

ABRAM GOLDEN CONOVER JR.

ABRAM GOLDEN JR. was born on the 24th of July, 1858 in Provo, Utah. He was the first of 9 children born to Ann (Owen) and Abram Golden Conover, Sr. This baby was born just 11 years to the day after his mother's father, Seeley W. Owen, first came into the Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young and the first company of Mormon Pioneers, in 1847. Just 22 days after arriving in the Valley, he returned to Winter Quarters. Seeley's wife, Lydia Ann, had died in Winter Quarters, Nebrasks, October 3rd, 1846. Her only child, Ann, was eight years old. In the spring of 1848, Seeley left with Brigham Young for Salt Lake. He was in Heber C. Kimball's Company, and arrived at the Valley that summer. In 1855, Seeley and Ann settled in Provo, where he built a home on 1st West near 1st North. Ann later met Abram they were married Feb. 26, 1857.

Their new baby, Abram Jr., would never know either of his grandmothers, for his father's mother, Eveline B. Golden had also died in Winter Quarters on the 11th of Nov., 1847. She left her husband, Peter Wilson, with 10 children from baby Eveline who was not quite 18 months old, to Abram Sr. who was then just 17. The oldest son, Aaron Houghton, was 19 but had left for the Valley earlier in 1847. In 1848 the rest of the family sadly left without their dear and much-needed mother and came into the Valley later that summer. They first settled on Mill Creek just south and east of the City of Salt Lake. Hought was married on January 1st, 1848 so Abram Sr., age 19, was now the oldest child with the family. His father, Peter Wilson, was called to help colonize Provo, so the following year, the family left Salt Lake to settle in Provo.

Peter Wilson re-married on November 10th, 1850, and started another family. Abram Sr. then decided to build a home for himself and his brothers and sisters. Along with plenty of help from his father and skilled laborers, they built a large brick house at 590 West 3rd South. It had four large bedrooms upstairs, each with a fireplace. On the main floor was a parlor and large dining room with fireplaces. There was a kitchen large enough for all the family to eat in, a dressing room, and a place for the loom and spinning wheel. It had paneling, and wood floors, with built-in bookcases, cupboards and closets.

It was into this bustling home that Abe Jr. was born, and as his aunts and uncles married and moved out, they were replaced by his own eight brothers and sisters: Lydia Ann, 1859, Alta Eveline, 1862, Seeley Francis, 1864, Wilburn Wallace, 1867, Don Wilson, 1872, Lois Orena, 1874, Alpheus, 1876 and Hugh, 1879. Starting with Abe Jr., the "W" in Conover was dropped, and from that generation on, the name became Conover.

As the oldest child, Abe Jr., had to assume more and more responsibility, for his father who was a Captain in the Militia, was away a much of the time fighting the Indian uprisings. Abram Sr. had also been an official Indian interpreter, and was always striving to bring peace between them and the settlers. Indians often camped at the lower end of this home where he fed them, and their ponies. One spring, about thirty-six were camped there.

All the Conovers were devout members of the Church, and Abram Sr. served on the Utah Stake High Council. Bishop James Loveless was a surveyor, and Abram Sr. was one of his assistants. When work on the farm permitted, young Abe would work with his father in building many of the roads in the area. The Conover home was just across the street from the 2nd Ward, and this home was a gathering place for the young people. Many activities were held in Pioneer Park, which was only a block away, so it was inevitable that Abe began to notice Bishop Loveless's daughter, Elizabeth. She was a fun-loving girl, who was 3 years younger than he, and they soon became attracted to each other.

The young people loved to celebrate any occasion, and on the 4th of July, the City of Provo would start the day with a 13-gun artillery salute in honor of the original 13 colonies. The parade began at 8 a.m. and was led by a color guard, with Captain Abram Golden Conover of the Cavalry, carrying the flag. His unit followed in closed formation. Next came the brass band that could be heard a mile away. Dignitaries, including Peter Wilson Conover and James Washington Loveless followed, some on horseback, some in buggies and others in wagons that were gaily decorated. A special carriage, decked out in red, white and blue bunting, carried a church choir that sang along the way to the Bowery, where there was a program. In the afternoon, picnic lunches would be eaten and the young people enjoyed two hours of dancing. Again at sunset, the artillery was fired and the flag lowered. At night, there were balls and dancing for adults. It was an enthusiastic day, with everyone pledging their allegiance to the United States of America, although Utah was still a territory, and far from being a state.

