

*A life sketch of*

# Anna Eliza Lemmon Knapp

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1860 – 1931

Anna Eliza Lemmon was born, November 18, 1860. She was the first girl born in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah. Eliza's parents, Willis Lemmon and Anna Eliza Homer, were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Just before Eliza was born, her father was called to go to Iowa to help prepare pioneer immigrants to cross the plains. While he was gone, there was an Indian uprising in and around Smithfield. Two town boys were shot and one died. This event caused a lot of worry and concern for Eliza's mother, as she was alone with a new baby. It was a great relief to this family when their father returned.



As Eliza grew, she longed for the day she could become a member of the church. Eliza was almost eleven years old when she was baptized, on May 11, 1871. Eliza went to school as often as she could. Being the oldest in her large family, she shared in much of the responsibility and work involved. Many times the children would huddle in the corners of the school or in their homes as the Indians came to the doors demanding or begging for food.

Eliza was left-handed. One day her schoolteacher became very cross with her because of it. One day he whipped her severely because she did not do her lesson with her right hand. When Eliza got home and her father learned what had happened he waited near the gate until the teacher came by on his way home. He proceeded to thrash the teacher, as he deserved.

One evening when her parents went to a social gathering, Eliza was left in charge of the smaller children. There were no electric lights or even oil lamps at this time. Her parents cautioned her to be very careful of the candle and to take good care of the baby. Eliza sat by the baby until she became so tired she fell asleep. When her parents got home they found her still clasping the candlestick to keep it safe.

Each fall, after Eliza was old enough, she would go to Mill Creek to the home of her grand parents. There she would gather and dry fruit for the family. This was an annual trip for her until her family's fruit trees began to produce.

Eliza loved to sing and became well known for her beautiful soprano voice. She was often asked to sing solos and participate in singing groups that performed in the valley.

Eliza attended school and later college in Logan. She acquired enough education to become a teacher, which she enjoyed doing very much. It was while attending college in Logan that Eliza met Justin Abraham Knapp. Many hours of their courtship were spent around the unfinished walls of the Logan Temple where Justin was working as a stone mason. Eliza married Justin on October 9, 1879 in the old Endowment House at Salt Lake City, Utah. For their wedding present, Eliza's father gave them a beautiful horse.

Justin built a brick home for his bride and they began their life together at Richmond, Utah. Four children were born while living in Utah:

Anna Rozina	July 26, 1880
Mabel	December 23, 1882
Jennie	October 12, 1884
Justin Willis	October 5, 1886

In 1888, Justin bought 160 acres of farmland at Hibbard, Idaho, 21/2 miles west of Rexburg. Eliza and her children traveled by train from Richmond to Market Lake, (now Roberts). Justin had moved the furniture and livestock earlier and met them at the train station with a wagon. The family then traveled across the sagebrush-covered valley to their new home. They settled on the farm, which was on the Teton River, in a small community called Island Ward. The area was later given the name of Hibbard in honor of George Hibbard, Eliza's brother in law and the family's first bishop.

Soon after they arrived, Eliza and Justin welcomed a little girl and their fifth child. Seven more children would join this family as the years on the farm unfolded. Their Idaho born children were:

Lydia Malinda	November 16, 1888
Clara Leone	December 26, 1889
Elsie May	February 17, 1893
Warren	April 14, 1895
Esther Jane	June 9, 1897
Alice Eveline	December 24, 1899
Edwin Raymond	August 9, 1903
Adrian Leroy	August 9, 1903

Eliza's home on the farm consisted of two log rooms. One had a small lean-to shanty where the stove was kept in the summer. The other room was used as a storeroom where Justin kept the stones and markers he was working on. This room also held barrels of salted meat and a large flour bin, which held one thousand pounds of flour. Between these two rooms was space enough for two bedrooms. Conditions were very crowded and every inch of space was put to use.

Eliza knew the hardships of building a new home in a barren land. She played a major role in making the Knapp's portion of the desert blossom as a rose. This mother was the first one up and the last one to bed. Her long days were busy and filled with a variety of chores and responsibilities. Eliza did not have many of the material comforts of life. Her cooking was done on a wood stove. The water was heated in a large boiler for washing and bathing. Baths were taken in a #3 round tub where two or three children could bath at the same time. The family washing was done on a washboard, one piece at a time. Eliza made her own soap.

Crowded living quarters placed three children in the same bed. Although crowded, they were cozy and warm. Their homemade bedsteads were covered with straw ticks. Their bedding was homemade quilts, all hand crafted by Eliza. Eliza and Justin had a feather bed made from the feathers of ducks, and geese, which he hunted. It was always a treat for the children to catch a nap on this bed.

