

**A History of Adelbert William Stirling**  
**by Keith H. Stirling**  
**with segments from Charlene Stirling Knell's history of William, Sr.**  
**and segments from Mary Savage Stirling's history**

Adelbert William Stirling, son of William Stirling, Jr. and Susannah Sarah Harris was born November 3, 1900 in Leeds, Utah. Del, the first born, with his sisters Alta Harris, Vera, Zelpha (who was stillborn), Lucille, Leona and brother Hyrum Legrand were all born at the family home in Leeds.

His father, William, who was the eldest son of William Stirling, Sr. and Sarah Ann Leany, was born in Glendale, Utah, February 16, 1866. His mother, Susannah, the daughter of William Silas Harris and Susanna Adams, was born in Leeds, Washington, Utah, January 15, 1875. They were married Dec 21, 1899 in the St. George temple.

According to Charlene Stirling Knell, William, Jr.'s roots began in Forfar, Forfar (now Angus), Scotland where his father, William Stirling, Sr. was born August 31, 1841. Not much is known about his life in Scotland.

William, Sr., known as "pappy," was the second child of Thomas Stirling and Elizabeth Bell. A sister Ann was born in 1839; Mary was born in 1843, died at age 3; Jessie was born in 1845; James was born Nov 2, 1848 and died at age 7; Mary Ann was born July 1, 1851 and was near 11 years old when she died; Grace was born Sep 21, 1853; and Hannah Ruthedge was born Oct 12, 1855.<sup>1</sup>

We learn how and when the Leeds Stirling's became members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Grandpa's sister, Jessie, when 79 years old and living in Woods Cross Utah, talked to some of her family members about her early life.

"We heard and accepted the gospel in Scotland. Previous to that we were Presbyterians, but as soon as my father, Thomas Stirling, heard Mormonism he was convinced and was baptized. The rest of the family all accepted the Gospel after that. I think we first heard the gospel through a man by the name of Gilles who lived in Dundee. He came over to Forfarshire with two missionaries and they held meetings there. My father, after he joined the church, was president of the branch in Forfarshire. In this branch at that time were Sisters Ramsey and Young, two old ladies, our own family and one or two others. We used to hold our meetings in our house. "

"My father was a very religious man. I remember that he used to read the Bible to us every night. We were all religious."

William, Sr. and his sister, Jessie, came to America on the "William Tapscott" on May 14, 1862. It is uncertain whether this date is the date they sailed from Liverpool, or the date of arrival in New York City. Continuing with Jessie's account:

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<sup>1</sup> Knell, Charlene Stirling, *Gleanings about Grandpa and Grandma Stirling*, [unpublished manuscript], 1970?, p 1.

[It] took them six weeks and two days to cross the ocean. There were 800 people on the vessel. All were members of the church except the crew. She said she emigrated with others from her part of the country. She also said when they were crossing the plains, at night after they had eaten they would clear off the brush, the boys would get out their fiddles and they would dance and sing Scotch songs. So the company was probably made up of mostly Scottish saints. Elders Ben E. Rich and Francis M. Lyman were in charge of the company. She tells of one storm at sea that was terrible. "Brother Rich and Brother Lyman walked up and down the deck, one on each side of the ship, talking to us and telling us that we would be alright. In the morning the storm had broken up and it was the most beautiful day I ever saw and we all went up on deck, and we held a meeting." The captain told them they had been blown back a great distance and that if it had not been a Mormon vessel, it would have surely gone to the bottom. He said he was sure it was the faith of the people that saved the ship.

They landed at Castle Garden, New York. From there they traveled by cattle car to St. Joseph, Missouri, that taking them nine days and nine nights. Then they went by boat from St. Joseph to Council Bluff, that taking two days and two nights.<sup>2</sup>

Charlene remembers her Aunt Ruth saying, "He drove a team and wagon of belongings across the plains for Frederick Ursenbach." "She said it was at Omaha that he met him. Grandpa had never seen an ox team before, but he offered to take the job."

Charlene's narrative also helps us to understand how William, Sr. met Sarah Ann Leany and how the Stirling's settled in Leeds.

Utah's Dixie began to be settled in the early 1860's and many of the saints were called to help colonize that area. Whether Grandpa was called or just found his way to Dixie isn't known but according to church records, in the fall of 1863 he was living in Harrisburg and was made branch clerk of the Harrisburg Branch of the Washington Ward.

He was living with the William Leany family. Just how or when they became acquainted we don't know. But here was a young man in his early twenties in a new country, with none of his family with him. He was probably given a home by the Leany's in exchange for his help with their work. The Leany's had been called to Southern Utah to help with the cotton industry, I imagine, because they were from the south and probably had some knowledge of cotton growing and manufacturing. If young William Stirling was familiar with weaving, as we do know some of his ancestors from Forfar were weavers and weaving was very common occupation in Forfar, he may have been called to help with the cotton industry. At any rate he was living with the Leany family. The oldest daughter of the Leany's was Sarah Ann. She and William were married on the 5th of February, 1865 In Harrisburg. They later went to Salt Lake City to the Endowment House and were sealed in 1868.<sup>3</sup>

Charlene gives us a glimpse of my great grandmother's, Sarah Ann Leany, "roots:"

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<sup>2</sup> Knell, p. 2

<sup>3</sup> Knell, p. 3

From a short history written by Sarah Ann's father, William, we know the Leany's came from Ireland. John and Margaret Means and John's father, Joseph, were the first to come. They settled in Pennsylvania previous to 1758. John served one year under General Braddock and under General Washington in the United States Army and was at what is known as Braddock's Defeat. He also volunteered and served three years under General Washington in the American Revolutionary War. He was at the Battle of Cowpens in South Carolina and was with General Nathaniel H. Green at the Battle of Guilford Court House in North Carolina. He was also with Washington at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. We can all be proud that one of our ancestors fought to gain the independence and freedom of our country. After the war, the family moved to South Carolina because they thought the warm climate would be better for their health.

William and his twin brother, sons of Culbert Means and Margaret Cook, were born in Franklin. After they joined the church, they went to Missouri for a few years and endured with the saints many trials because of the mobs and enemies of the church.<sup>4</sup> Later they went to Nauvoo and were with the Saints until they were driven from that city. William Leany married Elizabeth Searce in Nauvoo. He worked as a carpenter on the Nauvoo Temple and received his endowments in that temple. They left Nauvoo in May 1846. Grandma Stirling, Sarah Ann Leany, was born 18 August 1846 at Cutler's Park, which was near Winter Quarters. They arrived in Salt Lake in September 1847. In 1851, they went to Southern Utah where her father, William Leany, had been called to help settle. They first went to Parowan where they lived for eleven years; then in 1861 they were called to go to the Dixie Country or the Cotton Mission. Here they lived the rest of their lives and were buried in the little Harrisburg Cemetery.<sup>5</sup>

Charlene now answers the question why my grandfather was born in Glendale.

William and Sarah Ann Stirling's first home was in Harrisburg. Aunt Ruth said: "Sometime after they were married, William, along with others, was called to go to Long Valley in Kane County to help put down the Indian attacks. William and Sarah Ann built a home in Glendale and planted an orchard. Their first child, William Jr., was born in Glendale February 16, 1866. But the trouble with the Indians became so serious that the people had to abandon the settlements and move back to their towns in Southern Utah, where there was better protection. Sarah Ann was glad to be near her family in Harrisburg."

A second son, Thomas, was born in Harrisburg May 26, 1868. The other twelve children were born after they moved to Leeds. They are: Hyrum, born November 25, 1869; Ann Elizabeth, September 9, 1871; Adelbert, January 25, 1873; Helen May, 1 Oct. 1874; Sarah Elinor, 25 Feb. 1876; Jessie Amelia, Nov. 26, 1877; Alice, November 18, 1879; Ida, December 28, 1881; Ruth, October 15, 1883; David, July 23, 1885; Isabell, January 30, 1888; and Joseph, Nov. 15, 1889.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> William's twin brother, Isaac, survived the Hans Mill Massacre.

<sup>5</sup> Knell, p. 3

<sup>6</sup> Knell, p. 4

We now learn how William, Sr.'s parents came to Leeds and learn the story how the Stirling family home in Leeds was built.