In 1879, Abe and Elizabeth realized they were in love. He felt it was time for them to begin building a life of their own, and she happily agreed. With the blessings of their parents, they received their endowments and were married in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, December 4, 1879. Elizabeth's half-sister Ellen, and Ephriam Homer, also received their endowments and were married on the same day. Both young couples stayed in Provo through the rest of the winter, and Abram continued working for his father. Their first baby was born to Abe and Liz on the 30th of August, 1880. They named their petite little dark-haired girl Ann Matilda, in honor of her two grandmothers.

Abram Sr. wanted to give his son a start in cattle and a piece of land for a farm on the Provo bench, but the pioneering spirit still burned strong in his oldest son. His Conover grandparents had been steadily moving west since they had first landed in America in 1630. Abe learned that Brigham Young was calling for settlers to colonize the Castle Valley area in Emery County, some 145 miles south-east. He was young and hopeful, filled with dreams of homesteading his own home and farm. After the birth of his baby daughter, Abe and Eph rode down and looked at the area. They decided that Ferron offered the best grazing and farming, so the decision was made to take their wives and begin their trek south, early the next spring.

Elizabeth and Ellen did not want to leave their home and family for a lonely place so far away. They loved the bustling little city of Provo with its abundant farms, stores and other conveniences, but their husbands were confident and determined so the two young women went about through the next winter sewing, quilting, drying fruits and vegetables, and made preparations along with their husbands, for the great adventure that lay ahead.

In early spring of 1881, Abe and Eph provided themselves with guns, horses and a wagon where tools, seeds, dishes, cooking utensils, bedding and provisions for at least a year were carefully placed. Abe and Liz had a small pig, and a milk cow which trailed along on a rope tied to the back of the wagon. When everything was finally packed and ready to go, Liz placed her little concertina in a box on top of the load where she could easily reach it. Then all too soon it was time to say their tearful good-bys.

Elizabeth held her baby close as they passed through the town taking long last looks at the Church, their old school house and even the graveyard. There were so many places made dear by their cherished association with loved ones, most of whom they were rarely to see for the remainder of their lives.

Her eyes looked back,
The past was gone,
Within her soul she wept.
The road seemed hard,
Deep shadows fell,
Her gentle baby slept.

His course was set,
The sun came up,
His heart and will were strong.
"Have faith," he said,
"We're going home,
The place where we belong".

The two wagons groaned slowly south, through Manti, and on to Salina where they turned east. The men would wake at dawn, build a fire, milk and care for their livestock, while the women cooked the breakfast. On the trip down, they had luxuries like bacon, ham, eggs, and bread, that they would not have again for a long time. They did have fresh milk each day and even the pig got her share. After eating, they would jolt along till around noon when the animals would be watered and then graze or forage for food while the little group ate lunch. After a short rest, they moved along till early evening when they would stop to make camp.

Going through Salina Canyon there were many treacherous places where one of the men and his team would have to help hold back the other's wagon. After making it through the Canyon and around to the other side of the mountains, they turned north for another day's ride to Ferron; so named for a French surveyor, A. D. Ferron. He had been sent in the early 1870's to divide the valley into sections, with a view to settlement. After a trip of 10 or 12 days, they came to their new home. The little settlement sat below the western slope of a range of grey, flat-topped mountains, with snowy, forested peaks showing in back. Stretching far out to the east was the beautiful San Rafael Swell area with its unusual formations of tinted peaks, buttes and pinnacles. One special area would come to be known as the Sinbad Desert.

