

Personal History of Alvin Benson and His wife Elizabeth Ellen Orton

Alvin Benson was born in Parowan Iron Co. Utah Nov. 17, 1859.

Elizabeth Ellen Orton Benson was born in Parowan Utah 6th of Aug. 1862.

Alvins parents were Richard and Phebe Forrester Benson. Elizabeth's parents were Alexander and Jane Holmes Orton.

Born and reared in the same town they lived only a few blocks from each other.

They tell numerous stories of when Alvin was a little boy he did not like to eat potatoes, his anxious mother thought he should eat them to make him strong and big, but his excuse was, "It hurts my back to swallow them." To this day he claims it still hurts his back to swallow them.

Another time he was very much insulted when his mother tried to make him wear some good warm pants she made, he thought they were too girlish and sneaked them off. They lived close to the log church and Alvin was in the church one day when an old Indian prisoner peeked through the chinking at him and said "hoo", it frightened him so he ran home to his mother. Another time when he was playing by the church he saw two squaws, as he peaked around the corner, running home he said to his mother "I just about saw some Indians," meaning the squaws just about saw him.

Alvins outstanding school teacher was John Ed. Dalley. He had a desire to attend the B.Y.U. at Provo but his father thought he couldn't afford it, although he was deprived of this desire, she did not give up but studied and educated him self along many lines, teaching him self to type write fairly good, when quite old.

Alvin was always fond of horses, when young he used to ride and brake bronco horses as a business. He was always very kind and thoughtful of his own team, always seeing that they were cared for and fed before he himself would eat. He used to log with an ox team. Later he hauled lumber from the mountains with a mule and horse team. He had experience with raising and herding cattle also running sheep.

His civic and church offices were: In 1894 he was elected Sheriff, then again elected Sheriff in 1910 when Utah became a State.

He was a fierce vierer , an office held to keep cattle out of fields and lots. In 1897 Alvin was called on a mission to California. On returning home he was elected mayor of Parowan City in 1899. He was also put in president of the Young Mens Mutual Improvement Assn., with Charles Adams and William Gurr Jr. as gounselors. In 1927 he was appointed Dep. Sheriff of Iron Co in Parowan precinct, holding this office for five years. He was Justice of the Peace for several years, was twice elected rejistor, was supervisor of County Roads and collector of poll tax. He was Balif of Court for many years.

At the age of twenty Alvin became interested in Elizabeth Orton, their first date was a buggy ride. A few months later she was to be queen of the May, on May 1st 1879. Alvin evidently decided she was also his queen and asked her to marry him. They were engaged about two years and were married in St. George Temple on 15th November 1881.

Joys and sorrows have come to their lives. Many sacrifices they have made to serve God and their loved ones.

It took great faith and courage to serve God at the time Alvin left for his mission as Elizabeths health was very poor, but they put their trust in God answering this call of duty to his church and all came out triumphant. In a few months their son Clifford was born and Elizabeth's life was saved by the faith and prayers of the faithful people of Parowan and the Elders in the mission field who joined with Alvin in asking for this blessing.

Elizabeth was born in a house standing about where Jess Guymons home now stands, being a one room log house. She started to school when about five years old in a log room which stood north of the County Courthouse. Her first teacher was her grandfather Josiah Holmes. She attended his school at intervals from 1867 to about 1872, after which she attended the school taught by Charles Adams, in the East school house located on the south east corner of the present school block for one term. St next attended a school taught by Mary Jane West for one term this school was held in her home.

The reason that she couldn't attend school all the time was that she was a member of a large family and they had to pay tuition and their parents were

were unable to keep all the members in school at once. She next attended a school taught by Ann Gunn in a room that joined her home located close to the tithing office building. She next went to school in the basement of the old rock meeting house, her teachers were Harriet Ann Richard, Mary Adams Ollerton, Huldah and Dena Dalton and Joseph Fish. Her last teacher was John Ed Dalley who taught in what was known as the East School House. Her schooling extended over a period of about eighteen years with only a term on two each year.

