

# William Albert Walker Jr.

Compiled by Eleana Hurst

William Albert Walker Jr. was the first child of William and Lottie B. Walker. Lottie's first few years of married life were childless. Due to her anxiety, she prayed earnestly to the Lord that if he would bless her with a child, she would be willing to give it up anytime he would desire. When the baby was born October 24, 1880, they named him William Albert Jr. Lottie thought of him as an exceptional child. Then as well as throughout his life he was a very bright boy, always kind, cheerful, and obedient.

When Willie was 11 months old, his parents took him from Taylor, Arizona, where they lived, to St. George, Utah, a distance of about 350 miles by wagon, to have their temple work done and to have Willie sealed to them. The ceremonies were performed by David H. Cannon on November 10, 1881.

At the age of six, Willie had rheumatic fever, and it left him with a serious heart condition. In spite of years of nursing and care, his condition did not improve.

Six more children were born while they lived in Taylor, Arizona, three boys and three girls—Don Carlos, Ezra Erastus, Estella, Josephine, Walter Noah, and Lavina.

Life in Arizona was difficult. There were many outlaws roaming the country, stealing cattle and making trouble between the cattle men and the sheep men. And the Indians were a constant danger. William and Lottie decided to move to Fruitland, New Mexico, where several of Lottie's half-brothers had settled.

They traveled for weeks in covered wagons, over barren desert country inhabited by Apache and Navajo Indians, who were not to hostile. They brought some cows and a few horses besides those used to pull the wagons. They had a hard trip, as it took them one month to go 200 miles over desert land. Water holes were very few and had to be hunted. They made a bed in the wagon for Willie. They thought this move would be better for his health.

Lottie's half-brother, Clayborne Brimhall, met them in Fruitland and took them to his home. When they arrived at the San Juan River they were in desperation because of the illness of their son and the hardship of the trip. They arrived in Fruitland the first part of April 1896, and Willie died on the 25th of April—his father's birthday. He was 16 years old.

During the last weeks of his illness, he seemed to sense that he would be going. Several times he said he didn't mind, but that he didn't like to go alone. Shortly before passing, he asked his mother if she could see the people and hear the beautiful music. He said that there was a group of young people wanting him to go with them, so he wouldn't be alone. Then he peacefully slipped away.

His mother's grief for him seemed more than she could bear. Try as she could, she couldn't find consolation from any source. In one of her moments of despair, a voice came to her and said, "The Lord has only taken back that which was promised Him." She then remembered her early prayer and thanked the Lord that she had been privileged to keep him for those 16 years.