

# *MY STORY LEST I FORGET*

*By: Evon Wesley Huntsman*



I, like Nephi of old, was born of goodly parents 12 March, 1892, the firstborn of Elmer Ames Huntsman and Augusta Ann Norton. I was born on a homestead in a one room log dream house father had built for his new bride and where they perhaps thought at my birth would be their home for many years to come. This homestead was located in Cainesville, Wayne County (then Piute), Utah, a very mild climate. Father has told me how he made his ditches by hand with a shovel and each spring he had to dig them over again because the soil was very sandy and would wash away each year with the spring rains so he decided to move to another place where he had lived prior to his moving to Wayne County. This place was Annabella, Sevier, Utah. He sold and traded what he could of his meager possessions and fitted himself with a team and wagon to move his small family to their new home. His family consisted of a baby girl, Oreta, born 16 January, 1895 at Cainsville, myself, and Mother and Dad.

I have tried many times to try and think back as far as I could remember of the first event in my life and each time it goes back only to the time when I must have been less than three years old, when I saw some men and Dad, quite excited, getting their picks and shovels, ropes and heading for the river. I remember seeing one of our cows stuck in what I thought was mud, but was later informed it was quicksand and when an animal goes in it, the more they struggle to get out, the deeper they work themselves down until they either had to be dug out, or stay there until they died. I remember watching them dig the cow out and release her from her death trap.

My next remembrance was when Dad was getting ready to move. He had a few small pigs, weighing about 25 to 30 lbs. each which he

apparently could not sell or trade, so he killed them and put them in the "pork barrel" and took them with us. I can remember seeing the little white pigs hanging up all dressed, ready for the brine. All the pork or meat, then, was either fresh or salted, no refrigerators or deep freezer.

Another event I can remember was when we were all in the wagon, Dad with the lines in one hand and the brake in the other, myself, standing in the front near the endgate, looking at the horses. Perhaps I thought they were the finest horses in all the land, but I doubt if either weighed more than eleven or twelve hundred pounds. Well I remember being kissed by some of my aunts and cousins, Grandpa Norton and others standing nearby to wish us good luck, but perhaps thinking what a big mistake Dad was making, taking his family out of beautiful Blue Valley, as it was called. If you could see it today, you may think as I did when we visited it years later, that Dad didn't leave soon enough. This was in the fall of 1897, when I was five years old.

When we visited the place a few years ago with my brother Vernard, his wife Grace, Dad and Mom, we found the old homestead and where the house was built among the brush and sandy soil. All there was left was the rock foundation and the sand stones that were once the fireplace. But mother showed the corner where the bed stood, where she lay and gave birth to their first son, after some 36 hours of constant labor, with no doctor, but Dad and Grandma Huntsman as midwife. It was quite a hallowed spot if it was in a desolated place. However, in and around that place is now made a National Monument and is called Wayne Wonderland and is worth seeing, as there are beautiful colors and formations left by nature's storms, winds and mother time.

I also remember camping all night at a place Dad says is called Thistle Junction. We stayed, I think it was in a little log school house. I can remember how good the supper tasted that Dad and Mother prepared as Dad always helped her prepare it. I can't remember what it was we ate, but I do know it tasted mighty good. I also remember Dad braiding a whip out of some leather strings he had cut from an old leather boot top. The strings were about the size of a good shoe lace. We had a little coal oil lamp to eat and work by. I can't remember what kind of work I did, but I must have been taking care of a pair of little rabbits one of my cousins had given me. One was black and the other was white. I must have gone to bed a happy little boy, but when I awoke in the morning, all my worldly possessions were gone, as a cat had found a way into the school house and killed my rabbits. All that was left was a few pieces of black and white fur. Could this be the reason I have never thought much of a cat?

These are some of my childhood recollections of our stay in Annabella, Utah. I remember Dad building another log house, (home,) with a fireplace and later, building on a lean-to on the back. Dad let me have some more rabbits, for which I was very happy. He planted a few fruit trees and we had a garden. Dad worked for wages and often had to go away from home to find employment, so when he was gone, I was the man around the place. Water was very valuable and we had to take our turn whenever it came, night or daytime. Mother always had me get up with her, whenever our turn came in the night, as I was supposed to do, because I was the man around home and pack the lantern for her while she watered the garden.

I wasn't too enthused about entering school,

because I was small for my age and the boys nicknamed me "Stout" and the girls called me "Wessie". There was one little girl who had dark hair and eyes, that I liked to call me "Wessie". Her name was Maude Hanchett. I guess she was my first flame. I always had to sing on the school programs, so I was made very happy on one of George Washington's birthdays, when I was assigned the star role, to be George Washington. What a pretty George Washington suit mother made me, fitting very tight to my legs and very shiny, coming to my knees. My woolen stockings Mom and Grandma Huntsman had knit for me and my shoes all shined from the soot from the lid of the cook stove. Boy! Was Wessie scared but proud, especially when I once caught Maude looking at me.

I remember when a man came to town to take pictures. Mom wanted some of Oreta and me, so she could send Papa one, so she dressed us in our best, washed my neck and ears so nice and clean and made my hair lay in place by putting soap on it. It had the habit of wanting to stand straight up, especially around the crown.

I recall having a fight with a kid some larger than myself, but who had been bullying me around for some time and when he drew a line in the dirt and called me a coward and dared me to cross the line, I did so. Well, with the encouragement I got from some of the bigger fellows, especially my cousin Carl Spafford, we went to town. Every time he hit me, everyone seemed to pity Wessie, but every time I could hit him, how they did laugh and root for me. I'll never know why he quit, but I was kinda happy when he said, "Look at his big eyes bug out", and dropped his hands to his side and walked away. I was quite a hero, but I always hoped he nor anyone else would ask me to cross another line and I didn't, because no one

asked me. If they had, well maybe I would have done it, notwithstanding the results.

I do not remember when my second baby sister, Leona, was born (26 April, 1897) at Annabella, Utah, but I do remember when she died six months later. I do remember when my first brother, Vernard, was born, 20 November, 1898, at Annabella, and remember very well when Delos was born, because it was on the 24th of July, 1901. A friend of mine gave me a little black pup and I brought it home and what a howl it did set up, until the folks made me take it out to the corral and put it in a box. Maybe they thought it would scare the stork away. I didn't want to go stay with my aunt, (Estella Spafford, dad's sister,) and leave my pup out there alone, even if I was nine years old.

The next arrival in our home was a toe-headed girl we named Delta. She was born, 7 September, 1903, at Annabella, Utah.

The first things I can remember Santa Claus bringing me ( we never had Christmas trees then, but hung our stockings on the mantle) and how happy I was when I saw a little horse halfway out of the stocking, with a white mane and tail. He sure was a beauty. There were a few nuts and a little candy in the bottom of the stocking.

I remember when I went with Mother and some other sisters with their repentant children, down in front of Bishop Fairbanks' home and was baptized by John E. Davis, June 2, 1900, in the canal that ran past his place. At the time, we thought it was quite a big canal, but it was only about the size of the branch ditch that furnished water for our farm here in Woodville.

I attended Sunday School regularly and got

through the grades in school, as they came along, by the skin of my teeth.

Just before I was eleven years old, or in February, 1904, Dad went to Sunnyside, Utah with his brother William to work in the coal mines. They went by buggy and horse. Uncle Will was very good on the violin and Dad was just as good on the banjo, so they paid their expenses to work by playing for dances along their way.

Dad found several of Mother's brothers and sisters living and working around Sunnyside, so he sent for his family to come there and visit them while he worked. Mother put our clothes in a small trunk and a few bundles and we took the train from Richfield to Sunnyside. Mother had heard that Dad had had an attack of appendicitis, which at that time was a very serious thing, which must have worried mother a lot, but we children didn't notice it very much, as we were too excited getting ready to see Daddy, aunts, uncles, cousins and especially, having our first train ride. I remember Mother making the last few preparations to go. She tidied up the home and perhaps she never once thought it would be the last time she would ever see her home and belongings. I recall going out to the yards and saying goodbye to my little sorrel pony Dad had given me.

When we arrived in Sunnyside, we found Dad not too well, but trying to work, as most fathers would, to provide for his family. He had several bad attacks after we arrived and finally the company Doctor said he would have to go to Salt Lake City to be operated on. This made us all very sad, as his sickness overshadowed all the happiness we had expected from our visit with him and our relatives. But this was only the sad

beginning of a happy ending. No one thought he would survive the operation, as the doctor said he was in a very bad condition and thought his appendix had burst, which in those days was very serious indeed and usually meant certain death. Dad didn't say so, but I am sure he didn't expect to see his family again.

Now came another blessing in disguise. At the time we thought it was a great tragedy. On the train that came in in the morning and was to take Dad out in the afternoon for the hospital in Salt Lake City, there came a letter from Dad's sister, Estella Spafford in Annabella, saying that our home and all its contents, had burned to the ground during the night and nothing was saved. We never found out for sure who set the home on fire, but everyone at home suspected Uncle Will's wife, who was very jealous, because Mother had gone to visit Dad and could not go to visit her husband, so took her revenge out on mother by burning her home down. If this be true, I am sure everyone concerned had forgiven her and what appeared to be a terrible thing, will later be mentioned, as how we feel it turned out to be one of Dad's family's greatest blessings. Dad has often bore testimony, that when he read that letter and looked at his wife and children, a feeling came to his being and he knew he was not going to die and leave his family, wife and five small children, alone in the world, out in a mining camp, without a home.

He went to the St. Marks Hospital, in Salt Lake City and was operated on. It was found that his appendix had ruptured many days before and was drying away. He was a very sick man and the doctors and nurses wondered, with amazement, how he ever lived.

Mother was too proud to live off her folks, so

she accepted work with one of her sisters, cooking for some men, who had a contract shearing sheep, down near Price, Utah. We lived in tents and played around in the sheep corrals and dirt, for about three or four weeks and our clothing was wearing out, but always happy that Dad kept informing us, he was on the improve, but slowly. After the shearing was completed, mother's sister, Serelda Jones and family, as well as another sister, Tabitha Vest and family, decided to move to Idaho, so we went to Huntington, Utah to visit with Uncle Ben Norton and stay until Dad could return and take care of us.

The Jones and Vest families left in three wagons, for Idaho and stopped in Salt Lake City, camping near the St. Mark's Hospital and visited with Dad. In their conversation, Dad said, "I have no home to go back to, so if I had my family here, I would go with you and make a new home from scratch in Idaho." They said, "Send for your family and we will hold up until they arrive and we will take you to Idaho with us." Dad sent us a telegram to come to Salt Lake, so we packed quickly, as we didn't have much to pack and was soon on our way to Salt Lake City and Idaho. I have never found out, or been told, where Mother got the money to buy the tickets, but always supposed she had a little tucked away in her bag, as has been her custom since, for an emergency. We found Dad on the improve, but weak and thin. The ride to Idaho was not too easy on him, as he was very sore and he walked places where the roads were the worst, to avoid the jolting.

I saw my first automobile, between Salt Lake City and Ogden. It was not much of a car, but enough to frighten the horses.

We were 12 days, coming from Salt Lake City to Idaho Falls, Idaho. There were, as I remember it, 24 people riding in three wagons. We children walked a lot of the way, not that we had to, but to break the monotony and relieve our cramped and crowded positions. We followed the railroad most of the way, so enjoyed walking on the ties and rails. We arrived Decoration Day, 1904 and made camp about a mile south of Idaho Falls, where the new brick Green Gables Motor Court now stands. It rained very hard that night and we got quite a wetting.

The next morning, Dad put me on a horse and he walked along by its side and said he was going to find a home. We went to the old Clark & Fanning Store. The building still stands on the corner of Park Ave. and Broadway, on the northeast corner. There we bought a sack of flour and he sent me back to camp, with the flour on the horses' weathers (shoulders). There were no cement roads and only a few plank sidewalks, at the time, in Idaho Falls.

