

# *ELMER AMES HUNTSMAN*



*"An autobiography of Elmer Ames Huntsman, written by my own hand according to the best of my recollection."*

I was born 9th of April, 1870 at Wellsville,  
Cache County, Utah. I am the son of Isaiah

Huntsman and Rebecca Carter Ames. In 1872 we moved to Fillmore, Millard County, Utah, at the age of four. When I was five years old we moved to Annabella, Sevier County, Utah, in 1874. There I spent nine years of my childhood life. During these years I secured a very meager education. I never attended a free school in my life. We had to pay a tuition to attend school at that time as there were no free schools.

My father passed away in 1877, leaving mother with four children to support and in those pioneer days we had a hard struggle for existence. I was seven years old at the time of my father's death. My father's father was buried in Fillmore and my father requested that he also be buried there by the side of his father, James Huntsman.

My father's trade was blacksmith. He also played the violin and played for dances. He was a very faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and would always answer the call from the Church Authorities to move to new places. My mother carded the wool, spun the yarn, wove the cloth on a loom to make our clothes.

When we moved to Annabella in the fall of 1874 the Indians were plentiful in those days and we used to be very scared of them. I can remember them very well. I remember one old buck that came begging. Mother had some dried corn cooked for dinner. She gave him a bowlful and gave him a spoon. He ate till he was full and then he would roll on his stomach a while then eat again. Mother was afraid he would run for camp and take her bowl and spoon with him. The Indians were covered with lice and sometimes we would get a dose of lice from them.

In 1881, after my father's death, my mother went

to work for her son-in-law, Daniel Dalton who had a contract building railroads in Salina Canyon. I know what it is to be raised in poverty.

While we were living in Annabella, I worked during the summer herding cows. While engaged in this work I had the first direct answer to prayer I can remember. My cows became unruly and I was unable to handle them and there was a field of grain that they were determined to get into. I knew if they got into the grain there would be damage bill to pay. There was a river close by where I was herding the cows and they would cross over and by the time I would get them back and I would cross, the cows would be back over on the other side. I put forth all my energy to handle them, but they seemed to be gaining ground, so I dropped onto my knees and asked the Lord to help me, just a few child words, but with faith, and the cows changed their minds and I had no more trouble with them that day.

I was baptized in the summer of 1878, in the Sevier River by Elder Acy Holley.

We moved to Cainsville, Piute County, Utah in the fall of 1883. Piute County was divided later and Cainsville was in the new county which was called Wayne County. Here we started to make a living, but the County being newly settled, there were no schools, but a Sunday School was soon organized and we served the Lord in private homes in the winter and in the summer months we built boweries for worship and used tents. I was ordained to the office of Deacon and served the people by sweeping the bowery and by keeping fresh bows on the same to keep it cool as the summer days were very warm in that sunny climate. When we first settled this county we built our houses out of cottonwood logs and put

dirt roofs on them. We had no floors or doors in them because lumber was not to be had. But we lived comfortable in them as the winters were mild. During the first winter of these houses the green sprouts would grow all over the walls. On the inside of the walls they would grow from one foot to eighteen inches long. Then they would wither up in the spring and start to grow from the outside until the hot sun would kill them. Later years as lumber was brought into the valley, we were able to have floors and doors on our houses. The people were united and no rich, but all poor as far as money was concerned, but rich in spirit.

We used to dance in the bowery on the dirt floor, but when the people got floors in their homes, if we wanted to dance we would get permission from someone to remove their furniture and would have a good time. It would not take long, as the furniture did not consist of many pieces in those days. We had no rugs to move. Many a time I have danced bare footed. While I was a child I went bare footed most of the time. My feet became calloused and greasewood would form as soles on my feet as I walked over the greasewood bows. Many of the stickers would break off before any pain was felt, but many of them went through the "greasewood soles" and caused great pain.

Here is where I received another answer to prayer. I had been without shoes for a long time. While traveling through the greasewood I was impressed to pray. I had been having great pain from the stickers going through my "soles", so I knelt down in the brush and in simple words asked the Lord for a pair of shoes. I got up and had not gone far when I met George Rust who asked me if I wanted a job. I said, "Yes, you bet I do." He said if I would work for him a few

days he would give me a dollar a day. I worked six days and got a pair of shoes for myself and a pair for my brother Jim and some groceries for my mother. Those days a man would be glad to work for that wage, so you can see my faith was strengthened in prayer.

Later on we built a log school house, but I never attended school. In time we had a Ward organized with Henry Giles as Bishop. He served the people well and was loved by everyone. In the spring of 1885 I went to work for a man by the name of Henry Lords. I did farm work for him about two months at this time. Bishop Giles came and had a talk with me and showed me that it was not a good place for me to work. He said he would like to get me away from there and that I would never get my pay. He offered me the same price, \$12.00 per month, if I would come and work for him. I accepted his offer and have thanked him ever since for I found out he was right and I never did get my pay. I worked for Bishop Giles I bought my first suit of store clothes. Bishop Giles was a sheep-man and when he went on a trip one time, I asked him to buy me a suit of store clothes, which he did.

In March of 1886 I took a job of herding sheep from a man by the name of Henry Butterfield. This was another good man. He taught me honesty. The sheep business is a business that is easy to get dishonest in. My wages were \$15.00 per month. I worked for this man for three years, only taking a short layoff to go home. Henry, as I called him as he was only three years older than I was, would never let his mark be put on a stray sheep that chanced to get in his herd or never would allow one to be killed for mutton.

