

The Life Story of Annie Ethel Isom Stirling

Born in Greatworth England, my 2nd Great grandparents were William Isom and Elizabeth Hawkins. They are as far back as we know. They had five sons and one daughter. One of their sons was Owen Isom, he also was born in Greatworth England. He married Elizabeth Howard of Birmingham England, and they had nine children. They joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1849 in England. In 1860 Owen Isom, his wife and five children came to America.

In 1861 my grandfather William Isom and wife Katherine Wolfe with his sister Mary came to America. In England he was a brass founder and a traveling Elder for the L.D.S. Church.

The Owen Isom family emigrated to America as Latter-day Saints wanting to come to Utah. They lived in Salt Lake for a short time then came to southern Utah and, according to their story (in my possession), saw very hard times.

My father Thomas Isom was born November 30, 1870 at Mt. Dell, a small ranch four miles north of Virgin, Utah. My mother Annie Hinton was born in Virgin, September 24, 1874.

My father and mother met at a social in Virgin when they were young. I, Annie Ethel Isom Stirling, am the oldest of 10 children. There were 5 boys and 5 girls, their names were: Annie Ethel, Regena, Thomas Irving, Kathleen, Bernard, Spencer Hinton, John Leslie, Grace, Orville and Genevieve. At the present time (September 1971), all my brothers and sisters are still living. My mother died of a stroke in the Cedar City Hospital on July 16, 1938. My father died of natural causes October 20, 1952 in the St. George Hospital at age of 82.

My father, while living in Mt. Dell, spent 15 winters with other men, working on the Hurricane Canal to bring water to the valley where the town of Hurricane is now located.

I was born at Mt. Dell, Utah September 19, 1896. There were only 6 families living there and they were members of Owen Isom's family. The home where I was born was just a small two room adobe house. There was a room with a fire-place in one end, which we used for our front room and bedroom, and a large kitchen with a back porch. There was a cellar under the kitchen, I can remember the door we lifted up to go down in the cellar.

In the early days of Dixie, people made Dixie Wine. When I was very small I can remember a flood that came down North Creek, it wasn't far from our home and our cellar filled with water. I can still remember the wine barrels bumping under our kitchen floor. I also remember as a child an earthquake that rattled our dishes and windows, and even cracked some homes. I was five years old when my grandmother Isom gave me a little glass tumbler she brought from England, it had a stick of candy in it. I treasured that tumbler for years. I can also remember as a child, going down to Virgin to visit my Grandfather and Grandmother Hinton, and how I loved to go there. It seemed like a city to me, and when I was 7 years old I moved in with them and went to school. That was my first time away from home.

I played with two girls in Mt. Dell, they were my cousins Verna Isom and Pearl Wilson. I can distinctly remember one spanking my mother gave me. She had combed my hair with a little bob on top. I hated that bob, so I had Pearl take the scissors and cut it off.

When I was 8 years old my parents moved to LaVerkin, Utah, a very new town, where we could go to school and where father would be closer to his work at Hurricane. My sister Regena was then old enough to be in school, too. We lived in LaVerkin for two years and have

many fond memories a thereof. While there, my sister Regena and I were baptized in the hot Sulphur Springs by Henery Gubler.

When the Hurricane Canal was completed and the water flowed on the Hurricane flat, the people had a celebration. Then my father built a one room granary, which was the first house built on the flat. We expected to move to Hurricane in the spring of 1906 but father took sick with pneumonia, So Uncle Maurice Hinton moved in our house and was the first family on the flat that summer. In the fall father built another room, a lean-to it was called, and we moved to Hurricane December 6, 1906. There were no windows or doors in the room, but we managed for a few days.

I was 10 years old that winter and we held school and church in one room of Uncle Ira Bradshaw's home. He had the largest home in town at that time. Jacob Workman was the school teacher and we used anything we could find for benches. We used boxes, tables and benches. That winter we all had whooping cough and went to school anyway. We almost drove the teacher crazy.

The winter of 1907 the Hurricane Ward was organized with Uncle Samuel Isom as Bishop, and Charles Workman and Emanuel Stanworth as Counselors.

While attending elementary school (to the 8th grade) my teachers were Sarah Miles, Ira Webb, Clara Walker, Joseph Wittwer, Joseph T Wilkenson and Morgan B. Edwards.

In the winter of 1914 I attended school at the B.A.C. in Cedar City, Utah. I also went the winter quarter of 1915 & 1916, then I missed a year to let some other members of the family have a turn. In 1917 - 1918 four of us kept house in Aunt Catherine Leigh's up-stairs. There were Joe & Mina Hinton (cousins), my brother Irving and myself. In 1919 - 1920 Irving, Bernard, Kathleen and I kept house in the up-stairs of William Lunt's home, and went to school.

