

Autobiography of Elva May Astle Kendrick

23 May 1909 – 5 June 1978

I, Elva May, daughter of John Francis Astle and Laretta Hepworth was born May 23, 1909, in Grover, Wyoming.

At six years old, I started to school which was just across the street from my house. The school house was small, only three rooms, two downstairs and one room upstairs, each heated by a black pot bellied stove set in the center of each room.

We lived in the town house in the winter and moved to the ranch house which was about three miles to the Northwest during the summer.

Later on Dad sold the town house, and we lived on the ranch all the time. That meant a problem of getting to and from school.

Some of the time we walked and other times we rode the horses; two kids on each horse. During the bad weather, Mother or Dad would take us either in the surrey or on the bobsleigh depending on the weather. Everything went smoothly and we were all happy.

When I reached my 8th birthday, Dad took me out to the big ditch south of the house, where he had made ready, and baptized me. He then carried me back to the house. I was confirmed the following Sunday in church by Edward M. Thurman.

One day while cleaning and raking the yard and burning leaves, a wind came up and sparks got on the house and with no fire department available, everything we had was lost except the clothes we had on at the time. We stayed with relations and friends for a time. We also lived in tents while Dad arranged to have a home built. It was a happy time at least through the eyes of a child.

We lived in tents that summer. One day, a severe thunder and lightning storm came up. There was a cloud burst, causing a flood, sending a foot of water running everywhere, through the tents and nearly to the tops of the beds. So, later that afternoon beds and everything were moved into the partially finished house. As I think back, I believe the house was finished later that fall.

We were very happy with our new home. It was something; we even had a bathroom and everything. We still had coal oil lamps, as the electricity was not very far out of town yet.

Electricity was a luxury Mother didn't get a chance to enjoy as the following year the flu epidemic swept through the valley with many deaths. Mother and brother Vernon, age 20, were among the number it took. Vernon died December 23, and Mother died December 24, 1918. That was a very sad time for all of us. Especially Dad, as he had now lost his wife and a total of four children. They are buried in the Grover, Star Valley, Wyoming cemetery.

After Mother had died, Dad was left with a large family, as Francis was the only one married, so that left eight of us at home for Dad to care for.

He became very restless, and after a lot of thought of what would be best for his family, he decided to sell his ranch. This he did and we moved to Providence, Utah in June 1920.

This was a big step for all of us. Everything was strange. Even Providence seemed like a city as compared to what we were used to. But being young, we soon adjusted to our new home. We attended Sunday school and primary and soon made new friends.

Dad had a small acreage which he raised strawberries, canning beans, and sugar beets so that we younger children would always have something to do.

We also had some time for playing with our new friends. The summer soon passed and it was time for school to start. I was in the 5th grade. I have tried to remember my teacher's name but can't. But the next year, 6th grade, my teacher was Diantha Hammond. I liked her very much. Joseph Campbell was 7th grade and A. E. Allen was 8th grade teacher and principal. I graduated and was then ready for South Cache High.

It was exciting to start High School; I thought I was so grown up. There were many new things to learn, and new friends and teachers to meet. I rode the train to and from school. The school is located in Hyrum.

High school with the usual new friends, lyceum programs, school assemblies, ball games, studies and home work, etc.

NeVear and I were married November 22, 1927; we started our marriage in a one room apartment for which we paid five dollars a month in rent.

The usual ups and downs to married life, and looking forward to starting our family. On October 23, 1929, we went to the temple and had our marriage done right.

We had about given up on having a family when Melvin arrived September 20, 1930. We were so very happy, and then June 7, 1934, Jean arrived and then John arrived March 28, 1936, and Julia came May 20, 1939.

Then we settled down to taking care of our little family. We nursed them through measles, chicken pox, mumps, and all the usual childhood diseases. Tonsils and appendix were also added to the many things that children get and bring home to the rest of the family whether we wanted them or not.

They attended Sunday School and Primary from which they all graduated. The boys went into the Priesthood. When Julia graduated from Primary, she was the only child her age in the ward, so she was asked to repeat all the Articles of Faith in sacrament meeting. I was very proud of her.

Then they all attended M.I.A. where they took part in all the activities such as church basketball, road shows, and the many other things that keep the young people busy.

Melvin and John played football for Logan High School. Melvin was a member of the Region One Champion team of 1947, and they went to Salt Lake City and played Jordan High for the championship for the state. The score was 6 to 0 for Jordan.

