

# *Elizabeth Lavina Ferris*

By Ann Nybo



Elizabeth Lavina Ferris

She was born on March 9, 1879 to Thomas Ferris and Lavina Tabitha Ostler at Nephi, Juab County, Utah. She was the oldest of a family of six children who were: Mary Ann, Joshua, Lorenzo, Johnathan, Martha Isobel and Eliza.

She was about five feet, two or three inches tall (I could look over her head and I (Ann Nybo) am five feet four). She had lots of brown-black hair and large green eyes.

Although very small and slender as a girl she must have been very strong physically because she told me that before she had her first five children so fast and worked hard, she never knew what it was like to be sick or have even a headache.

From what we have been able to piece together, her dad was a freighter who worked with this father hauling produce from Utah to Nevada and back. They also helped haul marble during the building of the Salt Lake temple. It would appear that they moved around the state some because some of the rest of the family were born in Silver City and others in Salem.

After coming to Salem, it seems from several histories I've read that they had several homes. Thomas' brother Samuel is also listed as living in Salem.

Their last home here that Ma talked about was a small log house that stood just north and west of Ernest Hank's barn east on First South on the banks of the Salem canal.

Among the friends that Ma spoke of were the Davis family Lars and Olive Davis Grant and Otteson's a lady by the name of Ethel Ottesen who was the daughter of Larsene Otteson, George Bahr and Brigham Stone also told me they were school friends of Ma and Uncle Josh.

They must have been deeply religious for Ma always taught us to do whatever we were asked to do by church officers and by the fact that when Dad was asked to go on a mission even though she was down sick in bed and all five children were sick she insisted on Dad's going.

They were taught to be strictly honest. I was told the following story: One day when Elizabeth was on her way home from school, the wind had been blowing hard and as she passed an apple orchard, several ripe apples were laying in the road. So, thinking

that because they were in the road, it was ok to eat one. She picked one up and was still eating it when she got home. Her father asked where she got the apple. When she told him she had picked it up in the road, he gave her a very hard licking saying he would not have any of this family stealing anything and that the apple was not hers to take.

She was a fun loving person. She loved good clean jokes and the humorous antics of our family. It was fun to see her when she laughed especially when she was sitting down. She would sort of bounce up and down.

She said she loved to dance. The waltz and the old Quadrills. (I have several calls off these that she saved. They were fore runners of the square dances and she knew several calls. She sometimes sang and I learned some songs from her.

She was a very bright intelligent person even though she only had a seventh grade education. She was an excellent reader, writer, and I've been in the store with her when the clerk has been adding up the bill. There would be a list of three columns and maybe fifteen or twenty items. Ma, could add it in her head before the clerk did with pencil and paper and she always gave the correct answer.

She was a willing and hard worker on her father's farm and in the fall when they went to the canyon to bring wood for winter.

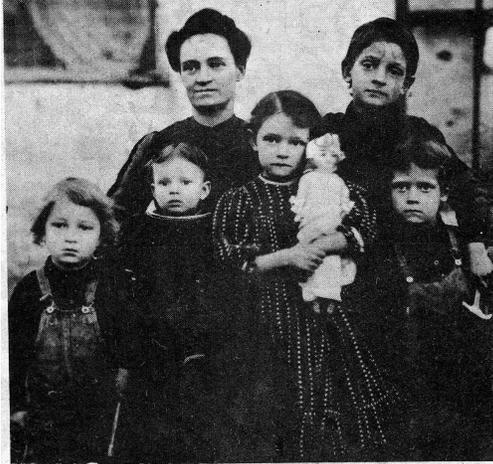
She told me the following story. One fall when Elizabeth and her dad went up Payson Canyon to get wood for winter, they worked very hard and it being a very hot day, they became overheated. When they stopped to rest, her father drank too much cold water. He became paralyzed and had to spend the rest of his life in a wheel chair.

This left her mother and the kids to do whatever they could to earn a living. The mother was an excellent seamstress and sewed for nearly everyone in Salem at that time.

She told me of a scary thing that happened to her one night when she was young: Ma and her family lived in Salem, Utah much of her younger years. One of the homes in which they lived and which she seemed to remember most was a little log house that stood north and a little west of where Ernest Hank's barn now stands. It is about two miles or more from the center of Salem on what then was just a lane.

One cold winter night, Elizabeth's parents told her that one of their little ones was very sick and since she was the oldest child in the family and her father paralyzed and unable to go, it was up to her to go to the drugstore and get some medicine. She felt frightened and reluctant but put on her wraps and went out into the night.

The drug store that was in Salem at that time was located across the street north on main street of where the church now stands and about the second building west.



The family of Wellington Wood. Mr. Wood was serving as an LDS Missionary at the time the picture was taken. It was near the turn of the century. First row, l to r: Willis, Mary [who died as a teenager] LaVern, [Mrs. Marcus Warren] and Sereus Wood. Second: Merrill and Mrs. Wood. Four other children were born to Wellington and Elizabeth later: Ann, Vernal, Ferrin and Ferris.

