

MY MOTHER'S HISTORY

By Eleanor Gibbes

## PREFACE

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am also indebted to the Utah Historical Society for their splendid accomplishment in filing and preserving the diaries of our pioneer ancestors.

This is an attempt to portray a few momentous incidents from Mother's life,

which sets her apart as an individual of faith and integrity.

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a-- Her Father was a pioneer doctor.

b-- Her Mother was a girl from Belfast.

c-- She was born into a very interesting polygamy romance.

II-- My Mother's life was perpetuated by the pioneer spirit incurring many moves.

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Through all this she was undaunted. She "took it on the chin". When she was told by some in authority that she would be safer and saner to lock to the older men in the church and contemplate polygamy, her Irish broke loose. Yes,

that's right, she had come by it honestly. My dauntless old grandmother, who  
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was baptized in the Irish seas, joined the church, sailed for America, and walked  
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I remember one night one of the older boys (there were six of them mostly grown when I arrived) came shouting:

"Dad, you better get up there's a big brawl outside."

Mother said, "Now do be careful, Jerome" and turning to us kids added:

"Be quiet-----nothings going to happen."

Nothing happened except a mob of twenty drunken men staggered in and by request placed their knives (and what knives they were) on our best table.

"Come back and get them boys, after you're sobered up," said Dad. A few days later, with apologies to Dad, and chocolates for the ladies each of them filed in to retrieve his knife.

Oh, Mother had her hectic moments with her Lockinver-- who never carried a gun but faced everything in his shirt sleeves--- but they made it. They saw their 65th wedding anniversary together. When Dad passed on, six stalwart sons served as pall bearers. Within two years, three of those sons had followed Dad.

Mother, at the age of ninety, divides her time between my sister and me. She never tires of telling how after the death of her first girl she waited twenty-one years for another.

Her philosophy of "the prayers of the faithful availeth much", bore fruit and she had my sister and me, two years apart.

One of my keenest enjoyments has been Mother's zest for the modern food. To me God certainly made up to her for those long, lean years of cornbread and molasses by preserving her digestive powers, to the extent that at ninety she can be indulgent. Often at midnight, Mother would enjoy an after-party snack with the family and suffer no ill effects. She is a veteran at eating cake, pie and puddings. Especially does she love the carrot pudding, a replica of the old fashioned "suet" pudding she used to sew up in a flour sack and cook in boiling water.

She still has the Irish wit to laugh at a joke, and the faith to meet death smiling when it comes. She stands a living monument to the<sup>s</sup> old pioneer spirit now facing its last frontier.

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Journal of Mary Jane McCleave Meeks

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Nothing happened except a mob of twenty drunken men staggered in and by request placed their knives (and what knives they were) on our best table.

"Come back and get them boys, after you're sobered up," said Dad. A few days later, with apologies to Dad, and chocolates for the ladies each of them filed in to retrieve his knife.

Oh, Mother had her hectic moments with her Lockinver-- who never carried a gun but faced everything in his shirt sleeves--- but they made it. They saw their 65th wedding anniversary together. When Dad passed on, six stalwart sons served as pall bearers. Within two years, three of those sons had followed Dad.

Mother, at the age of ninety, divides her time between my sister and me. She never tires of telling how after the death of her first girl she waited twenty-one years for another.

Her philosophy of "the prayers of the faithful availeth much", bore fruit and she had my sister and me, two years apart.

One of my keenest enjoyments has been Mother's zest for the modern food. To me God certainly made up to her for those long, lean years of cornbread and molasses by preserving her digestive powers, to the extent that at ninety she can be indulgent. Often at midnight, Mother would enjoy an after-party snack with the family and suffer no ill effects. She is a veteran at eating cake, pie and puddings. Especially does she love the carrot pudding, a replica of the old fashioned "suet" pudding she used to sew up in a flour sack and cook in boiling water.

She still has the Irish wit to laugh at a joke, and the faith to meet death smiling when it comes. She stands a living monument to the old pioneer spirit now facing its last frontier.

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## OUR GRANDMOTHER

On March 27, 1900  
A special child was born  
A wonderful spirit sent from God  
Arrived that bright spring morn.

Jerome and Nancy welcomed her  
This, their eleventh child.  
He was so tall and handsome  
And she so fair and mild.

They named her Eleanor Jane  
And gave her love so deep and true,  
That "Love One Another" became her motto –  
Touching everyone she knew.

Ellie's favorite pal was her sister None.  
They saw each other through thick and thin;  
Through the smiles and laughter, the trials and tears,  
And even through all the scrapes they were in.

Then one day a young suitor arrived  
She could never marry him unless,  
He was special enough to win her heart  
And he was – this young man she called Jess.

Being both such romantics  
As they set the date,  
They decided that Valentine's Day  
Would be great!

And so they were married;  
First came Jessie Jane,  
Then Don and then Norm –  
So much love they did gain.

The years sped by quickly,  
Her honors were many  
For service in teaching –  
She was better than any.

When her sweetheart passed on,  
There was heartache, but then  
She knew that someday  
She would see him again.

Her grandchildren all knew,  
That her busiest call  
Was to them – and their friends –  
She was "Grandma" to all.

She gave to us the greatest gift  
That comes from God above.  
For in her sojourn on this earth,  
She taught us how to love.

Her legacy will long live on,  
As we keep her teachings in mind.  
And when we think of her now and then,  
True peace we'll come to find.

And so we will not say good-bye,  
But merely sing the tune  
Of her love to us, for we'll all live again.  
So, Grandma, see you soon.

Diana Boschetti  
January 12,1995

# *ELEANOR JANE ASAY GIBBONS*

## *AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

*[Handwritten on 22 pages by Eleanor Gibbons  
about 1972, when she was 72 years old]*

*My father and mother were Jerome and Nancy Meeks Asay.*

*Dad's ancestors were of Dutch descent and very strict quakers. Dad was born in Trenton, New Jersey. When he was a young boy his father and mother joined the Mormon church. They were practically disowned by their wealthy family when they came west to Utah.*

*Dad had ten brothers and one sister. The family settled on a little creek in Long Valley which creek now bears the name of Asay Creek. The town was called Asay Town and was very prosperous for a number of years.*

*My [maternal] grandmother, Mary Jane [McCleve] Meeks, was sixteen years old when her family joined the Mormon church in Ireland and came to America. She trekked across the country to Utah with a hand cart company walking most of the way.*

*Here she met and married my grandfather [Dr. Priddy Meeks], who was then sixty-five [61] years old. They were called by the church to assist in the settling of the Dixie mission in southern Utah.*

*My mother was among the first white babies to be born in Parowan, Utah. Mother's father was Dr. Priddy Meeks--he was a specialist of herbs and the medicine of his time. My mother was, too--no matter how healthy we tried to remain there was always some preventative concoction for us to endure such as hot sage tea (bitter as gall) in the winter and sulphur and molasses in the spring. These if we stayed well--if we got sick--wow! You name it, we got it. It paid off--none of us ever had our tonsils out, none of us ever had our appendix removed--we survived to a ripe old age without false teeth.*

*Mother was an unselfish, give of yourself type of person and spent days upon days administering to the sick during all kinds of epidemics. I never knew her to contract a disease.*

