



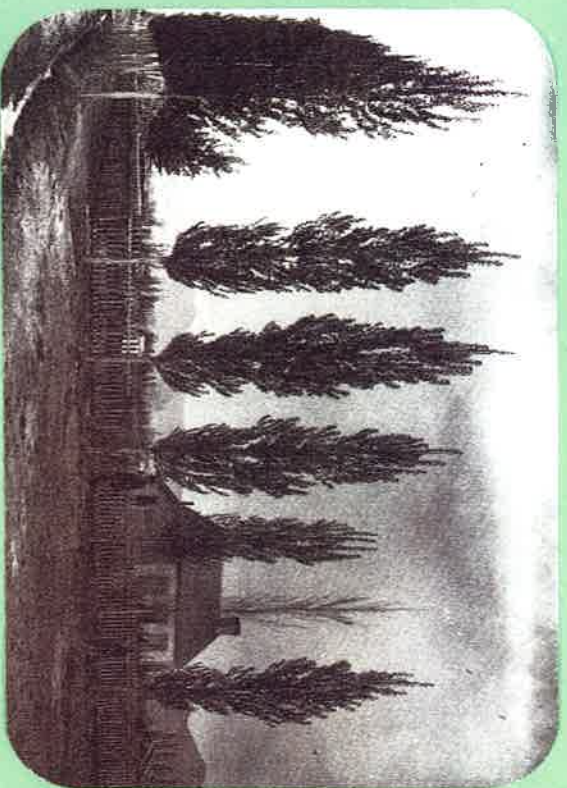
**History of  
James Albert McKee  
&**

**Eliza Mae Sherman  
McKee**

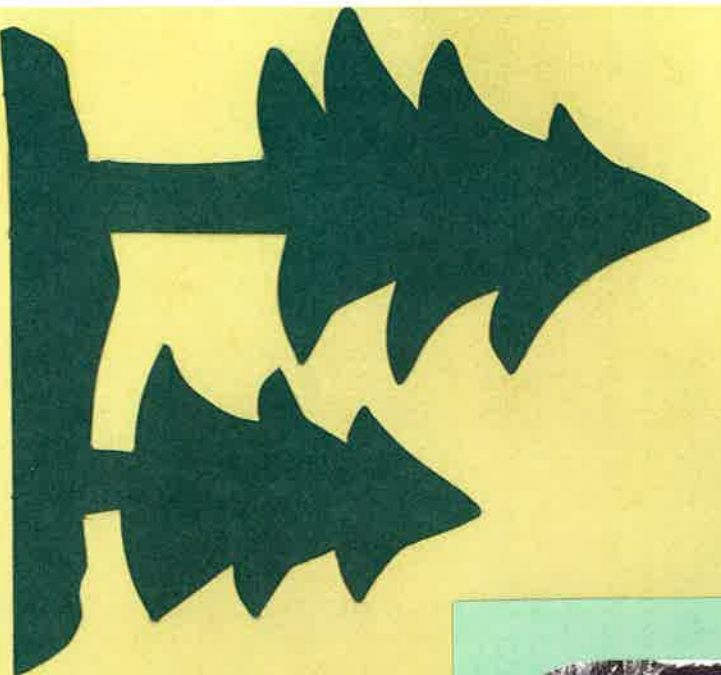




**Ruth, Bert, & James McKee**



**Uncle Hugh, home & farm**





# History of James Albert McKee Jr.

(History gathered by daughter, Hazel McMullin. Additional information of the times and related photos added by granddaughter Bernice M. Payne)

James Albert McKee Jr. son of James Albert McKee Sr. and Ruth Chase McKee. His father was born in Palmyra, Utah and his mother was born in Nephi, Utah. Bert (as he was called) was the 2<sup>nd</sup> child of eight.

His parents and grandparents were of sturdy pioneer stock. His grandparents came from Pennsylvania, Maine, Vermont, and Ohio. They heard about the gospel of Jesus Christ from various missionaries and embraced the gospel. Both sets of grandparents were traveling with the saints and met their spouses during the Nauvoo, Council Bluffs period and married during that time. Grandpa and grandma McKee married in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Grandpa and grandma Chase married “on the plains.” Both of these families endured all the hardships and made all the sacrifices that were necessary during these early days of the church.

Bert was born 3 Aug. 1882 in Huntington. His parents were married in Nephi, Utah on 17 Jan 1879, and made their first home in Holden, Utah. James Sr. had an uncle, Hugh McKee that lived with his family in Fountain Green, Utah. When the saints in Sanpete County were called to go to the Castle Valley and settle on the Huntington River, Hugh’s son-in-law went ahead with the first group in 1879 and returned the following February to report that things looked favorable.

So James Albert McKee Sr., and wife Ruth Chase McKee and their first child, a daughter, traded their possessions in Holden for a team, harness, and wagon and traveled to Huntington in 1880, with Uncle Hugh McKee and his family. Huntington was just a bed of prickly pears.

They farmed where they could get irrigation water for their land from the river. After the Huntington Canal’s finished they both got small farms adjoining each other.



# LOG CABINS

Huntington's frontier settlers erected log cabins as they cleared land. Pine was abundant in the area and usually preferred as it offered long straight logs. A log cabin could be raised and largely completed with as few as two to four different tools, including a felling axe, a broad axe, and a hand saw or crosscut saw.