During the time I worked for this man, my mother

married a man by the name of William Clark. We moved to Teasdale Ward. My mother did not live very long with Mr. Clark as he did nothing toward her support and with the children to care for she had all she could support, so they separated.

While I was staying with my mother in this Ward I paid my first tithing. And that was not an easy task, but I saw the other boys of my association paying tithing and the Bishop got after me in a kind fatherly way and I consented to pay some. During this time of my life I had saved some of my money and had invested in cows and heifers. So I had one old cow that I did not think would winter through, so I took her up to the Bishop, George Coleman. Brother Coleman looked at the cow and then at me and said, "Elmer, that cow will not live until Spring. Have you got nine more like her?" I felt ashamed and nobody could tell just how I felt, but I could see there was one way out of it. So I said, "I have a year old heifer. I will bring her up." So I did, but you don't know how I hated to see that fine heifer go. She was the pride of my herd, but she went and I was able to get my credit. Now comes the greatest lesson that winter. I had sixteen head of cattle in my herd. That winter ten of my best cows laid down and died and I was unable to know the cause. They had plenty of hay. I made this remark, "If that is the way the Lord blesses me for paying my tithes I have paid my last." So it was for a long time, but when I paid my tithing again it was with a better understanding. The first I paid was to be seen of man and men had seen me and they knew of my paying it and I had my reward and I was not entitled to any further blessing.



The Home of Elmer A. Huntsman in Cainsville Ut. Evon W. Huntsman and Oreta Huntsman were born there.

In the fall of 1889 when I quit work I took my money and bought cows and went to Cainsville and located a ranch and went to work building canals to get water on my ranch, but it was uphill business.

June 10, 1891 I married Augusta Ann Norton, daughter of Isaac Norton and Sarah Jane Cummings. We were married at her father's home by Bishop Henry Giles and we started out together to battle life. On March 12, 1892 a baby boy gladdened our home. We gave him the name of Evon Wesley. He was born in Cainsville, Wayne County, Utah.

I was forced to leave home from time to time to seek employment and left my wife and baby alone. On May 1, 1894 I took a job of herding sheep for John R. Stewart for \$20.00 per month. About the middle of June, I finished my job and returned home. After my expenses were paid I had a \$20.00 gold piece, the first I had seen for many days. While I was away from home my wife ran a small bill to the grocery store owned by Agnes Carrol. When I took the twenty over to pay the bill she was unable to make the change

as money was scarce to everyone, so I left it with her and drew it out in the things we needed.



L.D.S. Church in Cainsville, Utah, where the Huntsman, and Norton families attended.

On 16 Jan., 1895 at Cainsville, Wayne County, a baby girl came to gladden our hearts. We named her Oreta. There was no roof on the house where Oreta was born, so I took a wagon top and placed it on the roof over the bed to keep the rain off Augusta while the baby was born.

Bishop Giles met with an accident and broke his leg. For the lack of proper surgical help, he died from the cause. After his death the Ward was divided and Walter E. Hanks was chosen and sustained as Bishop of Cainsville Ward. Here we took a new life and a town was laid out and people built on the townsite and got closer together and a reformation took hold of the people and those that had not been to the Temple began to see the necessity of it. In the fall of 1895, Nov. 20th, I took my family and went to the Manti Temple and had our Temple work done and our children sealed to us.

Because of high floods we were forced to abandon our home. It was too expensive to keep up the canal. In the fall of 1896 we moved to Annabella, Sevier County and bought a vacant lot and built a house. While living here, another girl was added to our family. She was born on 26 April, 1897. We gave her the name of Leona. Before my wife was out of bed with this baby, I was forced to leave my family and seek employment. I worked this summer in the timber making railroad ties, returning to my family in the fall. Our baby Leona was taken ill and on Sept. 4, 1897 she died. This was the first gloomy spell of our marriage, but we put our trust in the Lord and he gave us comfort.

The fore part of the winter I worked in the canyon getting out piling for railroad bridges. The man I was working for went broke and I lost my wages.

On Nov. 20, 1898 a baby boy was born to us. We gave him the name of Vernard. About this time I was chosen 1st Assistant in the Sunday School. I was also 1st Assistant in the YM-MIA and labored as a Ward Teacher.

In Feb., 1899 I went to Wyoming to work on the railroad. I worked on the Evanston Cutoff. We were shipped out to the work from Ogden. This was the first time I had been out of the State of Utah. When we reached our labor we found things quite different to what it had been represented and we had to lay around for a long time before we could get to work. The snow was so deep in the mountains that we could not trail back, so we had to stay and make the best of it until the snow melted so we could get over the pass. While in this company I had the first opportunity of preaching the gospel to one that had never seen a Mormon. The camp was

mostly Eastern people and many had never seen a Mormon. While we were laying around, I volunteered to accompany a man on a hike and we left about eight o'clock in the morning and our whole time was spent in gospel conversation. The only name he would give himself was Wild Bill. We got so interested, we got so far from camp that we did not get back until after midnight. He seemed to be so interested that he pulled the gospel message out of me. He had many questions to ask and it was a pleasure to answer them. He told me he had never seen a Mormon and all he knew was what he had read in Anti-Mormon literature. I was thankful I had a little knowledge of the gospel so I could give him what he wanted.