William and Sarah Ann's first home in Leeds was on the lot where the George Olsen home is. In 1876, William built a brick home across the street and his father and mother, Thomas and Elizabeth, who had come from Scotland in 1868 and had been living in Salt Lake, came to live in Leeds and they lived in the old home. My father told me that Thomas worked as a gardener in Salt Lake and was paid \$1,000 a year for his work. When they came to Leeds, Silver Reef was a booming mining town and Thomas and Elizabeth kept boarders who slept in the barn. Dad said he remembered how his Grandmother would say in her Scottish accent, "All ye that want mush come in the house and get it, those that don't can go on the stack, for there will be no meat in the house tonight." Thomas died August 9, 1876 and is buried in the Leeds Cemetery. Elizabeth went back to Salt Lake to be near her daughters up there. She died October 5, 1895.

[William & Sarah's] brick home was built by people by the name of Worthen from St. George. It was built in 1876. Dad told me that the bricks were made from clay from the Connally Field. They were fired over there. He said the home cost \$4,000. Ethyl McMullin George, who grew up across the street from the old home, told me that Grandpa got the money to build the home from being on the payroll of the Christy Mill at Silver Reef. How this came about is told by Etta McMullin Mariger, a cousin of my father, in her book, Saga of Three Towns.<sup>7</sup>

"One bleak winter morning while Silver Reef was in its prime, William Stirling had an errand up there, and he started out on horseback to discharge it. His way led past the Christy Mill, where all was frenzy and consternation. The boilers were under full fire with no supply of running water, for the mill stream was completely frozen up. Without a supply of water, an explosion was inevitable. Something must be done. William Stirling happened to be the chief executive of the Leeds Water Company. But knowing the man, I should say that that would not matter much. What did matter was the danger the mill was in, and if he could act quickly enough to avert an explosion."

"With all the speed his horse had, he raced to the spot where the mill stream was diverted from our Leeds Canal. Hurriedly, he threw open the head gate to a large flow of water, and it reached the mill in time to stave off the disaster. As a gesture of gratitude, William Stirling's name was placed on the company payroll for one year."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Mariger, Marietta M., *Saga of Three Towns: Harrisburg - Leeds - Silver Reef*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Washington County News, St. George, Utah, n.d., p. 104

## Mission to Scotland



**This rare photograph shows some of the missionaries with whom David O. McKay served in Great Britain. This picture was taken while he was president of the Scottish Conference. He is seated on the front row, third from the right. William Stirling, Sr. is seated on the front row, left. Dr. Kent Samuelson's grandfather, Joseph Mitchell, is standing in the second row, third from the right.**

Grandmother was the third Relief Society president of the Leeds Ward. In the book Relief Society Memories of St. George Stake, it says she was president from 1897 to February 7, 1901. (It must have been 1900 because she died in October 1900 and the book says she was released because of illness.) It also says “quilt making and making of rag carpets were the main activities along about this time. Part of the money obtained by these articles was applied on the purchase of grain stored in church granaries. Some of the money went to charity.”

I am sure that the death of Hyrum, June 2, 1883, was a hard thing for them. It would have been about four months before Aunt Ruth was born. He was 13 years old. My father told me that Hyrum was taking a load of hay to the river mill. The horses bolted and he fell off the wagon and was run over.

In August 1895, Adelbert, who was 22 years old, died of consumption. Libby Cox told me that Helen May took care of him during his illness because Grandma was so busy with other things. Then when Helen May contracted the disease, Grandma felt so bad she took care of her constantly until May died May 9, 1899. She was 25 years old. Grandma then acquired the disease and died October 24, 1900. These must have been hard years and busy years. Thomas was married in June 1899, William in December of the same year. Grandpa went back to Scotland on a mission

leaving November 1898 and returned May 1900<sup>9</sup>, just about five months before Grandma died. This was also the time when Grandma was President of the Relief Society.

So this shows the obedience of both Grandpa and Grandma to the calls that came to them from the church leaders. It would also indicate that the family was close and the older ones must have helped in the care of younger children. Uncle Joe, the youngest, would only have been 11 years old when Grandmother died. Jessie Amelia died March 5, 1902 and if I remember right, Dad told me she also died of consumption.<sup>10</sup>

Jessie, who came to America when Grandpa did, married John Pack. They lived In Woods Cross and raised a family of seven children. She died 24 December 1925. The oldest sister, Ann, married David Whyte in Scotland in 1863. Five of their six children were born in Forfar but the last one was born in Salt Lake City. The last child born in Scotland was born in 1873 and the one born in Salt Lake was born in 1875. So they came to America sometime between June 1873 and October 1875. They raised their family in Salt Lake. She died January 7, 1920. I know my father kept in touch with some of the family for many years.<sup>11</sup>

Grandpa William Stirling died November 24, 1915, of cancer. He was 74 years old. This was six years before I was born. I wish I had known him; I am sure I would have loved him. There are a few of his grandchildren who remember a little about him. They have written for me some things they remember.

Alta Stirling Wicks (Del's sister) writes, "Grandpa, as I remember was about as tall as your father [Charlene's father, David], but heavier, a good sized man with blue eyes, bald on top with gray hair around the head. He had a goatee, a small mustache coming to a point. He was a kind man.

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<sup>9</sup> Elder William Stirling, of Leeds, Washington County, Utah, returned from a mission to Scotland, his native land, arriving in Salt Lake City, Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. He left his home September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1898, and arrived at Liverpool, September 29<sup>th</sup>; was assigned to labor in Edinburgh, under the presidency of Elder David McKay, of Huntsville, Weber County, Utah, with Elder James K. Miller, of Mill Creek; labored in that city for nine months, and assisted in baptizing nine persons into the Church; was transferred to "Bonnie Dundee" and had as companions Elders William Nisbet, of Wyoming, and William Cameron and George Bowman, of Salt Lake City. He heard there were one or two members of the Church in that city, and after a few days found an old veteran of the Church, Elder George Dunbar, who was a great help to them. With his aid a branch was organized, that now consists of six members. Elder Dunbar is a very faithful and energetic member of the Church. He is 80 years of age and was baptized forty years ago. He is seldom absent from any of the meetings, though he has to walk two miles to get there. In the winter he is always at the meeting long before any of the Elders and Saints and has the fire lighted in the hall. Elder Stirling enjoyed good health all the time he was away. When he was gone twelve months, a loving daughter, twenty-seven years of age, died. He returned home earlier than he expected on account of his wife being critically ill. The converting of souls to the Church of God in that country is, he says, like gleaning the vintage after it has been thoroughly gleaned. (*Deseret News* June 9, 1900, page 22)

<sup>10</sup> Knell, p. 5

<sup>11</sup> Knell, p. 7

We children all liked him. I was 13 when he passed away, but these are things I like to think about. When I was near nine or ten, he had me ride the horse while he put the hay up in the barn. You may know all about this, having made your home in that old house, which I loved. Anyway, there was a fork with four prongs which opened and closed. It was fastened to a heavy rope which was fastened to a pulley. The hay had been dumped near the barn. I was on the horse with a rope (or something). Grandpa would sock this fork into the pile of hay then tell me to move out a certain distance, he would shout to me when he wanted me to stop. While I was walking the horse away, this fork full of hay was being lifted up and into the barn and dropped where he wanted. Then Grandpa would call to me to stop and return for another fork load of hay. As I think of it now, there must have been someone in the barn placing the hay where they wanted it. This was a very special time for me.

“As children we would take a bucket over to Grandpa’s and he would give us fresh fruit: peaches, grapes, plums, and pears. They had so much of it. Alta also said that her mother spent a week or two at the St. George Temple after her father died. Alta says she thinks it was names that Grandpa brought back with him when he was in Scotland on his mission.”

“Grandpa was known as Pappy Stirling. He had a definite Scottish brogue. He would say, 'Yis, Yis, be dim and suz I ta im (him) and e ta me.' At my father's funeral, Grandpa was sitting about four or five rows behind us in the congregation. After the speakers on the stand finished talking, Grandpa asked if he could say a few words. Then he stood where he was and paid tribute to his oldest son, my father. This has always been a sweet memory to me.”<sup>12</sup>

Lucille Stirling Biddle, another of Uncle Will's daughters (and Del's sister) writes, “This I remember about Grandpa. Aunt Ruth had a flower garden around a pear tree, it was about even with the front of the house on the lane side and it must have been a summer pear. The fruit was small and sweet. It was off limits for us children. I can appreciate Aunt Ruth not wanting us to be tramping around in her flower bed. Of course, we wanted some. It may have happened other times, but I remember this once. Aunt Ruth was standing near the house watching unhappily as Vera and I picked up and maybe knocked down fruit from the pear tree for Grandpa was standing by with his cane and he had said, 'Let the lassies have some pears.' You may have heard this too. He often lost his spectacles and had the entire family looking for them. Eventually someone looked at him and saw them on his forehead where he had pushed them.”<sup>13</sup>

I am thankful for Charlene's effort in researching, organizing and recording this history. Aunt Alta Wicks recorded the following history about her father.