On their arrival, the weary little group saw a few crude shelters, and people living in dugouts along Ferron Creek. The settlers had come in 1879 & 80, and welcomed the two young families warmly. The first thing the men did was to find logs along the creek that had been washed down by the floods, to build a dug-out. All the dug-outs faced south, with the Creek running in front. The men dug into the creek bank and walled up the front and sides with logs, which were then chinked with mud. There was a crude door, but no windows. The empty grub boxes served as tables, but they had to make beds and 3-legged stools out of logs. They had no stoves, but did their cooking over a campfire with frying pans and dutch ovens. The primitive accommodations were very hard on the two young women as they had been raised in fastidious homes.

Next came the hard job of clearing their land, and digging irrigation ditches for water, so they could plant their crops. Many of the settlers there were new immigrants from all over the world, and for some of them, this was their first home. Their differences became assets, and their sharing made a closeness that is only found in small communities. Their common bond was the Mormon Church, and soon, these people came to depend on each other in good times and bad, through births and deaths.

Floods occurred quite frequently in the spring and late summer. It was 1882, and Elizabeth was expecting her second child. She had the baby clothes ready and in a box under the bed. When the first spring flood came, she sat on a table with little Ann and watched the box come floating out on the muddy water. A few weeks later, the valley was covered with green worms which clogged the furrows. No one knew what they were or where they came from, but one day they just disappeared. Many times the young couples were hungry and discouraged, but were determined to "stick it out".

On April 15th, 1882, little blonde Alta Jennette was born. She was named after Abe's sister, Alta Eveline. Life became even more difficult with a new baby in the cold, damp dugout so Abe became the first to clear a space north of the creek, on higher ground, with its thorned plants, ground hogs and lizards. It did offer a good foundation for the house that Abe built that summer. One by one, the settlers cleared the prickly pears and greasewood from their plots, and the building of the town began in earnest.

Word came that Liz's little sister, Hylette Maude, had died on May 7, 1888. A rough road had just gone through to Price, so Abe and Liz took the two babies and left for Provo. While there, they loaded their wagon with some much needed supplies: flour, clothing and tools as well as window glass and other items to finish the house. After a short visit, they left to return to Ferron. The road over Soldier Summit and down Price Canyon was rough and their wagon broke down. They left it in Price for repairs and rode the rest of the way home on the big, sweaty work horses, each carrying a baby. It was hot and dusty as they plodded along throughout the long day. Elizabeth said they were so galled they could hardly walk, and ate their meals standing by the mantle for some time.

When Abe was building their house, he had to go fairly high on the mountain to get logs that were suitable. It was hazardous work, and it soon became evident that a decent road had to be built up to the timber line. In 1882, an appropriation was requested from the County to build a good road up Ferron canyon. This was granted, and \$150.00 was received.

As soon as the snow permitted in 1883, the settlers all contributed what few tools they had and Abe supervised the building of the road. The workers were to be paid five cents a day, but ended up contributing most of their services as well. There was no powder to break up big rocks so they could be moved, so a fire was built on them to make them crumble. In cold weather, fires had to be built all along the road to thaw the ground enough to work on it. On their return trips they would haul logs and firewood. In the spring, they brought down small trees, shrubs, and wild roses to plant around their homes, as well as young pines to grow tall in the new town cemetery which had been laid out.

After a storm, the water would be muddy and had to be settled in 40-gallon barrels. A Mrs. Taylor had two barrels that she had put lye in. Liz was expecting another baby, and could not bear the grey, dingy little clothes. One night, she and Ellen decided to "borrow" some lye water. They walked two blocks and filled their small buckets, then half ran all the way home. The water slopped on their skirts and burned their legs. Their legs blistered, and every time they wore their "holy" skirts they were reminded of this lesson in honesty.

Abe was called home from "The Mountain" for the birth of his first son on the 6th of August, 1883. He was named Abram Seeley for his grandfather, Abram Sr., as well as his grandmother Ann's father, Seeley W. Owen. Abe also had a brother named Seeley Frances. Seel, as he came to be known, was the first child born in the log house. Although still relatively primitive, it was a vast improvement over the dugout, and Liz kept the windows shining. There was a large fireplace for heating and cooking, which could now be done inside.