Logs were round with grooves chopped in each end. Groves, or notches provide structural integrity, by locking the log ends in place, and give the cabin rigidity and stability. These were placed one on top of the other. Chinks (cracks) between the logs were filled with mud. Chinking and daubing completed the exterior walls of the log cabin by sealing them against driving wind and snow, helping them to shed rain, and blocking the entry of vermin. In addition, chinking and daubing could compensate for a minimal amount of heaving and save time if immediate shelter was needed. Chinking, especially the daubing, is the least durable part of a log building. It is susceptible to cracking as a result of freeze-thaw action, structural settlement, drying of the logs, and a thermal expansion-contraction rate that differs from that of the logs. Seasonal deterioration of chinking necessitates continual inspection and regular patching or replacement.

A whitewash of lime was used to paint the inside walls. Willows were used for laths nailed to the logs and plastered with mud. This was then rubbed smooth and white washed.

There was one door, and usually no windows. If windows were cut into the walls, animal skins or boards fixed to slide across the openings were used. Some builders used paper greased with animal fat, which made it both translucent and waterproof. Glass was a luxury. As soon as stores were opened however, it could be purchased from the merchants. There was one standard size for windows, 8x10 inches.

Roofs were made of rough boards covered with brush and straw and covered with dirt. These dirt roofs served very well in dry weather, but leaked badly in stormy weather. Later, shingle mills made better roofing possible.

Floors were either bare ground packed hard or rough boards covered with home made rag carpets or rugs.

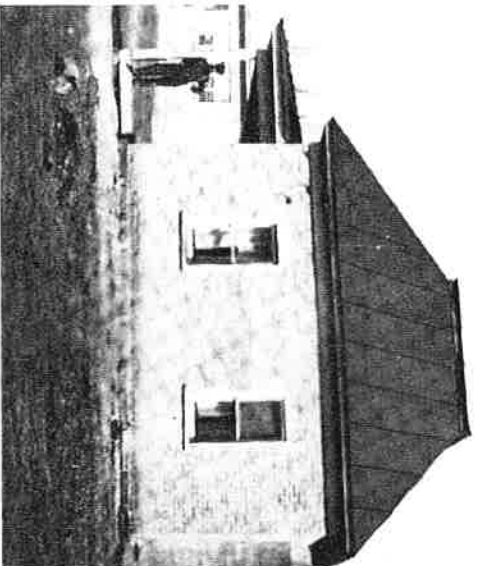


Typical log home and pioneers

The first McKee home was a one-room log cabin on the corner of main and center street, where the new Huntington City Hall now stands. It was later used for a blacksmith shop. When Bert was a small boy, they moved to a two-room house, one block west. The got milk from the Brinkerhoff family that lived about four blocks away. One day Bert took a horse out of the corral and rode it after the milk. When he got back, his mother took the rope he had on the horse and gave him a whipping for taking the horse without asking.

Bert and his father later tore down the house and the two of them hauled it out to their farm. Out of this material, his dad built a two-room house with a dirt roof, which they soon moved into. This was his home for the rest of his single life-- which was about 15 or 16 years of age.

The first school Bert attended was a seminary which was located on 1<sup>st</sup> north and 1<sup>st</sup> east. His father hauled the wood for heating. This paid the tuition for his children. While attending this school, he walked over a mile. In the winter when the snow was from one to two feet deep, Bert walked ahead of the rest of the children to break a trail for them. He was the oldest boy. School didn't let out until 4:00 and then he had to take the horses and cows to the river to water them and then chop wood for the two fires and do the rest of his chores.



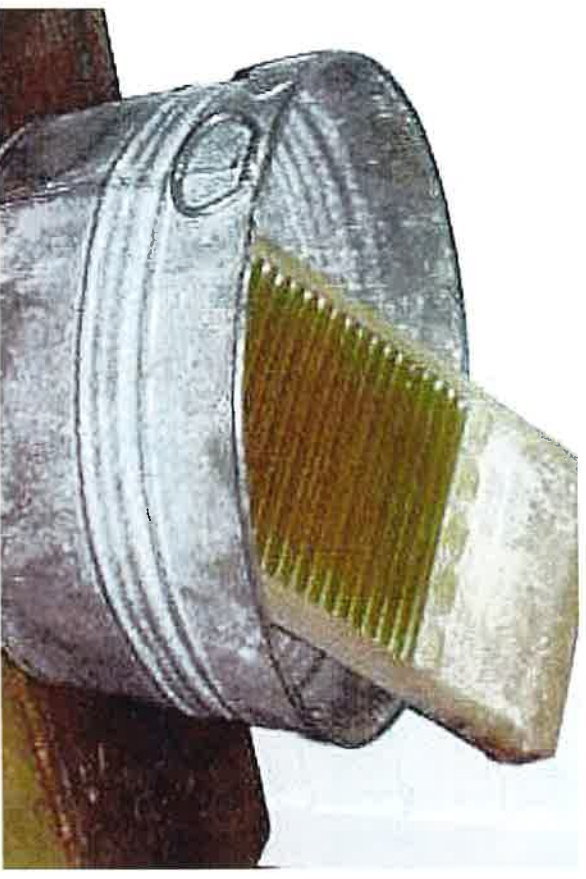
This one room brick building (50 E. Center St.) was built for a jail with iron bars on the windows; later town meetings and seminary classes were held there until 1918 when it became the library



In the winter we had to haul water from the river for use in the house. In the summer it would run by the house in an irrigation ditch.

Before electric washing machines, most women did their washing in a large metal tub with a scrubbing board.

