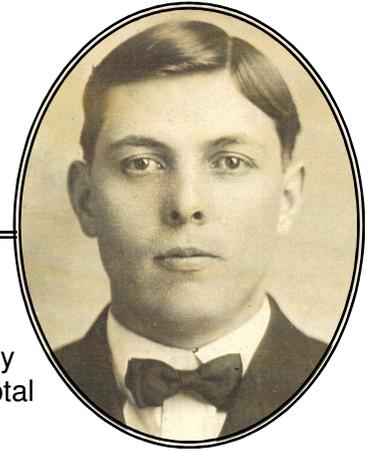


Justin Willis Knapp



I was born October 5, 1886 at Richmond, Cache, Utah. My parents, Justin Abraham Knapp and Anna Eliza Lemmon had a total of twelve children:

Anna Rozina
Mabel
Jennie
Justin Willis
Lydia Malinda
Clara Leone

Elsie May
Warren
Esther Jane
Alice Eveline
Edmond Raymond (twin)
Adrian Leroy (twin)

I was one and a half years old when my family left Utah and moved to Rexburg, Idaho. My parents 'took up' a farm two and a half miles north west of Rexburg in a small community, which was later named Hibbard. The ward we became part of was called Island Ward, but it was later changed to Hibbard Ward in honor of my Uncle and Bishop, George Hibbard.

Our farm was a typical piece of the untamed west, covered by woody brush. There were no fences, irrigation systems or improvements of any kind. As I grew older, I helped pull, pile and burn the sagebrush that grew. My father, with the help of my sisters and myself, cleared and cultivated more ground each year until we had some good pasture land, as well as land for planting crops. There were many wild flowers, which we enjoyed gathering for mother. There were also many prickly pears, which kept us on our guard since most of the time we ran barefoot.

The coyotes were plentiful, as were the badgers and porcupines. I used to watch for deer and antelope, as well as wild chickens and ducks that would nest along the river that ran next to our place. We did a lot of hunting and fishing, which provided us with meat.

As a boy I trapped many rabbits in the wintertime. I believe the winters were harder then. The fences would be completely covered with snow. My father made me some skis, which I enjoyed and would ride them to school, quite often.

Since I was the only boy in the family for a long time, much of the farm work and care of the animals was left to me. At an early age, I learned to ride and drive horses. There were few fences and plenty of open range, which everyone took advantage of. Cattle and horses would graze on the open rangeland and each day they would have to be rounded up and herded back to the corrals for night. Some times, I would ride four or five miles to find our horses and cows. My father traded for a pony, which he gave to me. I named him Pungo. He could go as fast and as far as I could ride and I often wondered how he could do it. He was a great help to us.

We spent a lot of time making ditches and dikes for irrigation. Fish were plentiful and many times we would get a pan of fish just behind our head gate. We had few neighbors and so we children did not have many playmates. When there was time for play, a few of the neighbor boys would join me for a swim or other activities.

I was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on June 5, 1895. Later, I was ordained a deacon. With this calling came a number of responsibilities, which I helped with. We used the same building for church and for school. The Deacons were the janitors and each week, two or three of us were assigned to keep the place comfortable and pleasant. I helped chop wood for the stove and sweep the floors. I was first councilor in the Deacons Quorum. When I was ordained a Priest we had meetings on a regular basis. In the summer, after our meetings, we would play games such as Run Sheep Run and Hide N Seek. Playing games seemed to encourage other boys to join us. As a group we would chop wood for the widows and visit the ward members to gather fast offerings.

One night, when we were playing by a fire, an older boy tried to push me into it. I threw him down and in the process his knee was dislocated. It was very painful for him. We helped him on to his horse so he could go home. The next time we saw him, he was on crutches. I felt sorry about the situation. Although he said he would never wrestle again, it wasn't long before he was playing and trying to wrestle us as usual. I always enjoyed wrestling and boxing. I played baseball throughout the Rexburg area and enjoyed it very much. To me it was a wonderful sport and introduced me to many great fellows that became my friends.

When I was nine, our family was blessed with a baby boy. I had waited for a brother a long time and he was all I had hoped for. I ran half a mile to get some scales so I could weigh him. I took extra pride in this little brother and we grew to be great friends.