About the first of April we started homeward and followed the Old Mormon Trail. Most of the way the trail was very plain. In many places about as wide as an ordinary street without any vegetation in it, while on each side would be sagebrush. When traveling this trail one could imagine some of the trials and hardships those people went through and there seemed to be a hallowed feeling come over one at the thought of those days. We came down Echo Canyon to the Weber River, then up the Weber River and down Provo Canyon. When we came out on the Provo Bench and saw the green fields and the fruit trees out in full bloom I could sing from the bottom of my heart. UTAH, the Queen of the West!

When I passed through Springville I got a contract from Mendenhall for one thousand mining props and went to work getting them out. I filled my contract, then took a job herding sheep for Samuel M. Davis of Springville for \$40.00 per month. Davis had bought the sheep in Colorado and shipped them to Sunnyside and

unloaded. He was unable to get on the Reservation and trailed along the Strawberry Ridge. Then he decided to go to Idaho. We trailed on this ridge to St. Anthony, Idaho. Here we left him and returned to my family for I had been away from them for several months, the longest time I had been away since we were married. Before leaving, Davis made me promise I would come to Idaho and work for him. When I got home I sold my team and fixed my family for winter. I left for St. Anthony, Idaho Dec., 1900 and spent the winter feeding sheep. I returned April, 1901. I went to Vaca and sheared sheep, then to Price and sheared sheep for a while then went to lamb a herd for John Giles in June. I got a job at a saw mill as engineer. The man asked me if I could engineer and I said "Yes", but I had never done it before. I left for home July 12th. I tried to ride a bicycle over the Scaffold Mountains, but it was very rough and walking was a hard task, so I had to push the bicycle all the way. The bicycle was part of my wages.

On July 24th, 1901 a boy was born to us. We named him Elmer Delos. He was born at Annabella, Sevier, Utah.

The summer of 1902 I rented a farm from Joseph Fairbanks and farmed. This summer I had the first attack of Appendicitis. From then on, I was unable to do hard work. In the fall I went to Castle Gates to get employment, but could not stand the work and soon returned home. This winter my wife's brother, William Norton and his family came to spend Christmas Holidays with us and on this trip got exposed to Small Pox. On Jan. 1, 1903 we were quarantined for Small Pox. We were under quarantine until March 15th. I then left for Sunnyside to work. I got a job and worked for eight days and the work shut down.

I came home and spent the rest of the summer at odd jobs.

On 7th Sept., 1903 we had another girl added to our number and we gave her the name of Delta. She was born at Annabella, Sevier Co., Utah.

I spent the winter of 1903-1904 with my brother Will furnishing music for dances, but being tired of hunting employment all the time I made up my mind to seek new country for a home. So on Feb. 1, 1904 I and my brother Will started with our musical instruments, making dances as we went to get money to pay our expenses. Our way of travel was a one horse buggy. We had a dance at Burville in Grass Valley. From there to Loa in Rabbit Valley and had a dance, then we went over the pass to Hoggan's Ranch and onto Emery in Castle Valley and had a dance. We went to Ferran where we had a brother living, Edson Huntsman, of whom we had not seen for many years. We stayed a few days with him and gave a dance there before we left. Then we went to Castle Dale, the County Seat of Emery County and had a dance there. We did better there than any of the previous places. We went from here to Huntington where one of my wife's brothers lived, Benjamin Isaac Norton. We stayed here a few days and gave a dance then went on to Wellington. Here we laid off a few days and visited with Will Norton, a brother of my wife.

We went from here to Sunnyside hoping to get employment. We were successful in getting work and boarded with Arch Young, a man I had known for years. I went to digging coal and my brother went to work in the coke ovens. I sent money home to my wife and had her come out to where I was so I could be with my family. I hadn't worked only a few days until the heavy work brought on another attack of appendicitis

and I had to call a doctor, the first doctor I had ever had in my family, Dr. Dowd of Sunnyside. He pronounced it appendicitis and gave me good care.

On March 13, 1904 my wife and children reached me at Sunnyside and found me in bed very ill. The doctor would not let me have anything to eat for twelve days and I got up and around. I went to the doctor's office to see him. I asked him if he thought I was alright. Here he gave me some good advice. Dr. Dowd said to me, "If I were you, knowing what I know, I would go to be operated on, but nine out of ten won't do it." He said, "You are in good condition now for an operation, but if you put it off you may have another attack and you might not be in a good condition." But I said, "I will be like the nine." So I rented a house, got a few things to keep house with and moved my family in and went to work again in the coal mines.

Those who dig coal work partners. They get what is called a room and load their cars and each one checks every other car. So I went to work with Archy Young again. He would not let me work that day. He said for me to lay off and he would do the work and check every other car to me. The following day I told him I could not stand for him to do the work and me to draw the pay, so I went to work feeling good as I ever did. About 10 o'clock I felt the attack coming on again. I said to Archy, "It's no use. I will have to give up." I could not leave the mine before twelve so I laid down to rest, then I began to think of what Dr. Dowd said and wondered what would be the outcome of it all. I walked home and sent for the doctor. When he came I could see he did not have much encouragement for me. He said, "My boy, you must go to Salt Lake and be operated on." But still I hesitated. I felt sure if

I went to the hospital it would be sure death to me. Each trip the doctor made, he encouraged me to go. He would ask me each time he came if I had felt a severe pain go down my right leg into my heel.