In the winter, it was harder because the houses were so small. But in the summer, it could be done outside in the yard.



My dad set out an orchard and currant bushes. We would pick the currants off the stem and I'd take them in horse and buggy to Cleveland and sell them for 10 cents a quart.

That seems like a lot of work for such a small amount of money.

(All photos from the Internet)



When I was about 10 years old, I took care of Lond Brinkerhoff's farm while he was away for a while.

There were few fences and I got what ever I could get from penning stray stock.

Once Lond and I went hunting rabbits and ground owls. While we were gone the cow that Lond's wife's parents gave them for a wedding presents bloated and died. That was a terrible loss in those days. It supplied all the milk, butter, cream and cheese for their family.



I remember what big floods used to come down the river when it rained.

There was an old wood bridge over the river, and the men had to gather up all the chains in town to chain the bridge down so it wouldn't go with the flood.

My schooling was rather short. I didn't finish the eighth grade. Some of my teachers were: J. Flemming Wakefield, Susan Wakefield, Ann Ryan, Don Woodward, Mr. Poag and Elias Cox.

After I was about 14 or 15 years old, I started working for other people, and from that time on I supported my self. Wages then were about 50 cent a day for a boy. If I was lucky I got 50 cents. If not, I worked for what ever I could get. My experience on the farm came in handy for I had learned to plow, harrow, tend water, shock grain and all of the other jobs on a farm.

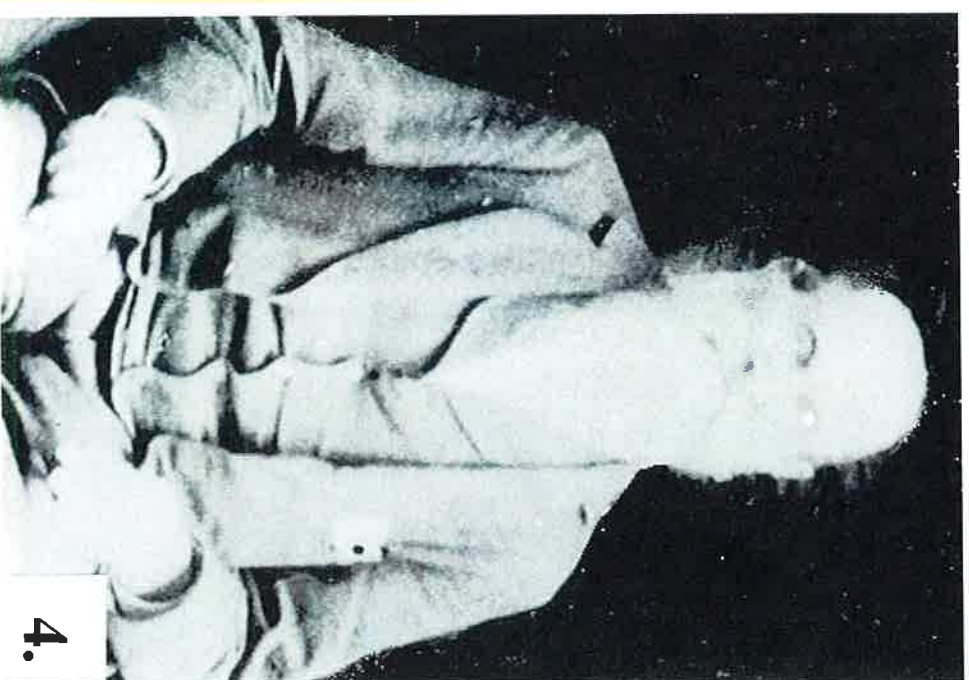
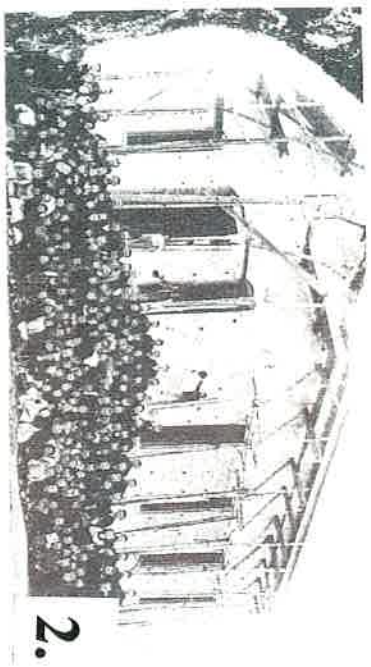
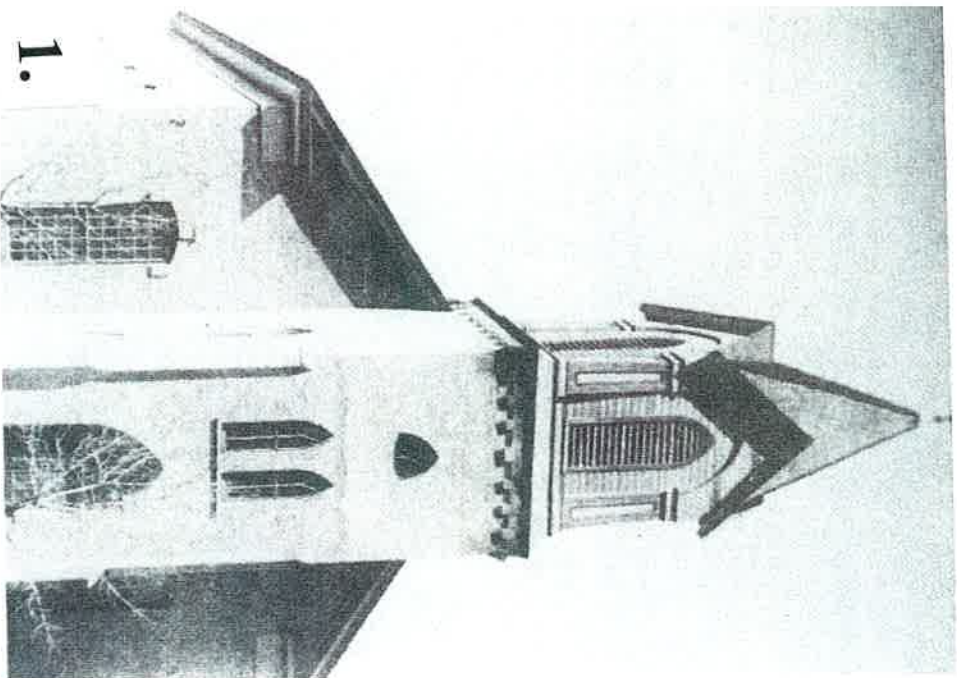
Some of my friends as a young man were: Will Stolworthy, Frank Guymon, Grant Young, George Herman, and Aaron Howard.