When Elizabeth was about five or six years old she was playing in the street in a ditch near her home, it being a warm day she became sleepy and went to sleep on the bank of the ditch. A man by the name of Edward Dalton was driving several horses hitched to a separator of a thrashing machine, he happened to look up in time to see her hair waving in the wind and stopped the horses before they trampled her to death. When a young lady with her girl friends she would go caroling at Christmas time and at Valentine time they would make their own valentines and carry matches on candles for light to read the names. They composed and presented plays to their parents.

Both Alvin and Elizabeth were members of the Parowan Dramatic Co., taking parts in many plays. Elizabeth playing leading lady in such as "The Rose" in "The Rose of Ettrick Vale." "Barbara Hair", in East Lynn" and "Angeline" in "Valet De Sham." They both played in many plays after they were married.

To this union ten children were born, three dying in infancy and one, Roena died with flu at the age of eighteen years in 1918. Their children's names were:

Alvin Alexander	Born 24th Aug. 1882
Madora Dean	Born 25th March 1884
Richard Heber	Born 1st April 1886
Flossie Forrester	Born 6th July 1887
Phebe Jane	Born 5th Feb. 1892
Clifford Homes	Born 13th Oct. 1897
Roena	Born 7th Nov. 1900
Twins Mary and Mabel	Born 1st July 1902

Roberta

Born 14th July 1903

In addition to their own family they have cared for several of Alvin's brothers children who lost their mother. They have been friends to many lonely youths who have come to their home. A friend making the comment that they "operated a free home for the friendless wanderers." It can be said of Elizabeth that she never turned anyone away from her door that was hungry. An outstanding thing in the life of Elizabeth is that within a period of two years and nine months she became the mother of four little girls. Roena was one year and nine months old when she bore twin girls. Mary and Mabel who died within a day or so. Then in a year from the time the twins were born her last child Roberta was born. During that period after Roena was born, until Roberta was born she took care of Alvin's brother's baby for six months, besides having and losing twins within that period of two years and nine months.

Shall we stop and marvel at such motherhood, which bears the pain, that spirits may their bodies gain, such unselfish love and sacrifice, that first began in paradise. All hail to mothers, queens they are, in God's vast kingdom their none so fair. Alvin and Elizabeth did not stop caring for children when their last child was born, countless are the deeds they have done for their grandchildren. After their own family was raised and married they had the care of a little grandchild Gordon Ramsey for four winters before he was old enough to go to school. A little fellow by the name of Harry Carlson they gave a home for several months, even teaching him to talk, bringing him from California because his mother had to work and the lady that had been tending him was unable to care for him longer; so kind hearted Alvin and Elizabeth offered him a home until his mother was able to take care of him.

A few years later they took another little boy in their home, (Buddy) or John Albert Montgomery and had him three years being reluctant to give him up then, but they were getting along in years and it was wise to do so. Harry's and Buddy's people were total strangers to them up to the time they took their boys in their home.

Harry may have been too young to remember much about them, but Gordon and Buddy will never forget their kindness, Buddy to this day has a visit every summer with them, and is loath to leave when the visit is ended. Their memory will always be a

shrine to him, ever burning in his heart, for he loves them most sincerely. As for Gordon they are more than grandparents to him for Alvin is the only father he has ever known. Their lighted candles are set so firmly upon his life that they will ever be shining through his soul as rays of hope and love, and their peaceful influence and guidance will ever be a help to him throughout his life.

Elizabeth has done a great service in Relief Society. As a young girl she was a Deaconess to the society and a member since she was nineteen years of age. She was a visiting teacher for over forty years, worked on a banquet committee from the time she was married until she was sixty five years old, always being willing to work and serve and furnish more than her share when called upon to furnish.

She joined the M.I.A. when it was first organized. In her later life she's been a faithful member, up until she was seventy eight, when ill health prevented her from attending. Nor has she neglected her Sunday School, it has been her pride to go with her family all her life and take part in many ways.

On November 16, 1931, Alvin and Elizabeth celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with more than one hundred relatives and friends joining in the social, which was held in the Parowan Relief and banquet rooms of the Recreation hall. Alvin paid tribute in such a charming way to Elizabeth of his grateful appreciation of her love and devotion, saying that she was the "One girl, the only girl," and Elizabeth with a winsome smile of "Thank You" acknowledge the tribute.

