

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF IVAN LEO DURFEE

I was born at Grandma Nicholas' old home in Willard, Utah on the first day of March 1892. Mom always went to Grandma's to have her babies. I guess it was probably a couple of weeks before we left Willard to come home to Almo. I don't recall much of anything for the next three years or remember hearing tell of much that happened in that time.

When I was four years old, probably 1896, we moved down to Grandma Nicholas' old ranch. This ranch was about half-way between Lewis Eames' and Dick Jones' houses. Dad had some cattle and he ran them on the mountain. We put up a little hay on the place, but Dad always jobbed around. He worked for Uncle Bill Jones some and he would shear sheep too. He would do anything wherever he could find work. Uncle Gene Durfee gave me a horse (a mare) when I was four years old and I rode that horse everywhere. She was kind of small and I sure though a lot of that mare. Edwin was born that year.

The fall I was six years old I started school. We had two schools, one at Grape Creek and one in the Cove. All the kids in Almo and around would go to school for a month and a half at Grape Creek then we'd move, teacher and all, to the Cove School for a month and a half. This evened the travel up a little. Some of the kids would walk, some would come a-horseback, and some in buggies. I rode my little mare a lot and Nina would ride with me. But that was the darndest horse-- on the way to school she would always balk at the same old cedar tree and we would turn and go back a ways then try again. I called her Molly.

The Church was located south and west of Lewis Eames' house on property now owned by me. The foundation is still there. People from town, Cove, and Grape Creek all came to this church. We were all Mormons. My folks went to church some, but not much.

Every fall the family would go to Willard to Grandma Nicholas' for fruit canning; it was a long, bumpy, dirty ride and would take the big part of three days to get there. The first day we would go as far as the "sinks", five or six miles south of Snowville, Utah and camp there for the night. By the next night we would be to Tremonton and camp there. On the third day we could make it on in to Willard. Us kids used to sit or lay in the back of the wagon with our legs dangling down and our feet dragging in the dirt. Sometimes we would run along behind or to the side of the wagon and I would trip Edwin, then we would wrestle in the dirt-- anything to amuse ourselves. Some years Mother would drive our old white-topped buggy to Willard, taking us kids with her, and she and Grandma would spend about two weeks canning and drying fruit, then Dad would peddle it in Almo and surrounding towns. One year Grandma Nicholas and Mother dried a lot of it. Father filled his wagon with all this dried fruit and went all over the countryside peddling it. He went to Goosecreek, Oakley, Albion and all over. He peddled that fruit and made quite a bit of money. I was about nine years old then.

I was ten years old when my sister Rosa was born and it was just a few years after that Dad took up a homestead in what is now Glen Jones' field, just south of the "old Nicholas" place. I was thirteen at the time I started jobbin' around when I was about eleven or twelve wherever I

could get work. When I was fourteen and fifteen I worked for Uncle Billy Jones and Tom Edwards. I worked for Uncle Billy a lot, he always had work and when I couldn't get a job anywhere else, he always had one for me.

I courted a lot of girls in my teen years but one I can remember in particular, was a little red headed gal by the name of Ella Bruesch. We used to have lots of house parties seems like mostly at the Bruesches'. We would play cards and sometimes have something to eat. I was kind of sweet on Ella. We'd all stay just as late as we could then old man Bruesch would get up about 1:00 a.m., yell at them girls that it was time to go to bed and we'd have to leave. There were dances around that we would go to. We'd go all over to them--Elba, Malta, Strevell. We would go in team and wagon; pile a lot of quilts in the wagon and get under those quilts and keep warm. The guy that didn't have a girl that night would get to drive or if everyone had a girl we would all take a turn.

When I was eighteen we moved to Grandma Durfee's home and lived there about a year. (Uncle Gene went to Filer to work and Grandma Durfee was in Hagerman living with Daughters. Grandpa had died in 1895.) This house was in the field just east of the "Old Rock Store". It was this summer that I was handy to the ball park and I went there nearly every night after work and played baseball. We played a lot of ball; there wasn't much else to do in Almo. The guys on the team were --Joseph Cahoon, George Bronson, Henry "Pate" Cahoon, Dave Durfee, Steve Cahoon, Ern Jones, Albert Tracy, Arthur Bruesch, and myself. Billy Cahoon was the umpire, I pitched and played left field. Every town around had a team and we traveled all over playing different ones. One time we went to Elba to play ball; there were three teams--Malta, Elba, and Almo. The winning team was promised a supper, it was to be at the "Braiding Place". (the logs to this house are still standing just north of Lavina Tuttle's home.) Mrs. Braiding and her daughter cooked the supper, I remember that we had watercress served with boiled eggs. I had never seen watercress fixed like that before but I liked it; it was pretty good. Well, we played our hearts out and won the supper and I took Nanie Cahoon to this supper with me. From then on I didn't date anyone else much, but Nanie. This was the summer of 1911.

In the late summer of this year I rode a horse to Arbon Valley to work in the grain fields. I pitched grain all fall and when the grain harvest was through I got a job working at a dipping vat where they dipped sheep. I worked for a man by the name of Jones who had a lot of sheep there in Arbon. Sheep get lice and we'd run those sheep, one after another, through that dipping vat all day long.

Along about the first part of December I came home to Almo to spend the winter. I didn't work a bit that winter, just spent the whole time playing around. House parties with card playing and games passed away most of the winter evenings for the young folks in Almo and we did a lot of that. We liked to dance too and I would take Nanie to these dances. Sometimes the dance would be in the top of Uncle Will Eames' store and sometimes on the floor of the Tracy house that was being built. Music for a lot of these dances was furnished by Glen Bates of Oakley--he played the trombone, his wife on the piano, and Joe Moltrey on

the violin. Uncle Pate, Ted King, and Dave Durfee played at a lot of the dances too....and Louis Jensen and his family had an orchestra and would play sometimes.

On January 19, 1912 I loaded Nanie, along with my sister Nina, who was to witness, into the buggy and we drove to Albion to get married. It was warm and sunny with no snow on the ground, just a good pleasant day. Albion was the county seat at that time. We got married by the Justice of the Peace then turned around and drove back home in the buggy. It was an old white topped buggy, a two seater, pulled by two horses.

We lived with nanie's folks first for a while then we would live with mine. We just moved back and forth; it wasn't any bother to move, we didn't have much of anything to take with us. That spring and early summer I herded sheep for Daniel Bruesch out in the South Hills and around and Mom would mostly stay in Almo. About the middle of the summer I came home and pitched hay. Wherever anyone was haying, I would help pitch their hay.

Late that summer, on the 19th of August, Fern was born. She was born at the old Cahoon place with Mrs. Green as midwife. For the next few years I just jobbed around. I picked up spuds on the flat down Burley way. I worked for Uncle Billy Jones punching cows and working with the sheep. I worked for "Old Duffy" getting rock out the "Castle Rocks" to build houses,. Sometimes I would haul the rock out but a lot of the time I would hold a chisel while a big man, I can't remember his name, would swing a sledge hammer. He could swing that sledge hammer hour after hour and never miss that chisel. I helped Duffy build a rock house in Almo Canyon for Joe Edwards and I helped him build Dad and Mom's rock house. I carried rock and mortar and kept the mortar mixed. I made two dollars a day and "them wuz damn good wages". I just worked everywhere.