On the 9th of April was my birthday and some of my wife's folks came to see me and brought me a birthday cake, but I was unable to share it with them. I watched the folks devour my cake before my eyes while I looked on. I laid awake the rest of the night thinking what would be for the best. I thought about my condition. I was unable to help my family. I was more a burden to them than a help. I thought if I went to the hospital it would soon be over and the operation would be a pleasure to what I had been suffering for the past three years and I would soon be out of my misery. My family could go home, as I had a nice little home for them to go back to and they could get along better if they did not have me to bother with, so I had it all planned out. I was comforted with what my standing was with the Lord. I finally fell asleep and was suddenly awakened by a severe pain down my right leg and into my heel.

The train came into camp at 8 o'clock and left at 2 P.M. On the morning of the 10th the train brought a letter stating our home in Annabella was burned to the ground and they were not able to save anything. The doctor came in to see me and I told him I had felt the pain he had been inquiring about. I told him I had made up my mind to go to Salt Lake to be operated on as soon as payday. He says, "Don't you wait for pay day. You leave on the 2 p.m. train." So we began to make ready. While the folks were making preparations, I was changing my mind from what I had been thinking of. I felt that there was no home to send my family to and it was a

poor time for me to die. So I had humbled myself before the Lord. If ever I was humbled in my life it was at this time. I made a covenant with the Lord that if he would see me safely through the operation and help me to get another home I would strive to serve Him the rest of my days. When I got through talking with the Lord (for I felt he was near) I had a peaceful mind. Nothing seemed to bother me. I felt just as sure I would be alright as I had felt before that I was going to die. I left on the 2 P.M. train.

When I bid the folks goodbye, I could read on their countenance that would be the last time they would see me alive, but I laughed at them and said I would be alright. My brother Will wanted to go with me, but I said I could go alone and they could do me more good by helping the wife and kiddies. My sister Estella had been to Salt Lake to attend Conference and she stopped off at Provo to visit her husband's folks and my brother telegraphed her to meet me at the train.

I left Sunnyside April 10, 1904 at 2 P.M. for Salt Lake City. We had barely got out of sight of camp after waving farewell to my folks when we came to a wreck of coal cars and we were delayed several hours and we missed the train I should have got on at Mounds, so had to go on to Price with the coal train and take the next train for Salt Lake at Price. After I was on the train, as I was without any acquaintances, I began to think more of my condition and I wished that I had let someone come with me for I felt sometimes like I would not live until I reached my sister. She was staying with her brother-in-law, Willis Spafford.

I got Estella to go with me to the hospital and she stayed two weeks then bid me goodbye and left for home. I rested good the night I spent in



Provo and we left the next morning, April 11th, and arrived at the hospital about 1 p.m. The doctors began to question me and I could not keep awake. It seemed to me days, but it was because I would keep dozing off. I was in no pain and it seemed like sleep was easy. There were several doctors holding a consultation on me and I heard them tell the nurse to have me ready by 8 o'clock in the morning. I have forgotten the name of the nurse, but I did not get to sleep after she got to working on me until nearly morning. I went onto operating table Wednesday morning, April 12, 1904 and that was the last I knew until Sunday morning, April 16th. I was on the operating table four hours and the doctor told my sister there was no hope for me, that I had put it off too long. My appendix had broken and mortification had set in. Dr. Lanenburg did the operation and did a good job. After I revived Sunday morning, the doctor had hopes of me getting through. Dr. Jackson administered the ether and did most of the dressing of the wound. I called the nurse's attention to a vine that grew up by my window and told her that when that vine began to leaf out I was going to leave. And every vine I could see was leafed out, but not the one I called my own and I thought it was dead because it had not leafed out yet. So the day I left I thought I would go and examine the vine and see what was wrong and to my surprise the leaves were coming out on it. The nurse that was with me said she had been to that hospital for three years and that the hospital had not been free from cases of appendicitis and sometimes they had as high as fifteen at a time and she had not seen one case as bad as mine. When the doctor discharged me he talked with me for some time and said, "You can consider yourself a lucky man for there was not one in a thousand that would pull through in your condition." So I consider the Lord answered my

prayers.

The day before I left the hospital, two of my wife's sisters and their families were passing through Salt Lake City for Idaho to get them some homes. They were traveling by team and called to see me. That was the first time I had been out of bed since I came to the hospital and I was walking around the floor to get my strength. The boys showed me from the window where they were camped and when I saw the camp I got homesick. I asked the doctor if it would hurt me if I went out to their camp and he said no if I thought I could make it. He said I could run all over town if I wanted to. So I started down the steps. I had hard work, but got down and rested for a while then made a dash for camp. They were having dinner. I felt good getting out in the world again and I made the remark that if I had my family with me I would go to Idaho with them. They were getting ready to go on that afternoon, but they said if I would send for my family they would lay over and take me along with them. I soon consented and Jim Jones sent a telegram for the folks to come immediately. I went down town with them and we waited until 12 o'clock that night to see if the folks came on that train, but no one came so I went back to the hospital and stayed that night. The next morning, May 17, 1904, I was discharged from St. Mark's Hospital, took my duds and bid farewell to the inmates of the place and thanked the nurses and doctors for what they had done for me and they sure gave me good care, and I left with a prayer in my heart for the blessings of the Lord in my behalf. I met the train at eight that morning and my family was there and they were surprised to see me for they did not know why they were sent for. They feared I might be dead. We stayed in the city that night and started for Idaho the next morning, May 18, 1904. We arrived in Idaho

Falls May 31, 1904. It took us 12 days to go from Salt Lake City to Idaho Falls, Idaho by team.