Dad had a nephew, Louis Nebeker, (son of Lewis Monroe Nebeker and Estella Huntsman) who was just starting out in the Real Estate Business in Idaho Falls, so he looked him up and he said he had a farm listed, down in Woodville, for sale, so they set out in a buggy, drawn by two horses, to see the farm. They came down through the sage brush, from Idaho Falls, to the Long farm and as all the roads followed gravel strip, Dad didn't think too much of it, but when they reached a spot, about where we now live, he said, "This is the kind of soil I like." So Louis tied the horses to a telephone pole at the northwest corner of the farm ditches and the willows had grown out about a rod on each side of each ditch, so there was not a piece of land on the farm that had over four acres in it. Dad

bought the place for \$1800.00. There was a \$1200.00 mortgage on the place and Louis gave Dad a job over on a ranch near Shelley, on what is now known as the Jim Hamilton farm, on the south side of the Butte, east of Shelley where he could work out the first, or down payment. We lived in two tents and mother cooked for the men working on the ranch and I got a job herding about 25 sows and their pigs, on alfalfa and later, on grain stubble. I got \$15.00 a month and with what mother earned cooking for the men, we lived on it and Dad was able to turn his wages on the new home. We lived all summer in tents.

The place we bought, was rented the first summer, but Dad got the rent, which consisted mostly of a few tons of hay. There were no buildings at all on the farm, so the next step was to get one. Dad traded his lot in Annabella, Utah, for a team of horses and harnesses. He found a two room, small lean-to house, east of Shelley, he could buy on time, so he bought it and paid for it by hauling and selling wood from the lava beds, west of here. With the help of some of his friends he had made in the area, they moved the house on the snow, out through the sagebrush, on what is now Clarence Johnson's farm, west of Shelley, and crossed the river on the ice in front of the Johnny Evertt farm, now owned by our son Evon. In Feb., 1905 we moved over to Woodville, living in a very cold house, owned by Elmer Gifford, for the rest of the winter.

We lived there until Dad got our house moved over and we moved into our own first home in Idaho. Later, Dad built a lean-to on the back that made us three rooms. It was not very well insulated as I remember how the water, milk and bread were always frozen and mother had to thaw it all out, before she could fix our breakfast

and school lunches. The whole house was cold, as our breath would freeze on the bed covers and look like snow in the mornings, but it was our home and we were happy.

Dad was able to borrow a little money to buy a walking plow, harrow, a little seed and pay a down payment on a few blacksmith tools, where he went to work late and early sharpening plowshears and shoeing horses. I used to turn the blower by hand, after school and chores were over, until I would get tired and sleepy and Dad would send me to bed and he often worked on into the night by lantern light, then woke us up by pounding on the anvil early in the morning. I inherited the team and hand plow, so had to quit school as soon as we could work in the field and I plowed, cut willows, cleaned ditches and what other work I could do. I remember the plow handles were about as high as my shoulders, so my arms used to ache while trying to hold the plow in place and my legs would be so tired walking behind the hand plow and for a change behind the harrow. I remember Dad plowed out a ditch about 200 yards long and asked me if I could shovel the loose dirt out and I said I would try. I went to work and finished it the next day. Dad come out and looked over the job and how big and happy I was when he said, "A fine job, son."

I attended Sunday School and soon became a Deacon (5 Sept., 1905) and attended M. I. A. all the time. I soon made friends in school, but had to quit early in the spring and stay out in the fall until beets were harvested, but I never complained because I knew we were poor and would all have to do our part if we made a home. I was ordained a Teacher 18 Jan., 1909; Priest 26 Dec., 1910.

When we moved to Woodville from Shelley, we passed the old store across the street from the present store and we heard a man say as we were passing, "There goes a family that we will have to feed." He, nor any one else, has ever given us a penny's worth of food from that day to this, while this and others in the crowd have had to accept charity and finally pull up stakes and move out.

Among the friends I made in Church and school, was a little girl who sometimes looked sad and somewhat worn out and other times cheerful and happy. I notice she was always very much concerned and interested in two of her smaller brothers. I soon found out that their mother had died, not long before we moved to Woodville and she was taking care of her father's housework in the absence of her mother and caring for her younger brothers and going to school when she could. This girl soon became my girlfriend, then my sweetheart, and later my wife and mother of our ten children.

We were married in my father's home, by Bishop John M. Rider, 3 June, 1910. We started immediately to become worthy to receive a recommend and went to the Salt Lake Temple, where we were sealed together as husband and wife (4 October, 1911) for time and all eternity and had our little girl Delila sealed to us and thus made it possible for the other children that were later born to us, to be ours for time and all eternity, with no power on earth able to break that bond, except our own actions, or the children break it through their actions and fail to repent.

Now a little more about my youth. I used to love to stand by my Uncle Will Huntsman and hear him play the violin and Dad knew it, so he bought

me one and made it possible for me to take music lessons. I learned to play fairly well and played with others for dances in Woodville and other places, but gave up playing for dances, when I saw where some of the company I was associating with was leading me. I learned to play pool and found myself wasting a lot of valuable time that I might put to better use. I used a little beer and sometimes drank enough, where I knew my breath smelled and I would act a fool, trying to make myself and others think I was drunk and a real man, or the making of one. I soon found out I was only making a fool of myself and was grieving Mother and Dad, who had been so good to me, so I decided when I got married, my wife would never smell liquor on my breath, nor my sons and daughters see me drink it and I have never drank a drop since before we were married and don't think I ever shall.

I also thought that I could use a little tobacco to make me feel like a "HE MAN", but one sunny afternoon, while I was with a gang who wanted me to learn the trade, offered me a chew of good old horse shoe tobacco. I bit off a good hunk and laid on the ground, like a man, on my back. I spit a little out, but swallowed some and soon I felt my head begin to whirl. I became deathly sick. The boys said I was as white as paper. I didn't feel much like a "HE MAN" then and that broke my desire to become one, from that day until now, if that was the way to do it. When I took upon myself to become a father, it took what money I could earn to make a home for my family, so I had none to waste on things that could do me no good.

Back to my youth - Oreta, my sister and Austin Hammer (whom she later married, but he died with the Flu in 1918) Austin's sister Annie and I went to town (Idaho Falls) to see a merry-go-

round and each of us had a nickel to spend, so we all took a ride and from then on we were broke and after a while returned home.

I was a little better "heeled" when later on some of us kids went into town for a celebration. I had \$.50 in my pocket and took my future wife for our first automobile ride, costing \$.25 per ticket. I think we rode about 2 miles around Idaho Falls, then I was broke again. We had to learn how to celebrate and have a good time without much money. Of course, we didn't have to buy gas then and usually took our lunch with us.

I worked one summer for William Bartlett, on his farm south of Woodville, for \$50.00 per month. I saved enough money and Dad helped me buy a new one-horse buggy. I had an old horse that was too balky to work and often refused to even pull the buggy and all the flogging I gave her wouldn't help her. So we often sat in the buggy until she moved by herself. She was a goer, then and we soon made it home. Sometimes it was daylight. When my kids came in late, it was because they ran out of gas, or had a flat tire, but Mom and I always blamed it on old Clem, as I called her. Times didn't change much, only the things we have, change. I know we were a worry, because we often came home with a spoke or something wrong with our outfit, because we had had a race with someone else and our buggies had come together in the race, while we were laying the whip on the horse and was not holding onto the lines as we should. Our concern was to win the race.

Another kind of transportation in winter was the bob sleigh. We used to have a lot of sleigh rides and a lot of races and often, when turning a corner, we would turn so fast that we would throw the hay rack or box off the sleigh and scatter straw, girls and boys all over and the team



and sleigh had to be gathered up down the road a mile or two. The snow was usually deep enough to make a soft place to light.

As a boy, I worked on the church house now used as by brother's home. Vern bought it from the church and made apartments out of it. It will be better known by the younger generation, as the old "Amusement Hall". We hauled lumber out from Idaho Falls on sleighs in April, 1907, "Believe it or Not".

Dad rented the George Thompson farm, then owned by a Real Estate Company back East, and I farmed with him and Nora and myself moved ourselves in the house which is still standing and is being used by Doug Thompson as a grainery. Both Delila and Bertha were born there. Delila was born 4 August, 1910 and Bertha 20 February, 1912.

I received a call to fill a Mission for the Church in Samoa (South Sea Islands) in the early Spring of 1912, leaving on 3 April, 1912. I was assigned to the Tongan District, then a part of the Samoan Mission. It was very hard to leave Nora and the two little girls, Delila and Bertha, Dad, Mother and the rest of the family and my friends, but I wanted to fill a mission and knew I should go. Since coming to Woodville, there were additions to the family; Voil Duane, born 9 Oct., 1906 who died 27 November, 1906 and buried in the Woodville Cemetery; Zalia, born 31 March, 1909; and Lenard Glenore was born 23 February., 1913, while I was serving on my mission.

Where the money would come from while I was on my mission, I nor Dad knew not, but we had faith we would get it somewhere. We had used what little money we had to buy me a few clothes

to take with me, but needed \$225.00 to buy my passage. At that time, the missionary paid all his passage to the Mission Field. The day before I was to leave, we went over to Shelley and while walking down the street, Brother Thomas Bennett came out of his office and wanted to know if we wanted to borrow \$250.00. Well, we surely did and I was soon on my way.

I asked that no one go to the train with me, except Dad. At about midnight, I bid all goodbye and got in beside Dad in the buggy. It was a very stormy night and we didn't carry on much of a conversation going over. I guess our hearts were too full

There were a few of my friends at the depot. We didn't have long to wait, so I said goodbye to the gang and to Dad and went aboard. I took a seat as far away as I could from anyone and cried all the way to Pocatello. By then, I was pretty well empty, so enjoyed my short stay in Salt Lake. There was no Mission Home then, as there is now, so the Church sent us to a hotel. I passed all examinations, as all the Elders did, except one from Canada, who had had an affair with a girl, in Butte, Montana, on his way down to Salt Lake City, and he had to be sent home to his parents in disgrace. After a few days in Salt Lake, I was set apart for my mission by Elder J. Golden Kimball.

We came back north as far as Pocatello and I sure wanted to get off the train and come back home to my loved ones, but am happy I did not. We thirteen Elders and one Lady Missionary, took the ship in Vancouver, Canada and I was very seasick for a week, then felt better and enjoyed my trip down to Tonga. I was on ship 30 days to Tonga. The Mission President, President Christiansen asked me if I could sing

and I said "They say I can carry a tune," and he said "You are needed in Tonga. Get on the boat this afternoon." When we three Elders, myself, Haycock, Tittensor, left the nine Elders going to New Zealand and Australia, at Fiji, we were quite lonesome going over to Samoa, but when I left the two Elders, I came with, to Samoa and had to get on the boat alone, I was sorry I ever let the cat out of the bag and told President Christiansen I could carry a tune, but after I arrived in Tonga and went to work, I was never sorry I did. If I had not, I never would have had the pleasure, I am sure, that has come to us in our later years.

I enjoyed my mission very much, learned to love the people as I learned to serve them and also the Elders I had for my companions. These championships have brought us a lot of happiness, after I returned home. I served as a Branch President and also District President, the last year of my mission. I have a daily diary of my first mission. Diaries are sometimes dry reading, but some may want to read it and get something out of it.

While I was on my mission Mom, had to do housework, take in washing, and other work she could find, to provide her and the two children with things they needed. I have never heard a person say they ever heard her complain and I am sure she was and is as grateful as I that I had a mission to fulfill. I knew she had all she could do to provide for her and the girls and that Dad's income was small, so I tried very hard to get along with as little money as possible, so when my mission was over I had spent an average of \$8.00 per month. I ate lots of native food and I don't feel I neglected my work watching my pennies. I felt that the family at home needed money more than I did, as the Lord was keeping

his promises to me, His servant, and blessed me to enjoy the native food. I learned to patch and mend and needed very few clothes more than those I took with me. When I was released, after nearly three years, I traded a few clothes that would be of no use to me in America, to an Elder Jacobs, who had just arrived in the Island, for a suit to come home in. It didn't fit too well, but I got by anyway.

I never had many outstanding experiences during my mission. I followed instructions, kept the Lord's commandments the best I could, worked hard to learn the language and the gospel, loved the people and my work and was willing to share my happiness with all I met. Most of my mission, I labored alone as far as a companion was concerned. Many times, my only companion was the Lord. I lived and ate much of the time with native Saints and friends I could make. We Elders would visit back and forth with each other in our Branches, as often as we could, without neglecting our work. At the end of each month, we would spend a few days, usually two days, attending Elder's Priesthood and Report Meetings, writing our mail home and receiving our mail. We called this "boat day" as the boat came in about once a month and when we could, we liked to meet on "boat Day", as that was the biggest day of the month. As the Islands are very damp and it rains a lot, the roads and trails we had to travel from branch to branch and into Headquarters, were always quite muddy. We walked every place we went and oft times made friends and opened the heart of a convert, as we walked along and would talk with him, or sit on a fallen coconut tree and rest. They would always be kind enough to climb a tree and get me a cool nut to drink, even though we could not agree on our religious views.

There was one outstanding experience I had that I would like to record, when I felt I was very near the Lord and one of His guardian angels. I was living in Foui and Branch President at the time and after tracting the village quite thoroughly, I went to tract in another village, Fahefa, about three miles east. I was able to convert three persons and baptize them. They developed into strong members and they and their families later became some of the most dependable members in the district and a branch was established there.

I held Fast Meeting in Faui Sunday afternoon and would walk over to Fahefa in the evening and administer the Sacrament and hold a Cottage Meeting for the members and friends there. During one meeting a severe rain and thunder storm developed and they wanted me to stay all night, but I felt I would like to go back to my branch to be ready for my work there "teaching a small school" Monday morning. So they provided me with a kerosene lantern and I left, but the storm increased rapidly and blew the lantern out and my umbrella became useless, so I wrapped it up and used it as a cane to help me keep on the trail. I was wet all over and the mud was heavy on my shoes; the trail was covered at places by falling trees. I came to a large coconut tree blown across the path and sat down to rest a moment and as I sat there, my thoughts drifted back home and I became very lonely and I even questioned whether my efforts were worthwhile and as I sat and pondered these thoughts, a strong feeling came over me and I thought I heard a voice very low, it may have been the whispering of the Holy Ghost, and said, "Don't question what you are doing. Your work and efforts are being accepted and recorded in Heaven," so I arose and walked to my branch with a light heart and a happy feeling.

Another experience I think I shall record, was my return journey home. Our new Mission President Nelson came down from Samoa to hold a District Conference. We arranged for a Conference. He arrived by boat in the morning and as we went to the first session, walking together and asking questions about the work in the District, he told me he was going to release me and asked who would be qualified among Elders to take my place as District President. He said we would attend Conference in the Vavau District on our way back to Samoa, attend a conference in Samoa and he would release an Elder to come home with me. When we arrived in Samoa, the first World War had developed to a point where even the Islands were being affected, as America, Germany and England each owned one of the main islands of Samoa. War ships and sailors were being landed on each of their islands, so President Nelson said he felt impressed to send me to Fiji on the boat we came from Tonga on, to catch the boat for America, as he didn't know what might happen in the Islands and I may be held there for months, so I was glad to get on my way. He purchases my ticket to Fiji and gave me an order for \$100.00 ticket home and the Government authorities allowed me to have \$25.00 for essential expenses. When I got to Fiji I found President Nelson had made the order out for \$25.00 short, so I gave the order and the \$25.00 and found that would only pay my fare on the boat to Vancouver, B.C. I was really broke. I pawned my cheap watch for a few dollars for a room and food the few days I had to wait in Fiji for the boat to America. They said things were uncertain all over the world and this boat may not get through. The boat came the second day. I went on board broke, but my fare and board paid to Canada. The only thing I knew what to do was go to the Lord and ask Him to see me

through. I did a lot of praying between Fiji and Hawaii. When we landed in Honolulu, I had no money for a taxi fare, so trusted the Lord to direct me to the Mission Home in Honolulu. I started up the street, never asked a person, and after walking about 1-1/2 miles I came to a place that said L.D.S. MISSION HEADQUARTERS. I went in and the President was away. I told the Elders my problem, showed my release. They let me borrow enough money for train fare from Canada to Shelley and a little expense money besides, which I paid back as soon as I returned home. My trip home was rather disappointing, as there were things I wanted to see coming home, but the increased faith I received I am sure was worth more than sight seeing would have been. I have seen things I wanted to see then, many times since. My faith and trust in the Lord increased from the day I left home until I returned, just as I was promised it would, by Brother J. Golden Kimball who set me apart for my mission, 5 April, 1912.

I arrived home 15 March, 1915 and worked for wages for a year or two. No one knew just when I was coming home, so it was a surprise when I walked in on the folks. Mom and the girls were living with Grandpa Gifford at the time. They were sent for and when Mom came in carrying Bertha and saw her man, she let all holds go on Bertha, flew about ten feet into my arms. All the commotion scared the fun all out of Delila and Bertha and it was hours before I could get them to be friendly with their daddy.

I worked for Grandpa Gifford and others that summer, then that fall Dad, helped me build our first home on his place, just south of where the so called branch ditch enters the street. It was a three room house, spick and span and new and we moved into it in the spring.

I'm a little ahead of my story. It is hard to keep things in their right order after so many years.

While I was on my mission, Dad had built them a new cement block house. It was a two story house and in the summer of 1916 it caught on fire and burned down. We and the neighbors were able to save only a few things. I was out in the field mowing hay for Dad, looked up and saw smoke from the fire and was one of the first to the house. There were no fire engines then, so we got what we could out of the house and let the rest burn. The fire started upstairs and that burned first, making it possible to get out a few things before the upper floor caved in. That was Dad's and Mother's second burn out.

I worked and donated cash on the new brick church. We started the basement in November, 1919. Dad drove the team and I held the plow as we plowed the first furrow on the project, after the Bishopric and others staked it out.

Now a little about the additional members of our family. Verona was born 28 December, 1915 in a small two room house back of Grandpa Huntsman's new home, the folks were living in, when I left for my mission. Verona was a very small baby at birth and remained the smallest member of the family. She married David Aaron Bragg of Basalt, Idaho 7 Dec., 1934 in the Logan Temple.

Alta LaReah was Born 15 April, 1917 in the same small house Verona was born in. We didn't know for several hours after birth, whether or not she would live. The outstanding event in her life was that she was born during a heavy snow storm and the doctor could hardly get out from Shelley and in the morning, there were 12 inches of snow on the ground that had fallen during the

day and night. LeReah filled a mission in the Central States, leaving in Sept., 1941 and returned April 9, 1943. She married Paul Albert Toronto, of Salt Lake City 9 July, 1943 in the Salt Lake Temple.

Dean G. was born 31 December, 1918 in the first new home we owned, mentioned before, built on Dad's farm. He was our first boy. Dean went on a mission to Hawaii 9 Nov., 1939. When he returned two years later, the 2nd World War was fomenting and he was drafted into the army shortly after his return from his mission. He spent some four years in the South Pacific area, fighting the Japanese. He had a world of experiences and nearly lost his life with Typhus Fever and Malaria and was sent to Australia from New Guinea, where he was in the hospital for several months before returning to active duty. We hope he will record some of his outstanding experiences and his miraculous healing by the Priesthood. He married Dorothy Roxanna Carter, in the Salt Lake Temple 2 June, 1945.

Evon Vernard was born 19 March, 1921 in the small house we moved into when we bought Grandpa Gifford's first forty acres. After graduating from High School, he went to Portland, Oregon to work in the Defense Plants, then to Camp Farogot, Idaho. While in Portland, he met the girl of his choice, Mildred Florence Wellesley and they were married 10 August, 1940. Evon has been the money maker of the family, going from row crop farming into stock raising.

Max Odell was born 13 September, 1922 at Woodville in the larger house mentioned elsewhere. It was Max who had his foot nearly severed in a mowing machine. It was one of our nearest tragedies and hardest experiences in

raising our family. he was five years of age. He followed the older children down in the field where I was cutting peas and they were piling them. I did not see him until he was within a foot of the cutter-bar of the mowing machine. Fortunately, his body fell over behind the knife and he held one foot up, but the other foot was almost entirely cut off. The hired man unhooked one of the horses and I crawled on and he handed Max up to me and I went to the house as fast as I could and we rushed to the hospital at Idaho Falls, Idaho. Dr. Hatch thought first, he had better amputate his foot, but after consulting another doctor called in, they decided to try to save his foot. We administered to him and they went to work. All that was holding his foot together was the little toe bone and outer skin. With their skill and the help of the Lord, he was left with a good foot. Max married Hazel Thorngreen, 19 May, 1944 in Dillon, Montana. Max has been more interested in Business and Merchandizing than in farming.



LtoR: Evon Wesley, Martha Elnora, Alta Lareah, Bertha, Donald Jay, Max Odell, Reed Ames, Evon Vernard, Newel Delos, Delila, Verona, Dean Gifford.

Reed Ames was born 20 September, 1924 on the ranch where Max was born. Reed was in the

Hospital several days with pneumonia, while a baby and after we brought him home, he developed it again and they had to tap his left lung to save his life. He was drafted in the service in Europe until the war ended. Reed should also record his experiences while in the service, as he also must have many. It is also difficult to get a service man to write much about his war years. He married Velda Mae Hoopes, 30 November, 1946.

Donald Jay was born in the same home 14 May, 1926. He married June Olga Elg, 16 November, 1944 in Pocatello, Idaho. Donald was drafted into the Army and served in the Pacific. His company were sailing into the Japanese Harbor for an attack just after the two Atomic Bombs were dropped and they were told by their commanding officers that not more than 10% would survive the attack. Don rented my farm for several years and did quite well. He drew a GI farm out of Washington where he moved and did a lot of work on the farm and went broke. The farm turned to alkali and would not raise a crop. He was later given a farm in Rupert, Idaho in exchange for the farm in Washington, but he lost a lot of money and time with the first farm.

Newell Delos was born at the same place, on 17 October, 1927. He was our tenth child. He joined the Navy and spent most of his time sailing the seven seas. He was harder to keep track of, as he moved so often and it was a long time between mail. He married Evelyn Wilkins, 9 June, 1949.

We had four boys in the armed forces and only parents who sent them out know the heartaches we had when we sent them out, especially when they got their last furlough before going overseas into battle and they pick up their suit cases and

walk out the door, perhaps for the last time. You just can't describe the feeling. We were sure thankful of God for their safe return unharmed.

Now back to the early days of our marriage. In September, 1915 I received my first church assignment as First Counselor to Samule H. Hurst, in the Shelley Stake Religion Class and later, Stake Superintendent, October, 1920. The Religion Class was the fore-runner for our present Church Seminary Program. I also served as Ward MIA President from 1917-1923 inclusive. In the winter of 1916, I served a short term Stake Mission among the non LDS people in the West First District. A. M. Poulsen was my companion.

The fall of 1918, the Flu broke out and people died by the hundreds and thousands. Among them were four from Woodville. My brother-in-law, Austin Hammer died, 11 November, 1918. This was Armistice Day, that ended the bloody First World War. Oreta, also lost her baby daughter Afton with the Flu, shortly after Austin's death.

I farmed with Dad in 1918 and for a year or two. He had bought the 40 acres, two miles north, on what is now Earnest Pickett's farm. There were no buildings on the place and the farm was in poor condition, so we hardly made wages driving back and forth from the home place. We turned the farm back when Austin Hammer died. Austin and Oreta bought an 80 acre farm a mile north of Woodville (now owned by Len Stears) and farmed it the summer of 1918. When Austin died, I traded our home, mentioned above, for Oreta's equity in the farm and we moved there in the spring of 1919 and farmed it that year. The place was badly run down and with the equipment I had, I didn't raise much of a crop.

The hay was poor. That spring, I paid Charley Baxter \$40.00 a ton for two tons of hay to feed the few cows and work horses. I had a fair crop of peas, but they got a little dry before I cut them and before I got them thrashed, a heavy wind came up and blew them all over the farm and shelled most of them out. I had a few hogs, 15 heads, and they cleaned them all up and were a fair price, so it helped me pay the seed bill. I had a few potatoes that year and sold them for \$7.50 per hundred lbs. This I appreciated and was able to pay my bills, feed my family of seven, and buy us a few clothes. Delila and Bertha went to school in Woodville, across from the present Church house. It was a two mile walk in the morning and back at night - 4 miles a day. There were no school buses.

