

G H O S T S I N T H E P R E S E N T

C O M P I L A T I O N O F F A M I L Y
S T O R I E S B Y F R A N C E S L A Y

F A W N M A H A L A S Y L V E S T E R

“She died and a light went out in our lives,” said Dezra June Leavitt, the daughter of Fawn Mahala Sylvester. Fawn was only 30 when she died, leaving her husband and her five children, who were all under the age of 12.

Her children remembered her as being a light in their home. Even though they were all so young when she passed, her strong impression as a mother held close to them as they grew up.

She was born on October 28, 1901, right south of Richfield, Utah. With seven siblings already born when she came along, her young life was never dull.

When she was 15, she went to visit her aunt and uncle and was selling lemonade at their store when Lloyd Leland Leavitt walked in. The very first night they met, Lloyd asked to take

her on a date, and they continued dating for two years before they were married in the Manti Utah temple in early 1919.



She and Lloyd would go to dances, on drives, and just enjoyed each other's company. Lloyd's brother Paul would joke that if Lloyd didn't hurry up and

marry Fawn, Paul would do it first. They stayed close throughout Fawn's life.

As a newly married couple they lived on a farm in the town Fawn grew up in. After that, they lived in Richfield for a year, sleeping in a tent by the river. Lloyd was working on a farm, and that was the best place they had to stay. After the tent, they moved back to the town Fawn was from. It was about a year before she died, and they stayed there for the rest of her life.

Even though they moved quite a bit, Fawn's daughter found lots of light wherever their home was.

“[She] made it a nice, warm, friendly, loving, place where friends and relatives were always welcome, and they had many visitors those years,” June said.

June had lots of memories with her mother. In early 1930 she recalled Fawn trying out a bridge her 6-year-



old son had made. The bridge wasn't strong enough to sustain her adult weight, so she sprained her ankle.

MARTHA MABEL ATWOOD

Born on April 9, 1888, Martha Mabel Atwood was brought into this world with a light and determination to be happy. She was raised in eastern Utah and was content with where she was her whole life. Just two days before her 17th birthday, she married Lillard Tucker, somewhere in the growing Salt Lake City. While they were married, they had seven children together. Growing her family was one of Martha's greatest joys. Together the family grew in Price, Utah, until Lillard decided to sell his property to move to Elmo, Utah where his brother planned to open a general store. Although the towns remain only 16 miles apart, the town greatly missed their direct impact on the price community. One of her children with Lillard, Nelda Jane Tucker, died after only

She leaned on June who was around three years old, to get home. "I felt very big that day to be able to help her," June remembered. June was a special child. She was born breech, so her head was facing the wrong direction. On top of that, she was born on the table in the middle of their dining room. The round oak table stayed with the family and continued to be used for eating as normal. Fawn got sick after about a year of living in Elsinore again. Her husband Lloyd recalled how bad it was for her. "She hurt so bad she couldn't be turned over in bed. One time, I took her to Elsinore to visit her mother in the sheep wagon, because it

five months. She had caught a disease — maybe whooping cough or pneumonia — and passed away in late June or early July 1910. After Nelda's passing Martha and Lillard had four more children whom she loved dearly. Lillard and Martha's love kept them bonded long after February 8, 1919, when Lillard's passing left Martha a widow at 30, with a young family to nurture. Only pushed by hardship, Martha embarked on a new chapter when she married Frederick Charles Oliver on December 19, 1923, in Salem, Utah. While they were married, they had one child, who was stillborn. After this loss hit her again, Martha and Frederick divorced. Just over a year after she married Frederick, in Grand Junction, Colorado, Martha found companionship again with John Charles Lofley, whom she married on November 28, 1924.

had a bed in it. She couldn't ride in anything else," said Lloyd. One afternoon June went to visit her with her sister and father. June was eating orange slices someone had brought for Fawn when her father reprimanded her. Even in that moment, Fawn was kind and let June eat the oranges, since she would appreciate them more than Fawn could. After two months of being trapped in the hospital, Lloyd took her to her parent's house, where she passed away early one morning in March. Despite being 30 when she died, her impact on her children and those she showed kindness to keeps her legacy ad hopefulness alive.



While she and John were married, they brought three more children into the world. With nine children in the house, there was always something to do. In her patriarchal blessing, Martha had been promised a table surrounded by loved ones and friends, and that is precisely what she got. With over 40 grandchildren 50 great-grandchildren, Grandma's house was full of love.



Even in when she moved into a nursing home she kept a light around her. One afternoon her son and daughter-in-law stopped by to visit her when her son shared the news that he started teaching a Sunday school class.