*Dad was a forceful dynamic person. He knew the environment had to be conquered and he was out to do his share. He shared with and protected his neighbors and tried and did love most of them. In dad's book, a drone was a useless character. Shiftless people nettled him something terrible. We were taught to work.*

*My aunt told me she never saw anybody do anything that my dad couldn't improve upon it. He could can and dry fruit, preserve meat for winter use; he could sew and cook and manage a house. He could do any kind of outdoor work and was an excellent carpenter. He was a magician at handling people. My dad was meticulously clean. He hated flies. We had more of dad's fly killer inventions than the world will ever see, but we still had flies, too.*

*As a child I remember hearing from friends and relatives such remarks as:*

*"That's Jerome's youngest daughter."*

*"Oh! He got his girl, did he?"*

*"Not one, but two."*

*"Wonderful, but I'll bet they're the spoiled ones."*

*Well, if being the youngest on the end of the line of eleven spoils you, I had had it! As if this placement in the family were not enough, consider the fact that my mother had lost her oldest girl and set about to have six boys before another girl arrived. This child lived only six weeks. My sister Naomi came along next and two years later I arrived.*

*Our entire family had been born in a log cabin on Asay Creek.*

*Soon after my sister arrived, the colony at Asay Creek disbanded. Many had moved out previously to seek more land and more advantages. My dad and mother decided to move to Green River because the climate was milder.*

*Here they became dissatisfied and decided to move to Vernal. At Wellington Dad and the boys found some work and decided to stay there until good weather arrived in the spring. It was while at Wellington that I was ushered in.*

*We were a noisy, happy, prayerful, and I guess quarrelsome family, who stayed together through thick and thin.*

*There were organ sessions and candy pulls and always laughter.*

*There was, however, one family ritual that I always recall with horror. Lice Extermination! You modern people, with your shampoos, sprays and antiseptics, don't realize what a bonanza you struck.*

*Every night our heads were inspected with a fine tooth comb and if one louse was discovered what a calamity ensued. Every article of clothing was thrown in and boiled in strong lye soap and we smelled of lye for weeks, all for a little old louse.*

*Well, when I was in second grade I found out what a little old louse can do when he invites his cousins in. Mother was going out to a ranch to be gone a week to assist with sickness there. Her parting words were:*

*"Now, Jerome, you watch that girl's hair. I'll swear a louse would swim Green River to get in her hair."*

*Dad watched, but his vigil was futile.*

*Do you know what? When mother got home she had the lousiest kids you ever did see.*

*The school had such an epidemic of lice, it sent everyone home with orders not to come back until every louse was eradicated.*

*Now you didn't get rid of them by just getting out a can of D.D.T., and spraying your duffle bag, you know. Those were the good old days. I was the worst off of our family. I thought I would die before mom got me overhauled. What with lye soap and turpentine and what not.*

*My hair has always been unmanageable and I'm sure it was because it got so "loused up" as a kid.*

*After that de-lousing, my parents inspected over night lodgers with more precision than Perry Mason tracks down a criminal. It wasn't color or religion that determined who our friends were. The criteria was does he have lice or doesn't he have lice?*

*I got so I didn't dare put my finger on my head, for fear mom would charge in.*

*One thing I never ever had was acne--mom kept me too clean for that I guess.*

*Teachers must be born--not made, otherwise I could never have been one. I'm sure my education would not have made me.*

*My first grade convinced me that is where a shot in the arm really takes hold. We were in Vernal and had one of Utah's greatest teachers (Kate Calder). Before the end of the year I was one of the outstanding first grade readers in our district.*

*In third grade I hit the jack pot again with another outstanding teacher, Dora Calder (now Dora Cooke).*

*We left Vernal at this time and that climaxed my winning rounds in elementary education.*

*Dad took timber contracts for the mines which were just opening up and we had some hectic years of coal camp life, school wise and other wise.*

*No teacher with intelligence to spare wanted to teach in such places, so we came up with the left overs.*

*Teachers drifted in and were ushered out, some on their own, some upon request.*

*Usually there was a one room school house (sometimes two) with all the grades together.*

*Every nationality was represented, including Greeks, Italians, Turks, Japanese, colored kids & white kids. Before the years were over I think I talked less of English than anything else.*

*In the midst of this cosmopolitan play ground, I became interpreter in chief. I could gesticulate anything so dexterously that it could be interpreted by all nations standing by.*

*In later years I was glad for this cosmopolitan upbringing. I had no barriers to break down and I knew there was some good in all people.*

*Also, my art of gesticulating was very fascinating to five year olds when I began my kindergarten career.*

*Barring this I think I received few benefits from camp life.*

*Some of the hair-raising episodes we went through make T.V. shows seem tame. We never knew whether we were going to be caught in a drunken brawl, an uprising or a gang fight, and it seemed like dad was the mediator for everything.*

*If there weren't enough youngsters for one grade, we were put in the one above or below, wherever we fit best. Because I could read, write and spell so well I usually went the grade above and nobody seemed to care what happened to me as far as math was concerned.*

*I knew the multiplication tables forward & back, adding, subtracting the simple things I came out O.K. on. When it came to fractions and the complicated things I found I had missed the boat entirely.*

*Kids really got kicked around a lot. I remember one night I was asked to stay and help some after schoolers. I told them some day I would grow up to be a teacher and come back and see them through.*

*I didn't intend to, tho, because my attitude toward teachers had really taken a drop. I vowed I'd sizzle in grease and die before I'd be one.*

*I was worried about what might happen to some of these "under pups" if I wasn't around.*

*Somehow I got to thinking if a nice little girl like me was on their side the teacher wouldn't be so tough before a lady.*

*I was pulling more shenanigans to get to stay after school than was nice of one of my station.*

*It wasn't too long before...if a misdemeanor occurred, the teacher didn't investigate, he simply shouted "You stay after school," -- meaning me. I think I had to memorize all of Longfellow's poems, but most of the time the teacher discovered memorizing for me was too simple, so I had to copy the constitution umpteen times.*

*Something had to give. There came a very dramatic event in my school career. One of our neighbors (a Greek whose boy could speak very little English) showed my dad how his son had been man-handled.*

*I and two of my pals saw Dad heading for the school house. We took a short cut and hid under the window long enough to hear dad say:*

*"If you touch my girls I'll have you out of here, if I have to throw you out."*



*It didn't make sense to me because if I did something to jeopardize my good standing in school, I didn't report it at home--I might be in double jeopardy.*

*Sense or no sense--it was worth a try, I was out to get a lickin'.*

*It didn't work, the teacher endured until Christmas and resigned on his own.*

*When my sister was high school age we moved to Castle Dale where she entered the Emery, Stake Academy (as it was then called).*

*I had one more year to gamble on elementary. It could have been a winner, but I had too many strikes against me. I couldn't win for losing.*

*I had been so used to having to interpret for other kids, that talking in school was second nature. It didn't work--here I was again.*

*By now I was more at home in a school room after school than during school anyway.*

*And did that eighth grade math catch up with me.*

*The first test came along and I was perspiring and getting sick to my stomach and wondering what to do, as kids started filing out and time was running out.*