Mother's oldest brother, Alvin, had bought Grandpa Gifford's farm, but was unable to keep up the payments and wanted Grandpa to take it back, so he sold me 40 acres and Jim Gifford another brother, 40 acres and Alvin kept the west 20 acres for his equity. I gave back the 80 acre farm we were living on and moved down on the farm, in a little 4 roomed house, which I later sold to Dewey Kelly. This is still a part of his home. I farmed this 40 acres in 1920. The next year, Jim gave his 40 acres back to his father, who asked if I wanted it and I did, so I bought it, making 80 acres and I got together \$750.00 to pay the down payment, on both forties. Alvin sold the lower 20, as we called it, to my brother Vern, who sold or traded it to B. B. Stringham, a Real Estate man in Shelley, who sold it to me for \$3,000.00 - \$500.00 down payment which I borrowed from the Bank, without a signer. The hundred acres cost me \$17,500.00 at 6% interest. Jim had become discouraged and moved to Jerome, Idaho. I had turned a team of horses and harnesses and a few other things, to

Grandpa Gifford for the \$750.00 down payment mentioned above. Grandpa let Alvin have them, as he had a dry farm out west of Woodville and farmed it.

I borrowed quite a lot of money from year to year to operate on, but never had to ask for anyone to sign for me. We never borrowed a dime from either my father or father-in-law, but did receive a lot of good advice from both of them on how to farm and keep out of debt as much as possible. It took me about 20 years to pay off the mortgage and have the place clear of debt. We paid as much interest, in the 20 years, as the original cost of the farm, but in the meantime, I was able to improve the farm a lot by leveling up many parts of the farm and building the two homes, barn and other buildings that are now in use. We raised hogs, sheep, chickens, and milked cows, with the help of our family. We also raised grain, peas, clover seed, hay, but most of what we were able to payoff the mortgage with, came from potato crop. You will notice that I use the term "WE" as it was we as a family, working together, that paid for and build our home.

From the day I started to farm, until the year I retired, 1945, from farming and renting it to the boys, I never found it necessary to work in the field on Sunday, except to turn water and do the chores and they were always done and arranged so we could attend Sunday School, Priesthood Meeting, Sacrament Meeting, and fill all other Church assignments asked of us.

When we moved onto the 40 acres, we purchased from Grandpa Gifford, we had a family of eight. Grandpa Gifford stayed with us most of the time, so it made nine in our small four roomed home. Upon buying the 100 acres, we

now had a lumber house with 4 bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, and a front room, which had been built by Alvin, just back of where our new brick home now stands. We built this brick home in 1936, at a cost of \$7,000.00, but would cost \$20,000.00 to build it now.



Brick Home built by Evon W. Huntsman, 1936.

We decided that the first debt we would pay, would be our tithing to the Lord and take Him at His word and went into partnership with Him. The Lord did open the windows of Heaven and did pour out to us many blessings. However, we did not leave everything to Him. We promised ourselves we would pay our way as we went and to do so we had to plan, or budget our income. We got ourselves a few cows, sheep and hogs. We made our cream and egg money pay our grocery bills and keep the house going, the lambs and wool was used to buy our clothing. The hogs paid our taxes and the farm, mostly potatoes, paid our interest, payments and machinery. There were times when we had to deviate a little, but got back on our budget as soon as we could. For the first ten years, I hauled all our wood from the lava beds west of

Woodville. It was a good twelve hour day to make the trip. I had to milk the cows, feed and harness the horses and be half way to the lavas by day break and it would be most of the time, after dark when I would get home, tired, wet and hungry as the snow was always deep then and we would walk most of the way to keep warm, until some bright mind thought up the idea of making a fire in an old tub and keeping at least half of you warm at a time, or until you got your clothes dry. Mother and the children would get all the chores done they could, by the time I got back with a nice load of cedar wood. I did not mind it too much then, as I thought the Lord was very good to us to furnish us with so much good fuel for nothing. All we had to do was go get it. I often think back now and wonder why some money crazy man didn't homestead the thousands of acres of lavas, covered with good wood and sell it to us. They would perhaps do it now. There were thousands of loads of wood brought from the lava beds each winter and many made a living selling wood here in Idaho Falls, Woodville received its name from the wood hauled through Woodville. Let me say here, that my father and Grandpa Gifford and others hauled wood in the winter and sold it to buy some bacon and beans to eat while they were building the dam across the river and digging the Woodville Canal to get water on the land they homesteaded or bought.

While we were living on the place we called "upon the hill" I bought my first car. It was a second hand Dart and what a car, but it was mine. I was the party of the first part. Some time in the early twenties, I think it was 1922/3, I went over to Shelly and came home with a new Model T. Ford, still mine and I was the "Party of the First Part".



I was always able to raise a fair crop on our 100 acres and was able to keep up my payments and made enough to stay out of debt except for the farm.



Barn Built by Evon W. Huntsman, 1937.  
L to R: Martha Gifford Huntsman, George W. Gifford, Max Huntsman, and Reed Huntsman in the loft.

For the next several years, we had our ups and downs, mostly ups though. There was some sickness in the family, but I think just enough to make us enjoy good health when we had it. I remember paying out \$900.00, one year on Doctor and Hospital care. Mother and several operations, Bertha had Typhoid Fever, Max having had his foot nearly cut off and Reed having had Pneumonia twice as a baby. The children seemed to pick up most of the childhood diseases, but all in all we came through in fair shape, to look at them as of this date. All our children were born in the home, so our hospital bill wasn't like it is today. The doctor would always say, when I would ask him what his bill was, "\$25.00 cash or \$35.00 on time", and then, ten dollars always looked too good to us, so we were always "Party of the First Part" in the ownership of our children.

I was happy to have received many opportunities to serve in the Church. As mentioned previously, my first assignment was a counselor to Elder Samuel H. Hurst in the Sake Religion Class; Supervisor of the Religion Class in the Shelley Stake, being set apart for this calling by Elder Rudgar Clawson in October, 1923. Later, on 8 July, 1923 I was selected to serve as second counselor to Bishop Joseph P. Bishoff of the Woodville Ward and was set apart by Elder John Wells, a member of the Presiding Bishopric. On 17 February, 1924 I was set apart by Elder Melvin J. Ballard (Apostle) as a member of the Shelley Stake High Council. While a High Councilman, I served as advisor to the Elder's Quorum, Stake Agricultural Advisor for the newly organized Church Welfare Plan, and Chairman of the Stake Beautification Committee. I served in the High Council for twenty-two years.

I served on several civic committees at different times - 12 years as member of Woodville Canal Board; 6 years as Chairman of the Westside Soil Conservation Committee; and Chairman of the County Production and Marketing Association, 1949.

I told the Lord once, that I hoped he never blessed me with so much wealth that I couldn't take care of it in a 6 day week and he never had. We were always able to attend the Fathers and Sons and Mothers and Daughters Outings, also made several trips to attend Ward and Family Reunions, and took many trips to Yellowstone Park with our family and others and still keep our work up, although we often had to double time before we left and sometimes triple time to catch up when we got home. We enjoyed this very much and it was part of our joy and reward for rearing our large family. We had most of the

child diseases and sicknesses that ordinarily come in a family the size of ours, but nothing we could not pay for, both hospital and doctor care.

My Priesthood ordinations are as follows; Deacon, 5 September, 1905; Teacher, 18 January, 1909; Priest, 26 December, 1910; Elder, 1 October, 1911; Seventy, 1920; High Priest, 8 July, 1923. I was chosen counselor to Bishop Joseph P. Bishoff, 8 July, 1923, set apart 19 November, 1923 by Elder James E. Talmage, Apostle; Stake Aaronic Priesthood Committee member, 1934-1937; Stake Elder's Advisor, 1940; Stake Chairman of the Church Security Agricultural Organization, 1940-1946; Ward Chairman of Beautification Committee, 1946; called to Preside over the Tongan Mission and set apart by President George Albert Smith, 29 April, 1946; Released 1 August, 1948; called a second time to preside over the mission and set apart 6 July, 1950 by President George Albert Smith; released 1 February, 1952. Called as a member of the Shelley Sake High Council 12 June, 1952, being set apart by Elder El Ray Christiansen, Apostle; called to officiate in the Idaho Falls Temple in October, 1952, being set apart by President William Killpack. I was recommended by President William Killpack and chosen and set apart 16 January, 1953, by President David O. McKay, to do sealings for both the living and the dead in the Idaho Falls Temple.

In 1954, I ran on the Democratic Ticket for Bonneville County Commissioner and won a four year term, 1955-1958, 1957-1958 as Chairman of the Board. I run for a second term in 1958 and won and was elected for a two year term, also served as Chairman. From 1939 to 1946 I served on the General Board of Directors of the Idaho Potato Growers Association and attended

two National Conventions in Chicago, Ill. and one in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In 1946, we attended General Conference in Salt Lake City as usual and the next day after returning home in April, I received a telephone call from President David O. McKay, 2nd Councilor in the First Presidency, asking if I and Mom could come to Salt Lake City and meet with the First Presidency. I said we would. This was on a Friday and they wanted us in their office at 10 o'clock Monday morning. We were very concerned and almost bewildered as to why they wanted us in their office. We went down and met with them at the appointed time. This was a lovely experience to enter into President McKay's office and we were both very humble. He asked us a few questions about our work and family and wanted to know what our plans for the future were. We told him that we had rented our farm and had three things planned to do - visit some of our relatives, do some Temple Work and go fishing. He smiled and said, "Well, you could postpone your visits and Temple Work couldn't you?" And we said, "Yes." Then he said, "Fishing is a poor way to spend a useful life," and I agreed it was and then he smiled and in a beautiful spirit told us their purpose in calling us down to Salt Lake was to see if we would be willing to go back to Tonga and serve a few years as President of the Mission. We were very much surprised and about the only answer we could give him was that Reed, Donald and Newell were in the Army and Navy and would not be home for some time, as far as we knew and we would like to see them. He said they were aware of this and about the next thing we said was, "President McKay, if the Church needs us we will go." He said transportation was difficult to arrange and for us to go back home and settle down and as soon as they could book

passage, they would send for us. We came back home and immediately started to contact the boys in the service. Reed came home "released", Don was in Japan, and Newell had returned after a short furlough. We contacted the Red Cross and they arranged for Don to come home and he came to Salt Lake, where we had a few hours with him before we left. We had returned home from Salt Lake, as stated, to wait our call and the next morning as I was leaving the house a call came from Brother Murdock, the Church Transportation Agent, that passage to Tonga had been made and to come down as soon as possible, as the boat was to sail for the islands on a certain date in the very near future. We got ready and in a few days, we were bidding the family goodbye and were on our way to far away Tonga. We were set apart 29 April, 1946 by all three of the First Presidency laying their hands on our heads, President George Albert Smith being mouth in setting me apart and President David O. McKay setting Mom apart with President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. assisting.

It is difficult to write things as they happened, as it has been many years since they happened and it is only reasonable to assume that many interesting and important things will be left out of this history.

I have taught classes in the MIA, Sunday School and all Priesthood classes and have enjoyed all my church activities and they have been very worth while to me. I have never had to work on the Sabbath Day, except to do the chores and turn the irrigation water, but no matter how rushed we were, I could always find a place where the water could run to good advantage, while I attended to my church duties.

Now, back to my call as Mission President. We

left Salt Lake City by train and took the boat Mantera on 2 May, 1946. The ship was once one of the best ships on the Pacific, but had been stripped of all its better furnishings and used as a troop ship. There were some 900 passengers on board and we felt very much alone as we stayed in our cabin. We were both seasick and didn't care much who was on board. We found, after a few days, that Elder Ladell Roberts, his wife Hortense and three children were also on board, going as missionaries to Tonga. They had been called direct from Rosemary, Canada and came direct to San Francisco, arriving just in time to catch the boat. Elder Roberts had also been on a mission to Tonga some ten years back. This relieved our lonesomeness some and we began to enjoy our voyage. We spent a day in Honolulu, Hawaii and went by taxi out to the Temple, but it was closed. It was very beautiful going to Laie, where the Temple is and we came back on another route, through thousands of acres of pineapple plantations and by way of Pearl Harbor, where the Japs attacked the navy ships and started the Second World War. There were many ships on the harbor and millions of dollars worth of war equipment piled high on both sides of the road, as far back as we could see and miles in length, as we rode around the harbor. It was easy to see where our tax dollars were spent.

We left Honolulu in the evening and landed in Suva, Fiji four days later. It was very hot and I knew we were in the tropics again. After 24 hours in Fiji, we sailed on to New Zealand, where we were to change boats for Tonga. We were met by President Halverson and some missionaries and were made very welcome in the Mission Home by Sister Halverson. We made a week's tour of New Zealand, riding for miles through towns and villages and beautiful farmland

and pasture, or paddocks as the English call them. New Zealand is a great sheep and dairy land. It was most beautiful to see thousands of sheep and called the "Yellowstone of New Zealand". There are many warm geysers and springs where they cook much of their food. We stayed at the home of Brother and Sister Davies, who had built the home as a Headquarters for President and Sister Mathew Cowley, when he served as a Mission President in New Zealand. We were fed and entertained wonderfully by the Maori Saints and a few Tongan Saints who had moved to New Zealand. We passed through Hamilton, not far from the place where the new College and Temple now stands. The road went along the land that is now called Temple City.

The boat going to Tonga was a day late arriving and when it did arrive, it was booked full and it didn't look like we were going to get passage. We knew the way would be cleared for us to go where he wanted us to go and that was Tonga. After fasting and prayers and persuading and trying to convince the authorities this was not a pleasure trip, but a "must" trip, the morning the boat "Matua" was to sail for Tonga, eleven hundred miles northeast of New Zealand, we were informed that some cancellations had been made and that we and Elder Roberts and family were booked to take their place. "The Lord moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform". Three days later, 7 June 1946, we sailed in to Nukualofa Harbor, to the land and the people I had learned to love some 32 years previous.

We were met by President and Sister Emil Dunn and many of the Saints in Tonga and was made most welcome by all. The language and people were very strange to Mom, but after a few weeks we found ourselves adjusting to our new life and

surroundings. We received word in New Zealand that Delila had given birth to a baby boy, Ronnie, and things were not just right. It was four months later when we got our first mail from home, caused by a harbor strike on the west coast of America, and no boats left that could bring mail or cargo. When the boat did arrive we received 95 letters and bags of papers and parcels. We learned that Ronald was OK and must have weighed near "90 lbs" by the pictures sent us.

We visited over the main island with President Dunn for a few days, then he left and we were officially in charge. One of the first visits mother and I made, was out to Makeke Plantation where our Mission School was located and was in the hands of native teachers, who were doing their best to keep it alive. The Elders from Zion had been evacuated from all the Pacific Missions because of the war and we and the Roberts family were the first to come out after the war. We found the school in poor condition. The buildings were mostly of native construction and they were leaking and unclean and the some 75 students were poorly fed and cared for.

On our way back to the Mission Home "8 miles" in a little Hillman car that had been left with us, we discussed the conditions at the school and I said as soon as I could get a letter off to the First Presidency, I was going to request a better school, or I would close Makeke down and sent the boys and girls back to their homes. I wrote the letter describing all conditions of the mission, especially the school, and told them I didn't think things were nearly up to L. D. S. Standards and hoped they would consider making us an appropriation to help us build a better school and renovate the Mission Home and make it more comfortable to live in.

I wanted to make a visit to the other islands to the north - Vavau, Haapai, Niuafu'o and Niuatoputapu, as soon as I could get passage on the small boat "Hifofua" going that route. I finally got passage and knowing it would be a very hard trip, as the farther east island was some 400 miles away, I didn't want Mom to take the trip that soon after arriving in Tonga, so I asked her and Sister Roberts to remain in Nukualofa. I took Elder Roberts and we made the visit. We were away three weeks, but when we did return Mom and everything seemed OK at Mission Headquarters. I was sure glad that I had taken Elder Roberts with me, as he was a better sailor than I and he knew conditions better than I, because he had only been away from Tonga 10 years and I, some 32 years. Two of the islands, Niuafu'o and Niuatoputapu, neither of us had ever visited before. It was a very hectic trip on that small boat. We were four days going to the most distant islands, Niuafu'o, and I was very seasick and very weak when we landed. The only white people on the island, was a Catholic Priest and two Nuns, some 1500 natives, mostly Catholics. We had two native Elders laboring on the island and three families of L. D. S. The boat anchored about 1/2 mile from shore, as there was not a place on the island they could build a wharf and was very rough water and very rocky. We came ashore in a small row boat and all the natives on the island seemed to be present. We met our Elders and they had one pony that they insisted I should ride, which I was glad to do so, as I was sure weak from being seasick and not eating for those three days. We went inland about four miles, which was about half way through the island. They provided us with a meal, which was not very much and after an hours rest, we held a meeting, administered to the Sacrament. I only spoke a few minutes. Elder Roberts spoke to them and after a little chat, they

prepared our bed on a few mats on the floor and we retired for the night. We had a little native hut by ourselves. Where the others stayed, I don't know.

As we passed through the crowd on the island and going through the small villages, we felt a very unfriendly spirit. The natives, on a whole, are very friendly, even if they don't believe in your teachings, but it was different on this Catholic island. You could feel an evil spirit everywhere.

We held another meeting with our little flock and tried to encourage them to be humble and live close to the Lord and He would bless them. We left about 1 o'clock to go back, as the boat was to leave about 1 o'clock. We felt the same spirit everywhere, on our way back. We were mocked, slandered and called "Joseph Smith" by men, women and children. You would wonder how they knew anything about the Prophet on that remote far away island, but what the Prophet said many years ago as an unknown boy, "That his name would be spoken of for both good and evil in all the world" was so true.

We sat on some rocks among our few friends and tried to show kindness to everyone, but they didn't respond. Their Priest and Nuns were in the crowd. As our turn came to get in the row boat, the last trip to go out to the larger boat still anchored where we left it, we bid the Elders and Saints goodbye and hopped from rock to rock out to the row boat. It was very rough and I was going to get washed off the rocks as the waves came in. We finally made it and was trying to tuck our suitcases somewhere, when a half dozen big native young men came hopping from rock to rock toward the boat and were heard to say, "Here is where we will drown the Mormons".

They jumped into the little boat and tried to sink it, or rock it and throw us out, but after an unsuccessful try, they jumped into the water and swam to shore. They knew we were poor swimmers, but should have made good shark food if we couldn't. We made it back to the boat, but the two native crew boys who rowed us out, were so ashamed of what happened to us, that they sure tried to do all they could for us when we set sail for the rest of the voyage to the other islands and home to Mission Headquarters.

Here is what happened to Niuafu'o and the people there. When we were two days out, a wireless message was received that the same day we left, the island erupted and the red hot lava destroyed the Catholic homes and school, government buildings and covered most of the village and their wireless station. The natives had to flee inland for safety. An American plane happened to fly over the island the next day and saw the terrible condition of things and wired Government Headquarters in Nukualofa. This all happened, luckily for them, that it was the time the Matua, the inter-island boat had arrived from New Zealand, so all the passengers and cargo was unloaded and the Matua set sail to evacuate the natives, Priest and Nuns of Niuafu'o. It was a sight when it docked in Nukualofa, to see about 1500 people get off the boat. The government had ordered them to leave their homes, horses, pigs, gardens and all they had behind, which wasn't much. We cared for our Saints and fed them well and the government took the rest into the brush and half starved them, until they could raise some food.

We felt sorry for them and encouraged our people to take them all they could and they responded in brotherly love and I think gave them about half they lived on, for a year. This was

another great testimony that the Lord protects his own and punishes those who do evil.

Newspaper articles appeared in various island English Newspapers, some stating that perhaps the Mormons were happy that the island had erupted, but we were not and taught our people to forgive and forget what had happened. We sure never held any ill feelings toward them, but pity for their teachings.

We had a nice visit with the few saints in Niuatoputapu, Vavau and Haapai and held conferences with them. Vavau and Haapai both were districts and we had about 600 members in Vavau and 450 in Haapai. We were gone about three weeks on our visit.

About a month after our return, the mail came in and two Elders, Laycock of San Francisco and Black from Arizona. Among the letters arriving was one from the First Presidency, stating they had approved our request for a new school and were drawing plans and had appropriated \$138,000.00 to build it and instructed me to secure more land for the Church to built it on and raise the necessary food it would take to feed the students, as it was to be a boarding school, as was Makeke, where the students would live, work and study while at school.

I spent several months trying to locate a suitable plantation for the school. As all the land in Tonga belongs to the Government and is allotted out to the chiefs and nobles, you have to get it through them and none of them were willing to do anything for the Mormons, as they called us. Everywhere I went I was turned down. Finally, after several months of tireless efforts, out of the blue sky an answer came to our prayers and efforts. We were sitting in the Mission Home one

evening and a native lady, who was married to a white man, Frank Cowley, came to our home and introduced herself, said she was a member of the church, but hadn't been active since she got married. She said she had heard we were trying to buy a plantation and we told her we surely had been trying for a long time. She said they owned, or had a lease on, a 375 acre plantation on Halaloto Road and had decided to sell out and move to New Zealand and we could buy their lease, together with 10 horses and about 100 head of good Poll Angus cattle, for 10,000 lbs or \$33,000.00 in American money. I thought it was a huge price for Tonga, but felt the Lord had a hand in it, so I told her I would have to get approval from the First Presidency and that would take some time, being so far away. She said they would hold the offer open for us, regardless of how long it took for an answer. I wrote the First Presidency by Air Mail letter, explaining details in general, such as price, length of lease, still with the Noble and the 55 pounds a year that we would have to pay the Noble for its transfer. The lease ran for 15 more years. I received a wireless back from President Smith, authorizing me to close the lease and the money was in the Bank in New Zealand in escrow, as requested by Mr. Cowley.

Then the fire works started! Other churches heard about it and offered more money, but she kept her promise and I felt she was a pretty good L. D. S. anyway. By law in Tonga, the property belonged to the native in a marriage to a white man. I was called into the Prime Minister of Lands Office, several times and Mr. Ata begged me not to buy the lease. He even threatened me, that when the lease ran out, the Government would not release it to the Church. I guess my faith was a little weak and I air mailed all the information and threats I had gathered in our

meetings to President Smith and I guess he felt I needed a "jar", so he wired back, and these were his exact words, "President Huntsman, please close the lease as soon as possible. The Lord will take care of His affairs in His own time." This was all it took to quiet my doubts and fears, but my troubles were not over. Parliament was in session and the main work before it, was to stop the Mormons from leasing land from another person, until it went through government red tape and got its approval. I knew they would kill the whole deal, as Mr. Ata had become very bitter and was throwing his strength around. He was next in authority to the Queen and had a lot to say and pressure to bring to bare. I knew I had to work fast and I was partly to blame, because I had prolonged the instructions from the Prophet of the Lord, so we prayed earnestly about it and for guidance as how to precede. I got up early the next morning and went down to the Office of the Minister of Lands and asked his help and support to get the lease through his office with his signature on it. Mr. Ata had been made Prime Minister and a noble, Mr. Havea, was made Minister of Lands at the time. This was a big request to make of a high official, third in rank and also a member of Parliament. He smiled and said, "Mr. Huntsman, I'll help you, but we will have to act quickly, as this law will be called up soon for vote and I am afraid it will pass and I will have to sign it. He got out a Government Lease, which was about as large as a page of newspaper, had the descriptions all typed on, got his, Mr. and Mrs. Cowley and my signature as Power of Attorney from the Church. This was another evidence that the Lord moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform, and he touches the heart of men, when there is work to be done.



President Evon W. Huntsman presenting a Book of Mormon to Queen Salote of Tonga, 1947, along with Sister Huntsman and Sister Roberts.

While reading in the history of the Mission later, I read an account that when President Smith visited the Mission, several years before this time as an Apostle, he and the Mission President were riding along this road and as they were passing the Cowley plantation, which was later named and recorded in the Church as the Liahona Plantation, said "This is where I would like to see the Church obtain some land." To those who may read this crude account, after my time may be over, I would like to read their thoughts on how this all came about. These things do not just happen.