I was unable to stand the jolting of the wagon so I walked most of the way. We had a fine trip, no storms to bother us until the night we got into Idaho Falls and I never saw it rain harder and many of us got a bath. There were three wagons in the outfit and twenty-five people in all, but everybody made the best of it and seemed to enjoy the trip.

The morning of June 1, 1904 I met my nephew, Lewis M. Nebeker, who was in the Real Estate business. He said he had a piece of land he thought would interest me, so we laid over that day and the 2nd of June, 1904 he took us out to look at it -- me and Jim Jones. We looked at it and was well pleased with it so on June 3rd, 1904 we signed up for it, the purchasing price being \$1800.00 for forty acres. There was a mortgage on it for \$1200.00. We assumed the mortgage and was to pay Nebeker \$600.00. Jim Jones turned his team in on it for two hundred dollars and we were to work the other four hundred out by the 15th of December, that year. We were to reserve two dollars a day for work and we were to draw \$15.00 per month each for maintenance of our families. Jones worked up one hundred dollars then he got discouraged and gave up. He said it was impossible for us to pull through, so he gave me his interest in the place for what property I had left in Utah, of which was a city lot, two acres of pasture land and two cows. He used this property to turn in on a bad debt he had left when he moved to Idaho. Jim moved to Moreland, Idaho and I was left alone to do the best I could.

The place was rented to Alma Gifford when I

bought it, so I got half of the hay and one third of the grain and potatoes, but my share of the crop did not pay the interest on the mortgage, so I had to leave the Nebeker ranch, where I had been working for wages, and get a job to finish paying the interest of which came due Nov. 1st.

When I started to work for Nebeker on June 5th, I was not able to hook up a team or grease a buggy. The first days work I did was to drive a team to Idaho Falls from Shelley, as I was working on the ranch east of Shelly by the Butte. That was the hardest days work I did. The team was high spirited and pulled on the bits and I could just pull enough to keep them under control. The next day I started to plow. I made seven rounds in the forenoon and seven in the afternoon and I was tired out, but I gained strength as time went on. When we started to hay I could ride the mower, but could not rake hay. When the second crop came I was able to rake and pile hay. During the harvest days they had to have extra hands on the farms and we boarded them for 50 cents a day. This helped us out some financially. We had the privilege of keeping a cow on the ranch, so I bought a cow from Alma Gifford that was due to freshen soon. I paid \$22.00 for her and she calved on August 7th and proved to be a good cow. I bought a pig to eat up the slop and what milk we did not use for our ownselves.

After I could see that the rent from my farm would not pay the interest, I got a job from Charles Nielson, working on the bailer. Hay was selling for \$2.50 per ton and they were shipping it out of the country in large quantities. After I got what money was necessary to pay the interest, I returned to my old job so as to get as much paid on the place as possible. After Jim Jones left me, it placed me in a condition that I

could not pay for the place according to contract, so I went to Nebeker and made arrangements for an extension of time. I got the time extended until March 1st, 1905.

Now winter was coming on and we were in a strange country and among strangers and we began to sense our condition. We had lived in a tent all summer, but when the cold winds began to blow we longed for our old home and old acquaintances. We were out of reach of both of them. We decided to go to Moreland and spend the Christmas Holidays with my wife's sister, Tabitha Vest. So we hooked up our team and started. We had a pleasant trip and had a good visit, but we had a snow storm and the weather was cold coming home. When we got home we could hardly get in the house. The house we were living in was open and the snow blew through the cracks. Jim Jones had rented a farm near Ammon and moved up there, so we decided to go up there for New Years. We went in a sleigh with a cover on and did not suffer too much with the cold. We came home in a few days and began to plan for the future. The place I had bought had no improvements on it, so we did not know what to do. I had not thought of these things before. I was so thankful to be alive and improving that I couldn't think of the hardships of getting a start in the strange country.

I found a man by the name of Jim Robinson who had rented a farm east of Shelly on the Taylor road and he had built a two room shed rough house on it, but had become discouraged and wanted to sell it on time. I went to see him. He said he would give me eighteen months to pay for it and he had a team and a chain tug harness he wanted to sell. So I made a deal with him. I discovered a plow he said he would let go, too. He wanted me to get a signer on the note and I

only knew one man in the country and asked if he could do. He agreed to take him, but when I got ready to sign the papers he said I would have to get someone else to sign. So I called the deal off, for I would not ask a stranger to sign with me. So I was feeling bad, hated to go home and disappoint my wife as we were rejoicing at our prospects. But before I got home, Robinson overtook me on a horse and told me I could have the property on my own note and he would take a chattel on the stuff. So we made the deal, but he was to retain the house until March 1st. So I rented a house from Elmer Gifford in Woodville and we moved over on January 17, 1905. The house was only a shell and we nearly froze as the weather was so severe cold.