*That time limit on tests always got me down--why the rush? I maybe could make it on my own speed! "Cast your bread upon the water and after many days it will return to thee." In this dark moment of despair a boy fled by and bent over to pick up a pencil he had dropped. I felt a paper tucked in my shoe.*

*Another boy filed by, grabbed an eraser off my desk and left a paper. A third boy filed by, pulled my curl and stuck a paper down by neck.*

*I had helped these boys through so much spelling and English, they couldn't let me down.*

*When I found a moment when the teacher wasn't looking, I checked the papers--no two answers the same--what a dilemma.*

*I discovered along about now that I had hit the jack pot again. Somehow this tall, dark and handsome teacher sensed that man power had been wasted somewhere (rather woman power). He spent time with me and really gave me the background I needed to make that year in math.*

*I've taught a lot of slow kids a lot of simple math and never yet has it exasperated me that they couldn't add two and one and get three.*

*In high school I met up with some teachers, I really got in and worked for. Our English teacher was priceless. She gave me the idea that maybe you could be young, gay and one among your students and still be a good teacher.*

*I was even contemplating going on and teaching English in high school.*

*Fate intervened. The fall I was beginning my Senior year, World War I broke out.*

*There was an immediate teacher shortage. Our district asked our principal to recommend a senior who could teach for a few weeks until they could locate a teacher. I was thus launched out into a teaching career that lasted practically a life time. I really didn't intend for it to. I loved that first year (wish I had time to tell you all about it) but I just didn't intend to be a teacher.*

*Spring came--I took the Utah State examinations for teachers and was eligible for the next year. Don't ask me how I passed that math test.*

*Suffice it to say we had a superintendent who wasn't going to let a little arithmetic stand between him getting a teacher with what he termed natural potentialities for teaching. (The shortage was still acute.) I didn't know what they (my potentialities, I mean) were then, but now I know a love for teaching and a love for kids was the greatest (in fact I think during those first green years the only) asset. I did have a rich background in teaching in our church, which I was thankful for.*

*Somewhere along the line I went away to a full year of college at Logan. This was tremendous--I really planned on finishing.*

*Do you know what? When the school bell rang in the fall I was behind a desk again and can you guess where? Right back where I told the kids I'd come and see them through. It might well have been the same group. There were Greek boys bigger than I was, Italians, Japanese, two adorable little colored boys and a sprinkling of a few all american whites.*

*The first day started out with a "free for all". War broke out between Greece and Italy; a conquest between Japan and Turkey ensued and there was a general uprising between the various factions.*

*I could see a school teacher was never meant for a battle front--immediately, I assumed the role of a general, charged in for a fight for my life and a survival of the fittest.*

*When the war was ended and the smoke had cleared away we joined together in a league of nations and signed a peace treaty that served for the duration. From there out I was in command and I did just what I said I'd do--I saw those kids through to the satisfaction of all concerned.*

*I don't know if I was ever quite the same after that year or not, but it was worth it.*

*I had five years of here, there, anywhere no one else would go--you know what I mean. Suddenly I met the man of my life. I became Mrs. Jesse Gibbons about the time a law in Utah came in that married women couldn't teach.*

*That was that! I sighed a sigh of relief because I had picked out a dozen kids at least during my career that I wanted to have one of my own like and I was anxious to get busy on a home of my own.*

*Do you know what? When I had three of my own I was back in teaching again. I had got my sweet little girl, my freckled-faced boy (I always wanted one of them) and my problem child (who nearly wrecked the boat). But, do you know what? All three of them were great in math, and my problem child turned out to be man of the year in Who's Who!*

*I was still unqualified, uncertified and undecided if I would ever teach again when we moved to Saint George because of my husband's health.*

*Nevertheless, I found myself installed as head teacher in the W.P.A. [Works Progress Administration] nursery schools.*

*You haven't really lived until you've taught for the government. They can think of more things to have you report on than a general on scout patrol duty. A lot of these things took figuring and you know my math.*

*I loved the kids, though, and I learned later that our staff rated pretty high. We were going strong when the government closed the project down. We sure gave some youngsters a good start.*

*We had had some good inservice training here, but my credentials hadn't built up. But, the next thing I knew I was teaching kindergarten in Saint George--I was in for life for sure this time and I may as well buckle down. I did and I loved it.*

*From here out I was involved in inservice training courses, correspondence courses-- anything for credit. I'd really like to tell you about some of these, but I can't take time.*

*Then plus all these winters there was summer schools every summer. State requirements went up and I thought they would get me sooner or later, but by petitioning for extra hours and getting through twenty hours for several summers I kept up with them.*

*Then in 1952, when I was fifty-two years old, do you know what? Dr. Maughn at C.S.U. [College of Southern Utah] (I'll always adore him for this) got all my credits from correspondence courses, inservice training and summer schools at B.Y.U., U. of U., C.S.U. and Dixie--all Utah colleges, and the one summer at Mammouth, Oregon together --deciphered them, added them to my one year of residence credit at Logan (was I ever thankful for that year) and guess what?*

*I graduated from college. I had a B.S. degree.*

*My whole family rejoiced and I was really rejuvenated.*

*Not long afterwards Saint George rated two new elementary buildings and I had a room assigned to me in the West. I was really in again this time.*

*In all my years of teaching I had been in few school houses. I had taught in every conceivable dwelling from the corner of a theatre to the parlor of a private dwelling.*

*Somehow I didn't look at the surroundings too much--mostly I was looking into the eyes of the children to see what I saw. Sometimes I was more concerned with changing what I saw there than changing the environment.*

*I knew from my own experience that a happy child learns much more readily than an unhappy child and was also fortunate in having learned the knack of being able to make children happy and eager to learn.*

*When I taught kindergarten I always thought I should take time out to write my own book. The ones I read were all designed for groups of 18 children plus an assistant.*

*One year I had 76: thirty-eight in the morning and 38 in the afternoon with only space enough to meet the requirements for ten. I was my own assistant.*

*Let's rescind that statement. (I coined that word from the government. Every time we got a good thing going, we got word to rescind that, which means just to ignore it and stay where you were at. As head teacher I was going at break neck speed to stay where I was at anyway. I couldn't get the one change made before the next one came in, so I just ignored a lot of things in the first place and it worked pretty well.)*

*Rescinding that statement that I had no assistant. I had my husband, my family, my neighbors, the merchants in town, and all of my parents, all contributing ideas, materials and talents.*

*I really felt at home in kindergarten. Kids could be happy there.*

*The one misery I had had to inflict on children in the primary grades was eliminated here and I didn't have to see what I saw in some first graders eyes when they looked at their report cards.*

*I was glad I was in the declining years of my career, when they brought report cards into kindergarten.*

*I felt much better counseling the failures of children over with the parents.*

*The last thing I wanted a child to know was that he was a failure anyway.*

*I hated such remarks as one child to another: "My mom's going to flip if you get an A and I don't." It wasn't A's and B's in kindergarten, but it was the same thing.*

*I had a lot of frustrations as far as administration was concerned.*

*I knew long before it became a school policy that all children were not ready for first grade at six years.*

*I realized that some youngsters were ready for kindergarten at four and a half years, others were definitely not ready at five.*