The program on this occasion commenced with a solo by their oldest daughter Dean, who sang "A darling Old Couple" prayer was offered by Bishop Clayton Mitchell and then Flossie their second daughter read a tribute to her parents in the form of a poem composed by her. Five little grandsons Bobbie and Doyle Rowley, Carlyle and Kenneth Mitchell and Gordon Ramsey sang, "I Dreamed That I was Grandpapa" another daughter Roberta gave an account of her parents romance and the misses Maytha and Roena Mitchell played a piano duet, Bishop Mitchell talked briefly, little Clara Dale Rowley youngest of the granddaughters did a recitation. Carlyle Mitchell played a harmonica number. R.H. Benson oldest brother of Alvin talked a short time. A group of granddaughters sang and L.J. Adams sang two songs.

An elaborate lunch was served with delicious wedding cake as the final serving.

Mr. H. Lyman was called to say grace. Following the lunch dancing was indulged in Alvin and Elizabeth were among the dancers and were very active and spry. Worthy of special mention was that Alvin kept pace with two younger by thirty years are were in a step dance which required rather intricate steps, never giving up until they did.

In 1926 Alvin and Elizabeth took their first real trip together, it might be called a belated "Honey moon," for ever since Alvin had fulfilled his mission to California he made a decision than that some day he would take Elizabeth to see the Sunny State. They spent several months there enjoying the beautiful winter climate, escaping the cold and snow of Utahs winters. It was on this trip that they ran across Little Harry previously mentioned. They visited many places of interest and really enjoyed themselves.

A few years later they purchased a small but convenient car and took trips to Boulder Dam, Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon Cedar Breaks National Monument, Salt Lake City, Yellow Stone Park and many other places of interest.

They visited many times with their daughter Flossie in Bingham Canyon Utah, their son Clifford in Idaho, son Allie and daughter Dean in California. One outstanding trip being to California to the Rose Parade in Pasadena, at this time all the children were there excepting Clifford. It was strange that the whole family were never together in their lives until in March 1938 when they all gathered home at once when Alvin was very ill. The reason that they had never all been together at one time, was that the oldest daughter had married and moved away before the youngest child was born, and they never all gathered home, at the same time, until then.

When Alvin went on his mission in 1897 he was set apart on 7th of April by Brother J. Golden Kimball as spokesman assisted by brothers C.B. Young and J.H. Smith at the annex of the Salt Lake Temple. He recieved instructions from brothers F.M. Lyman and Heber J. Grant, he was told to travel with out purse or script. They were the last missionaries to travel that way.

In the year 1927 Alvin served as messenger in the Utah State Leglslator, after he had been there about one week Elizabeth joined him in Salt Lake City living there until the term was over, taking many trips to points of interest with the legisla-

But today were here to honor
You, our queenly Mother dear
For the million things you've given
Us, throughout our lives each year.

On May 21st 1941, death closed the earthly career of Elizabeth after a lingering illness of about two years. Constant vigil was kept by all her children during the last three weeks of her life. She knew her time to depart this life was soon to come and did all she could to lighten arrangements as to her funeral, stating whom she wished to pray, sing and speak, her mind was extremely keen and alert to the last breath. It was her wish to go to rest.

Tribute was paid her for the service she rendered to others in time of sickness, her loyalty to her church in paying her tithing and offerings, her great knowledge of scriptures and church history.

Alvins health is very poor, in fact he was so ill when Elizabeth passed away that he was unable to attend her funeral. It may be but a short time before he is called to join her. I feel that they have kept the faith, and fought a good fight. Elizabeth has finished her course as Paul said "henceforth there is laid up for her a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give her." Likewise Alvin when he passes beyond the veil. Many friends will say in parting. "They have eased some aching head, dried some bitter tears."

We children of this splendid couple can say when they both depart this life "can't see them", but they are with us still."

Parents like ours are more than a memory, they'll always be a living presence.

Written by Flossie B. Ramsey.

(Daughter)