

Life History of John Peter Johnson

by Leona Johnson Lindskog

My Dad and Mother were both born in Ephraim, Utah. Dad was first married to my Mother's sister, Hannah, who died when her first child, my sister, Hannah was born. Dad then married my Mother, Desena, and they moved to Castle Valley. They made their home in Cleveland on a farm east of town. Mother's father, Peter Kesko Olsen, who owned many Hereford cattle, gave them a small herd. I remember as a child there being many cattle and horses on the farm. Most of the cattle were range stock and each summer they were taken to the mountains. Dad and my older brother, Ivan, would ride the range during the summer to look after the cattle.

Dad was a carpenter by trade, learning it from his father. He was also a farmer and raised many fine crops of grain and hay. Dad had many extra jobs on the side. He sharpened and set saws, mended and half-soleed shoes, repaired tools and acted as dentist, pulling many aching teeth. There was a large orchard on the farm and many hives of honey bees and Dad took care of these. We always had a good store of fruits, vegetables and honey in the cellar. In back of the house, which was a large log cabin, Dad had built a smokehouse where he cured and smoked pork and other kinds of meat. In those days each family provided their own supply of meat. I do not remember eating bear meat but Mother often told us how the bears would come down from the hills in search of food and if the menfolk were lucky enough to kill them they were used for food. At one time Dad drove freight wagons to Delamar, Nevada, a mining town, now a ghost town. He told many stories of those trips.

Dad was always patient and helpful with us as children, teaching us many things. He believed in system and order and we were all expected to do our share of the farm work and have it done on time. He demanded respect from us for others and especially those older than we were in particular our Mother and grandparents. He believed in recreation and that all work and no play was not the way it should be, but that there should be a time and place for each.

In the winter time we would set a post in the middle of the pond. After the pond was filled with water and frozen, father would fasten a pole to the post and fasten the sled to the end of the pole, put on skates and round we would go. Large crowds of boys and girls came out on weekends. We would bake potatoes, eat apples and popcorn we had raised. We had large fires on each side of the pond. The parents joined us for the refreshments and all had a good time.

When I was old enough Father walked with me to Mutual and would sing all the way. He knew all the hymns and many more old songs. One old song I think of now was (I'll hang my Harp on a Willow Tree.) After we moved to town he was secretary for the Cleveland Canal Company for years. He was also on the School Board of Trustees for a long time. He was a counselor in the Bishopric to Joseph Larson and a counselor in the YMMLA.

Summer was a time for picnics and in winter it was long rides in the big bob sleigh pulled by the horses. One time I had a badly burned hand and after it had been treated, Dad got out the bob sleigh and took us all for a long ride, taking my mind off my injury. There was always a hugh wood pile in the yard, which was used in the cook stove and fireplace. Hauling this wood was included having a picnic and we all went along. There was always time too, for camping trips to the mountains. These were usually with other families and lasted a week or more at a time.

Evening on the farm was always a pleasant time. After dinner and the chores were all done we all gathered around the fireplace. It was time for stories and songs. In Dad's boyhood days he belonged to a male quartett in Ephraim so he had a good store of songs, he sang to us and in later years to our children. He loved children and would sit and entertain them by the hour.

Neighbors were few and not too near yet all could be reached in time of need. Our nearest neighbor, Mrs. Pearson, who was a mid-wife, could be reached by hanging out a red flag. Dad got along well with friends and neighbors and it seemed that he and Mother were always sent for first in time of need. Dad was slow to anger and when angry he was very cool and self-controlled, thereby winning many an argument. A good talking to from him when we miss-behaved hurt more and had a better effect than a sound threshing. I dreaded it much more and it made me feel so small. He could spank too, though.

During winters when harvests had not been so good Dad worked at the coal mines. When I was the baby in the family our whole family lived in Castle Gate where Dad worked in the coal mine.

When I was seven Dad bought lots in town. He and his father built a house and we moved to town. Grandfather built a house on an adjoining lot. My brothers were now old enough to do much of the farm work. Our new home was near the school and Dad got the job as janitor. Many children came several miles to school and we had some very cold weather at times. I remember Dad taking care of children with frost-bitten ears, hands and feet. He was kind and gentle with them and they loved him.

In 1927 our home in Cleveland burned and Dad bought a small place in Price which included a gas station. I was teaching in Kimberiy, Nevada at the time. Besides taking care of the gas station, which Mother and all of us helped out with, Dad worked as carpenter on the State Road.

Dad was blessed with good health all of his life. I remember him having but one severe illness. He and my brother, Ivan, contracted typhoid while working on a job as carpenter. Both fully recovered from it.

Dad retired from work in his late sixties. He was not sick, just worn out. The Dr. said he was fine except the old ticker was worn out. He rested much of the time. He retained his sense of good humor to the end. He was never one to complain

or dwell on the dark side of things but could always make us see the brighter side. When asked how he was he would say, "I have a good home, a good family, plenty to eat and a place to sleep. God has been good to me. I can't complain." No one ever had a better Dad than he.

PRICE COUPLE PASS 50TH MARITAL YEAR

Tribune Intermountain Wire

PRICE--Mr. & Mrs. John P. Johnson of 419 East Fourth South St. passed the fiftieth milestone on the matrimonial trail during the past week. They were married in the Manti L D S Temple on February 11, 1891, by Daniel H. Wells.

Mr. Johnson was born in Ephraim, Utah, July 14, 1867, a son of Peter and Margaret Ann Hansen Johnson, Early Emery County Settlers. He has been engaged in farming and cattle raising and is active in church and civic affairs.

Mrs. Johnson is also a native of Ephraim, having been born July 23, 1876, to Andrew Peter and Anrie Mortensen Oisen. She has served in the Relief Society and Genealogical Societies of the LDS Church.

The Johnsons have eight living children: Mrs. Hanna Oveson and Clement Johnson of Cleveand, Utah, Ivar Johnson of Salt Lake City, Mrs. Leona Lindsong of Ruth, Nevada; Mrs. Sydonia Jones of Price and Glen and Elmer Johnson and Mrs. Edna Robison of Hanksville, Utah.

They have 37 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren