

Life History of Estella Walker Call

I was born in a log cabin in Taylor, Arizona, on August 6, 1887. Taylor was first named Walker, after my father's family, but because there was another town already named Walker in Arizona, the name was changed to Taylor, after President John Taylor. However, there is a flat just outside of town called Walker Flat, named after my people.

Shortly after my birth, Father built a two-story frame house on the hill across the creek from where I was born. We had a nice orchard where the old house was. There was a little bridge over the creek, and quite often we kids would fall into the creek.

Father, William Albert Walker, was a blacksmith as well as a rancher. His blacksmith shop was near our new home. Two brothers, James and Joseph, had died when they were children—John had been killed by Indians. Jesse was married to Loretta Hunt. Sister Mary Jane died when a child. Sarah was married to Alma Hale, Margaret to Joseph Kay, and Selena to Joseph Cardon. Joseph Kay ran a general merchandise store, and Mother clerked there at times. Uncle Joe was driving from Snowflake to Taylor when his horse ran away. He was thrown from the buggy, dragged a long way, and killed.

Father was a very kind man—gentle and loving with us children when we were small. I can remember him rocking and singing lullabies to us. Although he may not have had a very good voice and couldn't carry a tune well, I thought it was beautiful the way he hummed and rocked the babies for hours when they were fretful, and to sleep when they were sleepy.

My father was an Indian scout in the early days of Arizona. The Apaches were often on the warpath, and Taylor was just a short distance from Fort Apache. So when there was an outbreak, there would be a lot of killings and burnings in the vicinity of our town. I have heard him tell of one time when he was out scouting he was surrounded by Apaches, and suddenly a man appeared from nowhere and handed him a little Bible and told him to carry it over his heart and always remember its teachings and it would be a protection to him. I don't know what became of that little Bible.

He was also a great record keeper. He had quite a large book of names, dates, and genealogy. Foolishly, none of the rest of the family had an interest in this "hobby," so when our home was destroyed by fire, all of this valuable information went up in smoke.

Father was a great hunter and naturalist. He loved the outdoors. He knew the names and habits of birds, and there was a great variety in Arizona. He loved the wildlife. He had a half-dozen guns of the best make and did a lot of hunting.

My mother, Lottie Brimhall, had just the opposite nature. She cared nothing for that kind of life. She went in more for culture and education and social life. She was a good seamstress and made all of our clothes, and was a great reader.

My parents left Taylor when I was eight years old, moving to Fruitland, New Mexico. Our family then consisted of my parents, Willie, Carl, Ezra, Estella, Josephine, Walter, and Lavina—a baby of two years. Willie was bedfast with rheumatism, so a bed was made in one of the two wagons for him. We also brought some cows and a few horses besides those used to pull the wagons. We had a hard trip, as it took us one month to go 200 miles over desert land filled with dangerous Indians, though they were not too hostile. Water holes were very few and had to be hunted. Mother's brother Clayborn Brimhall met us at Fruitland and took us to his home.

After a short time, Father traded our home in Taylor to Tom Bryan for a seven-room adobe home at Fruitland, a very small country town. The house was on the banks of the San Juan River. The river would

flood every spring and was very treacherous. It changed its course often because of the sandy banks. It separated our town from the Navaho Indian Reservation, and we would often go across the river to their dances. The fishing and swimming were good. There were groves of cottonwood trees on our place, and being quite a tomboy, I used to climb to the very tops of them. Our house had a fireplace in each room except the kitchen, and the walls must have been two-feet thick, with plenty of windows in them. Our closest neighbors were the Luther Burnhams and the William Blacks. Our families grew up together and we had great times. The William Blacks and my parents were very good friends. Luther Burnham was our bishop for years.

We had arrived in Fruitland in April, and William died within a few weeks, when he was 16 years old. He had suffered from rheumatism since he was six. I remember very clearly the day he died. Mother had sent me out to the orchard to keep the other children out of the house. In a short time she came out and told us that brother Willie had passed on.

Children born in this house were Jesse, Ruth, Mae, and Ethel.

Father continued his blacksmithing, but business was poor. He had been a rancher, with a ranch, horses, and cattle in Arizona, and when he sold out and moved to New Mexico, he never seemed to get back on his feet. He wasn't a farmer, and there were no industries in the tiny town we moved to. He seemed to be like a fish out of water and never seemed to adjust to that kind of life. As a result, we would have been considered rather poor nowadays. We had a large orchard, but there was no market for our fruit, so we didn't enjoy many of the comforts and luxuries of life. Mother always raised a lot of turkeys but didn't realize much from them because of a poor market.

When I was a little girl in Fruitland, Mother, who was about to give birth to a baby, sent me to fetch a mid-wife, Abbie Young. She was the youngest wife of Apostle Brigham Young, the son of President Brigham Young. Apostle Young was at Abbie's home at this time, and he took me on his lap and he told me about the big city that he lived in (Salt Lake City). He said that by pressing a button, the lights would go on, and he told me many other things about what they had in the big city—street cars, etc. It was like a magic fairy tale. I had never seen anything but a kerosene lamp, nor had I seen any of the other things that he described to me. The electric lights, by pressing a button and lighting up the whole house, seemed impossible and impressed me the most.

When I was 16, we moved again, to Jewett, New Mexico. Nellie, my youngest sister, was born there. Jewett was about six miles away from Fruitland. I went to work for the Baldwins in their Indian trading post and also helped in their home. The Baldwins had two daughters—Ruth and Elaine. When I was 17, I had a chance to go to Old Mexico (Dublan) and stay with my Uncle Joseph Cardon and his wife Selena, who was my father's sister. There I attended school, and my brother Ezra came down also to attend school and work for Uncle Joe. I was there two years, and during that time I met Willard Call and became engaged to him. After I returned home to New Mexico, my folks sold their home and moved to Redmesa, Colorado.

In the meantime, my brother Carl (Don Carlos) had married Pearl Wheeler and had one boy, Don, so when we moved to Colorado, there were four grown young people in our family besides the small children. The main families living in Redmesa were the Taylors, Deans, Walkers, Wildens, and the Burnhams. While we were living there, Willard came from Dublan to visit us. I was to be 21 that August, and we decided to get married on December 20, 1908. Willard went back to Dublan, and I followed in December. We were married in the Call home by bishop Thurber. After our marriage, we went to live in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, just across the border from El Paso, Texas.

Willard went to work in a general grocery store for Brother Bowman. We were there until 1910, and from there we went to Salt Lake to go through the temple. I was pregnant, and my health was very poor, as

I had a miscarriage the previous year. After being sealed in the temple, we moved to Morhland, Utah, in Carbon County, where our first son, Willard Augustine, was born. I just about lost both my life and that of the baby's, as he was born at home instead of in a hospital and was an instrument baby. Only a very poor company doctor was in attendance. Mother was with me for three weeks. She had Nellie with her.

After leaving Morhland, we went back to Redmesa for a while, then back to Dublan, Mexico, and then north of there to a town called Pearson. We ran a general merchandise store there and had a big warehouse full of grain and hay and powder for the mines. At this time Poncho Villa was raiding the countryside. It was during the Mexican Revolution, and there was fighting going on all around us. The troop trains would stop just in front of our store, and the soldiers would come in and help themselves and, of course, would not pay for anything. My stay in Mexico at this time was short. One day I got a call from Grandma Call in Dublan telling me to take the next passenger train bound for the States. All of the white people, especially the Mormons, were advised to get out of Mexico. I had all of my clothes on the line and didn't have time to do any ironing, so I just folded them neatly and put them in my suitcases. I had sat up so many nights listening to the fighting and firing all around us and the Mexican troop trains passing by our door that I was exhausted from nervousness and fright. Augustine was 24 months old, and another was to be born in September. On July 22, 1912, I boarded the train and was the only white person on it. I had my baby, two suitcases, and \$30 in cash. That was all I got out of Mexico. When we had gone a short ways, the train was held up for an hour. I was terrified, not knowing the reason for the delay, but soon a company of Mexican officials on horseback rode up and boarded the train. When we arrived at Colonia Dublan, all the women and children in town boarded the train. They came from other colonies also. There were a few men aboard to take care of the wants and needs of the group. Wilford Farnsworth had charge of our group. We were on our way to the good old USA.

We had to stay in Ciudad Juarez overnight because we had arrived at the customs too late to go through that night. We went on to El Paso the next morning, where the city had quarters all ready for us to move into, with a high board fence all around. It was fixed up with toilets, showers, and a building with cooking facilities and a dining room. There we stayed until the people could be sent to various parts of the country to their friends and families. The Church paid the fares of its members to any part of the country where they wanted to go. They also paid all expenses of board and lodging until we could get work or take passage elsewhere.

After the women and children got out of Mexico, the men had to fight their way out. They rode horseback down through Colonia Diaz and out through Nogales, then joined their families in El Paso. Willard came out in one of the freight trains in a barrel loaded with flour. He said that when he left, there was nothing left on the shelves of the store. The Mexicans had cleaned them out, lock, stock, and barrel. I remember one day, Uncle Harold tried three times to get to the bank one block away with some money, and he was stopped and robbed by Mexicans each time. This was while we were at Pearson.

