

BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM JACOB STRONG 1863 –1903

By: Vernon Strong

Record of WILLIAM JACOB STRONG, now deceased. His Grandfather Strong came from Ireland and lived in Pennsylvania when a boy, although we are not sure as to the year. His father, Jacob Strong, was born October 9, 1799 in York County, Pennsylvania. Jacob Strong and his father, James Strong, who had purchased a 400-acre tract of land in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, laid out the village of Strongstown, Pennsylvania. Jacob Strong and his first wife, Sarah Hill, were baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints October 20, 1836, while still in Pennsylvania, by Elder Erastus Snow. They emigrated westward with the Saints, arriving in Utah in October, 1849. Jacob Strong married Mrs. Alice Fish Walsh, as a second wife, March 5, 1857 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

William Jacob Strong's mother, Alice Fish Bury Walsh, was widowed while crossing the plains in the Martins "frozen" Handcart Company of 1856. Winter over took the Company and many lives were lost, including their eldest son, Robert, and William Walsh, her husband. Severe hardships were encountered before entering Salt Lake Valley. With frozen feet and two small children, John and Sarah, of 3 and 1 years of age, respectively, she became the second wife of Jacob Strong.

To them were born three children: Lucinda, William Jacob and Alma Ether. William Jacob was born August 13, 1863 at Salt Lake City, Utah, and was named for his mother's two husbands, William Walsh and Jacob Strong. The family lived at 837 East 4th South Street in Salt Lake City.

Little is known of William Jacob's early life. His father died when he was only eight and one-half years old, which deprived him of even a common school education. His mother was left to raise her five small children alone. They lived in the Tenth Ward of the L.D.S. Church in Salt Lake City. When William Jacob was about 18 or 20 years of age he worked for William Swift cutting and hauling cord wood for the Ontario Mine in Park City, Utah. He was very ambitious, and before his death had acquired a good, practical education through working with others, whose business methods he readily adopted. He was a good penman and was naturally adapted for clerical work. He did bookkeeping for a firm in Salt Lake; also worked as a night watchman at the Church Tithing Office, and for a time worked for the Salt Lake Brewing Company. He was temperate and always set others a good example. also worked for the Dinwoody Furniture Company. [There were three Williams the family: one was known as "Big Will", one was "Little Will" and father was called "Willie"].

He married Emma Jane Duncan, daughter of Homer and Asenath Banker Duncan, September 10, 1886 and on September 23, 1886 they were sealed in the Logan L.D.S. Temple, Utah. They lived at 938 East 4th South in Salt Lake City until they moved to Farmington, Utah [now Kaysville 1966] in April of 1894. Uncle John Walsh came to Salt Lake with his team and hayrack with which he moved their belongings to their new home in Farmington.

On March 20, 1893 he was ordained a Seventy by Edwin Frost. He was a Sunday School teacher from 1887 to 1894 and in January 1893 he was called and went to Provo, Utah for about six

weeks in the interest of Sunday School work, studying in the halls of the BYU. Later he was a Mutual [MIA] worker as one the Presidency [Superintendency now 1966].

In 1894 William and Emma purchased a 50-acre farm located in the northern part of the Farmington precinct, in Davis County, Utah. Prior to leaving Salt Lake City four children were born to them: Sybil Asenath, born July 25, 1887; Clifford Duncan, born September 19, 1889; Harry Lyle [Lysle] born August 30, 1891; and Leon Marshall, born September 23, 1893. The house they moved to was some distance from the farm acreage. It was a frame building, lined with adobe bricks, and was about one-half mile east by north of the Judge Hector Haight home and was nearby to the home of James Henry Taylor. In this frame house was born William Aster on July 28, 1895.

The problem of school attendance for the children in Farmington was difficult so he used his influence in having the location of the Kaysville - Farmington precinct line changed to include his farm in the Kaysville precinct. The change made it possible to establish a school in this locality. A one room red brick schoolhouse was constructed on the east side of the road leading to Kaysville town site one and one-seventh miles from the farm. Later it was consolidated with the Kaysville school system and discontinued [about 1910].

On November 22, 1896 a daughter Alice was born in the same home as her brother William [Will, but now it was in Kaysville. The farm was a 50-acre tract near the shore of the Great Salt Lake. About an acre was acquired by Will Haight as a lane to reach his hay field to the west of the farm. A lane parallel to the Haight Lane from the road led to the farmyard where a locust tree stood in the center of the yard and was used as a hitching post. The barn, cow and horse stables, and pigpens formed the west side, with the granary, buggy shed and chicken coop being on the south side. The home was later built on the east side and was fenced off by a low fence to keep the cattle and horses from the lawn and garden which bordered the home. About 1900 he had an artesian well. We called it a flowing well drilled near the east line and east of the south side of the house which supplied excellent water for the home and garden. The garden was immediately south of the house. A family orchard was planted south of the garden which included peach, apple, plum, cherry and apricot trees. He planted some pear trees but was told a blight would start with these trees and would take his whole orchard, so he pulled them out. There were also raspberries, currants, strawberries and gooseberries in the garden and orchard areas. He also raised sugar beets, hay and some grain. He heard of the fruit trees of the Oregon country and had hopes of some day moving to that part of the country to raise fruit. On the southwest part of the farm he had approximately 1,000 apple trees planted.

QUOTING FROM LEON:

"He was interested in fruit raising and had a good-sized apple orchard growing shortly after taking over the farm. He had faith in the future for fruit in Davis County. It may not be inappropriate to say here that Davis County today is noted for its fruit, and might well be termed 'the garden spot of Utah'. or the West, for that matter!"