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<sup>12</sup> Knell, p. 8

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*



Memories of My Father, William Stirling, Jr.  
by Alta Stirling Wicks

My father, William Stirling Jr., was the eldest of William Stirling Sr. and Sarah Ann Leany. Born in Glendale, Utah, February 16, 1866. I don't know when they moved from Glendale but I am sure the Stirling family was among the early settlers in Leeds.

Grandpa had a two story brick home built for his family on the East side of the street. Here was home for my father, known as Will, for the first 34 years of his life. At 34 he married Susan Sarah Harris, December 23, 1899 in the St. George Temple. Our parents had five girls and two boys. The third girl was still born. Here we are in line of birth: Adelbert, Alta Harris, Vera, Zelpha, Luceil, Leona and Hyrum Legrand. Will Stirling was a gentle man, quiet of speech with his family and highly regarded in our community.<sup>14</sup>

He played fair with everyone, was as honest as the day is long. The home he and mother moved into is a stone house, a hundred years or more at this time. It stands on an acre lot on the West side of the street just two houses north of Grandpa's. We children were all born there and grew up in that old house. Our father owned fourteen acres of land at the south end of town. He raised alfalfa on seven acres for the animals (I should have said stock). We always had a team of horses and milk cows. On the other half he raised wheat and some beans to dry for winter. Our parents had a garden always on our home lot with fruit trees, also pigs and chickens. They raised almost everything we ate. Did a lot of canning. There had to be money for some things; so my father did a number of things to buy clothes, pay taxes and such. He sometimes sold a beef or hay. More often he hauled freight from the railroad in Lund, Utah for different people. Wagons, machinery as well as other large items, came unassembled. My father would bring them from the railroad then assemble them and get them in working order for the people who had ordered them. My father also did some mining, very little as I remember. He may have worked in Silver Reef in its boom days. I don't know. This I do know: He worked in a mine, sometime in his life, called The Delemar, in Nevada. It was learned later that the dust in the mine contained arsenic.

This was the cause of his death at 49 years of age, October 26, 1915. Our mother passed away July, 15, 1917. Will and Susie Stirling: our parents.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For example, the July 20, 1887 issue of the *Deseret News* lists the Appointment of Election Judges, Made by the Utah Commission. "The first named in each precinct being the presiding judge: Leeds--Richard II. Ashley, Marion E. Paris, William Stirling, Jr." Additionally, as reported in *The Salt Lake Herald*, William also assumed another civic duty by serving as a juror--reported in *The Salt Lake Herald*, Dec, 25, 1902: "Washington County: List of Names Drawn by Commissioners For Jury Duty, Leeds--William Harris, B. Y. McMullinn, E. C. Olsen, William Stirling, Jr.

<sup>15</sup> Alta, typed letter to Mary Stirling, undated



### **Partial Chronology of Delbert Stirling's Early Life**

Thanks to Del's wife, Mary Jemima Savage Stirling, one can construct a partial chronology of events pertaining to his early life. Mother wrote many letters to dad's sisters and in turn they wrote to her. The following events have been constructed from these letters. It is instructive for us to learn of the adversities faced by Del and his sisters and brother. They are worthy examples for us.

**About 1905-07** Recently I have been thinking of Christmas' past and would like to share a choice memory with you [Mary Stirling.] It was Christmas program time in our ward. I imagine Delbert was around 5-6 or 7. He recited a poem on the program. I was in the audience and I remember just how he looked: short brown pants, white shirt, tie and long black stockings. He looked beautiful and I was so proud I almost burst. This is his poem:

I wish I had a telephone,  
With silvery cords unfurled,  
Long enough and strong enough  
To reach around the world.  
I'd call up everybody along the line & say,  
"A very merry Christmas, to you this Christmas day."

I thought you might like this.<sup>16</sup>

**About 1910-14** As a boy and young man Delbert and Lawrence McMullin were the closest of friends, doing things together. Didn't smoke or drink as many of the boys in town did. I have always been proud of Delbert, loved and respected him. Just knowing he was there has been a great strength in my life, early and these later years. I felt a great loss when he passed away. We all did.<sup>17</sup>

**About 1914-20** Delbert earned money at different jobs, worked in a cannery run by Brig Jarvis<sup>18</sup>, worked some in a mine in Silver Reef. We never had much money but didn't need much. We raised almost everything we ate. We had 14 acres of land on which we raised our wheat for flour and cereal, also dry beans, fruit trees and winter squash. We had cows, pigs and chickens, horses. Raised alfalfa for the animals. After (maybe before) our father's death Ammon Jolley took care of the 14 acres. We were given half of what he raised. As you may know Ammon bought this land after we had all grown up. It is now in the Leland Sullivan family. We lived on an acre lot, raised a garden and fruit trees there. Delbert was a part of all this of course.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Alta, letter to Mary Stirling, Dec 10, 1975

<sup>17</sup> Alta, letter to Mary Stirling, Feb 8, 1979, Aurora, Oregon

<sup>18</sup> Marietta M. Mariger in "Leeds," chapter XXII, *Under the Dixie Sun* tells us that Brig Jarvis organized and built a cannery in Leeds about 1912. This created a market for products, giving Leeds a payroll. "Agitation, growing out of the idea that Mr. Jarvis owned too much of the company stock, caused him to withdraw...and the company collapsed."

<sup>19</sup> loc. cit., Alta, Feb 8, 1979

**About 1915** Some incidents I recall: One winter after father died, Delbert went to St. George to school. It would have to be the ninth grade because we had only the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Leeds. He stayed in St. George, coming home on weekends. How he got back and forth I don't know but once he came home horse back in the rain. Had pneumonia and was very sick.<sup>20</sup>

**July 1917** When they knew mother wasn't going to live, they came and got us out of Sunday School and took us to St. George where she was in the hospital. We went up one by one to kiss her goodbye. Of course we younger ones didn't realize what was happening. Del went first and mother asked him to keep us together, for which I'm very grateful. My brothers and sisters are very dear to me. Oh yes, Del stayed and accompanied the body home. We were sent ahead and slept on Uncle Dave's deck. That was always a treat.

In the months that followed someone wanted to place us in foster homes. But Del said, "No, that wasn't mother's wishes."<sup>21</sup>

**About 1917** Since Christmas both Luceil and Leona have asked me to try to think of some things about Delbert's life I might tell you. I will give you what I remember. First and foremost he did what had to be done, helped hold a family together. He and I decided that is what our parents would have us do. We fed them the best we could and kept clothes on their backs and kept them warm in the winter. Eventually they (we) all grew up and turned out to be pretty good people.<sup>22</sup>

**1918-19** Leeds didn't have electricity until after our parents died. A company from St. George was wiring homes in Leeds. We of course didn't have much money for the job so the man in charge allowed Delbert to wire our home; then they inspected it and found it to come up to specifications. We were proud of the job he did. Delbert had probably been watching to see how it was done. Mary, I am glad Delbert married you. I have a great deal of admiration and love for you.<sup>23</sup>

**Est. 1918-19** As you know [Del] wasn't a talker. I wish he had of been. There was a lot of things I should have known. Alta said he and Lawrence McMullin went to Cedar City or some place north of Leeds to work. And I guess he wasn't home much for I can't remember him being around. One time I remember we were having our supper in the bedroom. There was a heater in there. I guess there must have been some broken windows in the kitchen and that was the warmest place in the house. Alta was making what we called lumpy dick. It was flour poured into hot water and cooked like cereal and we ate it with whatever we had. It might have been sugar and milk or salt and pepper. After we'd eaten, Vera started to clean the chest of drawers off we'd eaten on and she brushed whatever was on it off on the floor. Delbert gave her a boot with his foot. That wasn't the way he wanted us to grow up. He was very proud. And as I look back he as well as the rest of us were very independent.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Leona, letter to Mary Stirling, March 2, 1979

<sup>22</sup> *loc. cit.*, Alta, Feb 8, 1979

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

<sup>24</sup> *loc. cit.*, Leona

The **1920 U.S. Census** for Leeds, Utah shows Delbert Stirling as head of household with his siblings Alta Stirling, Vera Stirling, Lucille Stirling, Leona Stirling and Legrand Stirling.