Eliza liked to crochet and knit and did all the family sewing. She was a beautiful seamstress and was very fussy. She never bought a pattern. Eliza had the unique talent of seeing something and transferring a picture of that item to material, just like she wanted it. Creating her own patterns and fitting them to perfection was a challenge Eliza enjoyed.

Eliza always had a garden. Fall days were busy canning and drying the garden produce and fruit harvested from the family orchards. Eliza raised chickens. She set hens and hatched chicks. She would take big baskets of eggs to town with her and trade for groceries and other commodities.

Eliza's house was always clean and 'she was as neat as a pin'. She made braided rugs and would put straw under them for padding. The children used to love to play on the rugs, because they were soft and more comfortable than the hard wood floors.

Eliza was a wonderful cook. Homemade bread was a specialty and was in constant demand when covered with her homemade butter. Often tithing was paid in products raised or grown on their farm. Special treats she made, to the delight of her children, were homemade ice cream, taffy and molasses candy. Eliza helped milk the cows by hand as well as other chores around the farm. Water was drawn from the well using two buckets, which hung off a pulley. Bucket after bucket of fresh, cool water was hauled to the house for drinking, cooking, washing and cleaning, and many more were taken to the animals, and garden.

Justin was a horse breeder and trained many horse teams for hire. Eliza was well experienced in handling horses. She did not like 'dead-heads'. She liked a horse with spirit. She loved to drive her horse and buggy to town and on her many errands and did it in fine style.

Eliza had a real dislike for playing cards and would not allow them in her home. She thought they were a waste of time. Music was a favorite past time of her family. Justin could play the violin, accordion, mouth organ and harp. The children learned to play and develop their musical talents. Many evenings were spent sharing their talents. Music and laughter from the Knapp home could be heard for some distance, entertaining neighbors for miles around.

Eliza was 5'8" and weighed 150 pounds. She had beautiful eyes and long dark brown hair, which she braided and bobbed in the back. It was always neat, never a hair out of place. Justin often teased her about 'picking a Lemmon in the garden of love, where so many other flowers grew'. Her personality was very dignified and sincere. She must have longed for pretty things for later when all the children were married she would buy little trinkets that a child would delight in.

Her home in Idaho was so far away from her family home in Smithfield that many days would pass before she would see her parents or other family members. Travel by team and wagon was so slow that it was often impossible to visit. At one time, it had been eight years since she had been home for a visit. Justin prepared a covered wagon and gave her a good team of horses. With her sister Julia by her side, they set off to visit their parents. They were gone two weeks, most of the time spent traveling, but she enjoyed the visit and felt the long trip well worth it.

On the farm Eliza carried her share of life's load, cheerfully and with a song on her lips. Other people's trials were made her burdens as she had a natural desire to help and care for others. Eliza experienced many of life's hardest trials. Her oldest daughter, Anna Rozina, died a few weeks after her first child was born. Her own baby Lydia died a few months after she reached her new home in the Snake River Valley, Typhoid Fever took her little seven year old girl, Clara Leone. Later this same dreaded disease visited their home again and took their son, Warren. At the same time her daughter, Elsie, lay close to death for weeks followed by Eveline and Esther. Very few people would come to give assistance because they were afraid of catching the disease. That left the load of care for the sick in her family to Eliza. The constant demand left her close to exhaustion.

In August 1903, twin baby boys were born. Adrian Leroy died at birth and Edmond Raymond lived until he was two years old. He was killed when a sheep butted him on the farm. Not long after her surviving children were married, Justin passed away and Eliza found herself alone.

Eliza had a strong testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through her many trials in this life, she walked by faith and prayer. Her son, Justin Willis, and her husband filled missions with her total support. She lifted her heart and eyes to the Lord and her burdens were made bearable.

At one time, Justin needed to buy a water right to the canal for their farm. They did not have enough cash for the payment. He asked Eliza if they could sell the horse her father had given them for their wedding present in order to get the money needed. He promised her he would look around for a nice, gentle horse she could drive on a buggy. Time passed and Justin kept his promise. He found just the right horse, a little brown mare which Eliza named 'Baby Birdie'. She would curry and brush this horse and keep her buggy neat and shiny. Everyone knew Sister Knapp when she drove into the town of Rexburg in her horse drawn buggy.

Eliza served many years as President of the Relief Society. She would travel from place to place offering her services to the sick or down hearted. She spent hours, making quilts and sewing for those in need. During World War I, Eliza knitted socks for the soldiers and did many hours of volunteer work for the Red Cross.

After suffering three strokes, Eliza left this life on December 13, 1931. She was 71 years old. Eliza was buried next to her loving husband, Justin, in the Rexburg City Cemetery.

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*The author of this Life Sketch of Anna Eliza Lemmon Knapp is unknown. The original account has been revised and additions made to make it more complete from stories, documents and other records collected and kept in the Family History Library of K. Oswald.*

*Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of K. Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.*