Willard got work in El Paso, so we stayed there for a while. Rex was born there on September 2, 1912. The next spring we moved to Clifton, Arizona, where Willard worked in a store for a mining company. In August of that year, we moved to Bountiful, Utah, where all of the Call clan had settled. En route I stopped off at Thatcher to visit Aunt Lavina Wood and family and at Mesa to visit my Uncle Cash and family, also Aunt Dora Openshaw and Grandma and Grandpa Brimhall. While at Clifton, "A" had the measles. I was so anxious for Rex to take them, but the little dickens didn't. We arrived in Bountiful in August, and Rex was a year old the next month. Willard went on the road selling wholesale groceries to the stores with his dad. That didn't last long, and he went to work for Dinwoody Furniture Store in Salt Lake City, delivering.

While at Bountiful, just before Elaine was born, Rex was run over by the old Bamberger electric train that ran between Salt Lake City and Ogden. The house we were living in belonged to John Rampton, and the yard was enclosed by a high fence, with a gate opening onto the street. We kept the gate locked to keep the boys in the yard. One day when one of Willard's brothers came in, leaving the gate open, Rex, then 18 months old, got out and got onto the railroad tracks that ran in front of our house. He had on Augustine's long black coat, and he tripped on the trailing end. The motorman thought it was a large black dog on the track and honked his horn, trying to scare him off. The train passed completely over him. He was lying close enough to the rail that the end of his sleeve and the front of his coat were chewed. His face and the side of his head were burned, and he suffered from electric shock. He vomited all night, but was soon back to normal. A doctor was rushed out from Salt Lake City, and one from Bountiful. In a few days we took him into Salt Lake City to a doctor, and they all pronounced him all right.

Elaine was born in Bountiful September 26, 1914. Sister Holbrook, who had a maternity home, took care of me. When Elaine was a few days old, Willard went to Ophir, Utah, to work. I was left behind to do all of the packing, and finally arrived at Ophir with the three little kiddies to find that it was a filthy little mining town. We stayed at a hotel for a week or ten days before finding a place to live. "A" took a bad cold, and we were afraid that he had pneumonia. I spent a very unhappy two years there. There were no people with my standards to associate with, except a family by the name of Baird, so I was lonely and stayed home without any diversion or social life.

When Elaine was one year old, I took the three children to Redmesa, Colorado, to visit my family, bringing Josephine, my sister, back with me. Her husband Willis was working in Montrose, Colorado, so we stopped off there overnight to visit with him. She went on with me, and Willis followed in a few days.

When Rex was five years old, he had another episode that added more gray hairs to my brow. I had sent him to the store to do some shopping for me, as Mack was just a little more than a week old. About half an hour later I was shocked when I saw Rex riding the bumper of a car going down the bumpy street, hanging on for dear life. He didn't get off until the car stopped at the ball park a considerable distance down the road.

The summer before we left Ophir, Augustine had gone to Redmesa to stay the summer with my people. He was eight years old in August and was baptized by my father, William Albert Walker, in the La Plata River in Colorado.

I believe that I disliked Ophir more than any other town I ever lived in. The environment was so terrible. When we left there in 1918 to go to Bremerton, Washington, I was very happy. I was in poor health, low in spirits, and weighed only 118 pounds. My normal weight was 136. As usual, Willard went ahead to Bremerton, leaving me to do all of the packing and caring for our small children. Fortunately, my sister Josephine, who was living in Salt Lake City, went with me. Her husband, Willis Taylor, was overseas in the Army. We arrived in Bremerton in the late summer of 1918. Harold Call and his wife Beatrice and their two small children had come ahead of us. Willard bought a three-room house, and we added a sleeping porch on the back. Uncle Harold bought the adjoining lot and erected a three-room house on it. They stayed only a year, and we bought their place from them. The area where we lived was called Charleston, being just a short was from Bremerton. It was here that Dorothea was born February 11, 1921. The address was 116 Olympic.

Bill Taylor returned from Europe in the latter part of this same year. He and Willard both worked in the Navy Yard in Bremerton. During the flu epidemic of 1920, I almost lost my life and had a miscarriage. Later on, Willard went to work for a grocery store, and we rented out our home in Charleston and moved to Bremerton on Park Avenue.

It was in our Park Avenue home that my twins, Harold Rey and Frank, were born. Harold had dark hair, and Frank was blond. I almost lost my life again. Our doctor was out of town, and I had to call in another one to take care of me. I should have been in the hospital having the best of care, as the babies were six weeks premature. [Frank died the second day.] Harold cried day and night for weeks. Later on, we found that he was tongue-tied and wasn't getting enough nourishment. Josephine was with me, and that summer Mother came to visit us. She was a great help with the baby.

Willard quit the store and went to work for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Finally, we were transferred to Everett, and he was made assistant manager of the Everett office. Again, I was left behind to pack. We arrived in Everett in October 1923. Willard had rented an old house on 21st and Broadway. It was a dirty mess, and I had this to clean up as well as take care of my small family. Harold was only six months old, and I had to dry all of my clothes indoors by the coal stove, as there was no basement.