**In 1922** there was a bad epidemic of the flu. We were all down as were a lot of families. A woman from Hurricane came and took care of us. Bill Nicholls took care of the animals. We were really sick, all of us. Delbert felt he should be up helping so got out of bed, had a relapse and had to stay in bed much longer.<sup>25</sup>

**Est. 1922-23** [Del] had Alta buy boy shoes for me one school year. I guess I was very hard on them. I didn't mind and I don't think the kids teased me about them. The only time we had meat at home was in the fall or winter when we'd kill a pig. I remember him and some other fellows killing one in our back yard. Dipping it in the barrel of boiling hot water and scraping the hair off. Then when it was all cleaned they hoisted it way up in the tree with the ropes on its legs and there it hung over night.<sup>26</sup>

**Est. 1925-27** Del, Legrand and I spent one winter in McGill Nevada where he worked in the plant. I think it was copper. He never discussed his employment. I've often wondered how he ever survived on my cooking. I don't remember ever cooking meat. Maybe he sneaked a little on the side. I'm sure he needed to. We first lived in a two room house up on the hill. After a time we moved into town and had three rooms, a bath and back porch.

The houses were owned by the company he worked for and they all looked alike. Ours was C-7. We didn't pay cash for anything. Food was about all I bought and it was charged. At the end of the month Delbert would go in and pay the bill. Often you couldn't make out the writing on the itemized bill and he'd ask me what it was. Once I had no idea what one of them said and I wonder if something was charged to us we didn't get.<sup>27</sup>

**1961** Something that meant a great deal to me was to have Delbert come to see me after I had a stroke. I must have been living with Melva in California at that time but it seems like I was in Inez's home in Oregon. Perhaps you can put me straight. Another fine thing he did for me was to go back to Leeds after a trip to California and bring back our sewing machine and a washing machine. The washer for me, the sewing machine for Leona. That is something I will never forget. We were doing without both.<sup>28</sup>

### **Marriages**

On April 27, 1920 Alta married William Glenn Emett. A child, Stirling Emett was born to this union. They would divorce. Later, on June 7, 1925, Alta married Carlyle Wicks in Beaver, Utah. Marietta M. Mariger, records a little drama leading up to their marriage.

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<sup>25</sup> loc. cit., Alta, Feb. 8, 1979

<sup>26</sup> loc. cit., Leona

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> loc. cit., Alta, Feb. 28, 1979

Dwellings [in Silver Reef] were everywhere, but the finest of them, as I remembered it, followed the course of the Harrisburg water ditch, and had fine shade trees, lawn, and flower gardens. Miners' cabins and cottages extended clear up to where the water for the three towns was taken out of the original Quail Creek Channel. This was the picturesque part of the camp, cottages being just built among clumps of cottonwood and cedar trees, near ditches when they could get there, distant if necessary. One cabin that awed me as a young girl was a little two room frame affair with a tiny porch and yard, near the Leeds ditch, and under large cottonwood trees. The little fence was down, the cottage abandoned; its doors locked, its window boards pulled off by the curious. We would tread softly up to the windows to peer in at the table covered with "breakfast dishes," a baby's bib hanging on a high chair, clothing on other chairs, the stove covered with cooking utensils.

That is how Matt Wicks found his kitchen when he came for breakfast after working the night shift, his wife and baby gone with another. (So rumor said.) Poor Matt walked out, locked the door and never entered again.

That boy came back to Leeds, a man, as his broken hearted, kind, old father lay on his death bed, on the farm he bought and planted for that son, Carlyle Wicks. It was the old Wm. Harris farm, now owned by Leland and Evan Sullivan. Carlyle Wicks, and his Leeds wife, and their family now live in California.<sup>29</sup>

On July 18, 1924 Vera married David Gavin Wood in Leeds, Washington County, Utah. They would later divorce. I remember Aunt Vera coming to live with us in Las Vegas during 1955.

The **1930 U.S. Census** for Burbank, CA, lists Carlyle Wicks as head of the house with his wife, Alta Wicks, and children Melba Wicks (age 3), Lucille Wicks (age 1) and Stirling Emmet (age 8).

The same census for Burbank also lists Lucille Stirling as head of the home with her sister, Leona Hall, her brother, Legrand K. Stirling and Leona's one-year old son, Melvin Lee Hall. Lucille would later marry Ralph Curtis Biddle on 4 August 1933 in Burbank, CA. Leona would later marry Mitchell Corum on 31 August 1935 in Los Angeles, CA. And Hyrum Legrand would later marry Mary Siecert on 27 November 1935 in Glendale, CA.

In Leeds, the **1930 U.S. Census** lists Delbert as living with his Uncle Tom. Dad's siblings have left home and he has been courting mom.

A drama has been unfolding in St. George, Utah. **The following is taken from the History of Mary Jemima Savage Stirling, an unpublished manuscript.**

The summer of 1927, as I made preparations to move to Leeds to teach school in the fall, one incident stands out in my mind. I had planted a vegetable garden and had canned some vegetables and fruit. I had just come out of the garden with a basket of green corn to prepare for bottles when a handsome stranger dressed in a navy blue suit knocked at our [door.] I still had on my straw hat and was brushing corn silk from my arms. If I had known I was facing my future husband, my face could not

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<sup>29</sup> Mariger, Marietta M., *Saga of Three Towns, Harrisburg - Leeds - Silver Reef*. Printed by the Washington County News, St. George, Utah. [approx. 1959] page 97.

have taken on a deeper blush in the confusion I felt at meeting the handsome young man. I looked like a typical farmer's daughter. He had come to inquire if I would rent his family home at Leeds. The next day I saw him strolling down the sidewalk with Annie Miles at his side. Annie looked cool and coquettish under her gay parasol and Delbert looked extremely handsome. I made a mental note that I would learn more of Delbert Stirling, the young man to whom Annie was so attentive. From Annie I was to learn not only more of Delbert but also information about the people, students and the school in Leeds where she had taught previously.

My first year of teaching school was an enormous challenge. I found that the gap between the theory of teaching and practice was wide enough to almost engulf me. There was so much I needed to know about the background of the children. In addition, the parents created some of my biggest problems. That first month it was "sink or swim." I missed Papa and wondered how he got along without me. Weekends Papa eagerly awaited my return. He was too sympathetic to my problems. "You know, Mary, he consoled, "You don't have to go through this." "You can quit." Quit? Quit my school? It would be a disgrace. I could never live it down. I could never live it down. I knew I wasn't the first teacher who had left home and found school teaching a bewildering experience. Nevertheless, as I became better acquainted with the school and townspeople, I learned to love my work and the people. As progression of the students became apparent, I began to derive satisfaction in my work and enjoyed the sociability of this small town. Signing a contract to return another year, I looked forward to a second year of teaching there,

It was during the fall of 1928 that Delbert Stirling returned to Leeds to live. I knew more about him than I had previously. My landlady had praised him many times when few jobs were available. Del and I began to see more and more of one another. Our friends in Leeds took it for granted that I was Del's girl and always paired us together; however, our relationship at that time was not so definite for either of us.

After I had taught two years in Leeds, Josephine and Roy inquired about a teaching position for me at Midway, Utah which was three miles west of Heber, Utah. Josephine was expecting her third and needed help with father. [Nephi Miles Savage was now living in Heber City.] There was a second grade opening for me. I looked forward to being with my folks again, for I had missed father, but was soon to find his illness had changed him a great deal. He was still sound in mind but very weak in body and very impatient.

Del gave me an engagement ring in the summer of 1930. Jobs were difficult to get; the stock market had crashed; many dire predictions of tight money were heard; people were going on public dole. We decided that Del would find something permanent for employment, and I would teach another year in Midway. A year seemed a long time to be apart, but we were practical people.

The government had taken steps to open up certain projects throughout the country that would provide work for people. One such project had begun near Las Vegas, Nevada - the building of the dam at Boulder Canyon. Del obtained a promise of work at the dam, as a foreman over a powder gang, blasting out roads through the canyon. We set our marriage date for June 24, 1931.

My twin brother, Joseph, returned home from his mission in England, and when he learned that Del and I had set our marriage date, he began a vigorous courtship with Norma Lewis of Montpelier,

Idaho, a lovely girl whom he had met in the mission home and finally won her over. Joseph and Norma and Del and I were married the same day in the Manti Temple. [Mom is confused here. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple.]