"She looked at him and with a gleam in her eyes she said 'Oh Dear, now they'll all stop coming,' but she knew they wouldn't and she knew Willard would be a fine Sunday school teacher and she was so happy," recounted one of Martha's daughters-in-law, Emma Loa Ward Tucker, in a

SIR EDWARD DE BRUCE EARL OF CARRICK, HIGH KING OF IRELAND, LORD OF GALLOWAY

As High King of Ireland and Earl of Carrick, Edward's journey was one of unwavering domination and steadfast power, etching his name in

the annals of history. Even though he was eventually defeated in battle, his name lived on. Born into the noble Bruce family, Edward's destiny was forged amidst the echoes of his ancestors. His path to kingship began with his brother, Robert Bruce, who paved the way for Scottish independence. Edward, in turn, set his sights on Ireland, where the winds of change beckoned. In the early years of the 14th century, Edward started his journey, alongside his brother Robert, to claim the

Tribute to Mother Lofley written for her funeral. Keeping the good spirit and humor on her until she passed, she was remembered by many who knew her as a shining star. A poem written for her by Emma Loa recounted her impact best: "I want to be like Mother, When I am old and gray. I want to have the same sweet smile that Mother has each day. I hope I have her gentle voice so soft and sweet and low, I'd rather be like mother, than anyone I know. I hope I have expressive eyes Like her's that seem to say I love you, my dear children Every moment of the day. I hope my hair is silver-gray And wavy on each side, If I can be like Mother, I will be satisfied." On September eight, 1972, she passed away in Elmo where she was buried with her first husband Lillard.

throne of Ireland. He fought alongside Robert for the crown of Scotland. As they fought, their three younger brothers were captured and killed by the English. Edward was a harsh and fast military leader, who killed those who fought against his brother's ruling of the Scottish throne. It had been somewhere around 200 years since Ireland had been overseen by a high king when Edward decided it was time for him to invade. Scotland was in the middle of a war

against England and Edward thought it would be helpful to steal men and materials from England by starting other problems to the west. At the same time, a king of a modern-day Ireland county asked for help from the brothers. With the promise of support from Ireland for Edward’s head wearing the Irish crown, the two brothers decided they would fight another battle. Over 6000 of Edward’s men showed up for battle. Their arrival sparked immediate resistance from the vassals of the Earl of Ulster, including the de Mandevilles, Savages, Logans, and Bissets, supported by Irish allies under Sir Thomas de Mandeville. However, Edward’s strategic planning and the valor of his troops secured a victory at the Battle of Carrickfergus. This allowed them to seize Carrickfergus town. In early June, he convened with northern Irish kings and lords at Carrickfergus, where he was crowned King of Ireland. This gesture expanded Edward’s influence across Ulster, though substantial recognition from other Gaelic kings remained elusive. Continuing his campaign southward, Edward faced challenges and



triumphs. His forces marched, routing local opposition and concurring areas like Castle Roche. Despite the ups and downs of any war, things changed for Edward with the Battle of Connor in September 1315. His victory over de Burgh brought him to an even higher military standing. After that, Edward’s battles were more full of rage and

violence than ever before, spreading fear and disruption throughout the area. Despite the war wins that took place, as winter approached, the Great Famine of 1315-1317 inflicted hardship on both Edward’s forces and the citizens, stretching their ability to sustain military operations to an all-time thin. In early 1317, Edward’s control over Ireland faced growing resistance as Irish lords regrouped and received support from English authorities. The famine only increased these challenges, leading to lower support among local lords who had initially pledged allegiance to him. After years of awful, if not awesome, military ruling, Edward Bruce was defeated and killed at the battle of Faughart in 1318. He was so hated by the people that his body was quartered and sent around Ireland. “And there was not done from the beginning of the world a deed that was better for the Men of Ireland than that deed,” according to the Annals of Ulster from the year Edward was killed. His head was delivered to the king of England, King Edward II. There ended the life of Edward de Bruce.



the Salt Lake Valley with her family in 1850 at seven. Tragedy struck early in Emily’s life with the passing of her mother when she was just nine years old. Despite this loss, Emily’s spirit remained strong, and she found employment in Brigham Young’s household as a young girl, demonstrating her maturity and resilience beyond her years. At the age of 14, Emily entered into her first marriage with William Grant Pain, who was a polygamist. This