When I was thirteen, father went in to the sawmill business with his brother, Morgan Knapp. A young man who wheeled the sawdust away from the saws was laid off and I took his place. I did this work for the first year. The next year, I soaked logs, off-bore (hauled slabs away from the saw), tended ratchets on the carriage (adjusted the saw to cut various lumber sizes), and hauled lumber to the valley. This was a good experience for me and I learned much about hard work and responsibility. There were some disadvantages too. I formed some habits, which were in conflict with my religious beliefs and proved to be a big draw back to me. My Bishop had promised that someday I would go on a mission and I later learned that giving up these foolish habits was not easy, but necessary, if I wanted to see this promise fulfilled. After two years, father gave up the sawmill business and went back to the farm.

Being large for my age, my older sisters wanted me to take them to dances and our local choir practices. This I was glad to do and soon enjoyed singing and dancing. I was very close to my sisters and they were fine companions for me. I was taught to respect them as well as all young women, for which I am thankful.

As I got older, I decided I would go to Ricks Academy with some of my companions. I planned to work until harvest was over and then move to Rexburg and begin school. I became sick and learned that I had smallpox. My family was quarantined until it was too late to start school. My plans were changed and I decided I

would continue working and plan to go the next year. When fall came, I became ill. I was diagnosed with diphtheria and we were quarantined again. This was a frustrating time for me mentally as well as physically, but I was grateful when I was healthy again and could work.

The next summer, six of us took a trip to Wyoming. I had never traveled before and so this was a big adventure for me. We saw some interesting country and towns and had an enjoyable time. We caught fish in the North Fork of the Snake River we could really brag about.

When we returned home I cut grain with a binder and then I started working in the beets. Again I was planning for school. I had worked in the beets one week when I became sick. The doctor was called and announced my illness as a serious case of typhoid fever. I remained in bed for thirteen weeks. Four other members of my family also came down with the disease. My brother, who was almost ten years old, died. This was a devastating event for us. I was so ill I could not turn over and I wondered why the Lord did not take me too. I got so thin my mother could carry me. When I finally improved enough to get out of bed, I had to learn to walk again. It took a long time to gain my strength back. I had always been big for my age and stronger than many boys who were older than me. I was eighteen years old and six feet tall, weak and needing help to walk. This was a frustrating time for me.

During the following summer I regained my strength and found that the Lord had been kind to me. That fall, I did start school. A neighbor and I stayed in Rexburg and we had our first experience as bachelors. It was good to go home on the weekends and get some of mother's cooking and help with my wash. I soon loved being at Ricks Academy. It seemed so good to be with such fine young people. I could feel the spirit there and everyone was so friendly. We had school programs and dances where I could mingle with others and meet new friends. I had music classes and participated in the choir. I thoroughly enjoyed the school year.

When I turned nineteen I weighed 165. I had always enjoyed wrestling and was often able to out do my associates. I could lie down and let my opponents get their holds on me and then throw them. I threw one man who had been my wrestling idol as a boy. I wrestled a man from West Virginia and afterwards he challenged the crowd at a baseball game I was playing in, to oppose me, but none would.

My next spring and summer were spent on the farm. Father by this time was in the horse raising business and spent most of his time doing that and so I did the farming. In the fall, I hauled beets and then I hauled logs at the sawmill until it closed because of the deep snow.

October 5th, 1907, I received a letter from Salt Lake City. I read it many times before I took it to my parents. They were pleased and asked me what I thought about accepting this call to serve a mission. I hardly knew what to think as I had been careless and had used tobacco, tea and coffee. I knew I would have to change my ways and lay aside these bad habits. I knew this was a great honor and wanted to accept the call. I took time for some serious thought and made the resolve that I would prepare myself. I decided I would go to school through the winter and be ready for a mission in the spring. The folks said they would do all they could to help me. I wrote the church leaders that I would accept the mission call after completing the mission course at Rick's.

I worked hard and stayed busy until it was time for school. The night before school was to start, I was alone in my room. I took a sack of tobacco from my pocket and put it into the stove. Then I knelt at my bedside and asked my Heavenly Father to help me leave off this habit. I also asked for help to leave tea and coffee alone that I might be able to improve myself and keep the rules. I knew that the students were expected to keep the Word of Wisdom. I had attended Ricks for two years and felt bad that I had not kept that commitment. I began school, determined to keep my promise to the Lord. I felt better and after a time I no longer craved these things as the desire for them was taken away. I was blessed and enjoyed the Lord's spirit.

I received my formal call to serve in the Central States Mission and upon finishing my year of schooling returned home to Hibbard. It was spring, so I helped get the crops planted on the farm. On June 2, 1908, I left my home, father, mother, sisters, friends and relatives and the old town of Rexburg. I had only been back to Utah once since my parents had moved to Idaho. At that time, father took me with him to Logan and Richmond where we spent the winter holidays with my relatives who lived there. This time I was going alone and I felt both excitement and some reservation as I tried to prepare myself for the new experiences that awaited me.

First, I went to Richmond to the home of my father's sister, Aunt Malinda Funk. She went with me to the Logan Temple where I received my endowments. It was June 3, 1908. I visited a short time in Smithfield with my mother's parents, Willis and Anna Eliza Homer Lemmon. Grandfather Lemmon then went with me to the train station and bid me goodbye. I traveled on to Salt Lake City. I arrived there at noon and went to the Church President's Office where I received my instructions and travel tickets to Independence Missouri, which was the headquarters for the Central States Mission. After leaving the office I decided to see the city. Before long I was turned around and lost. After walking all afternoon, I took a streetcar to the Williams Hotel where my Uncle Willis Knapp met me. I was tired and homesick. He took me home for supper and after visiting with him for some time, I felt much better. The next morning, I went back to the office and met three other missionaries who were going out with me.

We went to the Temple that afternoon where we were set apart for our mission. It was June 9, 1908. I was set apart by President Seymour B. Young. I went to see Will Widdison, who was the husband to my sister Anna. Anna had died several years before and so it was good to visit with him. He invited me to stay for supper, which I did. Then I returned to my hotel room and retired early.

The next day, I was part of a group of Elders who left on the 3 p.m. train bound for Missouri. Uncle Will worked for a fruit company and he brought me a package of fruit to take on the trip. It was a real treat and I appreciated his thinking of me.

When I awoke the next morning, we were going through the Rocky Mountains. It was some of the most wonderful and beautiful scenery I could imagine. We rode in an open observation car where we could see the tops of the mountains; some we learned were 2,000 feet high. On one side we were right next to the mountains and on the other side there was a drop off of several thousand feet. At the bottom you could see a large stream of water. It was a grand view. The next day we were going through farm lands again. Large fields of corn and grain that were already in head, turned my thoughts to

home. We saw the effects of heavy storms that had washed corn out by the roots. Through this area the tracks were unsafe and we had to travel slowly.

On June 13, 1908, nine of us Elders arrived in Kansas City. Seven were going to the Southern States, two of us were going to the Central States and I remember one was married. We parted feeling rather blue and uncertain. My companion and I took a streetcar to 312 S. Pleasant Street, Independence Missouri. We arrived at 10:30 p.m. and rang the doorbell. Samuel O. Bennion met us at the door. He told us that they had just brought in the body of an Elder who had died, as well as some other Elders who would accompany him home. Because of the extra boarders the mission home was crowded and so we were sent to a hotel.

We stayed at the hotel that night and the next morning we returned to the mission home. I was surprised when they said that there was mail for me. I received a letter from my mother and a card from Mabel, a girl I had met at school. We had school choir together and I had enjoyed her company at some of the school dances. For two years, her letters and mother's were always there. They were a great support to me while I served on my mission.

The next morning we met and were assigned our areas to work. We left on a train headed for Seneca, Kansas. We traveled for sometime and as we approached the lowlands of the city, we found that they were covered with floodwater. People had had to move out of their homes as the water was up to the windows in some places. Some homes had been turned around on their foundations. Thousands of people were homeless. Some were living on the hillsides in tents. The railroad tracks were covered with water, but there was only one way to go, so the train went through the water for about three fourths of a mile and then on we went to Seneca.

We met some other Elders there and split into companies. I had a lot to learn, but the experienced Elders helped me a lot. We sang on the street corners and were invited to sing at various functions. That helped us get into places we could not have entered any other way.

My first spring in Kansas the rainfall was very heavy. Floods were reported everywhere. The Missouri River ran over its banks, and drove many people from their homes, sending them and their livestock to higher ground. Some fields of corn were washed out five times.