Soon after things began to move to Liahona. The first General Priesthood Meeting, after the lease was signed, was held and much was accomplished. We needed a name for the School. I asked any one who desired to, to suggest a name on paper. Several were submitted such as Zion, Nauvoo, Kirtland, several native names like "Mama'fo'o" which means "new light", and even the old school's name of Makeke, which I never could find its

meaning. I asked if I could submit a name and we would vote on the names. I submitted the Book of Mormon name "Liahona," which in Tongan is spelled Laiahona and explained again to them its meaning and value to their forefathers, as they journeyed to the promised land and how it would guide and light their way, as long as they lived the commandments of the Lord, to a better life as their children attended the school. I called a vote on each name, leaving my name until the last. I didn't get one vote for any name, but when I called for Liahona every hand went up, so that is how it got its name.

I called for volunteers to start clearing 20 acres of jungle forest land, where we desired to build the school and clear land and plant gardens for food. In a few weeks, the land was cleared. The Makeke students came on Saturdays and worked. We built several native buildings around the place and as soon as we had enough ready, we moved the school from Makeke to Liahona. Makeke had nearly all been planted to coconut trees over the years and were starting to produce a good crop of nuts. There were about 100 acres of producing coconut trees at Liahona, so we were harvesting several tons a week and prices of copra "dried coconut" began to raise rapidly and we soon had funds to keep the school moving.

Material such as cement, lumber, glass, a rock crusher, compressor, dynamite to blast the corral rock out, began to arrive. I had purchased two trucks out of the local funds and when the boats arrived from America it was sure "Mormon Day" around the wharf, as we were unloading about as much cargo as the Government and all other churches combined. A good cement block machine arrived, sand and corral rock was hauled and crushed, and about that time,



President Dunn, who I succeeded as Mission President, arrived back in Tonga, to take charge of the construction.

A short time later, Pacific Mission President, Mathew Cowley, arrived by air on his tour of the South Pacific Missions. After a two week visit and holding conference with us, he prepared to leave. We had had several heart to heart talks and I think he could see conditions developing in general. President Dunn had his ways of dealing with the native people and I had my method of directing the affairs of the mission and we were both dealing with the Priesthood members, as they were called to spend a lot of time working to build the school and things were not progressing like he and I thought they should. He asked me what I thought of being released to return home a little short of the usual three years. I told him I would be happy to return home, or stay, and it would be up to the First Presidency to decide. He didn't say anymore to me, but when he shook hands with Mom and bid us all goodbye, he said to her, "I think we will be seeing you in Zion before long."

Sister Huntsman, President Evon W. Huntsman, Sister Cowley and Apostle Mathew Cowley in Tonga.

In a few weeks, we received our release from the First Presidency and a nice long letter explaining things as they saw them from President Cowley's report to them, how it may be better to turn the Mission affairs, as well as the building program, over to President Dunn. We were happy to do so and after a few weeks we had all accounts checked out, obtained passage, with some difficulty, by boat, to Fiji and air passage home. Our heartaches began to develop rapidly, as we visited as many branches as we could and bid

them goodbye. We loved them very much and were sure we left many friends in Tonga, both in the church and others. We had been about 2-1/2 years and I think accomplished what we had been sent out to do. Elder Roberts and family's time was up and they were released to return home with us. We went by boat to Samoa and Fiji and by air to San Francisco and by train to Salt Lake City. Paul and LeReah, sister and brother-in-law, Delta and Tone, and other friends, met us at the depot and LeReah brought us home the next day and what a re-uniting we had with the family, who were all assembled at



our home and filled the front lawn.

Most of our time in our two and a half years was centered around the school and getting the mission organized and operating with the native help and the few Elders we had to work with. Shortly after we arrived in the Mission, we were informed that five missionaries had been assigned to our mission and obtained landing permits for them, which I did and they were on their way. Three days after I had wired the First Presidency the permits were granted, I was called into the Office of the British Consulate and was informed that the permits had all been canceled. This was quite a blow to us, as the missionaries were on their way to Tonga. I wired the First Presidency to stop them. They stopped two in California,

two came to Samoa where they landed and one came on to Tonga. I went direct to the Prime Minister, Mr Ata, who was not friendly, for help, but he turned me down cold, stating that they had wanted to get rid of the Mormons for a long time and thought they had, when the Elders were called home during the war and now they were not going to let them back. They placed a quota of one white missionary to each 1500 members and our quota was two. Elder Delamar came on the next boat, but they wouldn't even let him land and put a guard on board ship, to see that he did not land. I even went to Queen Saloti, but she said she could do nothing for us, as the law had been passed. We tried to get them to let us take him to the Mission Home to stay all night. We had passage arranged for him to go on to New Zealand and promised them we would have him on boat by time of sailing, but they even refused this. We felt it quite a blow for the Church and our prayers were not answered, but we finally settled down knowing the Lord was directing His work and submitted to His will. We felt later, that the Lord had greater need for the Elders elsewhere and we were to get the work into the hands of local members and local Priesthood, which we did and every one seemed to be happy and new converts were being made and we were sure the new school would be a real successful missionary when we completed it and from all reports, it has really proved a blessing to all of Tonga and from the hundreds of tourists visiting the school as they tour the island from different parts of the world.

We feel our work and efforts were not in vain and the Lord had placed His blessings on our efforts.

(CHURCH NEWS; Week ending September 21, 1963.)

## LIAHONA COLLEGE OPPOSITION MELTS TO PERMIT SCHOOL

*" Let The Mormons buy the lease at Nafualu and build their school and we'll take it away from them when the lease comes due," confided one old Tongan noble to a fellow official.*

*They were part of an influential faction that had tried to block the sale to the Church of the lease on 200 acres of choice land. Failing in this, they aimed at vetoing the renewal of the lease which which would expire in a few years.*

*Though they were aware of this very real threat, the Church leaders decided to go ahead with plans to build the Liahona Collage.*

*Every since the first missionaries had set foot on Tongan soil in 1891, education had been part of the mission program. the elders had spent almost as much time teaching the three Rs to village children as they had in preaching the Gospel.*

*The Tongan people were anxious to have their children trained in ways of civilization but the available schools were pitifully few in number.*

*The Makeke was a great step forward in the Tongan Mission's educational program when it was built in 1922. It was the first Church School in Tonga to advance beyond the thatched hut level.*

*After World War II, a need was seen for a high school. The property at Makeke was not satisfactory for a new school. The 200 at Nafualu was ideal. The leaseholder was willing to sell. The Church bought thee lease with the cloud of confiscation hanging over it.*

*Five skilled builders came from the*

*U.S. in 1950 to begin the construction of the Liahona College. Three more came from New Zealand. They hoped to augment their numbers with Tongan craftsmen, but none were available. There was a labor shortage.*

*The situation looked black. the crew of eight could hardly hope to construct a school within a reasonable time on the scale . planned. Mission President Evon W. Huntsman was determined that the project must go forward. In desperation he called a group of young Tongan members of the Church as missionaries-building missionaries!*

*They were to work under the direction of the skilled craftsmen, learn their trades and get the school built. This was the beginning of the building missionary that has spread world-wide.*

*The idea worked despite the skepticism of some, and the project moved ahead. The missionaries learned to make concrete blocks, lay them up in walls, frame roofs, hang doors and to perform the many other skills involved in the construction of handsome, sturdy buildings.*

*In less than two years, dormitories and classroom buildings were completed to accommodate 300 students. Queen Salote Tupou attended the dedication at which Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve officiated.*

*When the time for the renew of the lease came, opposition melted away. The school continued under Church sponsorship.*

*Within three years, the needs of the school grew to the extent that a new building program was started to double its capacity.*

*Liahona College now is recognized as the finest secondary school in Tonga.*

We settled back in our home after our return from the Mission. I was again selected to serve as High Councilman in the Shelley Stake and was elected Chairman of the Bonneville County Production and Marketing Association and worked at the job one year, continuing to lease the farm to the boys.

Some of our happiest remembrances of our family life were spent on Fathers and Sons and Mothers and Daughters Outings, family and Ward Reunions, which we never missed. We also enjoyed loading our family in the car, no matter how poor the car was, and spending a few days in Yellowstone Park. As our family grew, we had to make trips twice a year, as we couldn't all get in the car at one time and had to take turns. We all worked hard on the farm to get the work caught up, save our pennies, and double time when we returned home and we had some pleasure along with our work. We never felt our work was heavy, when the results were going for the progress of the Church and the family. We often wondered, in later years, if the family was back of us as much as we thought they were as a family. At least each one has taken his own road and program as is their right. We thought we were on the right course and still do, not withstanding our many weaknesses, and it may take this life, as well as a long time in the life to come, to prove that our plan, though poorly carried out, was right and in the end bring to the family the happiness we had hoped for them.

We also had the privilege of going to the World's Fair in Chicago, Ill. and going back to Detroit, Michigan in 1940 and brought back a new car both times we went back East. We enjoyed visiting many Church Historical places, Nauvoo, Ill, Independence, Mo., Carthage Jail, Liberty Jail, Adam-ondi-Adam, and other places of

interest.

In June of 1950, I received a phone call from President Mathew Cowley, asking if we could come to Salt Lake again, as the First Presidency wanted to talk with us. We said we would be glad to and he made an appointment for Monday morning in their office. This was Saturday, so we had to drive down Sunday. We thought they might want to ask us something about Tonga and the school there. President Cowley had just returned again from visiting the Mission. It did not take them long to tell us what they wanted. It was to return again to Tonga and Preside over the Mission. They did tell us that things had slowed up in Tonga and they were anxious to get the school built. I told them I would be happy to return to Tonga, but I knew nothing about building and wouldn't be able to accomplish much in that line. President McKay said they had sent Elder Lionel Going and wife down to take over the construction work and would call what help we needed to supervise the work, when we got down and talked things over. They asked us to come down on July 6th to be set apart. They also, said that Elder Wilding and family and Elder Allen Spencer and family were both called and were on their way, as Labor Missionaries.

After being set apart, we were soon on our way, by train to San Francisco and by air to Tonga. President Dunn apparently did not know we were coming down, so when we arrived, he was much surprised when we told him we came down to take his place and he and his family were to return home. He sent a wire to President McKay asking if he could remain and work on the school under Elder Going. I don't know what their reply was, but do know he received a telegram and he was again on his way home.

Elder Going and I had several meetings and decided to call fifty strong, able bodied members of the Priesthood quorums, to accept a call to work on the school, until finished and request that a plumber, a cement man, an electrician, and two carpenters be called from Zion. I called a General Priesthood meeting and told them I was acting in accord with the wishes of the First Presidency and we needed fifty men to volunteer to work as labor missionaries. There were some 250 members present and when I asked for 50 they all raised their hands - many were old and crippled. We selected 50 out of the group and set them apart as Labor Missionaries, to work until the school was completed. Elders Hansen and Weiss, from Salt Lake City and Elders Clark, Hopata, and Elkington, soon arrived and each took ten natives and went to work under Elder Going. They were the first Work Missionaries called in the Church. Others have later been called in New Zealand, Samoa and Hawaii Missions. It took about eighteen months to finish the school and we made plans for its dedication and notified the First Presidency of our desires, if they were ready to send one of the General Authorities down to the Mission. They agreed to our plan and said they would contact us later, when someone would be down.

We waited about a month and received word to postpone the dedication, indefinitely, until other buildings in the Pacific Missions were ready for dedication. We were quite disappointed, especially because the Saints had arranged for tons of food and programs to be used in the great dedication of Liahona College.

Just a day or so before we received word to postpone the dedication, Mom came down with a fever and the doctor said it was a tropical fever called Elephantitis, where the legs and arms

affected, become swollen and was incurable in the tropics, but would leave her, once she was



Apostle LaGrand Richards & Evon W. Huntsman

out of the tropics, in a colder climate. I wired the First Presidency about her condition and received a wire to come home on the first boat, or plane, possible. They said they had called Elder Demont Coombs to go to Tonga to teach school, but were now sending him as the new Mission President, but not to wait until the new President arrived. I appointed Elder Ermil Morton, who had previously arrived with his family, to be Principal of the school. We soon got things ready to turn over to Elder Morton, took the first boat going to Samoa, then Fiji, where we got plane passage to Hawaii and boat passage to Los Angeles.

