

## **Walter Ralphs and LaVon Nelson**

Walter was born 4 Mar 1901, the youngest son of Parley and Hannah Ralphs. He never knew his father. As a boy, his main chore was to take the cows to the pasture on foot. When grass got short, he took them to the hills and stayed all day. He didn't want to go to school, but his Mother and sisters pressured him into it, but he didn't like it. He went through the 9th grade in Ferron and then to the Presbyterian school for 2 years. He didn't go on to the Academy like his older brothers and sisters. As he got bigger, every one of his older brothers had jobs for him to do.

When he was 17, he tried to join the Navy, but his mother found out and talked with the Bishop. He was shortly called on a mission. He served in the Mexican Mission. His first 6 months were in New Mexico. He then went to San Antonio TX, then to Laredo, and finally to Montarae Mexico. When he returned, his friends were all gone and he became a loner. He was active in his church duties for a while and served in the Sunday School Presidency.

Walter and his mother didn't have much to live on. He farmed during the summer and worked in the mining camps south west of Helper in the winters for 3-4 years. He worked in the Rains, Little Standard and Little Columbia mines. He had two close calls while working in the mines. One winter was very cold and froze all the outside water. He had gone into the mine to get some water and had been standing on the track. He just stepped off as a trip came by. He could have been crushed by it. Another time he had just moved away as a big rock fell where he was standing. He did crush his left ring finger coupling coal cars.

Walter raised and raced horses. A favorite event was the 4th of July celebrations, which lasted 2-3 days. The races started in front of Peterson's store and ran up the street to where Ray Wareham now lives. Sometimes they started from where Perry Snow lived. They held dances every night during the celebration. For Easter, Walter and his friends rode horses to the hills, to the Round Knoll and Long Knoll.

Walter married LaVon Nelson in 1936. They lived in the same house as Hannah. It was partitioned in two, but they shared the same bathroom. LaVon probably knew Hannah better than any of the children by living so close to her for 25 years.

Walter bought El's 20 acres under the dugway, another 20 acres from Bartons, and 120 acres from the County in the early 1920's. He also farmed the original 53 acres of Parley's on the meadow. He was one of the better farmers in the county, receiving the Best Farmer and Best Pasture awards. He sold the farm to Preston Thompson in 1960.

Walter served two terms on the Ferron Town Board in the 1950's. He took several trips to Salt Lake and Las Vegas with the Municipal League. He also ran for Mayor against Max, but Max won. Walter served as Brand Inspector for 10 years.

Walter was always willing and available to help anyone, whether it was spraying fruit trees, building a shed, or working on the farm or with the cattle. In his later years, Walter enjoyed fishing, and spent many hours and days with French Beach fishing the many streams and reservoirs of the area.