Del and I and Roy Jones, our brother-in-law, as our passenger arrived in Las Vegas, Nevada, when the town was small - about 8,000 inhabitants. How well I remember our arrival on that hot, dusty day, July 5, 1931. Our hopes were high, notwithstanding the whole country was in the depths of a depression. At the time we were married Del had \$200 in his pocket, and he had a job promised at the dam. I was not too depressed as we entered the outskirts of Las Vegas and beheld what is now North Las Vegas. On each side of the road were temporary shacks; some were merely made of cardboard boxes or pieces of tin, if the squatter was lucky, or the less fortunate had tied blankets over mesquite bushes for shelter against the scorching sun. To our amusement, some of these quickly established homes, if they were lucky enough to be near a power line, had refrigerators standing out in the sun providing the luxury of cold drinks and fresh food. As we entered the center of town, I had misgivings in seeing men lying in the Union Pacific park or loitering in any vestige of shade cast by the buildings. We soon learned that there was a strike on at the dam; thus, the crowded condition of the town.

After much seeking for a place to stay, we took a cabin at a tourist camp east of Las Vegas. There we remained a number of days until we could find more promising accommodations. Rentals were not only difficult to find but extremely expensive. We finally settled for a bedroom, but it was in constant use. It was the only place we had to wash our clothes. This was a far cry from what I had envisioned for myself as a newly wedded bride.

In the fall Del was offered a job as shop foreman of the Union Pacific bus garage. This seemed to us a golden opportunity. His employer was Jerry George, who was married to Ethel McMullin, a daughter of Bishop McMullin of Leeds. Ethel was an ideal friend and confidant, and it was through the Georges that our life in Las Vegas had a very pleasant beginning. However, Del's new job had its drawbacks; he was on call at all times; he worked nights and slept days; he had to work on Sundays. That first year I don't remember of Del having a day off. He was happy, though, because the job was a challenge and there was much to learn.

I didn't drive the car in those days, therefore I was somewhat limited in getting around and affiliating with the church members. That winter I read the Book of Mormon for the first time and some other good books. I spent much time visiting with the Georges. The ward was small, and the members were a compact group that didn't seem willing to welcome newcomers. A couple of years later when a larger new church was built, I started attending Relief Society regularly. I was asked to be a visiting teacher (and with very brief dropouts I have been one ever since). However, when I was asked to give the opening prayer, I felt that I truly belonged.

Our first baby, Marilyn, was born December 26, 1933. Del's work still demanded long hours, and I was grateful for Marilyn's company. She became a link for me and other young mothers.

In 1937 I had my first opportunity to teach for the church. Even though I was expecting my second child, I was asked to teach primary - the four-year-olds. It worked out nicely because Marilyn, who was then four, could join the class. In those days expectant mothers discreetly remained home during

the later months of pregnancy. When Keith arrived, April 3, 1938, we were exceedingly happy that we had a son. However, I developed child-bed fever, and after the critical peak had passed, a pleurisy-type pneumonia developed. After three weeks of intensive care, I learned I owed life to the faith of dear ones and the devoted care of a dedicated doctor and nurse.

In 1938 the government through the FHA program had provided easy payment plans for home owners. After renting so many years, we were eager to have a home of our own. We bought a lot and prepared to build through F.H.A., but, fortunately, a friend informed us of three adjacent lots with houses that were for sale. The corner house was new, about 18-months-old, and there were two older houses. The property was ours for \$6,700 with \$2,100 down--a mammoth sum it seemed to us in those days, but what a steal. In March 1941, we moved into one of the older homes and became landlords to two other tenants. Oh, the joy of having our own home after ten years of renting.

In February 1942, much to my amazement, I was asked to fill the position of Primary President. I wanted to say "No", but the passage from I Nephi 3: 7 came to mind. With prayer in my heart I accepted the call. I was blessed in choosing counselors who were very cooperative and had special talents for the work. Still, they depended on someone to lead out and set the pace, so I spent much time in prayer and thought.

Those were busy days. Between working in the church and raising and canning vegetables from our war garden, I nursed the children through a series of childhood diseases. The outdoor work provided me with therapy that relieved me from the strain of church activity that never came easy for me. Also, I was asked at that time to join a literary club, which gave me much development and satisfaction for the next 20 years.

Other changes came to us. Del, who had worked for the bus garage for nearly twelve years, had come to dislike the work. There were many supervisors with their particular type of back patting and empty promises. Politics in business was the order of the day. Our friends, the Georges, were passed over, and a series of other shop managers took over. When I called Del at work to tell him my share of the money had arrived from the sale of my father's home, he said, "Oh, good. Now I can quit my job." He did quit and began to work at various garages.

Now we were in a position to move into the newer corner house. However, furniture was becoming very difficult to buy under the war restrictions. My brother Karl and Mae shopped in Los Angeles and obtained furniture for us for the entire house.

After I had held the job of Primary President for two and half years, Las Vegas' only ward was divided. The forming of the two wards was more like a funeral than a celebration of the birth of a new ward. About a week later, Stake President Bryan L. Bunker called at my home and asked me to be the new Stake Primary President of the Moapa Stake. This indeed seemed a very difficult position to hold, for I was not one who liked to go out and meet strange people. However, I could not refuse. Stake supervision extended to wards as far away as Kingman, Arizona and Littlefield, Arizona, both 100 miles away. Part of the time we were limited in travel because of war time restrictions, but because of my physical condition, traveling made me very ill, and I was released in August, 1946, to have an operation. However, I continued to teach Trail Builders in Primary and later filled a position on another Stake Primary board.



In the summer of 1944, Del decided he didn't want to be just a mechanic doing piece work in shops about town, so he went to Los Angeles for about four months to enter a machine shop to learn the trade.

Del had a dream to fulfill: owning his own shop. We had previously bought a lot on the 1200 block of south "A" street in Las Vegas and began to plan for building a shop on the lot. Del had acquired the Cummins agency for Diesel parts and the Agency for Bendix-Westinghouse Brake parts. The past three years he had built a reputation as a dependable diesel mechanic, and the children were proud of him. He started doing business in his new diesel shop in the early summer of 1948.

Two years after Del had begun work in his new building, I went to work with him. I was to answer the telephone, keep up the job invoices, do the daily posting and keep the accounts receivable. There were many ways I could lighten Del's work load. Then, too, I found a new happiness in working with my husband and seeing more of him. We felt also that now we had a place we could keep Keith, our son, busy and that he could be closer to his father. That fall the Bishop asked me to be Relief Society President. However, the work at the shop became so pressing that I asked to be released after serving one year to give full time to helping my husband. The next five years I worked with him until he leased the business. The next year or so I had a series of operations.

October 20, 1957, I was called to serve as a Stake Missionary under Bryan L. Bunker, Stake Mission President, who had recently presided over the Southern California Mission. After President Bunker's release, Dr Gerald Jones served as the Las Vegas Stake Mission President. I received my release January 28, 1960. Six months after I entered the Mission, our son, Keith, was called to the North Central States Mission where he served an honorable mission.

Following my mission release, I entered Nevada Southern University in Las Vegas as a part-time student to make up enough credit to teach school. I took classes for three semesters, plus a summer session; however that year, 1961, the school district was not hiring new full-time teachers without degrees. I decided, also, not to substitute teach and was very sorry that I had not accepted a call to teach the theology class in Relief Society. In the fall of 1962, when Bishop Linge asked me to teach the class again, I realized it is not often one gets a second chance at one of the choice positions in the church, so I accepted. I found the lessons required many hours of hard work and spent much time seeking inspiration. I taught the class three years and found it very rewarding.

In the fall of 1965, I had my second cancer operation and was released from the Relief Society teaching position. My service in the church has given me much happiness and an opportunity for growth. I know the Lord has sustained me in all my endeavors.

My husband Del passed away March 15, 1967 from a heart attack, who had retired from working the day before.

Memories of My Father<sup>30</sup>  
Keith H. Stirling

I grew up believing that my father fixed everything. Our family would never have considered employing a mechanic, let alone a carpenter, plumber, electrician, roofer, welder, machinist, painter, farmer, explosive expert or cement finisher. I thought these were the kinds of things every father did. Later I would learn that these were each professions by themselves.