Sleigh riding was our man amusement in the winter. The snow was from 1 to 2 feet deep all winter long and we had lots of bob-sled races. In the summer we often had horse races on a long straight track up above town to the northwest. Horse races were always a part of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and the 24<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations.



The double-runner, or bob sled, as it is frequently called, will not be found expensive, and if well built, it will last long enough to be used by two or three generations. Load the sled with a crowd of jolly fellows or whatever load needs to be moved. A load of logs for building log cabins, ice for the ice house, or fitted for fun and the winter enjoyment of bob-sled racing.





1. The stately Huntington LDS Tabernacle graced the town's Main Street from 1896 until 1968, where Zion's First National Bank now stands
2. The construction of the meetinghouse/tabernacle was accomplished with the help and sacrifice of many.
3. Similar to the famous Salt Lake Tabernacle, Huntington's was built in a similar fashion, with 12 pillars supporting the balcony, enabling all a clear view of the podium area.
4. Grandpa Chase, stalwart in the LDS faith and he was a friend to the Indians of the area and translated for them.



The Relief Society built a large building behind the new meeting house, about 50 West Center St. The work was all done by donation. We took our pay in dance tickets at 35 cents a ticket. I hauled sand with team and wagon from the river bottom to mix the mortar with. This kept me dancing for 2 or 3 years. The bricks were made at Will Green's adobe mill down northeast of town.

Two or three times a week we would meet as an athletic club in the seminary building. Boxing and wrestling was our main evening entertainment.



We had Sunday School on Sunday mornings, Sacrament Meetings were always held at 2'o clock in the afternoon. Then we had another meeting that was somewhat like YMYW on Sunday evenings. The church meetings weren't planned like they are now, with young people taking part. They would just call men out of the audience to talk.

One of my earliest faith promoting experiences involved my Grandpa Chase. Some time after he was left a widower he made his home with us. During that time he developed a cancerous tumor on the side of his neck. He wanted my dad to take him to a faith doctor in Rabbit Valley, which was near St. George. It would take several days to get there by horse and buggy. Grandfather had fasted and prayed for 3 days and while we were hitching up the horses he called Dad in the house and said we wouldn't need to go for he had felt the cancer leave. As far as I know it never bothered him again.

When Grandpa Chase was about 46 years old, in 1860 and 1861 he filled a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He was called to go to England. He left his wives and family home. He had 8 children with my grandmother at that time. And two children with his second wife. The youngest was a new baby. This must have been extremely hard for all of them. To make things even harder, while he was gone a teenage son fell off the house and died.

I learned many trades while I was growing into manhood. One of them was in the sheep business. I learned to shear sheep, sack wool, herd sheep and move the camp for the herder. Pioneers prided themselves on learning many different trades.



Shearing sheep is an art that requires a certain amount of skill and lots of hands-on experience to learn the trade. It is also very hard physical labor. It is extremely hard on the back, knees and hands.



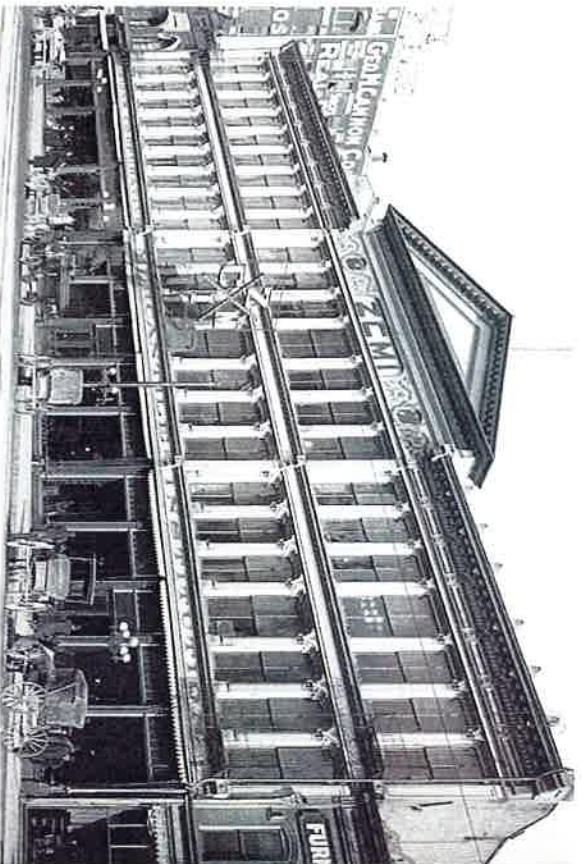
Before electricity and electric clippers were available shearing was done with hand clippers.