*I worried about the over anxious parents who were trying to "push" their children too fast.*

*I worried about children who wouldn't work to capacity and tried to keep them on the improve, but pressuring them is another story.*

*There is more to kindergarten than the three R's.*

*You'd be surprised at what heavy burdens a five year old can carry around on his shoulders and what big problems can upset his mind.*

*Kindergarten is a place where counseling, problem solving and the ground work for honest living really pay off because it is not too late.*

*I have rubbed elbows with so many wonderful parents and solved so many difficult problems through them and their cooperation, that I am glad to see more and more parent involvement entering into our schools.*

*I almost shudder to think how many children I have had in my hands at this tender age. My one consolation is I also had them in my heart and as they grow up, I hope they remember mostly some happy memories of me and kindergarten.*

*At 65 I closed the books in kindergarten and thought "All is well that ends well."*

*But do you know what? In the fall I was behind a desk again.*

*Summer schools were in session again and I was back in the groove again.*

*This time Saint George was eligible for Special Ed. and had students qualifying for a group of trainables.*

*No teacher was available, but I could qualify with a few more summer sessions.*

*These were the rough ones. Sp. Ed. training does not come easy.*

*My husband died in the spring of my first year in Sp. Ed.*

*That was a year "for the books." I surely "cast a lot of burdens on the Lord" that year. After my husband's death I stayed on, anxious to see these children through what I knew would be a slow process.*

*These children taught me more than I will ever learn from books.*

*I had to sell myself to them. Nobody meant anything to them.*

*They were mostly a miserable, hostile, unhappy group who knew beyond a doubt they had never been accepted, never would be and didn't care if they weren't.*

*But do you know what? We fooled them! I say we, because we set about to socialize these children so they would be accepted. This involved our schools, our teachers and our community in general. Involvement in going places and seeing all the many things we had missed by being isolated from school so many years was so necessary for us.*

*We set about setting up a pattern of behavior that would be acceptable to others and discovered we were not only accepted, but we were invited into, and became guests at so many wonderful affairs.*

*We have become an integral part of our school lunch program; setting up tables, carrying trays and filling in where needed.*

*When we began school our coordination made it difficult for some to carry their own tray.*

*They are now happy, eager and willing to try academically; we have achieved beyond our greatest expectations, but more important we have had a chance to say "hello" to living.*

*Praise enough cannot be given to the dedicated, cooperative, appreciative response of the parents of these children.*

*The feeling of trust and confidence they contributed, made me feel we couldn't afford to do anything less than make good.*

*Do you know what? I'm sure we did. If I ever write a book it will be on my years with my adorable trainables.*

*I have loved the atmosphere of teaching. If I have been outstanding in my teaching, I'm sure it is because of the love I put into it.*

*Learning what to ignore and what to make issue of is a great boon to discipline.*

*A sense of humor lasting and eternal can alleviate many pressures, and keep everybody more "young at heart."*

*I hope with all the modern, visual aids and mechanical devices coming into existence the school will still hold a good classroom teacher as the greatest asset to teaching.*

*Guess what? I'm out of certification again and I'm sure the age limit this time will make it for keeps.*

*But do you know what? I will always be cheering for the public schools of America.*

*Keep your lateral thinking high, set your sail taut against the winds of adversity and hope for a brilliant future.*

**ELEANOR JANE ASAY GIBBONS**  
**LIFE SKETCH**

*Written by her daughter*  
*Jessie Jane Gibbons Brandenburg*  
*August 1993*

Eleanor Asay was born March 27, 1900 in Wellington, Carbon County Utah. The family was moving from Asay Creek, where the winters had been so harsh, to Green River, Utah. Imagine the difficulty of that trip for her mother, Nancy Meeks, ready to deliver and traveling in a covered wagon over bumpy roads. She jumped down from the wagon, just in time for Eleanor to be born at a friend's house in Wellington. No hospitals, no doctors, just the friend to help with the delivery. Eleanor was the youngest of eleven children born to Jerome and Nancy Meeks Asay. As soon as Eleanor was able to travel, the family settled in Vernal, Utah.

She went to the first three grades in Vernal, where she said she had the best teachers in the world. They lived a few miles from the school, so Grover was in charge of the buggy and the horses that would take them to school each day. He would feed the horses at the school yard at noon time, and make certain they had plenty of water. In the winter when the snow was too deep they would just ride the horses--Grover and Ella on one horse, Neal and Naomi on another, and Norm on one alone. She says it was a mighty cold ride some days, and they arrived at school shivering and cold, so the potbellied stove in the school room was most welcome.

She and Naomi were the envy of most of the other girls at school, because their father had bought each of them a beautiful china doll with a leather body, and arms and legs that moved, and real hair. They were beautiful and not easy to find. Jerome had helped some Indians by using his equipment to pull their cart out of a mudhole. They were so grateful they sold him the dolls that they were taking to their own little girls. Everyone said Jerome sure did spoil his two girls. Ella said, "Not so, he just loved us."

Ella was always afraid of water, and so when she turned eight she was most frightened about having to be baptized in the Green River. However, when she and Naomi were given special gingham dresses to wear to the baptism and to church, she felt less anxious. It was a cool day the first week of April, and the baptism took place around noon. She was afraid as she waded into the cool waters of the Green River, but was excited to be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When she was nine, the family moved to the mining camps in Carbon County. Jerome and his boys had the contract to haul the timber to shore up the coal mines. This meant that they moved to many different camps, living in Mohrland, Standardville and Castle Gate. Often they lived in company tents. It was later that the companies built houses for them. What a celebration they had when they moved into that first home.

Ella always said their education was certainly an ethnic one. They went to school with all the nationalities that came to work in the mines--Greeks, Italians, and Japanese. Ella learned to

understand some of their languages and was often called upon to interpret for the adults. The schools were often just one room, with all grades combined. Ella always said it was a good thing they learned a lot in Vernal, because schools in the camps were not that good.

In Mohrland, Utah they had two choice dogs she always likes to tell about--Spot and Ballie, and what a pair! They would lay by the front door, and if someone suspicious came to the door the dogs would not let them in, but would stand in front of the door and growl. If it was someone the dogs knew, they just let them in. They could send the dogs to bring the cows in. What a trick that was! One of them would begin the round up while the other one stood guard. When the cows were all rounded up, down the hill to the barn they brought them.

Often the miners would abuse their children or their wives, and one evening down the street from the Asay home came the terrible screams of a youngster. Ballie and Spot headed for the place with Jerome a few steps behind them. When Jerome arrived, the dogs had the man by the neck, and he was screaming for help. Jerome said, "I will only call the dogs off if you promise never to beat that little boy again." Needless to say he got the promise, and there were very few beatings in the camp after that.

Of course, wherever Ellie (as she was nicknamed) and None, (Naomi's nick name) went, those dogs were there to protect them, so Nancy could send the girls to the store or post office without fear.