During the early 1940's dad began preparing our back yard for a "victory garden." This was an area about 30' x 150'. The original soil was hard, white "caliche." Mom & Dad had purchased three lots at 126, 128 and 130 North 12<sup>th</sup> street. Each of these lots was 50' wide and about 150' deep. The three two-bedroom homes were on the west side of each of the lots. The "middle house" had a dirt floor basement and was where the folks would store bottles of fruit and vegetables. The basement was a scary place to go because of its dark places and spider webs. The back (east) side of the lots extended to the alley where the sewer line ran. Their original property extended past the alley to 13<sup>th</sup> street. They would later sell the property extending east beyond the alley way. Our family moved into the middle house when I was 3-4 years of age

Dad would come home (riding a bicycle) from his work at the Union Pacific Bus Depot and begin driving 2-3 foot holes in the soil with a hammer, a long steel rod and a can of water. After he had a series of these holes, he would insert sticks of dynamite. At some point he would also insert a dynamite fuse. These would be wired together and then attached to a light socket in the basement of the middle house. When he pulled the light chain, a tremendous explosion would occur—hurling large chunks of hard soil into the air. The clean up task would begin. By hand and shovel he would load the dirt into a rusty, orange/yellow dump truck and haul it away. The process was repeated until the caliche mound was lowered, flattened and ready to receive blow sand.

Dad had rigged a winch on the roof of the truck that was tied by a steel cable to a large scoop. The winch was connected to the trucks drive train. He would back the truck into a mound of blow sand, start the winch in the unwinding direction, pull the scoop onto the pile of sand and time the process so that winch would begin winding the scoop into the truck bed. Standing on the back of the scoop, his weight would balance the scoop so that it would push the sand into the truck's bed. Somehow he would stop the winch when the scoop was in the back of the truck. Marilyn and I remember the fun times we would have riding in the back of this dump truck as he hauled load after load of blow sand, dumping it into the back yard. The exciting moment is when we would hang onto the top of the truck bed as dad would dump the sand out from underneath us. Eventually, we would let go and be partially buried in the pile of sand.

Rows were made in the sand using a rake hoe. Corn, green beans, tomatoes, radishes, cucumbers and carrots were some of the plants. A water hose was placed in a can at the top of two rows. Marilyn and I often had the responsibility of "changing the hoses." When the corn was about five feet high, using an eye dropper Marilyn would drop a few drops of mineral oil in the silk tassels growing from each ear to discourage caterpillars.

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<sup>30</sup> This record begun May 2, 2007

Sometime in the 1940s, dad went to Southern California to enroll in a machinist shop. I remember the red lathe that he had placed on the dirt floor of the basement in the middle house. He told us that Santa Claus had brought it for a Christmas present.

On several occasions during the war, dad put on a black arm band and would go out at night to make sure that people in Las Vegas had shut off their lights. Authorities were concerned that the lights from Las Vegas could be used by the enemy to guide bombers to Boulder Dam—a major source of power for southern California—and dad was assigned to assure compliance during these air raid tests.

In the late 1940s we moved into the newer home (130) on the north most lot. Reading a letter from my mother's older brother, Karl G. M. Savage, I discovered that he and his wife, Mae, had purchased in Los Angeles the furniture that we had in our newer home. The furniture was southwest in design with Indian-like designs on the bed head boards. Our living room, kitchen and bedrooms had matching furniture. This home had a basement with concrete floors and fewer spiders. The north part of the basement was a garage with driveway down into it. But, when someone would leave the hose running on the front lawn, water would seep into the basement. Dad dug a four foot deep trench next to the west, front wall of the house, mixed and poured a cement basin in it and then sealed the basin and wall with asphalt emulsion. He laid rocks on top of the basin, then filled the trench with dirt. A pipe extended out of the north drive-way wall where water would drain. After that I never noticed water in the basement again. In the early 1950s the garage door was filled in with cinder block with windows at the top, the driveway filled in with dirt and the converted garage became my bedroom.

The first car that I remember our family owning was a 4-door 1936 Plymouth. It was silver with running boards along the side. The doors opened at the front. Occasionally, to start it father would insert a crank through a hole in the front bumper and crank the engine until it started. I thought that he needed to be very strong in order to do that.

During 1948-50, dad had left the Union Pacific Depot garage and opened his own diesel repair business. He rented a small shop on south Main Street that provided some protection to work on trucks. (I remember a diesel tractor pulled into the opening of the garage.) He believed that he could open up his own diesel repair business. Las Vegas survives because of the trucking industry and the demand for diesel repair was increasing.

Our parents had purchased a lot at 1201 South A Street sometime in the 1940s and began to build a diesel repair shop. In 1952 at age 14, I started working during summers in the shop. My parents likely felt that I needed more supervision—which I did. This time of learning through close association with my father would become one of the greatest blessings in my life.

The only argument that I ever heard between my parents—and it made me feel terrible inside—was due to a string of pearls. Ruth Walters was the first book-keeper at the shop. Apparently, she had suggested to dad that he needed to buy mother a string of pearls. I don't know the details, but mother was very upset. After that, mother took over the book keeping and billing at the shop.

My first recollection working in the shop was with dad while he was pulling the oil pan from a truck's diesel engine. In my coveralls I was under the truck helping him remove the cap screws holding the oil pan. Mother was reminding him that she or I had an appointment that we needed to get to. Dad

seemed so happy to have me working with him in his new shop. On the outside wall in big letters was the name, “Stirling Diesel Service.” The thought occurred that dad may have considered that one day the sign would have added to it, “& Son.” At least it seemed a possibility to me.

Several years later dad would be encouraging me to continue my education. Though he never said this, mother remarked once how disgusted he would be with some drivers who spoke down to him because of his soiled coveralls while cleaning their fingernails and boasting of their exploits on the Las Vegas strip.

Most of the basics of my mechanical training and the use of welders and other shop tools was learned in the shop. As I would work with dad, I learned a lot of practical things about engines, air compressors, braking system, starting systems, cleaning & packing wheel bearings, electrical systems & diagnosis, drive shaft universal joints, the need and proper use of lubricants and shop tools. Numerous times what I would learn is *not to repeat that again*. For example, I thought that my glasses were pretty neat at protecting my eyes from the sparks coming from the grinding wheel—thus precluding the need for wearing safety goggles. When I discovered that the sparks burned pits in the lenses, I realized that wasn’t a good decision!

The summer of 1952 my first assignment was separating nuts and bolts. In the one or two years that he had been in the new shop there were several engines and pieces of equipment that I supposed were not worth repairing and had been scrapped. Whatever the reason there were pockets of nuts, bolts and washers located at different places on the shop floor. Taking me with him and using a big hand scoop, dad proceeded to shovel these into five gallon buckets. When he concluded there were five full 5-gallon buckets. On the outside east wall of the shop there was a 200 gallon tank holding diesel fuel. Dad filled a screened bucket with about a half-gallon of nuts & bolts. Using some of the fuel oil he “washed their faces,” and then sprayed them outside with the hose from the faucet. Almost all of the grease and dirt were now removed.

He knelt and started sorting them. “Make a pile for the 1/4 inch USS and SAE, a pile for the 5/16 USS and SAE, and so forth.” (USS stands for United States Standard—a U.S. standard for coarse thread; SAE means the Society for Automotive Engineering—a standard for fine thread.) The benefit of this experience is that I learned my nut & bolt sizes. But the task seemed overwhelming. I would jump at the opportunity to do other things. One thing that helped, considerably, was that I became the “parts chaser.” With my Cushman Eagle motor scooter—obtained Christmas, 1952, I could quickly travel (& weave) through town to pick up parts at different parts houses, or take a burned-out starting motor down to a shop in North LV to have its copper wire coils rewound. Dad had me build a Nuts & Bolts bin in the parts room where the cleaned and sorted items could be stored. By the end of the summer, I finally had completed sorting the five buckets of bolts. To my dismay, he said let’s take another look around the shop. Unfortunately, he found enough nuts & bolts to fill *another* five-gallon bucket. It was more than I could face! I was desperate. Where could I hide the bucket?

Dad had rebuilt several diesel engines that had been used in electrical power generation or water pumping applications. The engines sat in frames designed for these purposes. (One of the assignments that I had received was to find some paint that would match, as closely as possible, the Cummins’ yellow. The Cummins engine that I had painted with it looked pretty good.) Previously, before completing my “nuts & bolts sorting assignment,” I had suggested that we board the grease pit

over since it was not used and place these engines with frames cross wise over the pit. Dad agreed. This became the location to hide that last bucket of bolts! I removed one of the boards over the grease pit and lowered through the opening the bucket of bolts. It took some effort as the bucket weighed at least 100 pounds. I replaced the board.

One benefit of the job was that I was placed on the payroll. I received \$10/week. That was a little more than I had earned as a paper carrier per week—although the hours were about three times as long.