I met my husband through a friend, Pearl Larson, who taught school in Leeds, while I was visiting with her. Our courtship lasted about a year and I attended college part of that time. In those days the roads were not like they are today. It was not as easy to go places so we didn't see each other very often. We were engaged the 4th of July 1920.

On September 23, 1920 I was married to David Stirling, an unmarried Bishop of the Leeds Ward, and our reception was held the following day at the family home. My wedding dress was white satin with embroidery and tatting around the neck and sleeves. My girlfriend, Delsy Workman (Leany), helped me do the tatting. My reception consisted of a program and refreshments.

We moved to Leeds the following day and I started my new life. It was quite a change from my life in Hurricane. When I first came here we used coal oil and gas lights, and the water we used was dipped up every morning from the irrigation ditch in the street. A few years later electricity was brought to Leeds, also a water system which seemed wonderful.

I was kept very busy, after the first year of marriage our daughter Charlene was born, August 8, 1921. We were very proud of our beautiful baby. The following year our son Thomas Eldon was born on Election Day, November 7, 1922. Then April 26, 1924 our daughter Florence came to bless our home. At that time I thought I had plenty to keep me busy, I had three babies. A year and a half later Dave spent three weeks in the Cedar Hospital with typhoid fever and had only been home a week or so when our daughter Katherine was born, November 30, 1925. Next in line, born February 12, 1927, were the twin girls named Ilene and Elaine. They were so tiny, weighing 4 ½ pounds and 3 ½ pounds, but they were healthy and grew fast. Then I did have my hands full. I had 6 babies under 6 years of age, and we didn't have the modern conveniences we have today, so I had to have some help.

Besides my work at home in those years, I worked in the Ward as a counselor in M.I.A., Organist in the Sunday School, and later as a counselor in the Primary. Dave was still Bishop.

In 1927 we bought the family home of Dave's sisters, Ruth and Elinor. We had been living in two rooms of the home and needed more room for our growing family. That year Dave was released as Bishop, after serving for 16 years.

It gave me much happiness taking care of my little family, although we didn't have the comforts in our home that we have today.

On December 20, 1929 another son came to us, we named him David Leslie, but he only stayed with us 1 ½ years. He was run over by our truck and died of a basal fracture August 14, 1931. It seemed that summer I had a premonition something was going to happen to him and warned the family to watch him as I was convalescing from a goiter operation. We were without a baby for a year when our son William Merrill was born, October 9, 1932. He has always been a joy to us as well as the others.

On August 11, 1935 our last son was born and we named him Culbert Means, after a family ancestor. He was a loving child and we thought of him as our baby because he was the last child to bless our home.

In 1933 I was made a Counselor in the Relief Society with Hazel McMullin as President and Margie Dalton as a Counselor. I held that position for 8 years and was sustained as President in 1941. I held that position 4 years. In 1948 I was again sustained as a Counselor in the Relief Society with Maida Sullivan, Evelyn McMullin was President. I was also organist and held those positions until 1961. For 25 years I acted as an officer in Ward Relief Society and I now am a Visiting Teacher. I have acted as a Visiting Teacher Class Leader, Secretary of the Sunday School, Secretary of the Ward Genealogical Committee, and have taught Sunday School and Primary at different times.

While the Children were growing up it was a busy time, they all had their turn with Chicken Pox, Measles, Whooping Cough and Mumps. As they grew and started school there were adjustments to make, here at home and when each took their first ride on a school bus to go to school in St. George (Junior High, High School and College). One year we had 5 riding the bus, and two younger boys attending school at home. I remember that fall, I was sustained as President of the Relief Society and getting 7 off to school seemed too big of job for me. I had a nervous collapse and was in bed for several months. Charlene was through school and was working in Cedar City, so she came home and cared for the family.

I can remember while the children were at home going to school, at Christmas and in the Spring, the school and Primary would have cantatas or operettas, it seemed like I was making costumes all the time - but that was part of a family growing up.

In 1943 World War I was on. We saw Eldon go into the service for three years. He was a paratrooper in the 101 Airborne Division, but didn't see action. He was waiting for his number to be called when the war ended. He spent a year in Germany in the Army of Occupation.

The time came for the children to think about getting married. During the War, Florence, (the first of the family to marry) married David F. Adams of Rye, New York, a Catholic; but a fine honorable young man. She is setting a good example and is raising their son in the L. D.S. Church.

Katherine was the next one to get married. She married Russell A. Christensen in the St. George Temple on October 27, 1944. They have four fine children, 3 girls and 1 boy.