EMILY FRANCES OLIVER

Emily Frances Oliver was born on January 10, 1843, in Vermillion, Illinois (though some records place her birth in Nauvoo, Illinois). She was the sixth child of Harrison Oliver and Hannah Martin. Her developing years were filled with hardship and early responsibilities, as she crossed the plains to get to



union, however, did not endure, and Emily got a divorce. At 18, she married Alexander George Davis, who was 32 at the time. They married on March 29, 1862, by Wilford Woodruff in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. Throughout her life, Emily and Alexander raised a family of ten children together. In 1866, they settled in Price Valley, now known as Spring Glen, Utah, where Alexander built their first home—a testament

to their pioneering spirit and determination to build a future in the rugged landscapes of the West. Emily Frances Davis, as she came to be known, was praised in her community for her remarkable healing abilities. People said she possessed a natural gift, blessed by God, to bring comfort and relief to the sick. As a midwife, she welcomed countless new lives into the world, nurturing both mothers and babies

through the vulnerable journey of childbirth. Her skills extended beyond human care; she was sought after for her ability to heal livestock, using her knowledge and faith to mend the creatures brought to her. She loved to help the people and was fulfilled spending her life as a mother and a healer. Her occupation as a nurse, as noted on her death certificate, underscores the deep respect and reliance the community placed upon her healing touch. Emily lived a long and fulfilling life, passing away on December 15, 1927, in Myton, Utah, at the age of 87. Emily Frances Davis’s legacy endures in the stories of those she cared for, the lives she touched, and the example she set of strength, compassion, and unwavering faith in the face of life’s challenges. Her journey from the plains of Illinois to the heart of Utah demonstrates the unwavering spirit of the pioneers who shaped the American West.

ADAM CRAIK SMYTH

As an early member of the church, Adam Craik Smyth had a unique opportunity in something, not many others had the chance to participate in. He composed hymns for the church hymnbook. Adam was born on February 29, 1840, in Manchester, Lancaster, England. From quite an early age he was studying music. He was in the Manchester Cathedral chorus when he was young and studied at the



London Conservatory of Music when he was old enough.

At the Conservatory he studied harmony, counterpoint, and composition before he graduated. While he was in school, he also got the opportunity to study shorthand under Sir Isaac Pitman, who was the originator of shorthand. He received a diploma from that endeavor. At 24 he married his wife, Emily Brown. Just three weeks after their marriage they set sail for America, hoping to hope on the gold rush in California.

Making their way across the country faired harder than they thought when the couple lost a wheel from their wagon, and their company abandoned them. With no hope of reaching California on their own, they joined an oxcart party and arrived in Salt Lake in the fall of 1864. Less than a year after arriving in Salt Lake, Adam packed up again and moved to Logan, Utah. He found work there as a music instructor in a school. While he was there, he also organized a county choir, where he taught many future music masters. They moved just outside of Logan and Adam began walking to work every day to teach and play. He did this until 1873 and was even once followed home by a wolf pack. In 1866 his wife Emily passed away. They had two children at the time, and the youngest was only 11 days old when she died. Adam was baptized into the church and married a woman named Rhoda Watson two years after Emily’s death. Keeping up with the church’s then policies of polygamy, Adam was also married to Frances Harriet Townsend in 1874. They had seven more children together. In 1875, Adam and his family moved to Salt Lake City to work as a vocal instructor, director of juvenile operas, and choir director. He produced several junior operas for the program while he was there. After a few more moves, his family landed in Fountain Green where they stayed for many years. He was hired



by Manti City and taught a choir that sang at a stake conference in Manti. People were impressed with the magnificence of the music, and the choir was asked to sing at the dedication of the Manti Temple in 1888. While he was incredibly strict in instructing, he was a very kindhearted man. If someone was out of tune, or the choir sounded wrong he would be disciplinary to make sure that the issue was fixed. His words could be hard but his temperament showed how much he cared about the choir members and their music. His choir also sung at the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, which was a very distinct honor. Even after his death, he was respected and spoken of as an incredible musician and composer.



LAVERTA JENSEN LAY

For her children, it felt like their lives had been stopped at the same time when Laverta Jensen Lay passed away at 44. Born on January 21, 1942, in Manti, Utah, Laverta grew up in Ferron and later Provo, where she attended school and gained appreciation for music, and started art’s such as oil painting. While she was in high school, she met her husband, Leland Harvey Lay, and they married on June 24, 1960, in the Salt Lake Temple. Laverta’s commitment to her faith and community shone brightly throughout her life. She served tirelessly in various capacities within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including as a stake primary counselor, relief society counselor,



homemaking leader, cub scout leader, and dedicated teacher. One of her sons recalled weekly cub scout activities in their kitchen where Laverta would make the group cookies, and they would sit at the kitchen table working on their badges. Her service extended to the St. George Temple, where she worked for many years, enjoying the opportunity to serve God and his people. Even in her later years, she loved to paint. It was a safe space where she