Though father's formal education did not extend beyond the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, one would have never known it. I thought that he was brilliant. Once when the Cummins representative visited the shop, I saw him studying the fuel pump injector machine that dad had built. It had been welded out of 1/4 inch plate steel and stood about five feet high and as much wide. A fuel pump to be tested would be mounted on it. An electric motor drove the pump such that its speed could be controlled. There were six graduated flasks receiving the fuel intended for each cylinder through copper tubing connected to the top of the fuel pump. The flasks permitted one to measure the amount of fuel that an engine's cylinder would have received. This way dad would know what internal parts in the pump needed to be adjusted or repaired. Before I completed my years in the shop, Cummins had replaced this huge, bulky piece of equipment hanging on the side of its engines, with a PTT system where the injectors were under pressure all of the time and simply relied upon the timed thrust of each injector to meter the fuel for each cylinder.

Dad had what I thought was a giant lathe. In comparison, his first lathe that Santa Claus had brought was a toy. At the top of the stairs leading to the "upstairs" parts house that contained all of the Bendix-Westinghouse air brake compressors and parts, dad had mounted a motor that drove a transmission which drove a number of pulleys that turned a belt which turned the lathe down on the ground floor. Using the pulleys (flat and about 4" wide) with their different radii, together with the different gears in the transmission, one could achieve a multitude of different speeds on the lathe. If a tool or part was needed and not available, father would build it.

Frequently, trucks would break down while climbing Baker grade—about 90 miles SW from Las Vegas. He needed a truck with the power and gears to tow these trucks. His Studebaker truck had the potential, but not the range of gears. The first alteration on the truck was to install a "Brownie" 3-speed transmission behind the regular transmission. That way he had  $4 \times 3 = 12$  gears. I enjoyed driving this truck south on "A" street to see if I could get through all twelve gears before I ran out of street. ("A" street ended at a "T".) However, the power was still not adequate. The final alteration was to install a 6-cylinder GMC engine—with a five speed transmission. This configuration was an improvement.

In 1954, when Carl & Marilyn were visiting, Carl mentioned that his car, a Dodge, was using oil. I said, "We can fix that." Dad didn't say "no," so I started draining the fluids and removing the radiator. In a couple of days we had replaced the rings on the pistons, honed the cylinders, ground the intake and exhaust valves and put everything back together. Later, Carl told me that he had experienced overheating problems. I was to learn that when the radiator fluid is drained out, the residue in the radiator hardens and decreases the capacity for heat exchange and flow. Whenever one repairs and engine, remove the radiator and have it "rodded out" and cleaned at a radiator repair shop.

Frequently, father would ask me to retrieve a certain tool or hold a light. Once, he welded a rod onto a good size metal punch that he asked me to hold. He was trying to drive some tight fitting shaft from the frame of a truck. The item was about four feet off the ground. While holding the punch, dad would swing a 16 pound sledge hammer, horizontally, striking the end of the punch. This went on for a half-dozen times. I was amazed at how accurately he was able to control the hammer. He had welded the rod onto the punch as a safety measure—in case he missed the punch. He never did.

Several years earlier, I was trying to develop my baseball skills. One Sunday I asked dad to come onto the front lawn and play catch with me. I was impressed that he could throw so accurately and *hard*. Even though I was using a catcher's mitt, the balls he threw stung my hand so much that I couldn't continue very long. I didn't tell him why I wanted to stop. But I knew now why he was so *strong and accurate*.

The shop had enough capacity to contain four diesel tractors with the doors closed. Heating the shop during winters required some ingenuity. Starting with a 55 gallon steel drum, dad welded a frame on it that held a 10 gallon bucket above it. We now used the 200 gallon barrel containing fuel oil to pump all of the used oil into. In fall dad would have diesel fuel added to it. This mixture would be placed in the 10 gallon bucket. A little spicket controlled the drip speed as the oil fell on a brick inside the drum. The surface of the big drum would heat up—sometimes red hot—and was a good radiator of heat.

A year or two later, a salesman saw the contraption and insisted that his *Salamander* heater would put out a lot of heat, more efficiently. Dad purchased one and indeed it lived up to the claim. It looked like a closed tub about 24" in diameter with a five foot chimney. However, disaster struck once when the oil/fuel mixture contained some water. The super-heated steam caused the burning fuel within the tub to suddenly belch out onto the floor. Some tense moments occurred as the burning fuel flooded over the garage floor. Fortunately, the fire was put out—along with the Salamander heater.

Dad believed in customer service. He was available 24/7 to fix broken trucks. He had a reputation for making diesel engines purr. Often, he would come home, tired, but needing to return to work. Mother had a strip of rolled up carpet by the door heading from the kitchen to the bathroom so that dad's soiled shoes would not mark up the carpet. Frequently, he would lay down on the kitchen floor's linoleum for a short nap. I have memories of seeing him dozing on the floor.

In 1955, dad was diagnosed with a heart problem. His physician told him that if he did not get out of the shop, he would be dead in one year. Thus began a time when the shop would be leased to Wally Clothier and Max Barton from Cedar City. Later, while on my mission, James Engine rebuilding would lease it. For my Senior year in high school, I obtained a part time job working in the high school auto shop servicing Clark County Union School District's vehicles. I enjoyed the tutelage of Art Bowman, the auto shop instructor, who was also a member of our ward.

During my last year of working in dad's shop, my pay was increased to \$1/hour. I was on the time clock. Dad would assign me jobs relining brakes on tractors and trailers and repairing leaks with the braking systems and other tasks that he thought I was capable of doing. Frequently, as he was instructing me, he would not give me the answers. Once he asked how can these four six volt batteries

deliver 12 volts for lighting and normal operation, but supply the starting motor with 24 volts. That's when I learned about the series-parallel switch.

Another time he had a 6 cylinder GMC diesel engine in the shop for repairs. He was concerned that there might be a hairline crack in its block, since the engine had previously experienced over heating problems. The difficulty was that with the cylinder head off, there were holes in the top of the block exposed where the cooling water would normally pass between the block and the head. I suggested that we whittle wooden pegs and drive them into the holes and then hook up the hose from the faucet to the water jacket. He thought that was a good idea. I plugged the holes and pressurized the block and we discovered that there were no leaks. Unfortunately, I was not cautious enough at removing the pegs—which had now swelled with the water. I should have pulled the cylinder liner on one or two of the cylinders to assure that the stray chips of wood were no longer inside the block. Dad did not come home that night. Early in the morning he appeared at home to rest. I learned that he had put the engine back together and after starting it, number six piston seized in the cylinder. He had worked through the night to drain the fluids, remove the oil pan and the cylinder head, the piston and liner to discover that my wood chips had lodged between the cylinder wall and the block to cause a hot spot. All he said to me was, "You'll never do that again." He did chastise Stanton, one of the mechanics, for not checking my work.

In 1955 Las Vegas received about 3 inches of rain in 20 minutes. The terrain around LV is like a saucer plate. And the hard caliche soil does not have much absorbency. The net result was to have water flooding from the outskirts into the center of town. Both the Bonanza and Charleston underpasses were filled with water. Water from the west simply flooded right through the shop leaving about 4" of silt on the floor. A big cleanup operation began. Several months later, dad lifted one of the boards from the grease pit. By then the water had filtered down a drain in the pit leaving dried silt. Lo and behold there was a bucket of rusted nuts & bolts. Fortunately, he laughed. I have those today—which I'm thankful for. After being brushed with a wire brush they are as good as new.

During the flood, my friends and I happened to be riding in my folks 52 Chev south on Main Street, not too far from the shop. Water was up to the bottom of the car. All of a sudden we drove into a hole that had been in the street. Fortunately, a four wheel drive vehicle pulled us out. Somewhat frightened at this point, I decided that I needed to get home. When we got to 15<sup>th</sup> and Charleston Blvd, I turned north and stopped the car while we watched a torrent of water heading east down the street in front of us. Another lesson about water pressure was going to be learned.

The stream of water was a little over two feet high. I reasoned, if I could get a good run on it, we would be able to make it through. The force of the stream was much stronger than I anticipated. Our car was carried downstream until it hit something. Water was pouring through my open window. I rolled the window up and managed to open the door on the other side so that the water level wouldn't build up in the car. Strangely, there was also a taxi cab to our right which was almost entirely under water—with people in it! I remember my friend, Don Henrie, making it over to the cab and helping extricate the people who were in it. We hitched a ride home and told my parents that I had sunk the car. Without criticizing me, dad got in his truck and we went to tow the car home. I tried to flush the silt out of the engine, transmission and rear end. Over time, the hydraulic wheel cylinders controlling the brakes all rusted up. I would replace them. Perhaps this experience shortened the life of the engine, necessitating its rebuild in 1960.