It was a big day when our twins were married Ilene to Foy A. Seegmiller and Elaine to Nyron Sorensen - that was September 26, 1946. Having two of the family leave at the same time

seemed too much.

That spring (1946) our oldest daughter Charlene left for the North Western States Mission, our son Eldon returned from Europe, and our first grandchild, Beverly Ann Christensen I was born. A very busy year!!

March 27, 1947 Eldon was married to Louise Fluckiger in the St. George Temple. They now have 7 fine children.

In the fall of 1947 Charlene returned from her mission. She graduated from Dixie Junior College and attended C.S. U. for one year. She married Walter Leo Knell June 22, 1950. Seven Children have blessed their home.

Our son Merrill graduated from Dixie College, was then called into the service for two years, and served in Korea. He spent 2 ½ years in the Spanish American Mission for the L.D.S. Church, then finished his schooling at Utah State University. He is now teaching Industrial Arts at a junior high school in Kaysville. He married Katherine Harvey in the Swiss Temple on November 2, 1961. She was in Germany as an exchange student and he flew over when she was through her assignment, they were married and had their honeymoon in Europe. They have one son at this writing. Our son Culbert attended school at Dixie also. He graduated from Dixie High and had some College. He went to the Australian Mission in 1958 and enjoyed a wonderful mission. On October 27, 1962 he married Sharon Leah Branham in the St. George Temple and at present, they have a beautiful baby daughter.

At this writing we have 32 living grandchildren. Dave and I are here in the old home alone this winter (1963 - 1964), our family all have homes and families of their own. Dave and I feel we have had a busy and very rewarding life. Our family are all honorable citizens and are working in the church. We are very proud of them all.

In 1953 I had a month's vacation and went back to Rye, New York, by car, with Florence, Dave and Larry. We visited many interesting places on our way. We visited Independence Hall and other interesting places in Philadelphia, and in New York City saw the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty. I had my first airplane ride when I returned from New York to Las Vegas.

In 1957 Dave and I had a long awaited honeymoon. We went by Greyhound Bus to New York City, where Dave and Florence met us and took us to their home in Norwalk, Conn. We ate Thanksgiving Dinner with them and Dave's family, and while we were there they took us sight-seeing in New York City and Washington, D. C. We visited the National Capitol, the White House, Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln Memorials, Arlington Cemetery and Mt. Vernon, Va. We also visited West Point, Indianapolis Naval Academy and saw many long and beautiful bridges. We even went to a Stake Gold and Green Ball in Washington, D. C., at the Sheraton Hotel. It was a wonderful trip we will always remember.

January 17, 1968, I will try and write some more family happenings since 1964.

On the evening of July 23, 1965, Dave's 80th Birthday, the family had an open house for him. Friends and relatives came from surrounding towns to help celebrate and to honor him. We had it out on our lawn, it was a very nice occasion. The next day we had a family dinner at the Leeds Ward Recreation Hall.

In July 1966 we decided to take another vacation to Norwalk, Conn. to visit Florence and Dave. We went this time by jet. We had a newer car and drove to Las Vegas where our children living there saw us off on a Bonanza Jet to Los Angeles, and from there we traveled on American Airlines to Kennedy Airport -in New York, where Florence and her husband met us. We had a wonderful trip. While back East, we went to the Palmyra Pageant at Hill Cumorah, and

from there up to Niagara Falls. We saw the falls on the American and Canadian side of the river. They took us to a place called Mystic Sea Port, where there are old ships and whaling vessels docked. There were many other interesting things to see too. We went to New York City once and just toured part of the city (by car), and past the Water Front where 6 to 8 large ships were in port. We went by Times Square, the U.N. Building, Lincoln Center, Grand Central Station and saw the Pan Am Building that was built over Grand Central (that's where Dave Adam's had his office). Florence took us to church three Sunday's at her ward in Scarsdale, New York. Our family met us at the airport in Las Vegas on our return trip home. It was a wonderful three weeks.

At present we have: 37 grandchildren and 2 more expected this year, 1 great-grandchild and 1 more expected, 6 grandchildren in college, and 2 in the Navy. We have a family to be proud of.

It's quite lonesome here alone, but we have each other. The children come quite often to see us as they're not far away, and we enjoy having them come. Our church work keeps us quite busy. At present I am a Relief Society Visiting Teacher and Secretary of the Sunday School, and Dave is Secretary of his High Priest's Group, here in the Ward. Although this is a small Ward, we have fine, close neighbors which are a great blessing to us.

January 1969. I will try to write a few happenings of 1968.

On July 7, our grandson Bruce Sorensen, age 19, met with a car accident and was killed. He was Elaine and Nyron's second son.