The sheepherders wagon had all the comforts of home. A bed in the front, and a table and stove along the sides near the door.





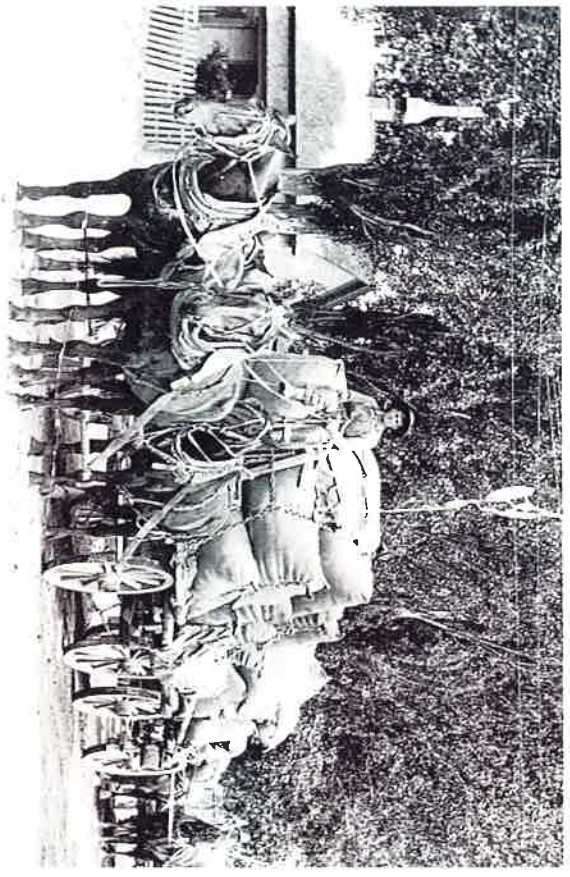
**Traveling from Vernal to Huntington in 1901 would have looked a lot like this photo, a lot of snow and mountain passes. It was approximately 120 miles. He would have had the 1 change of clothes he bought and what supplies he could carry with him on his horse.**



**Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution, known as ZCMI, the "People's Store," is what one historian called America's First Department Store, and was founded in March 1868. The store sold a wide variety of goods including clothing, wagons, machinery, sewing machines and carpets -- all available to member cooperatives at the same price as in Salt Lake City. ZCMI served as an outlet for the products produced by the Saints themselves as well as "states" goods.**

**This is a typical freighting wagon loaded with the supplies that were much needed in the settlements throughout the state.**

**(all photos from the Internet)**





## THRESHING WHEAT AND OATS

Steam engines were fragile, complicated machines requiring an experienced 'engineer'. Threshing machines likewise required an experience 'separator' to operate them. They had to constantly monitor the machines, oiling and grease the bearing surfaces, lacing and setting belts. Adjusting the engine and sieves to accommodate changes in the crop being fed.



A fireman kept the engine fed with straw and wood to keep the steam pressure in the engine boiler constant. Tankermen hauled water to the engine to keep the water level high enough for steady pressure. Bundlemen and teamsters take 4-6 teams of bundlemen at work in the fields to keep the steam thresher 'fed' once the operation started. Below the wheat bundles are being forked into the thresher, with another wagon waiting. Once the steam engine was fired up and at operational pressure the operation had to be maintained. A second grain wagon is waiting; the team at the left of the picture. The crew would work from dawn to dusk and beyond. The traveling crew would often stay at the local farm.



When these crews stayed at the farm where they were contracted to thresh the grain, it would take several women to prepare enough food for the "threshers".



Most every family in the area kept milk cows. Butter beyond that required for home consumption was bartered to local stores or marketed by peddlers to the coal camps. Butter was a high-commodity product. Local families were always in need of extra income. (Internet photos)



Coop-creameries were built during the early 1900's, stimulated by equipment manufacturers, who painted glowing pictures of large profits to be made. However, the milk supply didn't quite fill the bill for this expensive equipment and most creamery operations were abandoned.

At the age of 17, I drove 4 head of horses on the freight road for Silas young.

When I was 19, I went to Vernal to stay with my Aunt Almira and Uncle Curtis Washington Caldwell. She was my mother's sister. They had several boys near my age.

Some of the time I was there I worked on a threshing machine. And at other times my cousin and I helped a man put up his hay. I worked at all the odd jobs I could get. I made enough to buy me a horse to ride and 2 suits of clothes. I stayed in Vernal for 4 ½ months. I came back home in December. (That would have been a terribly cold time to transverse the mountains between Vernal and Huntington.)

The following spring my father sent me on the freight road for him. Then I worked on the threshing machine again. All I earned went to help support the family. Following these experiences, I went to the reservoir and worked out my father's water assessments by doing work there in the canyon.

In the winter, I could get a fair amount of work hauling coal with a team. Sometimes I had to walk to keep warm. Then I got an old tub and put a can in it and made a fire in the can. This was a heater for my sleigh.

