, her life was one of loving service and sacrifice for others. She did so very much and asked for so little in return that to me she must be looked upon as a saint, and there is nothing of which I am more proud than to have had her as a mother."¹⁹⁰

Mary Annie died 13 May, 1937, at the age of seventy-one, and was buried near Laura Jane in the Cannonville cemetery. "Her frail body, completely worn out by toil and suffering, was no longer a fit habitation for her beautiful spirit and she was called to her eternal home, a mansion of peace and rest and happiness," said John.¹⁹¹ Sam Pollock remembered his grandmother as "a queen of the desert. She was the angel to the weary, the doctor to the ill. She was the harvest to the poor. She was the seeds of kindness to grow in the springtime of many children. She was a table for the hungry, a bed for the weary. She was energy beyond human endurance for her friends. She was sympathy, the straight and narrow, motherly love. Her great affinity was to God's children in her care. Her allegiance to God was her life. She was loyalty and devotion. The angel of the red rocks of Cannonville."¹⁹²

As if to signal the end of an era, the lovely frame home John had built for Annie burned to the ground shortly after her death. The smoke could be seen by everyone in town, and all rushed to save what furniture and personal possessions they could from the flames. There was not firefighting equipment in Cannonville and very little water. Saving the house itself would have been an impossible task.¹⁹³



John, third from left, and some “old timer” friends.

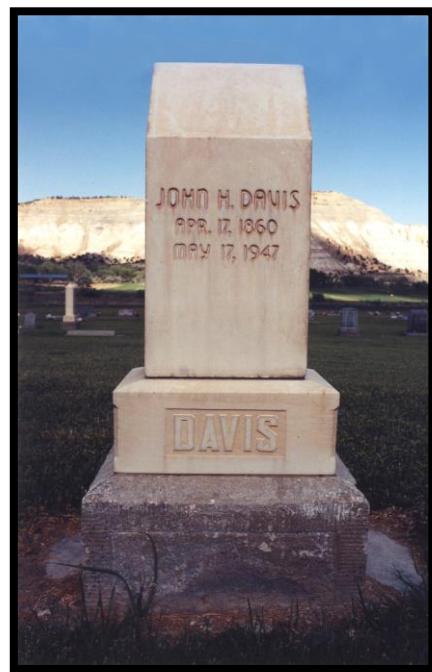
John’s Death

John moved in temporarily with Sherman and his wife Amelda¹⁹⁴ until he was able to purchase and relocate a two-room house to the site of the old Davis home. Vernon helped John add two bedrooms onto the back of the house, but the toilet remained near the barn, two hundred feet from the back door.¹⁹⁵ Maud stayed on to help care for her father until she married in 1939. “We are getting along fine, although I miss Maud she was so good to take care of things,” John wrote to Allie in February, 1940, after Maud had left with her husband Jim¹⁹⁶ for Ogden.¹⁹⁷

John remained interested in keeping up with his children and grandchildren, by travel when possible, and by mail on a regular basis. John was delighted to receive word of a new arrival from Maud in March, 1941. “Oh how glad I was to know you had a boy. It was what I hoped for and I sure [am] glad and I am sure proud to have him named John,¹⁹⁸ but I don’t know how the child will feel when his friends [find out] what an ornery old grandpa he got...I do hope you and Jim can come down on my birthday for it will save me a trip up there for I have got to see that baby as soon as I can.”¹⁹⁹

Life in Cannonville continued on as usual, with John tending to his animals and puttering around the garden. It may have been while he was working in the barn or hoeing a row of corn that he put a gash in his foot, an injury he failed to treat properly before leaving to visit Maud in Ogden. The cut became infected and still John ignored it. Finally, even the doctor couldn't do much about the gangrene that developed, and John slipped quietly into a coma. He died on 17 May, 1947.²⁰⁰

Maud accompanied her father's body back to Cannonville, where a service was held in the ward chapel. John was buried in the Cannonville cemetery between his two wives "at the foot of the white hill behind which they saw the sun set so many times...and where they shared both their joys and sorrows," said Vernon. "They were comforted by a faith that the vows that united them would endure beyond the grave forever, and that their children would forever be their to love and cherish. This was their fond expectation and dream and who could be ennobled with a grander hope."²⁰¹



John's grave in the Cannonville cemetery.

ENDNOTES

- ¹⁴⁴ John H. Davis, *Among My Memories* (self-published, 1937), page 55.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, page 51-52.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, page 51.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, page 58.
- ¹⁴⁸ John Ammon Davis (1922-1990), #KW8M-QP7, www.familysearch.org, son of Ammon Davis.
- ¹⁴⁹ Doris Mae Davis (1927-1953), #MTH6-ZNX, www.familysearch.org, daughter of Wales Douglas Davis.
- ¹⁵⁰ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 58; Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 328.
- ¹⁵¹ Afton “Toni” “D” (Mecham) Davies (1925-), #LNDN-5FS, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁵² Interview with Afton (Mecham) Davies, July 1998. Transcript held by interviewer Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ¹⁵³ Baldwin and Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 327.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, page 328.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, page 327.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Bringing Up Father* was a popular comic strip that ran in newspapers from 1913 to 2000. Many readers often simply referred to the strip as “Maggie and Jiggs.” Maggie was the scolding, rolling-pin wielding wife. Baldwin and Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 328.
- ¹⁵⁷ *The Garfield County News*, 16 March, 1923; 25 May, 1923; 9 May, 1924; 30 May, 1924; 12 June, 1925.
- ¹⁵⁸ Baldwin and Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 328.
- ¹⁵⁹ *The Garfield County News*, 2 July, 1926.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 1 March, 1929.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 5 July, 1929.
- ¹⁶² Among the out-of-town visits John and Annie paid to their children were those reported in *The Garfield County News*: 13 July, 1923; 23 November, 1923; 7 December, 1923; 11 May, 1927; 17 August, 1928; 20 December, 1929; 24 July, 1931.
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 30 May, 1930.
- ¹⁶⁴ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 58.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁶⁶ *The Garfield County News*, 31 October, 1924; 1 January, 1926; 22 October, 1926; 23 March, 1928; 29 June, 1928; 24 August, 1928.
- ¹⁶⁷ Maxine (Sullivan) Harrison (1907-1952), #LK7P-SNW, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁶⁸ Doris’ birth date was taken from John’s personal history. To date, no official documentation of her birth has been found. Her death date is unsourced from www.familysearch.org.
- ¹⁶⁹ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 58.
- ¹⁷⁰ Letter from John Davis to Maud Wheatley, 24 November, 1929. Copy published in Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 331.
- ¹⁷¹ 14 June, 1940, Salt Lake City Utah Temple, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁷² 27 April, 1955, Salt Lake City Utah Temple, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁷³ *The Garfield County News*, 23 March, 1928.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 29 June, 1928.
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 24 August, 1928.
- ¹⁷⁶ John H Davis household, 1930 U. S. census, Garfield County, Utah, Enumeration District: 3, Page: 2A, roll: 2416, Image 16.0, FHL microfilm 2342150.
- ¹⁷⁷ *The Kane County Standard*, 18 July, 1930.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 10 March, 1933.

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- ¹⁷⁹ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 58.
- ¹⁸⁰ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 331.
- ¹⁸¹ *The Garfield County News*, 20 July, 1928.
- ¹⁸² Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 335.
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, page 327.
- ¹⁸⁴ Samuel Herman Pollock (1910-1996), #KWZ7-5QX, www.familysearch.org, son of Emily Arilla Davis.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, page 57.
- ¹⁸⁶ Interview with Monte J. Davies, July 1998. Transcript held by interviewer Shelley Dawson Davies.
- ¹⁸⁷ Alice S. Pizza and Enid H. Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982* (Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983), page 56.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹⁰ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 317.
- ¹⁹¹ Davis, *Among My Memories*, page 58.
- ¹⁹² Pizza and Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 57.
- ¹⁹³ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 328.
- ¹⁹⁴ Amelda Minerva (Littlefield) Davis (1912-2009), #KWZM-H4L, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁹⁵ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 328.
- ¹⁹⁶ James George Wheatley (1903-1958), #2HH8-PC4, www.familysearch.org
- ¹⁹⁷ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 332.
- ¹⁹⁸ John Wheatley (1941-). To date, no birth or death documentation has been found.
- ¹⁹⁹ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 333-334.
- ²⁰⁰ John Henry Davis, death certificate, Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Utah Death Index, 1905-1951, state file #1947002074.
- ²⁰¹ Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 318.

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Utah. Salt Lake City. Department of Health. Death Registrations. Phillip David Davis certificate.

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INDEX

This index lists the names of people related to John Henry Davis, Mary Anne (Henderson) Davies and Laura Jane (Henderson) Davis. Women are listed under both their maiden names (in parentheses) and married names [in brackets].

A

Allen

Rachel Elizabeth (Davis), 10.