The family was reared in a small house located in the Spanish Fork Bottoms located about one half mile west of where the Horse Palace now stands. While Elder Wood was serving his mission in the Western States, the family moved into Spanish Fork.

Things went fine on the trip to town. She obtained the needed drugs and started her long lonely walk home. There were very few homes in the lane then. After leaving town, she became very frightened feeling that some thing or someone was following her. She didn't dare look back for fear of what it was, but quickened her steps. Every time she walked faster she could feel it walked faster. Yet, she dared not run. Silently, she uttered a prayer to her heavenly father for her protection and hurried on; toward home. Finally, a very white, frightened, and relieved girl burst into the cabin slamming the door and telling her parents that something or someone had followed her home from town. Her family laughed and told her that she had imagined it because she was so afraid. The next morning however, on looking in the snow around the cabin and down the road, they found the

tracks of a very large mountain lion.

After her father died, the mother just sort of gave up on keeping the family together. Elizabeth was given to the family of Alpheous Bingham who lived in Benjamin, Utah (at the age of fifteen), and she lived with them until she met and married Dad. Merrill, knew the family and said they loved her very much. She said she worked like a slave for them but she must have loved them also because, I remember some of them visiting at our home and she called them uncle Alph and her aunt Em.

The rest of the children were also given to families around the valley.

When Dad proposed she said he never said he loved her, just that he liked her and would she marry him. They were married November 23, 1898 in the Salt Lake temple. My sister LaVerne, the fifth child was later born on that day.

After marriage, they worked very hard. They had a herd of dairy cattle and used to sell cream and butter. They also raised chickens and sold eggs. Mother, worked very hard even helping milk and take care of the cattle and chickens making all the butter and caring for the family. This, along with having her first five children very close together helped to break her health.

After the fifth child was born, Dad was called to serve a mission for the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to the Western states mission (Colorado and New Mexico). Merrill, who was then eight years old had to be the man of the house. Dad traveled much of his mission without purse or script.

Elizabeth, was a very kind and thoughtful mother. When you were ill you received royal treatment and she was so generous that if someone at the table asked for more meat or anything she would go without to give it to them.

She was very strict and you never crossed her, for if you did you were sure to receive the punishment you so richly deserved.

She was an excellent cook and her bread especially was the very best. When we were all home she baked eight loaves three times a week. Neighbors and friends were always asked to eat. It was not uncommon for us younger kids to have several friends each, up home to visit and sleep over night. They were always treated very good and always happy. I never knew her to even turn a hobo or tramp away hungry.

Sundays, we often used to make ice cream and neighbors, friends and relatives usually came to enjoy it with us.

It was from her that I learned to quilt. We often quilted grey outing flannel for our farm beds. It was from her that I learned to crochet and the basics of sewing.

She was a very studious person often reading from the scriptures, Relief Society Magazine and many other books and Magazines. She raised many beautiful flowers.

She taught us to be dependable and reliable and to always try and keep our promises, to say please when asking for things and show and express our appreciation always whether at the table or otherwise.

One of my fond recollections of Dad, Ma and home is to picture myself coming across the river bottoms at twilight or after dark and being guided safely home by the lights shining through the old south windows and knowing what a warm welcome awaited me there.

Her last year or two of life she was ill most of the time suffering from heart disease, hardening of the arteries, varicose ulcers and other painful ailments. It was my privilege to spend the last few months of her life with her and Dad trying to help ease the suffering and give Dad a chance to be outside and work on the farm.

She died at home the evening of April 29, 1940 surrounded by husband and family who loved her and revered by many. At her funeral, the choir sang "Sister Thou Wast Mild and Lovely." This was our Ma, truly a queen.

Church. With her large family Ma served as a teacher some, but what I remember most, was that she was a devoted Relief Society visiting teacher. She and our neighbor Rose Warner always made their monthly visits, Rain or Shine, most of the time with horse and buggy. The homes in the River bottoms then were a long distance apart but

they always did their visiting. Later because she never drove a car, sometimes Dad drove them.

The following song reminds me of home and Ma and Dad:

Every night as I lay on my pillow, there's a vision of home comes to me.  
Far away 'neath the old weeping willow is a place I keep longing to see.  
By the door sits an old grey haired lady who hums as she rocks to and fro.  
And I pray I will soon be returning to that land of the west long ago.

(Chorus)

I know there is somebody waiting in the house at the end of the lane.  
I know there is someone who loves me and there I'll be welcome again.  
For someday my footsteps will lead me to the place I keep longing to see  
And I know that a light will be burning in the widow back home for me.

2nd Verse

Oh how often I dream of my childhood when she held me so close to her breast.  
When the trials of the day would be over, she lulled me to sweet peaceful rest.  
And now as the long years roll onward, I long for my home in the lane.  
And I know that each hour will be dreary till I get back there once again.