Word was sent to the grandparents in Provo, but the mail was irregular. Sometimes it was carried by travelers, or brought in on a pack horse or mule. Small express shipments were also brought by cattlemen or whoever was coming down. Later, when the railroad was finally built over Soldier Summit to Price, all mail came from Price in a white-topped buggy every day except Sunday. About this time, the first little one-room log meeting house between Ferron and Molen was moved to the school house block in Ferron. This building had a wood floor, and was used for school as well as church. In the early years, church meetings consisted of singing and prayer, taking of the Sacrament, and testimony bearing. Announcements of interest were also made to those in attendance. Dances soon started to be held regularly, with a fiddler and Lizzie, as her friends called her, playing tunes like the lively Varsouvian or "Have You Seen My New Shoes". on her concertina.

On the 21st of February, 1885, their third daughter was born. She was named Clyda Vilate after Liz's sister, Vilate Alice. It seems they wanted to keep their family members close, in memory at least. Looking to the future, Abe chose another large homestead just across the street from the school house block. It was a full quarter of a block and the new brick church being planned, would sit in a grove of young Cottonwood trees on the quarter block just east of his homesite. Indians, gypsies and other travellers often camped there, and it came to be called "The Grove". It quickly became a gathering place for picnics and other community events.

The settlers found that the grey clay in the foothills made good brick. In 1886, a kiln was built at the mouth of the canyon, but the firing was not successful. In 1887 they used that brick for the lining, imported brick for the facing, and built a meeting house which faced east and the main road. Sunday School, Sacrament Meeting, and Mutual were held regularly, and a church choir was organized. The choir practiced once a week, and Ellen was always able to go, as she had no children. Liz's were too small to leave, so one night Liz decided that if she couldn't go, Ellen wouldn't be going to "singing school" that night, either. After dark, she sneaked across the street to her sister's house and hid behind a scrubby bush. Ellen came out and was dressed in her "sunday best". She closed the door, and was walking down the path to the street, when Elizabeth started growling.- - " Oh godie, a bear," Ellen screamed as she ran for the house.

The Meeting House was also used for socials, and often pot-luck dinners were held with dancing after. Couples brought their children, and after dinner, the benches were put around the sides. Those wanting to dance sat on the front row and children were cared for behind. The musicians played most any kind of music. Although Lizzie danced some, she loved to play her concertina. Abe was the dancer in the family and loved to "kick up his heels".

The small, one-room log house now served as the first school. The children read from what few school books were available, and slates were used for writing. The desks were hewed log benches with no back supports. There was a fireplace at one end for heat, and the fire was replenished from time to time with logs and coal that the fathers of the children would donate. Most of the Conover children learned to read and write in this humble little school. Improvements were constantly being made, however, and soon a high school was built, also.

Elizabeth craved a little excitement now and then, and loved to play harmless pranks. She resented Ellen walking past her house to the Meeting House for Mutual, which was a social activity of the church. One night, Liz lay down in a dry ditch alongside the road and covered herself with a white sheet. As Ellen picked her way along the rutty road, Liz raised up moaning and groaning. Poor Ellen was lost in a cloud of dust. The next day she said to Liz, "I know you won't believe what happened to me"--. Liz delighted in repeating funny stories about herself.

Elizabeth gave birth to her fourth baby daughter on the 2nd of February, 1887. She was named Ethel Maude. Liz had to help Abe with the farm chores, and with her large family, she always seemed to have too much work to do. Ellen had time on her hands, so the sisters really did not have too much in common anymore. Eph became discouraged, and about this time, they decided to pull up stakes and return to Provo. Abe and Liz had put down deep roots and were to stay in Ferron for the remainder of their lives.