When Ellie reached high school age, her father purchased land in Castle Dale, Emery County, where he raised sheep and cattle and ran his own blacksmith shop. How good it was to have a home of their own and a town to call home. Ellie and None were good students and loved school. Naomi was in most of the plays and Ellie was editor of the yearbook. Math was always hard for Ellie, and she tells the story of the time the boys decided they would help her with the math final. The boys would drop a note on her desk with the answers to the problems. She says the only problem was that nearly everyone had a different answer to the same problem, so she had to figure it out herself. When she came up with a 99% everyone was surprised, including herself.

One time the class was supposed to have written a theme and brought it to school. Everyone had forgotten about it but Ellie, so since the teacher was late, she hurried and wrote her theme on the blackboard for everyone to copy. The teacher called on the first person and he read, "The Castle Dale Post Office is a disgrace. It is so small you have to go outside to lick a postage stamp..." and so on about the improvements that should be made. The teacher thought "Wow, this is the best theme he has written all year." But when he called on the next one, and he started out the same way, the teacher caught on, and declared, "At least one person in this class deserves an A for their work and the rest of you flunk. Not one person told who had written the theme, and the teacher could only guess that it was Ellie, but he couldn't prove it, so they all flunked.

Ellie says she spent lots of time at the blackboard writing over and over "I will not scream in line." It seems they had to line up to march into the school. The boys soon learned that if they pulled her hair, or even just touched her shoulder she would scream, so they persisted, and then



she was the one in trouble. Of course her punishment was to stay after school and write 100 times on the board, "I will not scream in line."

She really loved school, and was always the winner of the spelling bees. According to her, school ended much too soon. When she was seventeen and a senior in high school, there was a shortage of school teachers because of the war, so she was asked to teach first grade in Ferron, Utah instead of going to school. This would give her the needed graduation credits.

The job in Ferron was just to be a substitute job for a month, but it lasted for the year. She taught school in Ferron one more year, then one year in Castle Dale. It was during this time that she and her friends met together each week, to write to the service men or roll bandages for the Red Cross. Sometimes they would just work on their own trousseaus. They decided to call their group the Anti-Kants. They were against "can't," thinking they could do most anything. They had a pin engraved, it was in the shape of a question mark and was a gold pin. They were in earnest about this club, and they really had fun together. She penned this note to Naomi in the minutes of the Anti-Kants: "To Naomi, my devoted sister, lifelong pal and trustworthy companion--the girl with the soul."

Ella decided teaching was the career for her, so in 1921 she decided to attend Utah State University for a year. The school was then known as the Utah State Agriculture college at Logan, Utah. What a great year it was! Following are some excerpts from her diary about those days.

"September 9, 1921. On the train speeding Northward, penniless, and every moment is taking me that much further from home. I had one dress in my suit case, my accordion pleated, which dear old None put in, and this saved my bacon. I wore it with Florence's coat and really looked ritzy. I'm wondering if Naomi's big blue eyes still have tears in them--whoa I sure cut close to losing self-control when she waved goodbye, and mother how quickly she rushed away. I've joined the trampers so wish me luck."

The Camp VOMED Girls, the five pals of her girlhood, roomed together at Logan. Vera Berg, Oneeta Seeley, Margaret Seeley, Ella Asay and Dora Seeley. They called themselves the Camp VOMED Girls because the first initial of their names spelled VOMED. And what a time they had! The Logan campus was never the same again.

In her diary she has a poem that she wrote in chapel [weekly devotional]. The poem was printed in the campus newspaper. Her comment was, "Doesn't it look big in print tho!"

"Tis nice to sit in chapel  
And note the stately air  
Of all our fond professors  
Sublimely seated there.

The study of the faces  
Is a pastime sure unique  
For some are rich in interest  
While others seem asleep.

Another excerpt from her diary:

"Dear old Pal, on the last day of the twenty first year of her life Eleanor Jane pauses to inscribe a lingering farewell to this happy year and start out a year older tomorrow morning, with the view of doing better in the future than she did in the past."

And the excerpt the next day:

"Today has been the happiest, jolliest day imaginable. I received a large box from Chad Kay and Eva Doreen. It had fragile written on it so we were surely curious. Opening it we found sugar coated popcorn. Last but not least was huge box from home which surely afforded a thrill. We were all unwrapping as fast as we could and shouting as we came to 'eggs, meat, potatoes, gooseberries, butter, pickles, and 'here Ella open this quick.' And a soft square bundle was presented to me; I found a pretty gingham dress from mother. All the neighbors were wondering if I was the only daughter of a second Rocky feller [Rockefeller] and if I had to tell them about my birthday or did they just remember it."

On Monday, May 21st she writes:

"I just returned from chapel and it was Seniors Day. Oh, you don't know how hard it makes me want to work for a cap and gown."

With the school year over the gang returned to Castle Dale, and her diary says:

"Today when I arrived I found we had Nick here crippled and his five children to care for while Cloie was in Salt Lake with Tamsen. I was ready to quit the ranch at first sight. The first day home consisted of cooking, cleaning the house and tending kids. A diary of my doings from then on until a month had passed would consist of a row of diddos [sic] of every day."

The entry of July 15, 1922 at None's states:

"It was Eleanor Jane as the housekeeper today and talk about a record breaker, today is it. First I was supposed to churn. I did the dishes first--by that time the weather was soaring toward the temperature HOT. As a result the butter looked like hot mush and could not be worked. I put it down the cellar to cool and mixed the bread. Next I went out to feed the little chickens. My first act was to drop a board on one causing instant death. Coming in I cleaned the parlor until

Carol arrived. I forgot the bread till I heard a thud & discovered some of it was running away. I mixed it and got it raised nicely when Naomi arrived. Later just as it raised nicely for the oven, Chad disappeared. When he was located my bread was past the average height. I stuck it in the oven and we decided to take a swim, so I let the baking be as short as possible. We had a glorious swim, but on returning home I found the dough left for rolls had soured. I had forgotten the butter. Neal was home for supper and the bread baked was doughy. Do you think I'll ever get square?. P.S. I still have to study my Sunday School Lesson and curl my hair. I hope I make it."

Ella didn't go back to school in the fall, but instead taught school. She got a position teaching 4th and 5th grade in Mohrland, Utah. It was during this year that she and Jesse Gibbons began "courting". She had met Jesse 2 years before when he was working in the mines with the Asay boys, and asked them if he could go to Castle Dale to spend the weekend with them. He knew Ella would be there, and he had wanted to meet her for a long time. Jesse was not a member of the church, and Ella was writing to a missionary, so she had a hard decision to make when Jesse proposed. Love prevailed and they were Married February 14, 1925. Ella says she always had a flair for the romantic.

She finished teaching that year, but the district did not hire married women, so she became a housewife. In June of 1925 her father-in-law, Charles Gustavus Gibbons, was killed in a coal mine accident. He and his two boys Jesse and Gus, were working in an area when a large chunk of coal broke loose bringing with it other pieces. Charles was buried, and Jesse sent Gus for help. Then with only his bare hands worked to free his father. His hands were bruised and the skin peeled off he worked so hard, but his father never regained consciousness and died a few hours later. This was a difficult time for the Gibbons family, and from that time on Ella dreaded every shift Jesse worked in that mine.

This was also the year Irvin Anderson was injured in a coal mine accident. He was injured in May and was hospitalized in Salt Lake, so Naomi moved to Salt Lake to be near him. After Irvin was released from the hospital, he needed to stay for the frequent visits to the doctor, so Ella went to Salt Lake to help None. On September 4, 1925 they were able to find a larger house, and so spent the morning moving. That evening Ella went to visit the sick folks at the hospital. As she left the hospital she saw the last bus of the day coming down the street so she made a run for it.

She made the bus, but by the time she got home she was having labor pains. Her baby wasn't due until mid October and so what a fright this was. They got the doctor who came that night and said she needed to go to bed, and probably the pains would stop. The pains were still strong in the morning and when the doctor came, he said they would have to deliver the baby, ready or not. A baby girl was born September 5, 1925 to Ella Asay and Jesse Gibbons. They named her Jessie Jane. Even though she was a good size, her lungs were not well developed because of her prematurity so she struggled for life. They rigged up an incubator of sorts--hot water bottles in the bassinet--and had a home nurse come in daily to help clear the baby's throat. They kept her isolated in an upstairs room, and, as Naomi and Ella both said, they prayed a lot.

You would have thought that would have been enough confusion for one family, but when they visited the hospital the next day, Jesse Gibbons had been admitted with a broken leg. Now there were two invalids and a sick baby to worry about. What a time they had. Doreen wanted to see the baby, and so they had to watch her to keep her from sneaking into the "nursery." Chad, Doreen, and Valoy were getting the minimum amount of attention by this time, and they were ready to go back home.

November 19, 1925 Irvin Anderson died in Salt Lake City. That very day Chad got lost. He didn't come home from school as he usually did. He went to the old neighborhood, and couldn't find the way back. The police finally came bringing him home, and what a relief that was. Naomi always said it was a good thing the baby came early so that Ella was ready to help get her ready to go back to Castle Dale. Also, it was a blessing she had Jesse and Parley Anderson, Irvin's brother in Salt Lake to take care of all the business matters.

Everyone stayed at Grandpa Jerome Asay's until after Christmas. Then Jesse, Ella and Jessie Jane went back to Standardville where Jesse was working. In the fall of 1929, Ella persuaded Jesse to leave the mines and join his friend, Dewey McLatchie, in California. Jesse found a job in California, but since Ella was pregnant, it was decided she would stay in Castle Dale until the baby was born. Ella then discovered she was too lonesome for Jesse to wait that long. So she and her friend, Jenny Seely, boarded a bus for L.A. Jesse and Ella planned to stay with Jenny's mother-in-law, who ran a boarding house, until they found a place of their own.

In the one suitcase Ella took with her, she had put one baby blanket and a shirt, diaper, and gown. The rest of the layette she mailed. The bus trip was too much and her baby came the next day after they arrived. Of course there was no layette, so they scrounged around the neighborhood for clothes to last until the parcels from Castle Dale arrived. Donald Ray Gibbons was born January 14, 1930. Ella had never been so far away from her family before, so she was terribly homesick. She did enjoy the beach and the fresh fish they barbecued there, but that is about all they liked about Los Angeles.

Another boy was born to Ella and Jesse June 9, 1931. They named him Normand Lee. They were in Los Angeles for three years, where Jesse worked as a prop man for Universal Studios. While living in Los Angeles, Jesse developed asthma. The doctor recommended he move to a drier climate, so in 1934 they moved to St. George, Utah. Ella wrote:

"We settled in St. George, Utah, then a very lovely L.D.S. town where we reared our three children under the shadow of the temple. Later, mother lived with us and did much temple work for the family. Here also, my husband was baptized into the church at the time our daughter was baptized on her eighth birthday in the St. George Temple."

Ella began to teach again in St. George. The first five years of teaching were spent in the W.P.A. [Works Progress Administration] Nursery schools, where she was supervisor. One year Gene Asay, Ella's nephew, was enrolled. How angry he got when the other students would call

her "Aunt Ellie." He would say, "She's not your Aunt Ellie, she's mine." Needless to say, that year she was Aunt Ellie to all of the students.

From nursery school she moved to Kindergarten, where she taught for the next 30 years. To continue teaching, however, she needed to certify, so she spent the summers going to school. She says she is probably the only person alive who has attended all of the colleges in Utah and even one in Oregon, in order to graduate.

Finally, in 1952, Eleanor said,

"Much to the great joy of my family and myself, I graduated from the College of Southern Utah in Cedar City, with a B.S. degree and was a certified elementary teacher!"

The dream she had on that hillside in Logan finally came true.

Kindergarten in St. George was quite a pioneering feat in itself. The supplies were meager, so for art paper they used rolls of newsprint. She wrote many of her own books to use. She made them from pictures cut out of the Saturday Evening Post, and tag board. Her picture stories were the first to be taken from the shelf. All of her students comment on the clever chalk board stories they used to do. She taught kindergarten in the back room of the dime store, in the parlor of the principal's home, and in an old home next to the school. Finally a new school was built and kindergarten rooms were provided. She taught 28 students in the morning and another 28 in the afternoon. That's was a tough day's work.

It's interesting to note that Ella's Patriarchal Blessing says she will teach Kings and Queens and be an example unto them. She had never dreamed she would be a teacher, but the blessing is fulfilled in that she has taught many important people. Jeffrey Holland was President of BYU for some time, and is now a general authority. He wrote her a note when he was inaugurated, saying, "I hope as I send my 5-year-old off to Kindergarten that he will have the great experiences I had in your class. Thanks for the great start." Bruce Hurst [professional baseball pitcher], when he saw her at Bruce Hurst day gave her a big hug and said, "My you must have shrunk. I used to look up to you, and now you have to look up at me. You were a great teacher." Don's bishop in Chicago was one of her students. The Stake President of the Provo Stake is married to one of her students. Rebecca Jeppson, one of her students lives nearby and comes to visit with her children quite frequently. Among these kings and queens were some very special students, most dear to her. Her own relatives, she taught AnnaLee, VaeDon and Danni Smith--Genevieve's three oldest. She taught David Joe Bates, and Jolenc Bates--Shanna Lea and Joe Bates eldest. What fun it is for her to see how much her students have accomplished in their lives!

For a time Jesse operated a small cafe, called Jesse and Jane's Cafe, and after school Ella and the children would go help with the dinner hour at the cafe. It was a small place, about 8 stools at the bar, and two tables. The menu included Ella's homemade pies at first, but business was

too brisk. She couldn't keep up with that so they did the next best thing and served pies from the bakery. The menu just included hamburgers, fries, and steak with fries. Also, they served thick milk shakes. The fried shrimp that Jesse featured once a week was a real hit. Sunday afternoons, for their family night, the whole family went to the cafe to peel the potatoes for the fries. It was a busy time for all. After about 5 years of operating the cafe, they sold it.

One summer when she wasn't in school, Ella worked at the local sugar beet plant, sorting out the good seeds. She really enjoyed that because, as she says, "I didn't have to think."

The family had a large lot, so they raised chickens, rabbits, turkeys, and their own pork. They also kept a milk cow. Ella would have to milk once in a while when Jesse was out of town, but she never really enjoyed that chore.

Jesse helped Ella with her schoolwork and one time they took a first aid class together. When the final exam came, and the question involved some things they should do if they came upon an accident, Ella's answer to the question was, "I'd yell for Jesse." The teacher agreed that was the smart thing to do.