The years to soon passed and all four of the children graduated from Logan High School. January 15, 1949, Melvin enlisted for one year in the army. He spent 2 months in Fort Ord, California, and ten months at Camp Hood, Texas, arriving home January 15, 1950. It was nice to have him home and our family back together.

Later we all went up to Jerome, Idaho, to visit with Wells and Doretta and their family. That is where Melvin met Parma Hepworth and after a short courtship they were married in the Logan Temple September 28, 1950. They have five children and four grandchildren.

Jean finished school and went to work in the turkey processing plant in Trenton where she met Nako Kostoff. She also worked at Hill Field Air Force Base. Jean and Nako were married on May 6, 1953 and made their home in Trenton. Early in 1956, they moved to Basion City, Washington, where they bought 120 acres of land. (The land was bought through a government Homesteading grant for returning war veterans.) They were real pioneers. NeVear and I went with them when they went up to stay. They had taken a big load of furniture and machinery which they parked at a neighbor's home. They started their new farm from scratch. The land was bare, I mean by that, there were no buildings of any kind, not even an outhouse.

We all went into Pasco, thirty miles to the south and looked around, here Nako bought a used 24 foot trailer house, and they set up housekeeping. With a lot of faith and hard work, they now have a lovely home on their farm. They have three children, one boy and two girls.

When John finished school in 1954, he and Mae Obray were married and he enlisted in the Air Force, he then was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas where he got his basic training. He was then sent to Tampa, Florida, where Mae joined him. He also spent about three months in North Africa. When he returned to Tampa, NeVear, Julia, and I went down there for a lovely visit. We spent time visiting and sight seeing in and around Tampa and Miami and then all the way home crossing thru Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and then back through Utah to home. We were gone nearly a month. They now make there home in Ogden, Utah. They have three girls and one granddaughter.

When Julia graduated from Logan High, she went to work at Hill Field, where she met David Beckman from Davenport, Iowa. He was stationed there in the Air Force. After they were married and he got his discharge, they went back to Iowa to live. After a year they came back and bought a home in Layton, where they live now. They have three children. But last December 18, their daughter Jana May was killed in an automobile accident. She was just 18, and a lovely girl, with everything to live for. It is a great loss to us, and we miss her very much.

Now, going back a few years. Now, that our children are all married with families of their own, NeVear and I are alone, and I have a lot of very good and happy memories. But the time was short as death took my loved one very suddenly. I remember every detail. It was Sunday morning, Mother's Day, May 14, 1961. The kids were coming for dinner. NeVear was especially happy. He was brushing and working with his horse. He was so proud of it. He had taken the horse to the barn to get the saddle. As he picked up the saddle the heart attack came, and he was gone. It was a great shock. I thought it was all over for me too, but with the help of my Heavenly Father and my family and many friends, I managed to pick up the pieces and go on.

I had my job at Mode O' Day for which I was very thankful, as it was a great help.

This was a big help too, in April 1968 I was lucky. At Safeway's they were having a Bingo game, and believe it or not I won \$500.

My job filled a lot of those long lonely days besides made my livelihood. Too, I had the association of my many friends.

I retired June 1st, 1974, after having worked 27 years. Since my retirement, I have spent a lot of days in the temple until it closed for renovation, and I plan on going back when it reopens. I plan on going to the Ogden Temple soon.

In 1975, I joined a church tour, with James L. Bradley of the Institute at the University as the guide. We visited all the places connected with early church history including, Nauvoo, IL, Independence, MI, Kirtland Temple, Liberty Jail, where Joseph Smith and others spent so much time. We also went to Carthage jail where Joseph Smith and Hyrum were killed. We also saw where they were buried, Far West, and the Sacred Grove. We also saw where the Joseph Smith Sr. and Martin Harris homes were located. We saw the Pageant at Hill Cumorah at Palmyra, New York, and many other places of interest. We also went to the Washington DC temple where we had the opportunity of attending a session. It was a real thrill, it was so beautiful. That trip was a fond memory to relive over and over again.

I was secretary of the Primary for six years in the early 1940's and also helped in the M.I.A. for a short time, and was a visiting teacher for several years.

Now in closing, my family numbers 23: four children, 14 grandchildren (1 deceased), and 5 great grandchildren, all of whom I am very proud.

And as this is my 50th year of marriage, I try to live the very best I can, and one day at a time.

*This personal history was written by Elva May Astle Kendrick
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