The two years passed quickly and I felt they had been well spent. While there, I had traveled twice from the north of Kansas to the south. I had been in almost every county in the eastern part of the state and had visited most of her cities. I had learned more about the state of Kansas than I knew about my own state of Idaho. I had preached the Gospel on four Indian Reservations. I had sold more Bible Commentaries in one week than any other Elder had sold in that time during the two years I was there. We had met many people and introduced them to the Gospel. My testimony had grown and my understanding of its principles greatly expanded. I had learned much about God' plan and I became determined to follow it to the best of my ability.

After I was released I spent a very interesting day at Kansas City. I went to a park, rode a scenic railway, saw a man ride an ostrich, went to a museum, and took in several other interesting sights.

The next day, I started for the west. Our train stopped at Denver and then went on to Salt Lake City. I arrived just in time for June Conference. It was a treat to attend, and I enjoyed it very much. After conference I set my sights on home. I found my folks were well and they received me with a warm welcome. I went to Sunday School in the Hibbard Ward and gave a report of my mission. It felt good to be home and I was proud to have represented my family and friends as a missionary.

Father was still raising horses, as well as looking after the farm. He asked me to take over the work of the farm, which I did. We had some fine horses at the time. My horse had done very well while I was gone and I now had nine horses of my own. Three were broken and had been used on the farm while I was away. I had acquired a buggy before my mission and was eager to use it again.

I packed a few things and went to Marysville to see Mabel, the girl who had been writing to me while on my mission. Through our correspondence we had learned much about each other's character and ideals. We both loved the Gospel and wrote of its' blessings in our lives. Our friendship had grown to love. After a brief courtship, Mabel Fidelia Hale and I were married, August 17, 1910, in the Salt Lake Temple. After we were married we went to Yellowstone Park for a few days, taking my sister Jennie, her husband and their two little boys with us. We had a good trip, driving a team on a whit-top, camping out, fishing and hunting. A bear decided to join our party and entered our camp. He tipped our grub box out of the buggy and caused quite a commotion. Another night the horses chased him out of camp. It added a little more excitement to our vacation.

I went to work building a house on the northwest corner of the farm. I was asked to be a teacher in the Sunday School, Superintendent of the Religion Class, and Assistant in the M.I.A. It was harvest time, which along with my new assignments kept me busy.

My mother was quite ill with typhoid fever from the first of September until the last of November. Mabel stayed with her and helped care for her. When she was better, we moved into our new little home, about a quarter of a mile from father's house. This was an exciting and busy time in my life. I held the church positions I have named for about one year. I was then released and called as first councilor in the Sunday School, as well as first councilor in the Elders Quorum. After about a year I was released from the Elders Quorum and ordained a Seventy. I became a member of the 148th Quorum of Seventy. A year later I was made a member of the Quorum Council. This was a great work and we had many good times. I filled a short stake Mission during this time also.

On May 11, 1911, we had our first child, Claudia Mabel. I was now a father and felt a deep sense of responsibility.

I filed on a dry farm out at Hamer and we moved there for the summer. We were moving eighteen miles from our ward and the leadership asked if I needed to be released from my church duties. I told them we would continue to serve as we had been called.

Each Sunday, Mabel, our baby, and I would drive the buggy eighteen miles to Sunday School. It required quite an effort. We would leave between five or six o'clock

in the morning, arrive at our home in Hibbard where we could change clothes. Then we would go on one and one half miles to Sunday School. When our church meetings were over, we would go to our home, change clothes and travel eighteen miles to our place in Hamer. We followed this routine with little variation for a little over a year. During that time, the Sunday School was reorganized several times and I became 1st Counselor and then I was sustained as the Superintendent. This position along with my Seventies assignments kept me busy.

After our best efforts were spent trying to improve the ground and increase the yield from eleven bushels of grain to the acre, we decided Hamer was not for us and returned to Hibbard.

We had many good times and experiences during the next few years. We also had times that were difficult and challenging. Mabel and I were blessed with another daughter we named Justie. This little girl only lived a short time and died the same day she was born, December 20, 1912. We buried her in a quiet little spot that over looked the farm. Almost a year later, on November 23, 1913, we welcomed a son into our home. We named him Warren Ellis.

Work on the farm and my assignments in the church kept me busy, but I enjoyed working and was committed to serving in the church. Mabel kept busy with our family and household duties.

I learned many lessons about driving horses through my years of work on the farm. One interesting and challenge experience I had about this time was driving a 24-hitch team of horses on a thrashing machine. With the help of five other men we were hired to harvest grain on some Rexburg Bench dry farms. This hitch-team was one of its kind in the area and attracted quite a bit of attention. My team of Bird & Maude was the lead team and then four horses abreast were hitched behind them, making the total of 26. It was quite an endeavor to handle the reigns for that many horses, but we managed very well. This I did for several harvest seasons.

December 17, 1915, another daughter was born and we named her Marie Elizabeth. She passed away February 3, 1916. We buried her in the Rexburg City Cemetery.

November 21, 1918, my father died. He had been away on a short-term mission to California. When he returned he had a stroke and became ill with the flu, of which he never recovered.

I continued looking after the farm, and after it was probated, I was appointed the administrator. The place was legally turned over to my mother and then she deeded part of the farm to me. I re-morgaged my portion and took the debt over, which left mother's place clear and free from debt. I purchased some expensive Holstein heifers from Wisconsin and had plans to develop a dairy herd. I felt there was a lot of promise in this venture and looked forward to a bright future.

It wasn't long before we were facing hard times. These were depression years and the value of money decreased to the point that it was difficult to make our payments. I had borrowed money for the cows and was now unable to pay the bank. I had to sell the herd for about one third of what I had originally paid. I did the best I could to take

care of my obligations, but it became harder and harder to make a living off the farm. All my life I have been troubled with hay fever and it was becoming more and more difficult to work in the fields.

Our family had grown with the birth of Thelma, March 12, 1919, Anna born March 21, 1921, and Justin Alma born April 12, 1923. With our financial problems, my increased health problems, and our growing family, we decided to leave the farm and see if we could do better elsewhere.

We bought a Ford and started for Soda Springs where we heard they were hiring help to work on the dam being built. When we arrived the roads were muddy and we were loaded too heavy to go on so we stayed at a hotel in Lava. The next day, we went to Smithfield, Utah, where I found work at the Sugar Factory at Amalga. I worked there until spring. I then went to Alexander and worked for the Phoenix Utility Company who was building the dam. They had a large camp and employed about eight hundred men. I worked there three months. I then returned to Smithfield and worked in a pea-canning factory, the largest in the world.

My hay fever flared again and we decided we would return to Rexburg and on to Island Park. As soon as I was in the timber I began to feel better. I arranged to work for the Targhee Tie Company. I made a quick trip back to Rexburg to get my team of horses. I moved my family to Ashton and I went on to Island Park where I began hauling ties. I worked there several months, and in my spare time, built a house so my family could join me. At Christmas time, I was ready to move my family to camp and settle them into our new home. I drove a sheep camp mounted on sleigh runners with my family inside. We kept a fire in it for it was January, and it was cold. The snow was deep and made our travel slow. I cut wood along the way to keep the family warm, and melt snow to water our four horses and cow. The second day we reached the Railroad Ranch and I phoned for another team to come and help us the rest of the way. We reached camp and our new home late that evening. The neighbors had kept a fire in our house and had a nice warm supper for us.

Our children who were school age and so they went to school in the camp. We soon became used to the routine and demands of our new life. The snow was eight feet deep on Black Mountain Road where we hauled timber. It was very cold, but the wind did not blow, so we weathered our work pretty well. Cutting the timber and then loading it seemed to keep us warm enough.

My family was soon acquainted with our new neighbors and we enjoyed many socials and dances together. Many evenings we spent in the schoolhouse singing. That spring, some officers from the Yellowstone Stake came and organized a Sunday School. I was sustained as first Councilor in the new Island Park Sunday School. Within a year we were reorganized and I was asked to be the Superintendent. Quite often, I sang in male quartets, mixed quartets and duets. It was something I enjoyed doing.

The second winter our oldest daughter went to Ashton to school. It was lonely for us and for her, and we did not like to have her away from us. We had another little girl old enough to start school so we had three in the camp grade school.

That winter, there were so many workers hauling timber, we almost caught up with the choppers. Some of us then moved to Guild, ten or twelve miles northeast of the

camp, near the head of the North Fork of the Snake River. We worked for the Montana Idaho Company. I did well there, but when it was time for school to start again, I felt that we should be where the children could attend better schools. I did not like the idea of our family separated and so we made the decision to leave Island Park. We gathered our belongings, said goodbye to our friends and moved to Goshen, a small community five miles east of Firth. We rented a house close to the grade school so the smaller children could walk and learned that the school bus for the older children went right by our place.