Ella was frightened of all the desert creatures, lizards, snakes, etc. The whole family had been instructed to run to her whenever they heard her scream, and scream she could--it echoed all through those hills. One time everyone went running to see what was wrong, only to find her tossing coal at a Gila Monster, screaming with every piece she tossed. Jesse said the monster died with the first hit, but she kept screaming and throwing until Jesse got there.

At age 65 Ella retired from teaching, or so she thought. They had a big retirement party, and she officially retired. Her retirement was short. The superintendent of schools, Sheldon Johnson, the parent of a Downs Syndrome child, asked her to return to teach special education. She said, "Why not?" This meant she had to certify for Special Education, so back to summer school she went.

Ella had intended to teach only one more year, but when Jesse died in March of 1966, she decided to continue teaching. She taught a group of trainables (most had Down's Syndrome) until she was 72. She could have taught longer, but said she couldn't handle another summer school to update her certificate. Hers was the first group of mentally retarded students in the state of Utah to be integrated into the regular school. (Now nearly all of them are.) Some of her students learned to read, write, and do math. Some learned to talk. And all of them learned to socialize--something they didn't know how to do before they came to her class. Now all of her students are working and have achieved more success than their parents dreamed they could. Every parent thanks her for the great job she did with their children.

After she retired, she sold her home to the LDS church, and they have built a beautiful chapel on the property. She then moved to Provo to live with her daughter and, as she says, "to help her raise her children." Some of her good friends also lived in the Provo area and she enjoyed visiting with them. Mrs. Fawson, and Mrs. Jeppson, both visited often. They had

taught kindergarten with her. Her good neighbors from St. George, Dorothy and Earl Cottam, also lived in Provo and were frequent visitors.

One of the highlights of her life was taking a trip to Israel with a BYU group and the Fawsons. She said, "To walk where Jesus walked was the thrill of my life. I never dreamed I would ever have such an opportunity."

Ella was always active in the church, serving as Primary president for many years when primary was after school. She served in the Stake Sunday School, and during World War II when there was a shortage of men, served in the Sunday School presidency. She taught Relief Society, M.I.A. and one of the first Teacher Training classes.

She had always wanted to be an author, and so she said, "I used my talent for writing, producing scripts for skits, poetry, songs or tributes as the occasion demanded." She was noted for the clever faculty skits she wrote. And as the family all knows, she wrote tributes for the funerals of her brothers, sisters, and others, all in rhyme. At age 92 she wrote a clever Christmas poem. She loved to write, and could write an entire skit in about 5 minutes, all in rhyme.

For her eightieth birthday, she was honored by her special education class and their parents. They had a special cake and all sang songs together. The class did a cute program doing some lip sync songs, and dancing. The party was filmed by KUTV 2 NEWS and was televised several times. Also, The British Broadcasting Company filmed the same occasion. No doubt it was also televised in England.

In June of 1980, the class and their teacher, Eleanor Gibbons, appeared in Life Magazine. The article was entitled "The Downwinders." It included a two page picture of Eleanor and her seven handicapped students.

Eleanor received various honors. She was honored by Dan Valentine, a columnist for The Salt Lake Tribune, as the Teacher of the Year. She was also chosen as Teacher of the Year for the Washington County District. The Altrusa Club honored her as their Orchid Lady of the Year.

However, according to her, the greatest honor is to belong to a great family. Since she was present at most of the nieces and nephews births, she has felt close ties with all of them. She says she doesn't know what she would have done without her Sister Naomi. They cried together, laughed together, and raised their children together. Their's was a special relationship. She has always been proud of her three children, and her twelve grandchildren are precious to her.

She has also enjoyed her great-grandchildren. Grandma Gibbons, as they call her, still loves to recite nursery rhymes with them. She must know hundreds of them.

A special red-letter day in her life was the open house she had for her 90th birthday. Over 150 friends and relatives called upon her during that week. Some of her cousins she hadn't seen in years came to visit. Many nieces and nephews and grandchildren were present. She was saddened by the fact that her youngest son was in the hospital at the time with a stroke. But,

on March 27th she took a cake to the hospital and shared it with the patients in the rehab unit, and Norm got to sing happy birthday to her. How grateful she is for his recovery.

Now in her 93rd year, as her body is riddled with painful arthritis, and she finds it hard to get around, she says:

"All I have left is my senses. It's been interesting to be able to remember nearly a century, and I don't know of anything I've enjoyed more than a clear mind."

In looking back she remembers a lot of changes and inventions, such as the car, the airplane, the telephone, the TV and the radio, and in this modern day, the fax machine, the computer, and all the medical advances. She says in her life, the greatest invention was, "the permanent wave." No more late nights for her up curling her sandy-colored hair that hated to stay in place.

#### **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Height: 5'1"

Gray eyes, sandy hair, until the age of forty when it went gray. It has been a beautiful silver gray for the past 53 years.

Weight at age 93 is 107 pounds.

Eleanor never had any infectious diseases, other than small pox. The small pox affected her eyes, so she wore glasses at an early age, and is nearly blind at age 93. She had a cornea transplant in the left eye. She nursed everyone through the measles, mumps, chicken pox, and scarlet fever, and never had any of the childhood diseases. She seldom had colds or any serious illnesses. However, she did suffer from migraines, and often would spend the weekends in bed with severe headache.

She has been hospitalized twice in her life, once to have a hysterectomy, at age 60. The other time was at age 82, when her heart slowed, and they needed to do tests and evaluate medications for her to use. She says, "Life has been good to me."



Eleanor Jane Asay, age 8, and Naomi Asay, age 10.  
Posing in the new dresses they were really proud of.  
The material was a small check gingham, purchased,  
for Ella's baptism.



In an era that has become mechanized and automated, you have never faltered from bringing a warm human touch to all who know you. As the book about your life states, you are a remarkable woman who took on a great challenge when past the age of retirement in 1966, you were the special teacher for seven years to a beautiful group of retarded children, and together all of you learned how to unwrap the gifts which reveal those hidden gifts that are buried within the soul of each of us.

We love you for your loyalty to our late father and your late husband, Jesse Ernest Gibbons. You are an outstanding American, a great teacher and a wonderful mother.

Love from all of us,

Norm, Gae, Don, LaRue,  
Jessie Jane, your grandchildren,  
other relatives,  
and friends.

March 27, 1981



Students lined up in front of the school house, and were required to march in very correctly. If they misbehaved in line they were jerked out, and required to stay after school. Ella was often in trouble for screaming in line, because the boys had pulled her hair, or just lightly touched her shoulders.



For recreation Ellie's gang, both boys and girls would ride horses and camp out up in Joe's Valley. Ellie always requested the tamest horse, she didn't like to go too fast. She loved the camp fire cooking, and here you see her with Naomi, waiting to put something on to cook.



Eleanor Jane Asay and Jesse Ernest Gibbons Family  
Front Row: Normand Lee, Eleanor Jane, Jesse Ernest  
Back Row: Donald Ray and Jessie Jane,



Taken in St. George Utah, 1946.