I was concerned greatly because the house we had purchased from Mr. Robinson would not pass over the bridge over the Snake River. Shelley was southeast of the property we had purchased in Woodville and we were separated by the Snake River. I did not know how I would get the house over to our property without tearing it to pieces. I tried to get Robinson to move out and let me have the house so I could move it across the river on the ice. The river is wide and ice would form during the winter months to several feet in thickness, making the crossing easier, but he would not unless I would rent him an up to date house in town and I was unable to do that for the rent in town was too high. So I decided to wait and see what the results would be. I was afraid the ice would be gone by the first of March, so was puzzled just what to do. But good luck would have it extremely cold in February and Robinson moved into town to get his children in school and sent me word I could have the house any time. So I got Alma Gifford to go with me with his team and we soon moved the house over and we moved in our new home

Feb. 17, 1905

When we moved to Woodville we knew no one here and our winter supply was very small. We had a part of a sack of flour and four or five pounds of bacon and our milk and butter, but the day we moved over, the Bishopric was making their annual visit of the Ward and they called on us. They gave us a good talk and encouraged us. I told them I needed flour, but was able to work if I could get work. I told them I was a blacksmith and if I could get a few tools to work with I could help myself. He said that was just what they needed because they had to go to town for every little job they had done. Bishop J. J. Hammer said he had some wheat that I could have to get some flour and could do some work for him when I got some tools. I got five sacks of wheat and took them to the mill and got my flour. We felt contented and happy.

We lived a few miles from the Lava beds and we could gather our winters supply of wood from them. They were thick with red cedar which gave up good heat. I had no wagon or sleigh to go to the Lavas, so I began to look around for one. I found one that belonged to Will Watts that he had broken a tire on. He said he was going to get a new one. So I gave him my watch and a tent for the wagon. I went to the C.W.C.M. Company to get some tools. They said if I could get someone to sign with me I could get them. I told them I was a stranger in this country and hated to ask strangers to sign with me. He said if I could bring some references from some of the houses I had been dealing with I could get them. I said I could not do that as I had never gone into debt before so no houses knew me or anything about us. Just then Will A. Hammer came in and I asked if he would do to sign with me. He said yes if I could get him, he would do. So I

approached Mr. Hammer and said, "This is something I don't like to do", but I explained to him and he said, "That is something I don't like to do, but I will take a chance with you." The bill came to thirty dollars. So I got my tools, though they were few, and started to do the work for my neighbors. I got my old wagon fixed up and hauled wood and we got along until spring.

Then I was confronted with the problem of seed. I did not know how to get it. I borrowed \$40.00 from G. G. Wright of Idaho Falls by getting George W. Gifford to sign with me. This is where I got my introduction to commission. He wrote me a check for \$40.00 and I endorsed it and he cashed it for me and took out three percent commission. This was a surprise to me. So he explained it to me and said if I did not want it I could leave it alone, so I couldn't do anything but take it. I found out afterwards that the same security would of got the money at the bank without commission and at less interest.

That fall I paid the notes that I had to get signers for and established a credit that has helped me out many times since. The following winter I bought a sleigh and hauled wood to Shelley for three dollars a cord to pay for my team and harness. I could make a trip to the Lavas and the next day to Shelley and back home by noon and work in the shop until bedtime in order to get along.

In the fall of 1905, I was put in as President of the Young Men M.I.A. In the Spring when the work was crowding, I would work by lantern light in the shop mornings and evenings and would work the daylight hours on the farm. Jan. 13, 1906 the Ward was reorganized with John M. Rider as Bishop and Samuel H. Hurst, Sr. as First Counselor and George R. Moses as Second

Counselor. At a Priesthood meeting held March 2, 1906 it was proposed immediately to build a new house on the foundation that was built the latter part of June, 1905. We started for lumber March 3, 1906. I was appointed as one of the building committee and we crowded the work and in one month we were able to hold church in the new hall. It was not finished but we held church in it from then on. The house was finished about the 12th of April, 1906. We used it for all purposes and amusements.

The first tithing I paid in this ward was in 1905, the amount \$16.15. I spent the summer of 1906 on the farm. On December 9th, 1906 I was sustained as Ward Clerk. In 1906 I paid \$10.00 tithing.

On Oct. 9, 1906 another boy was born to us. We called him Voil Dwane. This was a beautiful child, but he was not permitted to stay with us very long. He took ill with pneumonia and on Nov. 26, 1906 he took his flight to his Father's Home.

On March 31, 1909 we were blessed with a baby girl and we named her Zalia. When she was about one year old, just beginning to walk, we noticed one morning she could not stand on her feet. We did not know what was the matter so we took her to a doctor. After he examined her he said, "Now don't get alarmed. Your child will never walk again. If she does she will be a cripple and clumsy the rest of her life." This made us feel bad and worried. Some time later we held a Quarterly Conference in Shelley and Apostle David O. McKay and Rulon S. Wells of the Council of Seventies were in attendance. So we asked them to administer to her. Brother Wells anointed her and Brother McKay sealed the anointing and promised her that she would be

restored to her normal condition. When we got home that night I was dressing her for bed. I stood her up to let her clothes drop and to my surprise she could hold her weight up. We were afraid to let her stand, but in a few days she was running around on the floor. A miracle performed by the Power of the Priesthood!

Our oldest son, Evon Wesley was married to Martha Elnora Gifford, daughter of George Washington Gifford and Louisa Hale on June 3, 1910. The marriage was later solemnized in the Salt Lake Temple 4 Oct., 1911. Their daughter Delila was sealed to them at this time. When they had two children, Delila and Bertha, Wesley was called on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was called to go to the Friendly Islands. These Islands are off the southeast coast of Australia. He labored in Samoa for a short time and then was sent to labor in the Tongan Islands.

Prior to Wesley being called on his mission, and as my family grew, we decided to build a new house. So I bought a block machine to make concrete blocks and started to make blocks. I had \$20.00 toward building. I bought \$20.00 worth of Portland Cement and started to make the blocks. When I got some blocks on hand someone would want them, so I would sell them and buy more cement and continued on so doing until I got some on hand to build with. I also continued my occupations as farmer and blacksmith.