One morning she was getting out of bed to get ready for the day when her husband, Leland, heard her collapse. Laverta had suffered a sudden brain aneurysm and passed away almost instantly while she was in Leland’s arms. Despite the best efforts of healthcare workers, there was nothing to save her. She was officially dead in a Las Vegas hospital room, after flying there in a helicopter with Leland. When she died her family went on pause. Her second oldest son,



could express her feelings and create works that captured her love of life. She was always giving, letting anyone who needed a place to stay in. Her mother recalled a time when Laverta’s sister Zeneth stayed with her and Leland for a while, due to marriage problems. Despite having eight children in the house already, she took Zeneth in without a second thought and shared her life with compassion. The family would spend Christmases all together, basking in the light of being with each other. All of Laverta’s siblings had children which made for full events, but the love they shared made it worth the chaos that would always ensue.

who was on an LDS mission, was devastated when he got the news on the phone. He remembered crying for hours, not knowing how to process any of it. Due to mission rules, he did not come home for her funeral. “No death has hit me so hard since the death of my little baby brother when I was about 5 years old,” said her mother, Laurene Weyermann. Her daughters also felt stuck without someone to guide them through their teenage years, and her youngest boys were only 9 and 7 at the time. Laverta’s life may have been short, but the memories of her love, service, and faithfulness are still passed down by her children and siblings to the new generations.



EINAR EIRÍKSSON

Moving isn't easy. Especially in the late 1800's. With four young children. From southern Iceland to Eastern Utah.

Einar Eiríksson did just that.

Einar was born in late December of 1847, in Medaland, Skaftafalls, Iceland.

He worked under a goldsmith and watchmaker as a young man.

He worked two years with no compensation but room and board, and then finally received 100 Kronas for his final third year.

He was married on November 6, 1870, to Gudrun Magnuson. About a year after their marriage, they had their first child. Her name was Halldora Helga. She was born and passed away within the same year.

After her passing, they had four more children within the next 7 years, naming one of their daughters Helga in her honor. It was a common practice at the time to name a second child after one who passed.

Three years after Einar and Gudrun were married, a couple of LDS missionaries came to Iceland to teach the gospel. Einar was set in his own

faith and invited the missionaries over to prove them wrong. However this plan backfired on him, and he was baptized and confirmed only six months later with the rest of his family. Religion was immediately a cornerstone of his life after he was baptized. He started saving money to move his family to Utah to find a community with the saints there.

After years of saving up, he was able to send Gudrun and their four children across the water and land to get to Utah. Members of the church had sent money from Spanish Fork, Utah, and it was just enough to send them on their way.

Einar didn't have enough funds to go with them just yet, so his plan was to stay in Iceland and continue working for another year.

Before he left, he got homesick, for the home he found in his family. He would take long walks worrying about their safety and began to have regular visions about them reaching their destination safely. That helped calm his nerves.

Only two months after Einar's family left Iceland, he decided he needed to follow them.

"I felt so alone after my family left that I could not stay with the job, and I sold everything I had, even my watch and gold ring off my finger and the best of my clothes for money and some of my friends gave me a few Kroner so I had enough to pay for my ticket to Utah," he said.

Once he got to Spanish Fork with his family, he took a job working for the railroad. The family lived in a dugout cellar until he built them a real house. Four years, and one child, after being in Utah, Einar was called to serve a mission back in Ireland. He left on April 14, 1885, just four days after being ceiled to Gudrun in the Logan, Utah Temple. During the 14 months he was gone, he baptized 25 people and helped 57 move to Utah.

Out of money, he got back and walked around 50 miles from Spanish Fork to Salt Lake.

He and Gudrun had one more son in 1887 and moved soon after to Elmo, Utah. Elmo was on the other side of the mountains, away from any other cities in eastern Utah. It took a few years to build a home, and the area felt very desolate compared to where they had lived in Iceland.

To stay alive, they had a farm and Einar also kept bees. He sold honey and crops and made enough to support them.

After serving another mission to Europe, he kept busy farming still. He also had lots of his jewelry-making tools which he used to make young couples wedding bands.

After their children moved out, the house was lonely, and the couple

didn't have much to do. Einar's vision went out, and he struggled to both hear and see. His children would still come back regularly and try to take care of them as best they could, but it was a tough battle.

In May of 1930, Gudrun passed away, and Einar followed her on September 25, 1931.