OUR ORCHID LADY  
Eleanor Gibbons  
1967



Mrs. Gibbons' School House

**Program**

Welcome and Presentation of Orchid Lady: Vice Pres. Elaine Allred  
Vocal Solo .....Normand Gibbons  
What is a Teacher? .....Lou Esplin  
Life of Eleanor Gibbons .. .....Nina Atkin  
Tribute to Mother .....Daughter, Jessie Jane Brandenburg  
My Grandma and Specialties .....Grandchildren  
Musical Reading . .....Don Gibbons  
Vocal Solo .....Normand Gibbons





Mrs. Eleanor Gibbons and her West Elementary kindergarten class.

# Eleanor Gibbons To Retire From Teaching

Eleanor Gibbons, Kindergarten teacher at the West Elementary school, will retire at the close of this school year. Mrs. Gibbons was born in Wellington, Utah, the youngest one of eleven children born to Jerome and Nancy Asay. Her first three years of school were spent in Vernal, Utah, where she was thankful for a good start, because it was one of the best situations in her teaching career. Many of the teaching years that followed involved a lot of moving in very poor schools.

In 1917-18 her teaching career began. She was then a senior in high school at the Castle Dale, Utah then known as the Emery Stake Academy. The county superintendent in the school district came to the principal and asked him for a senior high school student he could recommend to teach for a month in a near by town, until another teacher could be found. This was during the first

World War. Because another teacher was not found, she had begun her teaching career, a career that came as a surprise, because she had planned a college education and intended to write about schools not to teach.

Preparation for the second year's teaching was the process of passing the state examinations then being given for teachers. Following that year six weeks of summer school at BYU. Met requirements for the third year. The third year was really a test of durability, this was where the real decision was made to become a teacher. The result was to sandwich in a year's college at Logan.

After having taught for five years she was married to Jesse Gibbons and because of marriage had to leave the teaching profession. Utah then had a law stating that married women could not teach.

In 1934 they moved to St. George, where she soon found herself back in the swing of teaching. The first five years of teaching in the Washington County School District were spent in the WPA Nursery Schools. During the summers she took more training at different universities in the State

building up some more college credit.

From Nursery School she moved to Kindergarten where she spent the remainder of her teaching career, with the exception of one year, which she was asked to teach in Special Education.

Mrs. Gibbons expresses the feeling that the history of Kindergarten in Washington County was quite a pioneering feat, going from one available building to another with meager supplies and half the space needed for the number of children. When the new elementary schools were built the first special Kindergarten Rooms were provided and Kindergarten had really arrived in St. George.

During these first years of teaching in St. George, more correspondence courses were needed for state requirement for certification which she received in 1952.

Because of the long struggle to receive her bachelors degree she thought she would never want to go back to school again, but as soon as Special Education appeared on the agenda she found herself back in school again being asked to be the Special Education Teacher.

# A Word of Thanks

April 1964-68

I couldn't possibly close my kindergarten career in St. George without expressing my thanks to the lovely people of Dixie, who have made my life here so wholesome and full of meaning.

It is because of the confidence that the Board of Education of Washington County, the parents and the staffs of teachers I have associated with, have placed in me that I have been able to adjust as a teacher. I have always appreciated this.

I want to thank Vernon Worthen, (my first principal in St. George) for his tolerant attitude and friendly spirit, which started me on the road to feeling like a real native of Dixie.

A special thank you to the last and youngest principal of my career, (Mr. Victor Frei of the West Elementary). I extend my gratitude from the bottom of my heart, for making me feel that "being young at heart" is the most important criteria in judging a teacher's age.

Thanks for everything, to the wonderful faculty of the West, for making my last year one of my best, with an abundance of cordiality and friendliness in my behalf.

The outstanding party for my retiring will never be forgotten. A very special thank you to all who helped to make it so lovely.

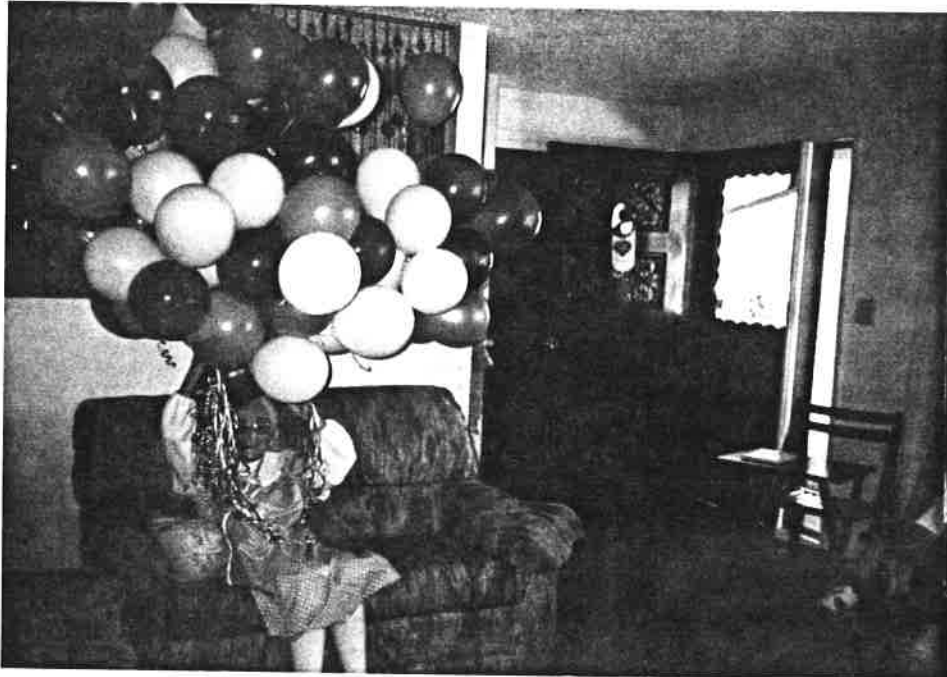
I feel confident the staff I am saying good bye to at the West, will be bound together in some very sincere efforts for future progress, and that Mr. Frei will not be found wanting in the values he chooses.

To the many boys and girls I have taught throughout the years I express my thanks for so many things, (that most adults maybe wouldn't understand) you know—the cookies, the home made candy, the bouquets and the many lovely gifts when you were five; the wedding invitations as you became teenagers; and in some cases the opportunity to teach some of your children. Just thanks for everything.

Again thanks to the people of Dixie for a wonderful career.

Mrs. Gibbons  
Retiring Kindergarten  
Teacher

A SPECIAL PARTY FOR A SPECIAL PERSON, ELEANOR GIBBONS 90TH!!  
A 90 BALOON BOQUET, AND OVER 150 GUESTS, IT WAS A GREAT DAY!!!  
SHE EVEN RECEIVED A HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISH FROM THE PRESIDENT, AND  
HIS WIFE, GEORGE AND BARBARA BUSH, AND ONE FROM GOVERNOR  
BANGERTER.





ELEANOR GIBBONS 90TH BIRTHDAY, AT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL REHAB UNIT  
PICTURED WITH HER THREE CHILDREN: NORMAND LEE SEATED, DONALD RAY,  
AND JESSIE JANE STANDING BEHIND ELEANOR (ELLIE) GIBBONS.