At about this time, something happened to change the pattern of life for all the Conover children. After the harvest, the Bishop asked all the members to put their grain in a large warehouse, under his care. The wheat was to be returned as it was needed. Abe willingly complied, then toward the end of a hard winter, he ran out of flour, and wheat to grind for cereal. The storehouse was empty as the grain and flour had been given out in large quantity to others. Roads were impassable, and for some weeks his family went hungry for want of bread to stretch out their other meager supplies. Abe vowed that never again would he depend on anyone but himself. He continued to keep the 10 commandments, and lived by the Golden Rule, but seldom attended church. Their babies were blessed, and later baptized. Liz and her children attended some meetings, but most of his children and their families were largely inactive. Some became active again in later years.

On the 7th of May, 1888, Liz's father, James, died. On the 20th of August in 1888, Wilburn James was born. This second son was named for Liz's father and Abe's brother. They now had six children and little Annie was just eight years old. Abe still continued putting in time to build the road to the top of "The Mountain" with its beautiful fresh water lake that fed Ferron Creek. A large dam, 25 feet high was to be built at the lower end of this natural reservoir with an output control, so water could be kept til needed in late summer. The lake is 9,250 feet above sea level, and the 25 mile road wound up through a series of bluffs, washes, hills and ledges to the narrows, where for more than a mile, the road hugs the edge of big ledges of loose-looking rock. The road then turns and climbs through a valley, around a hair-pin curve, and up a steep dugway. On top is a clear view of Ferron and the surrounding valley, and far to the east are line after line of mountain tops in the distance.

Abe's young brother, Alpheus, died Dec. 11, 1888. There was an epidemic of diphtheria in Provo and many people caught the dread disease. In Castle Valley at that time, only simple home remedies were available: sage tea, milkweed, wormwood, mustard plasters, and Humbug oil which was used for everything from bites and bee stings to swabbing a diphtheria throat. There were a few who knew enough to set broken bones or sew up wounds. Eliza Lake Stringham moved to Molen from Manti in the 1880's and she was an excellent midwife as well as stand-by nurse for more than 20 years. She had been the midwife at the birth of Elizabeth's babies, and Liz often said that it was a wonder no one ever got blood poisoning, as Eliza's hands were always stained different colors from dying rags.

Epidemics of dread diseases came regularly and claimed many of the settlers and their children. Little 2-year old Ethel died of Whooping Cough on the 27th of April, 1889. Her grave was the first of many Conovers who would lie under the growing pines. The parents grieved, but were grateful for those that were spared.

Abe fired his own brick and after gathering flat, oval rocks for the foundation, set to work building their new home on the lot between the school and the church. There were only two rooms, but both had a fireplace - one on each end, and Liz had a small cookstove. The house faced south and had windows that slid up and down. Many of the materials had to be hauled from great distances over poor roads. Abe put many long hours of hard labor into this small home that was to shelter him and his family.

Before they moved in, Abe dug a cistern to hold their drinking water and lined it with brick. A pump with a sturdy handle was installed, and the out-house was in place some distance from the house, but there were pits to be dug, fences and corrals to be put up, and a barn, granary, chicken coop, cooling cellar, wash house and other out-buildings to be built. Liz helped where she could, and the work steadily progressed.

Their fifth daughter was born in this new home, on the 3rd of August, 1890. They named her Edna Elizabeth, for her mother. Abe continued working on the out-buildings, and planted shade and fruit trees of every kind as well as berries and currants for jam. He had a vegetable garden, and pits dug to store the harvest. Annie was almost 10, and Alta 8, so occasionally, Liz could leave the house for a short time. She loved to go to rag bees, where rags to make rugs were bought or exchanged, as well as quilting parties where a lunch would be served. Although they both worked from before dawn till after dark, their lives were a little easier. They were slowly prospering, and they were happy. As surely as there was happiness in their lives, sorrow would follow, and on September 27th 1890 Abe's father died of typhoid fever. He had lingered for months before he passed away at the age of 59.

Their first tax was only \$5.00 but Abe had to go out of town to earn the cash. He was gone 3 months, and his wife and young family had to take over all the feeding of the livestock, milking, chopping wood and other chores. Needless to say, the children had to learn to help beyond their years. Each child, in his or her own turn, learned the value of hard work and were taught lessons that would stay with them for the rest of their lives.

