

The Autobiography of
Aaron Willey Call

1891 – 1961

I was born the 7th day of July 1891, in Bountiful, Davis County, Utah, a little town nine miles north of Salt Lake City; just a small place known as East Bountiful.

The house in which I was born was a large brick, six room home very oddly constructed, but very comfortable. The kitchen was in the southeast corner of the house with a nice window in the east and a glass door in the southeast corner, which we enjoyed very much.



When I was five months old, five carbuncles came on my body, one under each arm, one in each groin and one on the left shin. They caused me to be very sick resulting in a lot of sleepless nights for father and mother. The family doctor, Sister Waddoups, who was the mid-wife for that small community and who also took care of mother when I was born, did all they could for me, but finally said there was nothing else that could be done. Through the great faith of my dear father and mother, they called in the Elders who were Brother Alma Kenniston and Brother Thomas Waddoups. They administered to me and through the faith of my folks and the help of the Lord I soon became well. Up until this time I had not grown very much, but through the good nursing of my mother and the help of our Father in Heaven, I started growing as a child should.

While living in this home there was a lovely baby brother born to brighten our lives. That made two of us children. Then father was called on a mission to the Southern States. He labored in Alabama, leaving mother to care for two children, our home and the farm. Of course, the farm was only six acres, but mother rented the six acres to a man named Tom Egbert, who was a very poor farmer. We did not realize very much out of the farm. This made matters very difficult for mother to send the amount of money each month that was necessary

for father to carry on his missionary work. Again the Lord came to our assistance and blessed us with means to keep father in the mission field for eighteen months. Father then took the chills and fever and was sent home.

The following spring I started school having a two and a half miles walk. I started in what was called the Old North School House. It was built of brick and was a very crude schoolhouse. It had one room, four windows on each side, no blinds or curtains, an old wood burner, which looked like a steel barrel and kept one of the eleven people most of the day carrying wood and feeding this stove. In one corner of the room was a large box, which served as the table. On this box was a water bucket, which had to be kept full. Each morning we took our turn taking the bucket and walking through the field to Brother Wilford Barlow's place, which was a quarter of a mile from the schoolhouse. After the bucket was filled and placed on its crude resting-place, we all lined up for water, all drinking out of the one and only tin cup. I don't think this cup was ever washed only when it was dipped into the bucket for another drink. We did not have pencils or paper to write on; we had slates and a slate pencil. No book of any kind, but still we enjoyed ourselves. This schoolhouse was built on the back of a deep hollow. On each side of the hollow the banks were covered with oak brush, and in the bottom was a tiny stream of muddy water. This made a very nice place to sleigh ride in those days. We had six months of snow, sometimes three and four feet deep covering the fences for two months at a time.

While attending this school I started going to Primary. Sister Dustin, better known as Grandma Dustin, was the President of the Primary. After I had been going to Primary about two years the teachers organized a Boys Chorus of which I was a member. We sang in Farmington, Centerville, Kaysville, and all of the three Bountiful Wards.

By this time I had had my eighth birthday. I was baptized on my birthday, July 7, 1899, in a water trough. There were also fish in the trough. Nicholas Benigar baptized me.

I did chores, milked three cows, and fed the pigs and chickens. I had always wanted a pony so father said if I would earn enough money to buy one, I could have one. I worked around the neighbors weeding their gardens and picking fruit until I made eighteen dollars. I

found a man that had just what I wanted. I bought a black pony, and then all my friends envied me. After I had the pony a few days I hooked him on a large limb. He did not know what to do so I took hold of his bit. When he started the noise scared him; he jumped on me and trampled me. I still have the scars on my body and always will have. That did not scare me however; I always owned a horse while I was on the farm.

That fall I started school in the fourth grade up town. There was one empty room in the Rampton Grocery Store so that was fixed up for a teacher. Was she ever mean! She pulled just about all my hair out, not because I was mean, but because there was a girl sitting in front of me that wanted me to tease her and the teacher did not like it.

I went to school there until I was made a deacon. I kept going to church and helping father on the farm until I was made a teacher, then a priest. During these few years I played baseball and basketball, sang in all the choirs, and took part in some of the ward plays.

Father was called on his second mission to England where he labored in Nottingham. Russell and I did all we could to help mother support father. After he returned home, the next member that was added to our family was a sister. Father had not been home but a year or two when he sold his property in Bountiful and bought a farm in Syracuse, Utah. While living in Syracuse the family grew in number. There were twelve in all, with two sets of twins, a boy and a girl in each. After being there a few years, father built a nice, new brick home. We enjoyed living in Syracuse very much.

It was here that I met Lydia McMurray, the sweetest young lady on earth. We met the summer of 1915 and kept company until December. We were married in the Salt Lake Temple on December 15, 1915, by George F. Richards. After being married we returned to Syracuse to the cutest little home in town. We had it all furnished, new furniture, and my darling wife had made quilts, rugs, dollies, and table linens for it. She had everything to make our little home the nicest and the cutest of any of the newly married couples. We were very happy.

In 1917, a lovely son came to add happiness to our lives. After Dean was born my companion did not have very good health. Her back and her nerves were all out of order.

In February of 1918, we moved to Burley, Idaho. I farmed with father until we could buy a farm. We bought a farm in Springdale with my brother and his wife, Russell and Lavern. The home was not a very good ONE, just two rooms for each couple. We only lived there a year and then sold the place and bought the eighty acres where the Unity Church stood.

In June of 1918, another son, Merrill, was born in the Pella Ward. Wayne and DeVerl were born while living in the Unity Ward. The six of us were living in two rooms. The boys contracted the whooping cough and were very sick.