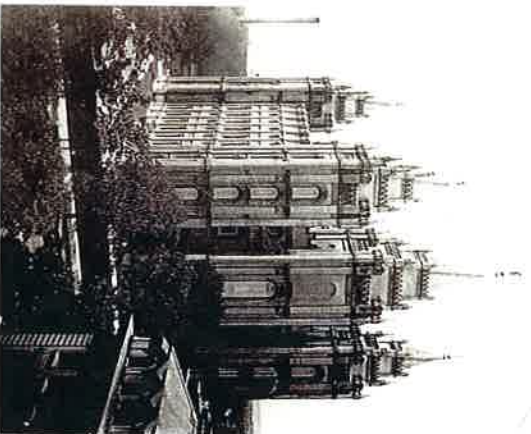
When I was about 20 years old, I started courting the girl I married. I had to walk about 11 bocks to where she lived. I went with Eliza Mae Sherman for over two years. I went out to Sunnyside at the time of a strike at the mine there. I worked about two weeks and quit and come back to Huntington and got married on 25 January, 1905.



Our first home was a 1 room house which we rented for \$1.25 a month. After our baby girl was born (Vivian) we rented a 2-roomer for \$2.50 a month.



**In Oct 1906, we took our young babe on the train to Salt Lake City and went through the temple on 4 Oct. 1906.**



**Family photo taken on trip to Salt Lake City**

**I had several jobs always trying to make a little more money. When the creamery opened up I worked there for about 8 months at \$1.00 a day.**

**On 2 January, 1908, a new company was formed known as the Miller Mercantile company. They erected a new brick store. I worked for George Miller and J. W. Nixon part of the time driving 4 horses freighting goods for their store.**

**Goods had to be freighted by team and wagon from Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) in Salt Lake City. The stock for the store was limited, but the most necessary items needed at the time were purchased such as: calico, canvas goods, needles and thread, knitting needles, yarn, pins, shoe laces, muslin or factory cloth as it was then called, medical supplies, flour, sugar, molasses, salt, soda, honey, and hardware of all kinds. If a customer requested a certain item it came in as a "special order" weeks or months later.**



WITNESSES:  
*Wm. W. [unclear]*

Signed *James A. [unclear]* GROOM  
Signed *Eliza [unclear]* BRIDE  
IN THE PRESENCE OF  
*Wm. W. [unclear]*  
*Eliza [unclear]*

according to the laws of the State of Utah at  
*28th* day of *Jan* in the year of our Lord  
*One thousand Nine hundred and five*

**HOLY MATRIMONY**

This Certifies that  
*James [unclear]* and *Eliza [unclear]*  
in the State of Utah, were by me joined together in

(COUNTY OF

STATE OF UTAH

**Marriage Certificate**



Sometimes I'd get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and haul a load of dirt and go on to work on the threshing machine before daylight.

In the spring of 1909, I was operated on for appendicitis. That resulted in a fair amount of time off work. In August, I went to work in Mohrland cooking for the surveyors. Mohrland was just opening up. I worked there until the next spring. In about 2 years Blackhawk (Hiawatha) opened up. It was a coal mine north of Mohrland. I worked there for a while.

Sometime I helped Mort Jensen move his sawmill up Huntington Canyon and worked with him for a while.

Our first home was a log house which I bought. I later bought a vacant lot and moved the house onto it. After a few years I sold it and got me a farm out north of Huntington, but lost it under mortgage.

The next home we had was a frame house which I moved on to a ½ lot a block west of main street. We lived there for several years.

I worked in the timber for Bake Lott. I went with him to Idaho for about 2 weeks. The next summer I went back to Idaho and bargained for 20 acres of land and was going to move my family there. However, the next spring the fellow sent me word that he had decided not to sell.

Then I tried to get a farm in Holden, Millard County, and that fell through.

During all of this time of working here and there; trying to buy this place and that, we had 9 children. Vivian Mae born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1905. Our first boy, Herald, born on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1907. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> was a girl we named Lena Aleen, born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1909. James Eldon came along next. He was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 1911. Number 5 was another girl, Velma, born on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October, 1912. Our next child was a girl also, Jean Ann arrived on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, 1914. Alma Dick was #7, coming to town on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1918. Floyd arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, 1922 and Hazel Ruth on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 1928.





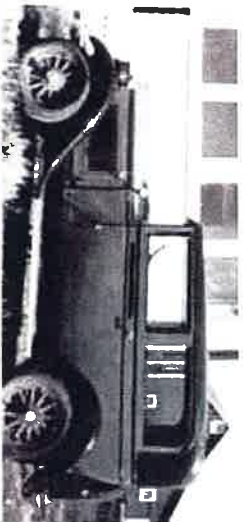
**It soon became necessary for the inhabitants of Utah to have safer and better homes than log cabins. There were several who started to manufacture clay bricks. Some of the homes that were built of bricks from these early manufacturers are still standing.**

**John P. and James W. Cahoon had the top brick company in the state. It was located in the vicinity of where the McKees made their home. It was called Interstate Brick Company. This may have been the company that James (Bert) worked for.**



**(photos from the Utah Historical Research Center)**

During World War II, I worked as a carpenter's helper out to Horse Canyon, near Sunnyside, Utah in Carbon County. While working there, I fell and broke my neck. I spent quite a while in the hospital and had a cast from the top of my head to my waist for several months. Needless to say this was a very hard time for us.