He was just getting started on the farm when he received a call from the Church Authorities to go to the Southern States Mission Field and fill a mission for the Church. He had always been religiously inclined and had served in religious capacities all his life. With the support of his good wife he accepted the call. They rented the farm and, after moving his family consisting of

his wife and six children into a house in Kaysville City, he left for the south on March 17, 1897. They lived with the Elijah Laycock family, using the two front rooms on the south of the building. He labored under the Mission Presidency of Elias S. Kimball during the first part of his mission, but while he was there the Church Authorities released President Kimball and appointed Elder Ben E. Rich President of that mission. While on the mission one of father's suits became so faded that he sent it home. Mother washed it, picked it to pieces, dyed it, sewed it back together again, pressed it and sent it back to father. After working for the cause of Truth in parts of Alabama, Georgia and Western Florida for two years, he was honorably released and returned home March 9, 1899. When he returned from his mission he brought with him watermelon seeds from Alabama which he planted, and raised the best watermelons in that area. People from Kaysville and most of Davis County bought his melons and praised them above all others.

After returning from his mission, with the help of John Coles of Kaysville and his brother Alma, he built a new red brick house on the north- east corner of the farm. They moved the old granary down to the new location south and west of Judge Hector Haight's home and the family lived in it while building the new home. The boys helped to dig the adobes out of the old house so they could be used for lining the new house. This modest new home consisted of two bedrooms on the south side, a parlor across the east or front of the house, a combination kitchen and dining room on the north and west with a pantry in the west side of it. There was a small hall and porch on the northeast corner. A summer kitchen was connected with the door to the kitchen to the west of the north part of the house. Under the summer kitchen was a cellar which was never finished because father took ill and died before he could cement it as he had planned to do. Shade trees, poplar and catalpa, were planted along the east property line and a row of poplar trees on the south side furnished shade for the house.

In this new home Vernon LeRoy was born July 9, 1900. On August 27, 1901 Mildred Irene was born in this same home. Father and Mother showed their interest in their family by allowing the boys to choose their interests in what might be called pets in those days. Clifford and Leon chose to "own" the pigeons which they provided a loft in the attic of the barn. Harry and Will [Willie, he was called in those days] were guardians of the flock of chickens. Everything about the farm and the home was kept in a very neat order. The top of the buggy shed was used to dry fruits and corn for winter use. Boxes of apples were stored and the potatoes were put into a pit from which they were taken as needed in the winter months.

Following is the one and only interesting anecdote passed on to me to record about father: At one time father lent some money to one of his friends, H__C__. Later, when the money was due and not paid, when he would meet said Mr. C__ driving along the road, the latter would, seeing father, whip up his horse and say as he passed: "I haven't time to stop and visit."

Mother has told me many times how much father enjoyed holding me up to the artesian well and watching me drink --or trying to drink, likely.

In the fall of 1902 the family again moved to live with the Elijah Laycock family in Kaysville for the winter. They had a separate part of the house in which to live. Father rode a horse 3 miles to the farm in the morning to do chores and back at night during the winter of 1902 and 1903. He

thought he hurt his side as he jumped on the horse but it turned out to be appendicitis. Mother wanted him to go to the doctor but he had little or no faith in the local doctor. He was operated on the kitchen table in Ogden [North Ogden at the home of his sister, Mr. and Mrs. Scott W. Campbell -Lucinda] in about April by S. Ed and Ezra Rich. He became well enough to walk to the post office at least once but was not well. Peritonitis set in and he suffered until October 4, 1903 when in excruciating pain, mother went outside and under the trees offered a prayer in which she asked for help if father were to be taken and promised to do her very best with our Heavenly Father's help. Father passed away in the early hours of that morning in the house which he had spent so much time building for his family. Mother once said that father said, "If I can't get well I hope I don't have to live." With all of his suffering, more than six months of extreme pain, his faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ remained firm. "He was a comparatively young man at the time of his death, having just turned forty years of age in August. He had lived a very consistent life of good moral habits, having never tampered with liquor or tobacco, and was always desirous that his children should abstain from the use of such. With their welfare in view he was quite strict with them as to the proper observance of the Sabbath Day, in connection with the other teachings. He was of a retiring nature and kindly disposition, but was not inclined to yield to the things that detract from a life of usefulness in the Church." (Quoted from Leon's biography.) He was buried October 6, 1903 in the Kaysville-Layton Cemetery in Kaysville, Davis County, Utah

Father's bed during his last illness, was in the parlor. I can remember each morning as mother would come into the kitchen-dining room from the bedroom, usually Clifford would ask how he was and mother would say, "Not so good, I am afraid." The only time I can remember being in his presence was once when he had asked mother to bring me and Mildred in for him to see. Apparently it was near his last days. There were two chairs near his bed with a footstool covered with a yellowish-colored carpeting on which were some bottles and a glass with some water in it. Mother sat in one of the chairs and lifted Mildred into her lap. I didn't want any help as I could climb onto the chair all by myself. In doing so I bumped the stool and rattled the bottles and glass which shocked father so much that he asked mother to take the children out. We were quickly hustled from the room. This was the most disappointing experience I had in my early life.

I also remember the day of the funeral with friends and relatives crowding into the summer kitchen and again as I walked into the hallway and seeing the casket along the south wall of the parlor. Someone lifted me up to see and then I walked through the crowd of persons to the door. The long line of buggies that followed the black hearse as they drove out the lane and up the road to the cemetery will always remind me of father. I was just 3 years and 3 months of age.