On Sep. 20, 1892, Abe's grandfather, Peter Wilson died, and on October 30, 1892, his third son was born. They named him Jesse Maurice. A month later, Abe went to Provo for supplies and took Liz and the younger children. She wanted to visit with her family a while, so he returned home alone. Word was taken to Abe while he and the children were at the dance, that Liz was sick and 2-year old Edna had died of diphtheria Dec. 29th 1892. He dressed as warmly as he could and rode throughout that cold night alone.

When he arrived in Price the next day, his feet and legs were covered with sleet and were nearly frozen. He had to take off his boots and rub his feet with snow to start them warming up. He stabled his horse, and caught the train which took him to Provo. Abe was afraid he might be met with even worse news, but Elizabeth was better. They buried their baby girl in Provo, and had to leave her lonely little grave and return home. Liz could see some small fingerprints there which she could never bring herself to wipe off, but they slowly wore away.

Abe got a start in cattle when he received some from his father as part payment for working for him, and he had been building up his herd. He, along with other cattlemen, ranged their cattle on The Mountain during the summer and early fall, but as winter and cold weather came, they were moved to the Sinbad desert with the Green River as their eastern border. Abe was President of the Ferron irrigation Company for six years, and during this time he was also the Town Constable. He always tried to make improvements in all that he undertook to do.

Elizabeth was constantly busy with the routine work of taking care of her home and large family. She made many of their clothes, and knit their long stockings. She carded her own wool and made quilts out of flour sacks which she bleached and colored with the dye she had made from sage brush, berries and onion skins. They made their own candles, brooms, lye, and the soap she used to wash the clothes with on the scrubbing board. She preserved fruits and vegetables, made her own bread, butter and cheese, tended her large garden and knew it was true that a woman's work is never done. When she had time to think she grieved for those she had lost - and she was much like the other women there, she had come to love.

On the 26th of May, 1895, Liz's 6th baby girl was born and they named her Erma. This sweet little baby eased their grief, and they had a productive summer with a good harvest in the fall. On Nov. 26th, 1895, Abe's mother, Ann, died of pneumonia. They took the children to Provo for the funeral. While they were there, they had a picture taken of this third little girl who's name started with an "E", for she looked a lot like her two little sisters who had died. The following summer, Liz was expecting her 10th child, but at about five months she went into labor and there was a miscarriage. She wrapped the little form and put it in a shoe box which Abe buried in the orchard.

On the 4th of January, 1896, Utah was made a State. The settlers had brought their traditions with them, and now celebrated the 4th of July with more enthusiasm than ever.

On the 30th of September in 1897, their baby, their 2-year old Erma, died of Whooping Cough. They were heart-broken as she was buried in the little cemetery at the side of Ethel. Again they grieved as they continued on with their work and their lives. They had a large portrait finished of Erma, in loving remembrance of her and her two small sisters.

deadly flu epidemic Ferron 1920

On May 15, 1898, Liz had her fourth baby boy. They named him Challmer Glen. He was the largest baby she had delivered, and the birth was difficult. Annie, Alta and Clyda each had assigned tasks to do and were a lot of help to their mother. They accompanied her to Relief Society, and one time Liz was on the program where she not only played her concertina, but sang as well. Her voice was slightly flat and a little off key, so the girls may have been a somewhat embarrassed. They told their mother that, as she was singing, they saw people nudging each other. At the next meeting Liz stood up and said "I understand there has been some nudging going on, will they please stand up?" Of course no one did.

Wilburn's oldest daughter, Ada, says that Liz was known as a compassionate soul, always giving generously of herself and her means. Sick people would send for her instead of the doctor. Even if her own heart was breaking, it seemed her little bucket of chicken soup and her ^{concertina} would always cheer them up. Sometimes she played her small "squeeze-box" and sang. Many times she recounted humorous stories, as she was known for her keen wit and quick sense of humor. She often walked miles to arrive at her destination, but any effort it took was worth it to aid a sick or grieving friend. Maurine, oldest daughter of Jess, remembers Liz's special treat. At the birth of a baby, Liz would make her sweet soup, with large round tapioca cooked in red currant juice and sugar, seasoned with cinnamon, and full of fruit or fresh berries.