We had a Willis Knight Car. It was billed as “better than a Ford”. We just knew it was better than a horse and buggy.  
(Internet Photo)

We were living in our two room house on the ½ block in town. (diagram to the left) We had a barn, corrals, a team of horses, pigs, chickens, milk cow etc.

Floyd had an FFA pig and kept it in a small building by the corral. It needed extra heat so he put in a small stove. One night, the heater started the building on fire and not only burned up the building, but the pig too.



My boys, Floyd and Dick were both involved in WWII. Floyd was in the navy, and Dick was in the army-air force. Dick was only 8 days out of Pearl Harbor on a transport ship when Pearl Harbor was attacked. This was a time of great worry for us. Due to me still being in a cast, the chores became Hazel's responsibility.

I bought an acre of ground in Salt Lake City around 23<sup>rd</sup> East and 30<sup>th</sup> South and started to build a house on it. I got a job at a brick yard. Mae and I stayed there about a year, but Hazel didn't like it so she came back to Huntington and stayed with her friend to continue high school there.

When Floyd and Dick returned from the war, they wanted to buy the Killpack farm in Huntington. It was located down by the river on the northeast side of Huntington. I didn't feel like it would work, but we figured it out and decided to do it. So I sold the property in Salt Lake for \$3600.00 and headed for home. I had 36 \$100.00 bills in my pocket. For a short time, we were rich.

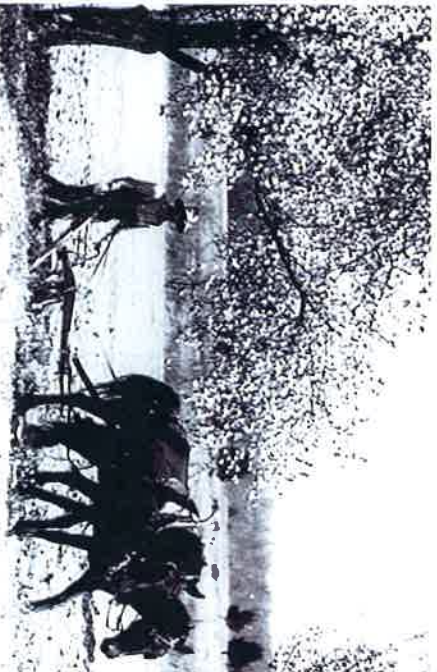


**Dick on one of the horses he was working with. Note the house in the back ground. This home had a nice front porch and a very large yard.**

**The screen house we enjoyed was just to the left of the horse in the middle of the yard.**



**This internet photo shows how hay was raked on the farm. This photo is about 1940.**



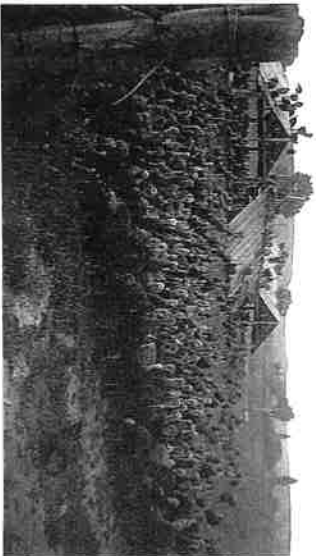
**Like the one above, this photo shows how plowing was done. The man walked behind the plows and tried to keep them upright while the horses pulled the plow.**

**Definitely not an easy task, as it was usually very hot and very hard work.**



**Horse shoeing was a back-breaking task. But a necessary thing for the horses. Their feet needed trimming often and the shoes kept their feet protected. As Floyd hammered a shoe on, the hammer must have chipped a piece of the metal from the shoe and it flew into his eye.**





One of the things we tried was raising turkeys. We had hundreds.

Floyd and Dick liked to raise horses. One time when Floyd was shoeing a horse, a piece of iron from the horse shoe chipped off and struck him in the eye and resulted in blinding him in the eye.

He was able to get a glass eye and it looked pretty normal.