B

Baldwin

Margaret “Maggie” Alena (Davis), 80, 82-83, 90, 103.

Reta (Davis), 87, 94, 101.

C

Caffall

Mary Alvira “Allie” (Davies), 59, 70, 82, 84-90, 98, 103-104.

D

Davis/Davies

Afton “Toni” “D” (Mecham), 99.

Ammon, 70, 82, 98, 100, 103-104.

Byron, 80, 82-83, 89, 98, 103-104.

Dicy [Hickman], 70, 83, 102.

Doris Mae, 99, 102.

Douglas, 70, 80, 82, 98, 102-104.

Elda Maud [Wheatley], 56, 80, 82, 86, 96, 98-99, 103-104, 110-111.

Elizabeth “Betsy” (Davies) [Williams], 10-11, 16.

Emily Arilla [Pollock], 68, 83, 103-104.

Ethel [Johnson], 83, 98, 103-104.

Henry William, 7, 10.

Hyrum Jefferson, 69-70, 76, 78.

John Ammon, 99.

John Henderson, 59.

John “Johnny” Henry, 6-10, 12-13, 16-17, 20-24, 26, 28-35, 37-45, 47-54, 57-62, 67-68, 70-79, 82-86, 88-94, 96, 98-111.

John Johnson, 6-9, 16-17, 58, 60, 83.

Laura Jane (Henderson), 55, 57-61, 68-70, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84-87, 89-90, 96, 98, 102, 109.

Laura Maria [Mangum], 59, 83, 103-104.

Lois [Johnson], 80, 82-83, 86, 90, 103-105.

Margaret “Maggie” Alena [Baldwin], 80, 82-83, 90, 103.

Maria or Mariah (Davies), 7-10, 60.

Margaret Alena [Mulliner], 14.

Martha Maria (Davies) [Rees], 7, 10-11.

Mary Alvira “Allie” [Caffall], 59, 70, 82, 84-90, 98, 103-104.

Mary Anne “Annie” (Henderson), 51-61, 68-70, 80, 82, 84-90, 99-100, 102-103, 106-107, 109, 110.

Monte “J,” 83, 94, 99, 106.

Phillip David, 7, 10, 94, 99, 106.

Rachel Elizabeth [Allen], 10.

Reta [Baldwin], 87, 94, 101.

Sherman, 82, 90, 103-104.

Vernon, 56, 70-80, 83, 90, 103-104, 106, 109-110.

Dickson

Alvira Aurelia [Henderson], 55-56.

E

Elmer

Alvira Aurelia (Henderson), 55.

Hyrum, 62.

Evans

Cora [Henderson], 85, 89.

H

Harrison

Maxine (Sullivan), 102.

Henderson

Alvira Aurelia (Dickson), 55-56.

Alvira Aurelia [Elmer], 55.

Cora (Evans), 85, 89.

Elda Maud, 89.

James Newton, 55.

Laura Jane [Davis], 55, 57-61, 68-70, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84-87, 89-90, 96, 98, 102, 109.

Lucy, 55.

Lydia Drucilla "Drewsy" (Johnson), 56, 84-85.

Mary Anne "Annie" [Davies], 51-61, 68-70, 80, 82, 84-90, 99-100, 102-103, 106-107, 109, 110.

William Jasper (1840), 51, 55-57, 61-62.

William Jasper (1863), 49, 55.

Hickman

Dicy (Davis), 70, 83, 102.

J

Johnson

Ethel (Davies), 83, 98, 103-104.

Lois (Davis), 80, 82-83, 86, 90, 103-105.

Lydia Drucilla "Drewsy" [Henderson], 56, 84-85.

M

Magnum

Laura Maria (Davies), 59, 83, 103-104.

Mecham

Afton "Toni" "D" [Davies], 99.

Mulliner

Margaret Alena (Davies), 14.

P

Pollock

Emily Arilla (Davis), 68, 83, 103-104.

Samuel Herman, 68, 106-107.

John Davis, 11.

Reese Jones, 11.

William Reese, 11.

S

Sullivan

Maxine [Harrison], 102.

R

Reese

Martha Maria (Davis), 7, 10-11.

Roundy

Elizabeth Margaret (Williams), 11.

W

Wheatley

Elda Maud (Davis), 56, 80, 82, 86, 96, 98-99, 103-104, 110-111.

John George, 110.

John, 110.

Williams

Elizabeth "Betsy" (Davies) [Davies], 10-11, 16.

Elizabeth Margaret [Roundy], 11.