I held the office as Ward Clerk for twenty years. During this time I was sustained as Y.M.-M.I.A. President two different times. I was also First Assistant in the Sunday School.

Wesley left on his mission April 5, 1912, leaving

his wife and two little girls behind. It took a lot of money to get him outfitted to go on his mission. He had to have eight pairs of shoes to go and other clothes in proportion, but we didn't have the money and we didn't know how we could get it. I said, "If you want to go we will raise the money." So we started out. We were able to raise \$100.00, but couldn't raise another cent. The Ward gave a Farewell Party and we got a nice sum of money to help. I pleaded with the Lord for help. I tried to borrow some, but had no success. I tried every bank and business office, but was unable to get any. Two days before he was to leave, a kind brother from Shelley called me up. Thomas Bennett said for me to come over. He thought he had found me some money. He sent me over to a Sister Mason who had just sent her husband on a mission and he had left some money to live on and she wanted to loan it out. Two hundred dollars! So I was supplied with money to send the boy on a mission. It was expensive to get him off, but it was a cheap mission after he got there.

I would like to mention one thing here in connection with this mission. When he was out of money and had sent home for it, I had none and try as I did was unable to get any. So I went to the Lord the same as usual and

laid my case before Him and said, "Lord, I have tried every way I know how and I want you to help me get some money to send to the boy." After praying I felt more calm and went about my work and the worry left me so much that I forgot the matter for a while. I was chopping wood and a widow passed by as I had seen her pass by many times before and thought nothing of it. In a few minutes she came back and called out. She said she felt impressed that I needed some money. I said, "I surely do." She said, "I can let

you have \$100.00 if that will do any good." So I thanked her and said, "I will pay you the same interest as the banks charge." She said, "I don't want no interest. Only keep still about it and say nothing to anyone."

So I proceeded to make blocks for the house and was able to complete it. A two story building with four rooms on the ground floor and had it completed by the time Wesley came home March 15, 1915.

While Wesley was on his mission we were blessed with another son. We named him Lenard Glenore. He was born 23 Feb., 1913 at Woodville, Idaho. He was a tow-headed boy and was the ninth child to bless our home. He was an unusually healthy baby except his head seemed too large for his small body. We were concerned about this and prayed about it. However, in time things became normal and he was such a healthy child and a joy to our hearts, we felt the Lord had once more heard our prayers and Lenard was blessed to live a normal and successful life. We also felt blessed to have seven of our nine children living, as so many of our friends and relatives lost so many in infancy or childhood. The Lord poured his blessings a thousand fold upon our household.

Our daughter Oreta was married March 31, 1913 to Austin Josiah Hammer, son of William Austin Hammer and Anna Messervy. She was endowed and sealed to him April 2, 1913. They had four children, Leona, Bernice, Afton and Louis Austin. Her husband and their daughter Afton died during the epidemic of Influenza during the First World War. She was later married to John (Jack) Child, son of Heber T. Child and Minnie Bolander. This marriage took place 8 Oct. 1923. They had two children,

Maxine and Cherrill.



Left to Right: Elmer Ames Huntsman, Lenord Glenore Huntsman, Augusta Ann Norton Huntsman, Zalia Huntsman, Delta Huntsman, Elmer Delos Huntsman, Vernard Huntsman

Not present: Oreta Huntsman and Evon Wesley Huntsman

Our son Vernard was called on a mission to the Northern States Mission. He left for his mission on Feb. 15, 1918. He returned March 15, 1920. While he was on his mission, we had a fire that burned the house to the ground. We were able to save some of the things in the house. It seemed like fate was against me and I felt blue, but we were able to rebuild again before he returned. He married Grace Montague, daughter of James Montague and Susan L. Jones. He was sealed to his wife June 2, 1926.

Our son Delos was called on a mission to the Southern States. He left 15 Feb. 1926, returning March 29, 1928. He married Anona Shumway, daughter of Charles Shumway and Carolina Hymas, on June 20, 1929 in the Logan Temple.

Our daughter Delta was married July 27, 1927 to James Cleary McElroy. He deserted her and she was married June 26, 1928 to Robert L. Stratton. They were divorced. There were no children from these two unions. Delos Huntsman,



Evon W. Huntsman, Elmer A. Huntsman, Lenord Huntsman, Vernard Huntsman in front of the Elmer Huntsman home, which was rebuilt after a fire in 1919.

She later married Thomas Anthony Sanone, son of Joseph Sanone and Mary C. Colonico. They adopted two children, Jeaniene and Thomas. The marriage was later solemnized in the Salt Lake Temple Sept. 31, 1953, their two children being sealed to them at this time.

Our daughter Zalia was married Sept. 7, 1935 to Thomas Young Emmett of Portland, Oregon. He was the son of Erving Clarence Emmett and Nellie Young. This marriage was later solemnized in the Salt Lake Temple Sept. 15, 1936.

Our son Lenard Glenore was married June 7, 1934 to Evelyn Balmforth, daughter of Lorenzo Balmforth and Eva Whiting, in the Salt Lake Temple.

I have at this writing, four living sons and three living daughters, thirteen living grandsons and eighteen living granddaughters, three great-granddaughters and four great-grandsons.