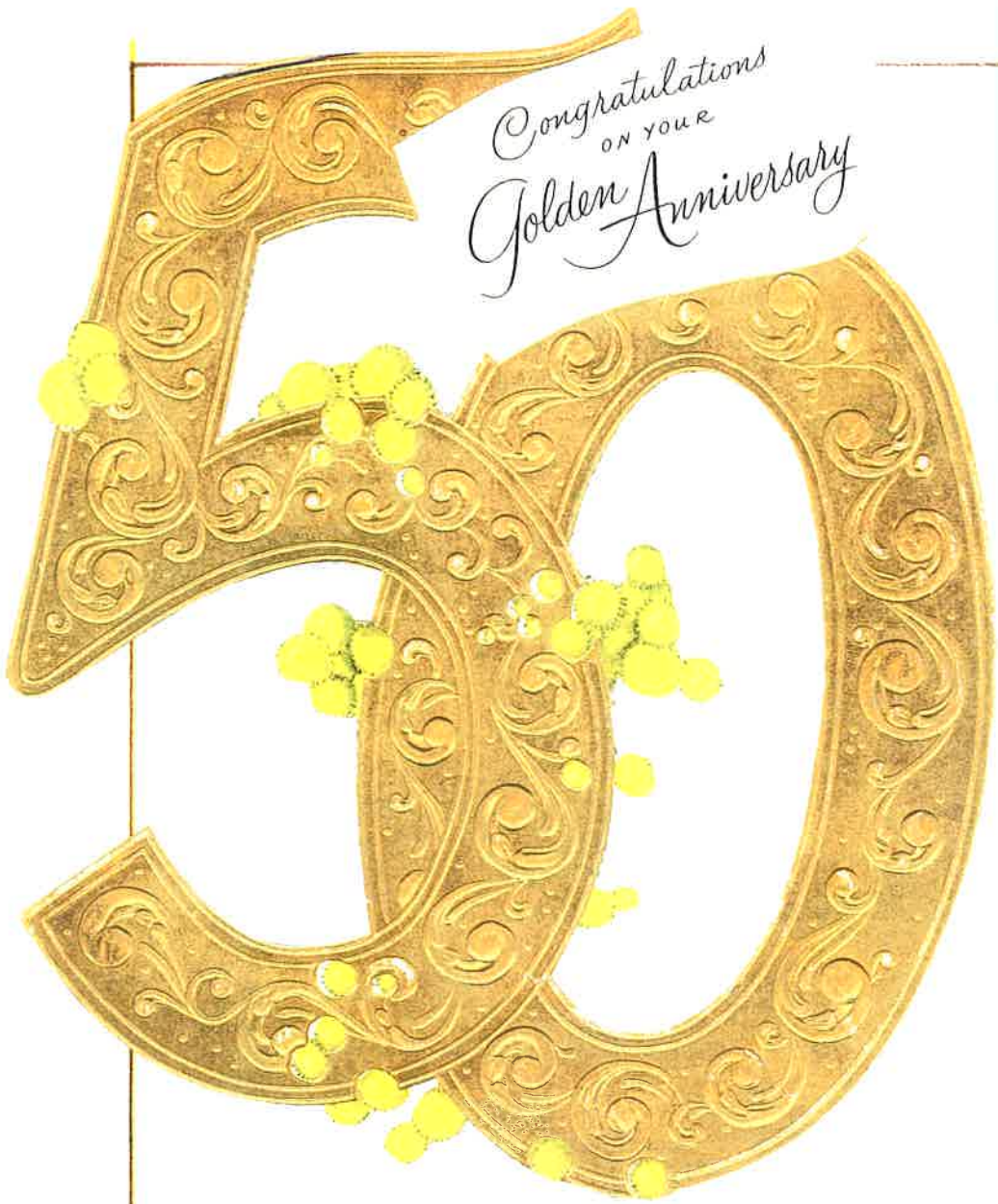
From the time Bernice was just little she liked to ride the horses when she came up. Depending on who was home, Floyd or Dick would take her for a ride if they had the time.

Once when they were not home, I was in the field and she begged until Hazel brought her out and put her on the back of the work horse. I took her up the field and back. By then her pants were soaked through with sweat from the horse and she had had enough.



Soon Floyd took over the farm and all I did was a little farming. Mainly I took care of my yard and my home, trying to fix it up to look nice. It was the nicest home we had ever had. I planted flowers all over my yard and I just loved to take care of them. I built a small screened building in the center of the front yard that we called the summer cottage. We just loved to sit and listen and smile at the flowers and enjoy life. We had family reunions for a while. Usually some where in Huntington Canyon. We also had family dinners especially at holiday time. Home made ice cream was my specialty.

Congratulations  
ON YOUR  
Golden Anniversary



Sincere Congratulations!  
How proud you both must be  
To see this long-awaited dream  
Become reality—  
And may you find this happy day  
Will hold the promise, too  
Of even greater happiness  
As golden dreams come true!



**McKee family reunion up  
Huntington Canyon.**

**Estimated to be about 1950  
Bert & Mae are on far right  
side.**



**Thanksgiving at the Yates  
home. With Mae and Bert in  
the center and parts of  
Vivian's, Hazel's and Floyd's  
family gathered around. This  
was about 1957.**

**Bert was famous for his  
homemade icecream. He  
turned that old crank for  
hours.**





Mae and I lived a good life together. Not an easy life for the most of it. But not many people celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

A great blow came to me on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November of 1959. I lost my darling wife Mae. She had some health problems and we took her to the hospital in Price. They took her to surgery but found that she was full of cancer and so they just sewed her back up. She did not wake up from the surgery. I guess it was a good thing. She didn't have to suffer. But having her go that fast was very hard. I was now all alone. The kids tried to visit when they could. But they have families and jobs of their own.

Then I met the widow of Olef Carl Jensen, Sarah White Jensen. I married Sarah on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1961 in my home in Huntington. We were married by Pres. Frank L. Hall. Sarah's family and my family all came to the reception and we had a wonderful big family party. Bert and Sarah lived together for 6 years almost to the day.

I turned 80 years old in August of 1962. My family had a big party for me.

Bert said, "I guess I will die on the farm where I am now living." That is exactly what he did. Bert had a very short illness, which resulted in pneumonia that took his life. He died on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1976, at his home. He was 84 years old.

The following song which was sung at his funeral, exemplifies his life.

### THESE HANDS

These hands ain't the hands of a gentleman. These hands are wrinkled and old.  
These hands raised a family. These hands raised a home.  
Now these hands raise to praise the Lord.  
These hands won the heart of my loved one. And with her they were never alone.  
If these hands filled their task, then what more can one ask?  
Now these fingers have worked to the bone. Now don't try to judge me.  
By what you'd like to be. For my life ain't been much success.  
While some people have power, but still they grieve,  
While these hands brought me happiness.  
Now I'm tired and I'm old and I ain't got much gold.  
Maybe things ain't been all that I planned.  
God above hear my plea. When it's time to judge me,  
Take a look at these hard working hands.