I began a search for work and was hired to help build a potato cellar. After the cellar was complete I hired on to dig and sort the potatoes to be stored in the cellar.

In the spring, I helped plant crops for Wilford Christensen. That summer our oldest boy, Warren, and I went back to Island Park. We each drove a team for Targhee Tie Company, again. When fall came we returned to haul beets. The next winter, I went back to Island Park and hauled cedar wood and posts. When it was time for harvest I went to work again for Christensen's on their farm. We became well acquainted with the people of Goshen and enjoyed many parties, dances and church gatherings.

I was asked to be a Ward Teacher, President of the Choir, and a Sunday School Teacher. Later I was asked to be Ward Clerk. At first I laughed, I was so surprised and I couldn't think of myself as a Ward Clerk. After they talked to me for a while I consented to try. I was released from the callings of Sunday School Teacher and Ward Teacher, but remained President of the Choir.

With Claudia's graduation from high school, a chain of events began for us that changed our lives quite a bit. School graduations, marriages, grandchildren became part of our lives. Mabel and I had to adjust to the changes in our lives. With children leaving the nest, and in laws and grand children joining our family, it was a surprise to learn that we would be adding to our own family. November 14, 1929, we welcomed a baby boy into our home. We named him Bernard Elden.

On April 16, 1933, at our Ward Conference, I was released as Ward Clerk and sustained as Second Councilor to Bishop Ralph Larsen. I had been Secretary of the 106th Quorum of the Seventies for about a year. Now, I was ordained a high priest and looked forward to my new responsibilities. I was placed in charge of the Sacrament, the Goshen and Presto Primaries, the Genealogy Society, the Teachers Quorum and Chairman of the Music Department. These years were good to us and I enjoyed the challenge of serving and getting to know my neighbors better; and we had some good ones.

Over the next couple of years, we determined it would be better for our family if we moved to Rexburg. It was hard to leave Goshen. On January 28th, 1936, I moved the family to Rexburg where Marjorie was in college. We became members of the Rexburg 4th Ward. I was asked to be a Ward Teacher, and was soon singing in a couple of male quartets at Priesthood Meetings and Ward Socials. Mabel and I became members of the Genealogy Society.

I received an invitation to attend a Primary Day being held for the Goshen Ward Reunion. My family was unable to go, but I made the return trip. It was a special program and I was presented with a pen and pencil gift set, which I prize very much.

The spring of 1936 came and I began working for South's Sawmill. I ran the engine and served as handy man until winter came. I moved my family to the sawmill so we could spend the summer together. Alma fired the engine and I ran the saw.

In the early morning hours of October 13, 1937, I woke to find the sawmill on fire. By the time I woke the crew, the fire was too big to contain. All our efforts were spent trying to keep it from spreading beyond the mill yard. The loss was a real set back to us. We decided to rebuild, which we did and within a few weeks we were up and running again. The orders we had were filled and with some extra work we were able to finish the season.

As the season came to a close, Mabel and I decided that we would not move back to Rexburg. On December 31, 1937, we moved to Idaho Falls. We rented a basement on Ada Street, and two days later I started building a house for us on Cleveland Avenue. Alma and I worked every day. The winter weather was pretty mild and we were able get our home ready to move into by February 11. We moved into our house February 14, 1938, and the next day it started to snow. That spring, I dug a root cellar and plotted a garden spot that we maintained each year.

We joined the Idaho Falls 4th Ward and quickly became members of the choir. The Chairman of the Genealogy Society of the Idaho Falls Stake called and asked us to report on our work at priesthood meeting. We did and were sustained members of the Stake Board. This work was important to us and we were anxious to help. A new church house was being built at this time and I worked on the construction crew during my spare time.

I was working for Tri-State Lumber Company and then for Roched Seed Company. I also worked at Island Park in the timber when needed. I received word from Wren South, who was living at Green River, Wyoming that he needed my help. He wanted me to set up a sawmill and begin the production of railroad ties. The mill was built about seventy miles from Green River, just above and east of Manilla, Utah. I ran the saw from the first of August until the middle of November 1938. The snow was so deep the logs could not be hauled out, so I returned home. It was quite a different experience for me to be in that area of yellow pines. I saw many beautiful scenes of timber, rocks, and mountains. When it came time, I was happy to return to my folks.