We again, had to say goodbye to our many Saints and friends. Our work this nineteen months, went by without much opposition from the Government and others, so we enjoyed this mission very much. It was rather hard for us to leave our second home, as it had become home to us for five years in our two missions.

In June, 1952, Mother and I were called and set apart by President Killpack to be Temple Officiators in the Idaho Falls Temple. In January, 1953, I was called and set apart by President David O. McKay, to do sealings in the Temple

for both the living and the dead and we have and are enjoying these assignments very much.

In November, 1953 I was called by the First Presidency, to accompany Apostle LeGrande Richards to Tonga, to dedicate the Liahona College. This was a most wonderful experience, traveling nearly six weeks, in constant association with Elder Richards. We left Salt Lake City by plane and stayed all night at the Mission Home in California, with President and Sister Gardiner. We left the next day, landing in Honolulu the next morning, Thanksgiving Day. We were met at the Airport by President Cessell of the Oahu Stake. They were preparing to hold services in the new Stake building, which we attended and both had the pleasure of speaking to those present. We left shortly after the meeting, landing on the little island of Canton, which was a very small coral island leveled down for an Airport for the USA Armed Forces during the war. We were there only one hour and had some refreshments. The only people on the island were a few personnel and caretakers. This was about midnight and Elder Richards was quite concerned about the landing on such a small island, by instrument, at night, but I had had the experience of landing there twice before, when Mom and I went down and returned on our second mission, so I knew we could do it. We arrived in Nadi, Fiji, another US Air Base built during the Second World War and is called the Air Cross Roads of the Pacific. It is a beautiful place. Mother and I have stayed there before, in the open air sleeping headquarters. Nadi is about 32 miles from Suva, which is the Sea Cross Roads of the Pacific. There is a bus that makes a trip twice a day, but is slow and quite uncomfortable riding. It follows the shoreline all the way and very twisty. We were sitting out in front of the hotel waiting for the bus, when a small plane came in. I walked over

and asked the pilot if he could take two passengers to Suva. He said it was a mail plane and had to make a few stops enroute, but could take us. He cleared the mail bags out of the two seats, put our luggage on top of them and we took the two seats behind the pilot. It looked mighty small in comparison to the large four engine PWA plane we had been riding from the States. I asked Elder Richards if he felt safe. I guess I was relying on the fact that he was an Apostle and if he felt safe, I would be sitting beside him and I would be safe also. All he answered was , "I hope so." We had gone too far now, to get out, as the plane was moving out on the runway. I said as we left the ground, that we could be flying over a rough country and for him to be sure and keep his feet up high, or he would leave them on some mountain peak I had always wanted to fly over a jungle country and this it was, part of the way. It was most beautiful. We could see native villages most of the way and people by the hundreds, working their small farms, where they grew pineapple, bananas, coconuts, but mostly sugar cane. Also oxen. All their farming is also, done with brahma oxen. They seemed to stand the heat. We also, saw some rice fields along the route.

We landed on a small Airport near Suva and went by Taxi to the Grand Pacific Hotel. The next morning, we boarded the Matua for Nukualofa, Tonga, a thirty-six hour trip, some 800 miles. As we entered the harbor, my fourth time and Elder Richards first, it was most beautiful, just between day break and sun up. Elder Richards told the Saints, later in Conference, that he now knew I loved them very much, as he was afraid I would jump over board and swim to shore, before they got the boat tied up and the gang plank down. I will admit, it was a great thrill to meet President and Sister

Coombs, the Elders and Saints and friends. One of the great thrills of my life, was when we were taken out to Liahona Plantation. As we got out of the car, at the front gate and started to walk up the wide path, with the students lined up on both sides, the band I tried for some time to get organized before we were released, played, "We Thank Thee O God For A Prophet" in honor of Apostle Richards and then burst forth with the Tongan National Anthem. We were royally welcomed and entertained by all, with programs and big feast. The next day was Conference. The big auditorium was filled with Queen Saloti, Prince Tuibelehoke, many other chieftains, President and Sister Coombs, Officials of the Tongan Government, Rev. McKay of the Tongan State Church, Elders, Lady Missionaries, District and Branch Officers filling the stage. Elder Lindsay and the College Choir, sat immediately in front of the pulpit. President and Sister Coombs, myself, Queen Saloti and Apostle Richards spoke, then President Richards dedicated the college for the uplifting and blessings of the Saints. What a thrill to me. The Saints had worked so hard and had made plans for a grand welcome, in the Tongan custom, in place of the afternoon session of Conference. Elder Richards asked me some questions about it. Of course, this was all new to him and somewhat of a change from the Conference held in Zion. I said, "Elder Richards, it will break their hearts if you refuse their request." He said, "We won't do that."

When President Coombs told them, at the close of the session, they could proceed with their feast and "katoanga" they were a happy people. Mats and braided polos soon began to appear. We walked around the buildings and grounds and went to the Principal's home, Elder and Sister Morton, where we were treated with cocoa, fruit

and cookies. This was called an English Tea, only it was Mormon Cocoa to us, but the Europeans, the Queen and others enjoyed it.

We were called back to the school about 2:00 PM, to the feed, as we call them and what a sight, especially for Elder Richards. There were tons of food - baked pork, fish, beef, yams, sweet potatoes, taro and fruits of all kinds. The afternoon was spent in native songs, dances, speeches, presentation of gifts to Elder Richards, Queen Saloti and myself. Then a dance at night and we were taken back to the Mission Home for our second nights rest. After breakfast and much visiting with the Elders, and Saints, the Sea Plane came in about noon and we went to the wharf, where we said "Nafoa" or goodbye, to hundreds who had gathered from various branches and school Apostle Legrand Richards and Evon W. Huntsman in Tonga. children, got in a small launch and were taken out to the plane, anchored about 1/4 mile out and in a few minutes we were off for Fiji, leaving Tonga once more, with a heavy heart, wet eyes full of appreciation for the blessing that had been mine to see Liahona started, built and dedicated.

This was my first experience of flying in a sea plane, but after leaving the water, you couldn't tell the difference. We landed back in Suva, Fiji, after a three hour flight, 800 miles. We spent the night in the Grand Pacific Hotel and were off for Samoa, the next morning. This was Fast Day and had fasted from breakfast, but had crossed the international date line and lost a day, so when we arrived in Samoa, it was Saturday and were met by President and Sister Stone and many missionaries laboring in Samoa. What surprised Elder Richards most, was the big feast awaiting us. To him it was Fast Sunday, but he didn't know we had lost Sunday when we crossed the

date line. I told him it was Saturday and he said, "How do our Seventh Day Adventists friends explain this?"

It was another three hour flight from Fiji to Samoa. We spent three days in Samoa, holding meetings and being entertained by the natives, in about the same way we were in Tonga. The school at Pesego was dedicated 6 December, 1953 and also, three Branch chapels. I was very happy to meet Elder and Sister Going again. They had finished Liahona in Tonga and had been called to Samoa to the same kind of work they did in Tonga.

We flew from Samoa, back by way of Fiji, to New Zealand. As we landed we were met by President Ottley. President Ottley handed us a telegram he had just received, informing us that Apostle Mathew Cowley had passed away, suddenly. It was a great shock to us and had been to all of New Zealand, as this mission was where he had spent 6 years as a "boy" , as he said of his first mission , and later had Presided over the Mission. He had entwined all of New Zealand, both Maui and Europeans, around his heart and likewise his, around theirs. They requested a full day of mourning ( which is customary in New Zealand), for Elder Cowley, which Elder Richards gladly granted.

We spent a week in New Zealand, held two day conference in Auckland. Elder Richards dedicated a new chapel in Auckland. We went out to Hamilton, where the new Church College was under construction, visited the place where later, was chosen for the erection of the New Zealand Temple, visited a day in Rotorua - the Yellowstone Park of New Zealand. While in New Zealand, I met several Saints from Tonga, who had moved there ( Jim and Eliza Hopeta and

James and Elsie Elkington), who had both spent a year with us in Tonga, having been called to Tonga as work missionaries. I had married the Hopeta's while we were in Tonga. After a week of pleasure in New Zealand, we left direct for home, landing in San Francisco, took the train to Salt Lake City where Mom, Paul and LeReah and children met me at the depot. The next day, we came home and once again, were happy to be home with the family in Zion. This trip was a glorious experience and many beautiful contacts and experiences and friends were enjoyed. We were away a month.

After we had been called to serve part time in the Idaho Falls Temple and retired from farm work, I had a desire to still keep active and wanted a part time service job to supplement our income. I kept my eyes open and in 1954, local politics began to show activity, so I decided to step in and try for the Bonneville County Commissioner's job from District # 1, which included all the west side of Snake River, part of Idaho Falls west of Boulevard and south, taking in York, Cotton and Taylorsville, to the County line. I filed on the Democratic ticket in the Primary Election, against Mr. Bennett. I won by some 300 votes, but my big fight lay ahead of me, in the General Election in November, against Mr. Harold West, my Republican opponent. He had been a very popular Commissioner and I could feel by talking to people, that most of them either told me, or left the impression that I couldn't win, but decided to carry on a clean campaign and the result was a victory of 776 votes, for a four year term.

I have had no opposition on the Democratic ticket and won easily, a 2nd term against Mr. Jack Moir of York area, by some 1500 votes, for a two year term. At the end of this term, in 1960, I went in again, for a third term, with Vern

Bitter as my opponent and won by 2380 votes. I did very little campaigning that year, as I felt after six years, the voters could now judge me and would either vote for or against me, regardless of what I said. The work has been very interesting and beneficial to me. My first term, I served with Tom Weeks from District # 3 and Cliff Scoresby, District # 2, both Republicans, in the election in '56. I was a carry over and they ran again, but were defeated by Al Owens and John Burtenshaw. We have served together for four years and are now on our next term, when theirs is up for re-election.

It has been part of our work to attend conventions, both State and National. I have attended conventions in Moscow, Idaho, Wannathu, Washington, Lewiston, Idaho, Pocatello, Mack's Inn, Priest Lake, all in Idaho and National Conventions at Salt Lake City, Atlanta, Ga., Portland, Oregon and Miami, Florida.

In 1958, we decided we would have to leave the farm sooner or later, so decided to build us a new home near the Temple, where we hoped to spend more of our time as we grew older. We purchased a lot on "J" Street, two blocks from the Temple, where we built our new three bedroom home, with a full basement apartment, where we are happy and comfortable, in the 7th Ward of the North Idaho Falls Stake.

Two events that brought us much sorrow, was the passing of my mother, very peacefully, August 17, 1957, at the age of 86 years. She had enjoyed good health most of her life and was doing her own work. Three days before her passing, she was in the Temple, where she had worked since its opening and done more than 3000 Endowments for the dead. Father came to



live with us, after mother's death. He also, passed away without much suffering, October 27, 1957, at the age of 88. He had been, crippled quite badly, with Arthritis for a number of years and for the last few years, he was on crutches, but carried on his Temple work until just a few months before he passed away. He had done 4430 Endowments in the Temple. They are both buried side by side in Shelly, Idaho Cemetery.

Their old home place is now owned by the Ward, as a Welfare Farm. They lived on their farm for 56 years. The new super Freeway Highway runs through part of their farm. Great changes have taken place in many ways in the one-half century.

In September, 1961, Mother and I, with A. L. Owens and wife and John Burtenshaw and wife, attended a County Commissioners Convention in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. We had a good time and took a boat trip on the lake, with about 250 County Officials, the last day of the Convention. When we were going ashore, on a wooden wharf, Mom caught her shoe in a crack and fell to her knees. At first we didn't think it was too serious and left for home the next morning, but it was swollen quite badly. We went to the doctor and after some X-Rays, we found she had a broken knee cap and had to wear a cast for some six weeks.