Feb. 15, 1926 Elmer Delos, our son, left for a mission to the Southern States. He returned March 29, 1928. His companion was Quent Shumway of Preston, Idaho. They came home together and Delos stopped off to Shumways. There he met Anona Shumway and on June 20, 1929 they were married in the Logan Temple.

I will state here that the spring of 1913, I had leased a farm just across the road where I lived and was putting in a large amount of grain. I got a job working my team. While I was working I had run out of field grain and had to take some of my seed grain to feed my horses. When I got through work I had \$150.00 coming to me. I figured \$15.00 for tithing. I laid it aside for that purpose. I paid the balance of my bills then went on putting in my crops. I was pressed as to what to do to replace my seed grain that I had fed up. It would take \$15.00 to do it. I had that much on my person, but it belonged to the Lord. So I debated with myself just what to do. So I decided I would take it and buy my seed. Then I thought that it was the Lord's and I had no right to it. So I took the money and headed out for the Bishop's place and paid my tithing. I came home and went to work contented. This is where I gained another testimony. I knew how many acres I was going to plant and how many pounds to the acre I needed. I set the drills for that amount. I decided to go on drilling until I ran out of grain, then go out and rustle the rest to finish planting. But to my surprise, when I finished planting I still had grain left. Now as far as I could see, there was no difference in the thickness of the grain than that planted before and

when thrashed I could see no difference and I did not change the drill.

I will state here some of the financial difficulties we had. We had to sell our wheat for 70 cents per hundred pounds, spuds for 20 cents. I have sold some for 20 cents. Hay was selling for \$2.50 per ton. Other things in proportion. We had a hard time to make ends meet and keep our heads above water.

We had no meeting house when we came here. So that was one of the first things to do was to build an all-purpose house. On March 12, 1905 we started to work on the foundation. We planted a patch of spuds for the purpose of obtaining money to build with. Up until this time we met in the school house for our Sunday School and meetings. But we had to divide the time between the Mormons and non-Mormons. We had the forenoon and they had the afternoon. There were bad feelings between us and the other party. It seemed like nothing we could do to get them to be friendly with us and these times grew gradually worse until we divided the school district. Then we had considerable peace.

On March 3, 1906 we started for lumber for the new building and by the first Sunday in April we were able to meet in the new building.

I was called to labor with the non-members in our Stake. I labored for three years in that capacity. We belonged to the Blackfoot Stake for several years after we came here. Elias Kimball was President. During the latter part of 1907 James Duckworth was sustained as President.

As time went on, the Stake was divided with Joseph H. Dye as President. The new Stake was



called the Shelley Stake. The foundation of the above named house was built by Bishop Jasper Hammer, the first Bishop of Woodville Ward. John M. Rider was the second Bishop. He finished the building of the house. James P. Fugal was our third Bishop. Joseph P. Bischoff was our fourth Bishop. Then we decided to build a new church house and take the old one for an amusement hall. I served as Ward Clerk for these last three Bishops, about twenty years. George Risenmay was our fifth Bishop. Elmer Delos Huntsman, our son, was the sixth Bishop and Victor M. Kotter the seventh Bishop, up till this time December, 1946.

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Elmer Ames Huntsman was a man of honor and integrity. His word was as good as money....many times proving to be much more valuable. He worked hard and by long hours and hard labor and a growing faith and trust in the Lord he rose above the poverty of his childhood and early marriage. By his side, in all things, stood his devoted wife, Augusta. Together they met the obstacles placed in their paths and together they overcame them, growing in faith and testimony.

The teachings of the gospel became a living part of their very existence. They worked faithfully in the branches of the Ward organizations, serving when and where needed. They gave of their time and talents. Through prayer and the blessings of the Lord they received when in need, but gave more fully when needed. At times they gave "the widow's mite", but never seemed to miss it. Many they helped, failed to repay, but in Elmer's own words, he could not find room in his heart

for bitterness or hard feelings. The Lord had blessed him too abundantly. His name is honored and revered by all who met or had dealings with him. He had no enemies, but was loved by all. Those who were not of "the faith" looked up to him with trust in his word. He failed no one.

After the Idaho Falls Temple was built, he and his companion, Augusta spent many hours, days and months doing the Lord's work. Prior to that time they took every opportunity to go to the temples in Utah, as that was the closest to their home. Years were spent gathering genealogy and compiling records of his family. He was never idle. He used to say that idleness was the devil's workshop.

Elmer and his wife maintained their own home until the death of Augusta. The day she became ill, they were in the Temple doing the Lord's work. She had a stroke in the Temple. Three days later, she died 17 Aug. 1957 at their home in Woodville, Idaho.

He went to live with his son, Wesley following her death. His body became bent with age and pain, but he rarely complained. When Wesley built a home in Idaho Falls close to the Temple, he used to sit in his chair in front of the window and look at the Temple. He went to the Temple as often as his body would allow, but the last few months of his earthly life, he was too crippled to do more. He longed for his beloved Augusta and when his time drew near, he went to visit his son Vernard, still living in Woodville, and there a few days later, he passed away, 27 Oct. 1958. He was laid to rest by the side of his wife, surrounded by their friends and loved ones who had gone on before. His life was well spent and his example a beacon of light for those of us who are left to follow. Not only did he teach his family how to live, but how to die honorably. To

know him was to have lived a little richer for the experience.

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Top: Oreta  
Delta, Zalia  
Elmer, Lenord, Augusta  
Delos, Vernard  
Evon