In August, Florence and Dave moved out west from Norwalk, Conn. and bought a home in Las Vegas, Nevada, where Dave is employed by the Nevada Power Company. We are happy to have them close to us, along with five of our other children. .

We had a wonderful surprise on Thanksgiving morning, we thought we were going to Las Vegas for Thanksgiving, but instead they all came home and surprised us. They brought dinner with them, all ready to eat. It was a wonderful day with over 50 of us present. The old home was full of children and grandchildren that day. Five grandchildren were unable to be here.

1969 so far has been quite different and upsetting. On the morning of February 7, I discovered Dave had had a stroke during the night, he spent the day before at the Temple. He was taken to the St. George Hospital for a week and then to Las Vegas, so our family could help care for him because he was helpless. In March he was taken to the Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas, and was there three weeks. In June he returned to the hospital for an operation, to try and correct some trouble the stroke caused. While in Las Vegas we stayed with Florence most of the time and in July we came home to stay. The family took turns coming to help care for him. In the spring of 1970 he had another stroke and was taken to the St. George Hospital for a few days, and from there to the Cooper Rest Haven. He was very unhappy there and wanted to be home. He was always contented at home. He suffered much.... When I went to see him on his 85th Birthday he was too ill to realize that it was his birthday. Then early on the morning of July 27 he suffered another stroke and closed his eyes to this life.

Many friends and loved ones came to the beautiful service for him. I know he had a happy reunion with his loved ones on the other side of the veil. He was a good husband, father, and friend to all who knew him, and I hope I can live worthy so when my time comes he will be happy to welcome me over there.

I am living here in the old home alone, and it gets very lonesome. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have my church to go to, and so many friends and loved ones to help me.

Addendum

I had my story printed and reading it over I realized I had left out some important events in my life. I am adding more.

My family lived in the old two-room house until about 1911. Dad had a struggle in getting a larger and better home built. There were 8 children and we needed more room. The new home was of brick made in Hurricane by William Marshall of St. George. There were four large rooms and a wash room, later a bathroom downstairs, four bed rooms upstairs. Christian Larson was the carpenter. The Worthen's of St. George did the mason work, the Cottons the plastering, Alex Milne & Sons did the painting. We were very happy in our new home. At that time we used coal oil & gas lights. 1918 electricity came to Hurricane, also running water in our home from a cistern that was under the canal.

Strangers began coming into our new town and there was no hotel for them to stay. Aunt Marion Bradshaw took these visitors, as she had the largest home. As the town grew, more visitors. Aunt Marion started sending some to mother, after our new house was built. Mother found room for them, as well as her large family.

Kane Co. people run sheep not far from Hurricane. They came to Hurricane for their supplies at Petty Mercantile. The sheep men came to our home to stay while in town. At times there were so many that mother had trouble finding room for them to sleep. The family had to find all kinds of places for them to sleep.

Our home was in the center of town and was later called the Isom Hotel. Father had a good farm. He raised hay, fruit, a few head of cattle and sheep, which helped supply food for the hotel and family. Hay for all the guest's horses. We children helped with the work, as the hotel was our living. Our home life then was not as we would [have] because there were so many guests in the home. I feel our family suffered to some extent in a religious way.

Times were hard in those days, but people were happy in their new town. They had struggled many years to build the canal so they would have water for their farms. Farming was the only way they had to make a living. I saw some pioneering while growing up in a new town. We traveled by wagon, then later Dad had a white topped buggy. The first automobile came to Hurricane when I was still quite young. The man took people for a ride and charged 10 cents per person. Dancing was the main form of recreation. Radio & TV were not dreamed of. The people made their own pleasure, but were happy.

About 1907 or 1908, Hurricane erected their first public building with a stage at one end. It was used for school, church, recreation. It had curtains stretched in several places to divide it for classes in school and church. If I remember right, there were two large stoves to warm the building. As years passed, neat and better buildings were built. At present the Stake Chapel stands where the first building was. Today, Hurricane is a thriving town. The original pioneers are all gone, but their children help to make their community. I have seen many changes in my lifetime. I feel I have a rich heritage.

Nov. 1972

In my family there have been some happenings that I neglected to write. Charlene & Leo had a tragedy in their family at their home in 1959, when their baby, Robert, met with an accident and was killed. Then in 1969 their oldest son, Walter, also had an accident and was killed instantly.

In 1971 our daughter, Ilene Seegmiller, passed away. She had been very ill for some time with diabetes. It was sad to see her go while so young and leave a family.

We believe there was a reason for her leaving us. She was needed in the spirit world.

She and the others that have passed on have work to do over there, to help prepare for our Lord and Savior, who will come again.

At present there are 38 living grandchildren, 8 great grandchildren in the family. There are 5 grandchildren that have left this life.