After the great Freeway was built through Dean's farm, we had purchased from Howard Frogner, it split the farm in two and neither section was a very good farming unit. I was through farming, so I traded our home place to him and took his farm in the trade. We figured both places at \$600.00 per acre - \$60,00.00 for my 100 acres and I allowed him \$48,000.00 for his 80 acres. He

paid me \$12,000.00 cash, the next year and the deeds were transferred to each other. I received \$13,000.00 cash and 2-1/2 acres of the Woodrow Arrington farm, for a little less than 14 acres right of way and severance damage from the State of Idaho, for the Inter-State Highway right-of-way. I invested the \$25,000.00 in two new brick homes, built on the farm "northwest corner" one for \$14,600.00 and one for \$17,000.00, which we rent. I sold 1/2 acre to Donald for \$600.00, where he built his home and 1/2 acre to Dee Risenmany for \$1,500.00, where he built his new home.

1962- I was a candidate again, for another four year term and won by a good margin, as stated elsewhere in this history, " Vern Bitters", I acted as chairman of the board for two years, then asked one of the other commissioners to take the chairmanship and nominated A.L. Owens for the position. I attended Idaho's Annual Commissioners and Clerks Convention in Montpelier, Idaho, and the National Association of Counties Convention in Denver, Colorado, during this term. I decided at the end of three years of service

that ten years was long enough to serve, so made plans to retire at the end of this term, which I did and prepared to give more of my time to Church Service, which I enjoy very much. I enjoyed the county work, but I could see with the growth of the County, the work and responsibility was increasing. I thought it best for all concerned to step down and let a younger man take over. I felt with my church assignments, in the Temple and Ward work, with some attention the farm needed, I could keep as busy as I wanted to. I was also serving on the Stake Sunday School Board.

We had one of the most heartbreaking

experiences of our life, on 17th of March, 1963. Harold called us about midnight and informed us that our oldest daughter, Delila, died suddenly. She had talked with her mother that day and said she didn't feel well. We thought she was working too hard. We dressed and went down to their home in Woodville. It was a sad experience. The Dr. and ambulance had been there and taken her body to the Nalder Mortuary in Shelley, by the time we arrived. It was a sad occasion to meet her family. Our son Dean, who is bishop of the ward, was also there. This was the first member of our family to pass away. Again, we were so happy for the truth of the Gospel and the assurance that we would see her again. She was sealed to us and her husband and children were sealed to her. This was a real consolation to us and our family. The funeral was beautiful and she was buried in a nice spot in the Shelley city cemetery, where her body will rest until her spirit calls it forth in the morning of the first resurrection. She has been a loving daughter and wife and mother and had done much good, while the Lord permitted her to stay with us. She has always lived near us, where we saw her nearly every day.

Mother and I had talked much of visiting Tonga again and going on another mission, if our health permits. When the announcement came out in the local news paper that I was not running again for County Commissioner, The First Presidency had just made a request for 600 married couples to go in to the mission fields and help fellowship the many converts coming into the church and give the missionaries the time to proselyte for converts. Bishop Keith Collins read the letter the next morning in Priesthood Meeting, from the First Presidency, pleading for more help from married couples. As we separated for class work, Bishop shook hands with me and said"

Evon how about it". I said " Bishop if my health would permit and you think we should go, I'm sure Mom and I would be willing to fill another mission". He said to talk it over and he would visit with us soon, which he did for an hour and said if we were willing, he would recommend us to the Stake President. President Olsen visited us a few evenings later and after questioning us for some time, said he would report back to the Bishop and they would recommend us to the First Presidency. President Olsen asked us if we had any preference and we said we would accept a call anywhere, but loved the Polynesian people, but would go wherever we were called. This was in the summer of 1964. About six weeks later, we received notice that we were called to the South New Zealand mission and asked when we could be ready to leave. I wrote back, saying my term as commissioner would be finished the first of the year and thought it best that I filled out my term, but would be ready any time after the first of the year. We went to Dr. Hatch and Dr. Higgs and they both thought our health was good enough to go, if we would watch ourselves. Sometime later, we received our assignment to enter the mission home on January 4th, 1965. It was a new experience for us. There was no mission home when I went on my first mission and we were not required to attend when we were called to Preside in Tonga.

We enjoyed the week very much and left for New Zealand on January 11th, 1965, by plane. We changed to a jet plane in San Francisco, arriving in Honolulu, about mid-night, Fiji, about day-light and Oakland, about 9 o'clock, Wellington, our mission head quarters, at 11 the same day. It took us less than 24 hours of flying time from Salt Lake City to Wellington, New Zealand. George and Jane Risenmay met us in San Francisco for a short visit, which we

appreciated. They were visiting there at the time. We stayed with Paul and LaReah while in Salt Lake and were not in the mission home. They took us to the airport. President and Sister Boyack and some elders met us at the airport in Wellington, to greet us. We spent the afternoon in the mission home. Received our official assignment from President Boyack to labor in the city Invercargill on the Southern tip of the south island of New Zealand. Elder and Sister William Garret, who were special assistants to President Boyack, met us at the plane in Christ Church and accompanied us to Invercargill, by plane. Invercargill is less than 3,000 miles from the South Pole. It was very cold and windy. Heated apartments are not in New Zealand and we were three days finding us a place to live. The best we could find was at # 6 Alice Street, but it only had a small gas cook stove and a small fire place. Winter was coming on down there and it was very damp and cold. We were in a branch of about 260 members scattered from as far away as 50 miles. The Church was building a nice chapel there, but the branch was badly divided into some three groups and the building was almost to a standstill. We got busy and visited the saints as fast as we could find them and with the four proselyting elders stationed there, we got things moving again. The chapel was completed in March. We got the Branch reorganized and got the Relief Society, Primary and M.I.A. organized, reorganized the Sunday School. President and Sister Boyack came down and held a conference in the Branch, brought Elder and Sister Garrett with them. We held a nice conference. Our health was not too good and we were called to Christ Church for a conference with Elder LaGrand Richards, along with about 50 elders laboring on the South Island. Elder Richards interviewed Mom and I and advised President Boyack to release us. We returned to

Invercargill about 400 miles from Christ Church, where we were as busy as we could be. We received a letter from the President that he had decided to release us. We started our journey back to our home and loved ones. We visited the Temple in New Zealand, spent a short time in Oakland, New Zealand, where we had many friends and saints from Tonga. We had planned on visiting Tonga on our way home, but the brethren advised us to go home as soon as we could. We did arrange for a three day stop-over in Hawaii, where we visited the Temple in Laie and the college there, where we met several of the students and saints from Tonga, who had moved there. We spent a few days in Vista, California, with Mike and Bertha, then Paul and LaReah and family, then home by plane, where we were met by members of our family and friends at the Air Port, here. We had rented our home when we left to President and Sister Arvie, who had been serving as Mission President in Canada and who is now President of the Temple here in Idaho Falls. They gladly moved and we visited with our family for a week before they got moved. Our mission was shorter than we wanted it to be, but we tried to do as much as we could in the short time we were there, nearly six months.

My health improved faster than Mom's and I have been back in the Temple as a sealing officiator for some six months and Mom's health has improved and she was set apart again to officiate in the Temple about a month ago.

As we try to write our history, we remember some of our outstanding experiences, but forget to mention the experiences and joy we have had all through our lives with our families and friends and our every day activities in the church and our daily labors, that we forget and are so many that

it would take volumes to record it on paper, but it makes up a part of our lives. We have been quite busy in the Temple and keep our home and yard clean and enjoy a small garden, lawn, flowers. I enjoy going fishing with many of my brethren who work in the Temple, but I never go on the days and evenings we are assigned to the temple.

Mother had a heart attack the first part of September, 1966 and was in the Hospital ten days and they found she had some gall bladder trouble. She improved slowly the first month at home and was able to take care of our home. She returned to her work in the Temple after about six month leave of absence.

We got a few days off from our Temple work and took Delos and Nona, Dean and Dorothy to visit the Canadian Temple. We enjoyed our visit up there very much. It was their first trip up there, but it was our second visit to that Temple. We came back through the Glacier National Park and stopped to see an old missionary companion of mine, while I was on my first mission in 1912-1915, Elder and sister Earl Beattie.

I had felt a little tired when we got back, but Delos and Dean done most of the driving. We came home Saturday evening and went to Priesthood, Sunday School and Sacrament

Meeting in the evening, as usual. I was removing my coat when a pain hit me in the chest and Mom called Dr. Hatch. He said to take me to the hospital and he met us there. Dean, Max, Reed, Don and Newel were all there soon after. The Dr. said it was a heart attack, so I spent ten days there. LaReah came from Utah. This was my first night spent in the Hospital. I got along very well, after the first few days. We are both feeling good, considering our age, so they say.

We have to act our age for our condition and get along alright. The April, 1967 conference and missionary reunion was the first we have missed since the reunion was organized years ago.

This is April 13th, 1968 and we just returned from Salt Lake, where we attended our reunion and visited with Paul and LaReah and family and took in conference over the T.V. I drove the car down and back and got along very well. We have been interested, all winter, in a new chapel in Woodville ward, where Dean is Bishop for the past 5 years. It is the fourth ward chapel built there that I have seen erected there. I am happy to know that we have been happy and interested and have done our best to help with cash and labor in their erection. The first was in 1906, when I was still a boy. I and my Dad plowed the first furrow in the digging the basement of the old church house across the street west of the new church, which is built on the east side of the street, where the old school house used to stand. The extension on the north was built while we were on one of our missions, but was home before it was completed and was living back in our home when Apostle Matthew Cowley came to the Shelley Stake Conference and came over and dedicated it. Elder and Sister Cowley and members of the Stake Presidency ate dinner with us.

While Elder Cowley was presiding over the New Zealand Mission, during the second world war, they adopted a little Maori by the name of Tonnie. Elder Cowley told Mom and I, after he had been chosen as a General Authority of the Church, if he had of known he was going to be called as a member of the Twelve Apostle, he would not have brought the boy to America. They traveled a lot for the Church and had no one to look after him. We asked them to send

him up with us on the farm, where he could have plenty of room and play with our boys who were older than Tonnie. He adjusted very well, although we did not know how we were going to meet all the problems he got into. He stayed with us three months. We attended General Conference the next spring and talked to Elder Cowley, who had been chosen as President over the South Pacific Missions, including China and Japan and was called to visit them, which would take about two months and did not know what to do with Tonnie. We told him to send him back to Idaho and we would be glad to take care of him. He smiled at us and said " Brother and Sister Huntsman, you are the first ones who ever took Tonnie into their home, that ever said you would take him again", but we knew he was happy to send him up. We think it was a real blessing to help an Apostle make his visits and not have to worry about Tonnie. After they returned home, they came up to get Tonnie and stayed all night with us on their way to a Stake Conference in Wyoming and that was the last time I saw Apostle Cowley. He passed away while Elder LaGrand Richards and I were making our visit to the South Island Missions. Mom attended his funeral services in Salt Lake City. It was a great blessing to have him visit our mission twice while we were presiding over the Mission in Tonga and in our home twice in Idaho as well as having been in his home twice in Salt Lake.

I was told by a member of the Temple Presidency, when I started to seal the living and the dead in the Temple, that he hadn't kept a record of the number of sealings he had preformed and I did not do the same, but I have sometimes wished that I had. I have sort of taken an average of my sealings for the past fifteen years I have been sealing and come up with a round figure of fifty five thousand parents sealed

and with an average family of six children, I think about three hundred and thirty thousand children sealed to their parents.

**(This was the last Recorded Hitory writting by Evon Weseley Huntsman. His last recorded record, was around the end of 1968. He died from heart congestion, peacefully, May 16th, 1971 at the age of 79. His last three years were spent, up to three days before he died, working in the Temple, of which he loved the work dearly. It also included gardening and fishing with his many friends.)**

#### **MY PRAYER**

*Teach me that sixty minutes make an hour, Sixteen ounces a pound and one hundred cents a dollar so that I can lie down at night with a clear conscience and undaunted by the facts of those to whom I have brought pain . Grant that I may earn my meal ticket on the square and in earning it I may do unto others as I would have others do unto me. Deafen me to the tingle of tainted money. Blind me to the faults of others and reveal to me my own. Guide me so that each night when I look across the table at my family who have been a blessing to me I will have nothing to conceal. Keep me young*

*enough to laugh with the children and sympathetic to be considerate of the aged.*

**This Prayer was found among the possessions of Evon Wesley Huntsman after his death. Author is unknown but it is certainly how he tried to live his life. I know no one of his Posterity or his Friends that would not so testify. He certainly was a light to us all.**