In those days the winters were so hard, two and three feet of snow ranging from 20 to 30 degrees below zero. There were weeks at a time we could not leave the place except on a horse. When the weather would clear we would hook the horses to the old skid and go out on the desert and dig sagebrush, which was the only firewood to be found that time of year. Believe me, cutting sagebrush was the only way we could keep warm.

We lived on this place three and a half years, and then the Depression came. Wheat was 8 cents a bushel and hay was \$2 a ton. You could buy a good cow for \$18. We raised 2800 sacks of onions. We sold one ton and hauled the rest to the Snake River and dumped them in. Conditions like this caused us to loose the place. We then moved and helped father until I could find work.

The next spring we rented a place over by Grand Yeamans. I then started work at the brickyard for \$1.75 a day; of course it was 12 and sometimes 14 hours a day. That job only lasted five weeks. Then without money or a job, it made it rather difficult with six to feed and nothing for them to eat and there was rent to pay. I walked miles each day trying to find work. After months of this there was a new creamery that came to Burley. There was an ad in the newspaper for a man. The next day there were 30 men lined up in front of the creamery begging for any kind of job. After the boss talked to each one of the men, he gave the job to me. I must have had the saddest story. With the new job we were able to pay our debts and finally bought our first car, a Ford, and boy was it swell!

The next addition to our family was another son, Ray W., a big husky boy that we all enjoyed. By this time we were farming the Scott place for Mr. Burgess. After we moved to the Ray George place our first daughter came to brighten our lives. This made us very happy because it had begun to look like there were no girls for us. Dr. Patterson was our doctor and I think he was just as happy and proud to bring us Lois, as we were to have her. By this time I had been working at the Farmers Equity for a year or two.

Next we moved to Declo and I started working for Bob Pence in the mill. We rented a nice little home from Sam Richardson east of town. While we were living there our second daughter came to brighten the lives of all of us. We named her Maxine. We continued renting for a few more years and then became tired of renting. We bought three acres with a nice cement blockhouse on it. It had a new furnace and hardwood floors throughout. While living in this place, my dear wife had a lot of unpleasant experiences. Never a day went by that she didn't feed one to six bums going through the country.

Our neighbors had as many sons as we did and they spent their time at our home. Each boy had a pony and they would do the things all boys like to do. One day, DeVerl fell from his pony and broke his leg. It was a very bad break taking four of us hours to set it. Afterward the doctor raised the foot of the bed two feet, made a harness across the bed, put a pulley from the center of the rope through another pulley and then tied one end to DeVerl's leg and put a bucket of dirt on the other end. This patient little boy lay there seven weeks. You can imagine how he suffered, but with the help of his dear mother and with the faith he himself had he came out of it just fine. While all this was going on I was working again at the Farmers Equity in Burley, driving back and forth night and morning so I was not much help to my good wife in raising our family while in Declo.

Another addition came to our family. We named him Jay; a large ten pounder, with black hair and a grip like Chief Kit Fox.

After a few months we bought eighty acres one and a half miles south of Burley and moved into the happiest home we ever had. While on this place Dean was called to go to the North Carolina Mission. While he was there my health broke. My ulcers ruptured and I spent

most of the two years Dean was preaching the Gospel in the hospital. Once more my beloved wife took over and cared for the family, the farm and all that goes with a setup of this kind. Dean had just been in the mission field a few months when he was sent to Salt Lake to be operated on for appendicitis. The Lord blessed him and he was soon back preaching the Gospel and finished a wonderful mission.

Our eight children all finished high school and were married in the Temple, all marrying the best of companions.

After we sold the eighty acres on Overland, we bought the forty acres on Burton Avenue. We lived there three years. While there mother was put in the Relief Society Presidency. Wayne and Ray both served two and a half years in the service of their country, both having many very close experiences, but through the faith and prayers of all of us here at home the Lord saved their lives.

After selling the forty acres on Burton we moved to Twin Falls and bought the home on Blue Lakes Boulevard. Again my darling wife was put in the Relief Society Presidency. After living here for four years we moved to Jerome where we bought a lovely home. While living there my most capable wife was made President of the Relief Society. She made a very wonderful President. While living there we made a lot of wonderful friends, the kind of friends one never forgets. We lived in Jerome three years and then moved back to Twin Falls in the same home we left. We had only been back in Twin Falls six months when my wife was put back in the Relief Society Presidency for the fourth time, pretty good don't you think?

On July 14, 1955, our home burned. This was quite an experience and one I hope we never have to go through again. We had our home rebuilt and made larger. It is very comfortable and we are enjoying it very much.

I have taken great pride in being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and appreciate the opportunities I have had to serve. I especially enjoyed working with young men in the scouting program. Many hours spent in work and fun has provided me with many lasting memories and friends. I was also able to serve as President of the Young Men's

Mutual, Ward and Stake Sunday School Superintendent, Seven Presidents of the Seventies, and mother and I were called on a Stake Mission. Due to my poor health we were only able to serve as missionaries a short time. I am now serving as Secretary of the High Priests Group.

-- Father passed away November 9, 1961, at Twin Falls, Idaho at the age of seventy.

Although we as a family knew father was a giant of a man, not in stature, but in character, it was a tremendous pleasure and assurance to have so many people show their concern and pay tribute to dad. His example and friendship will always be treasured by many.

As I write this conclusion to dad's own account, I pray that all of us who read this will make the necessary adjustments and efforts to reunite with dad as a climax to the many years he gave to us.

A loving daughter,

Lois

This Autobiography of Aaron Willey Call is published as he wrote it and as it has been preserved through family members.

The closing tribute was written by Lois Call Knapp, daughter of Aaron Willey Call.

Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of Karla Knapp Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.