In 1956-7, I went to BYU in my Model A Ford pickup. I had a wonderful time the first four quarters. Unfortunately, my grades were not very good. A D+ average. I did meet Dolores and over time we knew that we would marry at some time. But I knew that I was not ready for marriage. I decided that it was time for me to go on a mission. I was not doing too well trying to explain this to dad. He felt that my education was very important. Every reason that I would present in support of a mission seemed to be easily dismissed. Finally, I said, "Dad there's this girl." He said, "All right son, you can go on a mission." Dad had already met Dolores and knew she was a choice woman. He also knew that I was not ready to get married.

Dolores and I married on August 5, 1960, two months after I returned from my mission to the North Central States. The folks had supported me while on my mission, so I was able to use \$1800 from my savings to purchase a used Roadmaster trailer. This would become our home for the next two years at the Riverside trailer park in Provo, Utah.

In 1960, Dolores & I visited mom & dad for Christmas. Dad loved Dolores and always wanted to make sure that she was being taken care of. Our car, the 1952 Chev that the folks had bought new and was now a wedding gift to us, was Dolores' transportation to and from her school as she taught her sixth graders. (I rode a bicycle to and from BYU.) Dad did not like the sound of the engine so he asked us to leave it home and borrow their 1960 Ford to get back to Provo. A couple of weeks later he returned the Chev to us with the engine rebuilt. Such was dad! Since it had been purchased in Las Vegas, it did not have a custom heater, defrosters, etc. It was quite challenging to drive in the winter time when the windows would fog over and ice up. I had installed a heater that I had found laying around the shop, but it would be a couple of years before I found a 1952 Chev in the junk yard and was able to extract the heating system from the junker and install an "original equipment" heating system in our car--*with window defrosters*.

For four years, 1960-63, dad would help us haul our trailer houses back and forth between Las Vegas and Provo at the beginning and end of each summer so that I could work for Dick Worthen, repairing refrigeration units. In 1962 we had traded our uninsulated trailer for a larger, older, but better insulated Travelite trailer. In the fall of 1962 dad appeared with tools and insulation material to board in around the base of our trailer. That helped make the trailer warmer and keep the pipes and drains underneath from freezing. I can just see mother talking to dad and telling him how water in our oil line that fed the furnace had frozen the previous winter. Carla was now born, our parent's first grandchild.

One time during the early 1960's dad shared an amusing experience with me. He had been working on his 4-wheel drive truck out in the back yard--trying to replace the transmission. Lying on the ground he had tried, numerous times, to put the top bolts in the bell housing (attached to the front of the transmission.) Finally, exasperated, he removed the floor boards from the truck in order to replace the bolts. To his surprise, there was a black widow spider's nest with the spider nearby. Closer inspection revealed a spider daubed with grease. While his greasy fingers were working to insert a bolt on top, the spider had been doing its best to dodge them!

About 1963-4, I was talking with dad about the refrigeration work that I had been doing for the past few summers. When he found out what I was getting paid he said, "You're not worth it!" I said

nothing in response. Compared to him and how hard he worked for his wages, *I was not worth it*. I simply was capitalizing on peoples' need in very hot weather for a cool place to live and sleep.

In the fall of 1964 my friends Darwin & Patsy Peterson had decided that they would go to school at the University of Nevada, Reno. While I was on my mission, dad had gotten to know Darwin quite well as Darwin had been called as a counselor in the Elder's Quorum presidency in the Las Vegas 2<sup>nd</sup> ward. Dad had started to attend priesthood meeting. In preparation to move his family to Reno they had purchased a used trailer. Darwin asked dad if it would be possible for him to tow the trailer to Reno. Dad said that he would do it. He told me that as he pulled the trailer north on 13<sup>th</sup> street to Bonanza and turned west heading up the hill, he had to put his truck in 1<sup>st</sup> gear. "What on earth is in that trailer?" Pulling over and stopping the truck, he unlocked the door of the trailer. Covering the entire floor of the trailer were quart jars of bottled fruits and vegetables! Patsy figured since Darwin would be starting as a freshman, they were going to be in for the long haul. He knew that Dolores & I were doing the same thing, so had asked, "Why not me?" Darwin would go on to get his Ph.D. in a field associated with anatomy. About 1969 while on our way from Berkeley to visit in Utah, our family stopped to visit them in Reno. I went fishing with Darwin & his son, Wayne, and caught my first fish. Darwin & Pat were always very appreciative of dad's hauling their trailer the 400 miles to Reno.

During the late 1970's while visiting Grandma Stirling, I was cleaning out the shed which had been used as a chicken coup back in the late 1940's. I discovered a box of dynamite and fuse that had been there for probably 15 years. (That would have tied to the time that dad was prospecting for uranium.) I picked the box up, set it out in the back yard on the sand, and called the fire department for advice. Upon inspection, I was informed that the dynamite was unstable. Coated on the sticks' outside were crystals—caused by the nitroglycerin leaching out. One of the firemen laid the sticks in a crossing pattern on the ground and lit the first one on fire. As the wind blew each stick in turn caught on fire. I learned how one safely disposes of dynamite.

### Some Special Experiences

Carlyle Stirling, a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin of my father, told me of an experience he had with dad. While watching an individual who was trying, unsuccessfully, to start a small gasoline engine that powered a conveyor belt, he said, "After a few minutes Del could not remain silent." He said, "Let me help." "I know more about that engine than monkeys know about coconuts!" In a few minutes Del had the engine running.

An hour or two after dad had died (March 1967), mom and I sat in a restaurant down towards No. Las Vegas. There was a sad, dull, empty feeling while we ate together. Marilyn and Carl had not been able to come from Reseda yet. We talked a little about what we were going to do. Eventually, the funeral came and mom asked me to dedicate the grave. A singular event occurred that has affected me ever since. The words were placed into my mind, "If you are as true to the truth that you know, as your father was to that which he knew, it will be well with you!"

On Mondays, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, I would often help mother with the wash. She believed in Tide soap. Though the overalls used in the shop were cleaned by a commercial firm, the khaki pants and shirts worn under the coveralls would become soiled and needed washing. Sometimes, while working under a truck, oil from the transmissions and "rear-ends" would drip onto the coveralls and seep through into under clothing. Washing with Tide would remove the oil, but not

the stain. I was instructed to always hang dad's underclothing between the sheets on the clothes line. (Often, the temperatures in Las Vegas would dry the clothes on the first line by the time one got to the last line.) Dad's under garments would sometimes still have green spots on them. After he died, mother once mentioned that he had visited her on two occasions. She remarked how surprised she was to see that his garments had no green spots—they were white! That brings good feelings. The scriptures tell us that those whose garments are made white through the blood of the Lamb are the Just. And are not those who are "true to the truth that they know" among the Just? I sincerely hope that my state in the hereafter can be as well as my father's.

After dad's death, I was talking with Bishop Worthen and observed that dad had not obtained a temple recommend to attend our wedding in 1960. He said, "That's no fault of mine! Your dad never asked me." "If he had, I would have given him one." Dad had chosen not to enter the temple on the basis of conscience, not worthiness.

A year and half after his death, our family came from Berkeley to get mom's cooler ready for summer time and to visit. A wheel bearing started whining in our rear axle. Mom was out watching as I pulled it and the one on the other side, also. (I figured if one went, the other was probably questionable.) Going to an automobile parts house three blocks west of mom's house, I located what I needed. But when trying to pay with a check written on a Berkeley bank, the clerk told me, "I can't take that! As far as I am concerned the whole lot of you guys can slide into the Bay, drowned, and the world will be better off! (I can't remember if the Third World Riot or the People's Park Riot was going on at that time.) Las Vegas may be a wide-open town, but the people there were politically conservative. (They did not appreciate seeing people lighting fires on Bancroft Ave and using 2x4s to break windows in banks.) Looking dumb-faced, I stood there wondering how I was going to pay for the wheel bearings. Then an older fellow came from the back room. He said, "You're Del Stirling's boy aren't you?" I said, "Yes." He turned to the other man and said, "Take his check." "If it bounces I'll get it from Del when I get on the other side." Then he said to me, "That's the one fault your father had. He was too honest." I realized that long after dad's death, my sister and I were still being blessed with the good name that our parents had given us.