In 1926 we bought a seven-room home at 1906 Lombard. It was a nice home, and we could have been comfortable and happy with our little family. I was insistent that the three oldest ones have music lessons—Elaine on the piano, Augustine and the violin, and Rex on the trumpet. I sewed clothing for all of the children, making even the boys' shirts, and also Willard's. We didn't have many of the comforts of life, though Willard made good money for the times. We attended a little branch of the Church, and when Harold was three years old, I was put in as the president of the Primary, the first Primary president in that branch. I had already been holding a neighborhood Primary in my home.

Augustine, Rex, Elaine, and Mack graduated from Everett High School, all being good students. Elaine worked at Rumbaugh's Department Store after school, and after graduation she was put on full time. Rex played with a little band on the ship USS Alexandria, which traveled along the coast of Mexico and back to Seattle. Augustine went to Provo and stayed with my sister Ethel while attending BYU. He worked for his tuition, and Ethel carried him for his board and room until graduation and his first job.

Willard didn't stay with Metropolitan Life. While the kids were still in high school, he opened up an office of his own with the Northern Life Insurance Company. Because of outside interests, his efforts as a business executive failed, and most of our support money came from money earned by Rex and Elaine. He finally closed his office and went to work for a construction company in Oregon. I received a civil divorce from him in Everett, with Rex paying for it. I don't believe I could have kept my sanity if it hadn't been for Rex and Elaine. Finally "A" came home and went to the CCC Camp to help provide for our wants, but I persuaded him to go back to Provo and finish his schooling. This was during the depression, and he couldn't get work anyway.

Rex was working in Seattle and persuaded me to move there with my family on June 16, 1936, and we bought a home by Woodland Park there. While I was working at Boeing Aircraft in 1943-44, I finished paying for the balance on our home. Elaine got work at the Bon Marche in Seattle, and we were very happy in our little home. We enjoyed staying home evenings, playing games and singing songs around the piano. We usually had company on Sundays—other young people and missionaries. The children were busy in the Church and had many good friends. Not all of their friends were members of the Church, but they were all nice clean boys and girls. Those were the happiest days of my life, when my young people were all grown and at home. Elaine filled a 20-month mission to California while we were living in Seattle.

On December 7, 1941, World War II broke out, and all of my sons enlisted—Rex and Harold in the Navy, Mack in the Air Force, and "A" in the Army. They were all married except Harold—Rex to Louise Shippee, Mack to Jewel Gregory, and Augustine to Mildred Stewart. When Harold left in 1943, I went to work for Boeing Aircraft as an electrician. The good Lord watched over all of us, and my sons returned home safely.

In October of 1946 Harold was called on a mission to the Central States. The bishop also recommended that I fulfill a mission, and two weeks after Harold left, I followed. Renting my home to support me, I arrived in the Mission Home November 4, 1946, and soon was in the Western States Mission, being gone for 22 months.

My two daughters had married during the war—Elaine to Nyal Flanders in the Salt Lake Temple and Dorothea to Clain Gessel in the Logan Temple. Harold attended BYU after returning from his mission and met his future wife there. He married Carma Hall on September 7, 1950, in the Saint George Temple. Harold finished his schooling at the UAC in Cedar City, Utah, graduating in education. Rex and Mack both went to the University of Washington after the war, Mack majoring in law and Rex getting his master's degree in business administration. Upon graduation, Rex obtained a job as an assistant professor at Ohio State University, which afforded him the chance to work on his Ph.D. He taught two years at Omaha, Nebraska, in order that he might obtain material from the packing houses for his doctor's dissertation. He obtained his Ph.D. in March 1955, and I was there for the event. He then accepted a professorship at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Dorothea also attended the University of Washington for more than three years.

My Church activities, at least some of them: When I was 16 and lived in Fruitland, New Mexico, I was secretary in the young ladies Mutual. I was president of the Primary at Redmesa, Colorado. I have taught in the Sunday school and in the Mutual at various times. I was Primary president in Everett and also secretary and then first counselor in the Relief Society and president of the University Ward Relief Society in Seattle. I served as a missionary in the Western States Mission, where I worked in the Primaries and Relief Societies along with my other missionary work. I was the first Relief Society president of the 5th Ward in Seattle and was called on a stake mission in the Seattle Stake on December 5, 1953, and released December 16, 1955. I served two years and had 24 converts. After my release, I taught the theology class in the Relief Society, the subject being the Book of Mormon. Again I was asked to go back to stake missionary work, which I enjoyed very much. After moving to Mesa, I did temple work in the Mesa Temple.

[Written about November 1971]