In July 1940, I was again cutting timber in Island Park. One evening, when I came in for supper, a member of the bishopric from Idaho Falls was there to meet with me. He told me that they were ready to start building the Idaho Falls Temple and they were looking for a work director. Since most of the work was to be done by church members from within the temple district, they needed someone to co-ordinate the workers and meet the construction needs. He asked me to return with him and meet with the committee. The next morning, I met with Stake Presidents David Smith, J. Berkley Larsen, John Homer and Elias Woodruff, who was the field man for the welfare work of the church. Three other men were also their inquiring about the same position that I was. When evening came, I was preparing to go back to the mill when word came that I had been selected to serve as work director. I met with the committee again the next morning and officially became the superintendent of labor, or the regional work director. We went over the plans and Monday morning I started work.

We visited one or two stakes a day. When we were through with the eastern area of the temple district, we went to the central region, which included six stakes, Burley being the head. Then we moved to the four stakes in the Pocatello area. A meeting was called and we met the contractor, Bird Finlayson, also John Fetzer, the temple architect, and a number of other brethren. After our meeting we went to the temple grounds where several photos were taken. I was asked to schedule two men who could start working the next morning. It was August 5, 1940.

The Star Valley area was added to our district, which made a total of 26 stakes we could work with. From the initial crew of two men we worked up to crews of 86 men, including foremen and contractors. In the cold weather of December, it was necessary to stop the work until March 12, 1941. During this time, I was able to work for the contractors. In September, I was asked to serve as night watchman in addition to the eight hours a day I was working with the contractors. This I did for two months. When cold weather came again, I worked part time cleaning, moving lockers and I also helped install the oxen in the font.

While working as the director, I became acquainted with a great number of people, which I consider a privilege and for which I truly am grateful. Some of them were Presidents of Stakes, Bishops, Councilors, Stake and Ward Directors. Many people came from all over the country to see the building, and it was interesting to meet them and show them what I could.

Finally, on September 23, 1945 the Idaho Falls Temple was dedicated. This, of course, brought a lot of excitement. Important church leaders came to visit and inspect the work. President David Smith was named the first president. George Albert Smith dedicated the Temple. Mabel and I were thrilled to attend the dedication ceremony. It was such a privilege to help with the building of a temple.

I was asked to be the first custodian. I accepted the challenge of keeping everything tidy and neat. I did this work throughout President Smith and most of President Killpack's administrations. My duties were many, but I wanted to do my best and serve faithfully.

After my work at the temple, my hay fever became a problem again. I spent the next several summers in Island Park at South's Sawmill. I skidded logs and drove the Federal Truck, along with various other tasks.

When I was at home, I attended the temple and was able to do a number of endowments. It has been a source of enjoyment to go to the temple, not only to do work, but also to renew acquaintances with many old friends and meet new people.

Other than my hay fever, I had always been blessed with a strong, healthy body and so it was a strange experience for me when I had to have surgery for a prostrate condition. I had always had a dread of hospitals and rest homes and so my hospital stay was one I faced with great hesitation. The surgery went well and as soon as possible I returned home to recuperate.

In 1960 Mabel and I celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary at Al's home. I played my harmonica and sang songs that have had special meaning to me through the years. It was a fine day spent with our family and friends.

One blessing I have realized from my Patriarchal Blessing, with much thankfulness, was that 'I would become a lender instead of a borrower'. It had been an important thing to me that I do my share and earn my way. I am grateful that I have been able to help others and feel that I took that opportunity whenever I could.

In 1960, Mabel's health began to decline. Jesse developed a melancholy sadness as he saw her situation worsen over the next eight years. Frequent trips to the doctor, surgery and long periods of recuperation were difficult for both of them. It was especially difficult for him to have her in the hospital for long periods of time.

On Father's Day, June 15, 1969, Jesse unexpectedly passed away at his home in Idaho Falls. Funeral arrangements were made for the following Thursday.

When Mabel was told of Jesse's death, she soon followed, passing away at the hospital June 18, 1969.

Adjustments were made and a joint funeral was held for Jesse and Mabel on June 19th. They were buried in the Rexburg City Cemetery.

For those who knew them, their passing was a reflection of how their lives together had been, side by side and always together.

Jesse's life was spent working hard, providing for his family and following his conscience. His work ethic was exceptional; his devotion to family unwavering and his testimony was the core of his character. He was a hero to his family and an example to all.