Now that they were older, Seel and Wilburn did a large share of the chores, and - helped their father on the farm. They rode well and helped with chores and the cattle. All the children had to help, even if it was only to bring in a pan of "chips", bits of wood that flew off as the cedar logs were chopped.

Abe received a modest inheritance after the death of his parents, and now he decided to increase the size of his home. He literally raised the roof about 16 inches along the back of the house, and extended it out 12 feet. He then built one small bed-room for himself and Liz on the west, and another one that was long enough to hold two double beds. This is where the girls and young children would sleep. The older boys slept on mattresses in the loft of the granary. Abe added a hip roof on the east end and built a kitchen with a big pantry, extending it out in front 8 feet. This formed two porches, a long one across the length of the house in front, and a square one in back which had a door into the kitchen, as well as the long bedroom. The bedrooms, as well as the kitchen and two porches, were down one step from the original house so the ceilings would be high enough.

A pipe was run to the kitchen sink, so, at last, they had a cold water tap inside. Liz had a big new black coal range with a water reservoir on the side, and it had a good oven, and two warming ovens above. Each new convenience made their lives a little easier, and over the years they gradually added more of the comforts they richly deserved. They now came to the end of an eventful century, and wondered what the future would bring.

1920 - deadly epidemic of H1N1
file

Abe and his Liz marveled at the changes in their lives, and this new century would see them progress even further from their humble start nineteen years ago. From candles, to coal oil and kerosene lights, to electricity. They thought of the dug-out, their first home, and were grateful they had come so far. Abe went into business with Sam Singleton in the Co-Op (general merchandise) store, which was re-named Singleton and Conover. Jess was able to do some of the chores at home now, and helped care for his younger brother, Chall. Both Annie and Alta had sweethearts, and pretty 15-year old Clyda, who pronounced her name without the "a", was starting to attract attention from the young men in the area. Elizabeth again realized that she was to have another baby.

Another little girl was born on July 15, 1900, and they named her Rita Faun. They were happy, but Liz was filled with dread as she thought of her last three baby girls. Will I be allowed to raise her, she asked herself, and prayed with all her soul that she would. Little Annie married tall, dark haired John Funk, from Manti, on the 7th of March, 1901. On December 17, 1901, Alta and Mark Tuttle, of Orangeville, were married in her parents' home. According to their daughter, Irene, "guests were served a sumptuous dinner". Seel and his sweetheart, Ethel Jensen, were married on the 13th of May, 1902. She was from Ferron, and was known to be a good cook. Changes were coming almost too fast.

Alta gave birth to a baby boy in 1902, but he died after only two weeks of life, from a tragic overdose of sedative given to him by a "live-in" who was helping till Alta recovered. Seel had a baby boy and he was healthy and happy. Tragedy seemed to stalk Abe and Liz when their little girls got to be two years old. When Rita was just that age, she got meningitis. Rita's parents despaired of her life, but prayed for her to live. Liz paced up and down on the front porch, and dedicated this baby to the Lord. They were overjoyed when their last small girl slowly began to recover.

On the 26th of July, 1903, Liz gave birth to her 12th, and last child, their 5th son. He was named Reid Golden, in honor of Abe's other grandmother that had died in Winter Quarters, Eveline B. Golden. Elizabeth was 42 years old, and had been bearing children for 23 years, with only a mid-wife in attendance. As difficult as it had been, she said that the years spent raising her children were the most happy ones. She was now ready for her married children to have their own babies, which she could love.

In 1904, the Presbyterian Mission built a large Church and opened a School. The teachers came from New York, and Abe was quite impressed. Chall, Rita and Reid all attended that school. In this same year, a young doctor, by the name of Bruce Easley, came into town. He was from Indiana, and had been educated in Europe. He and Clyda met and were married a year later, on the 7th of April, 1905. He made Ferron his home, and remained to care for the sick. He set broken bones, took out tonsils and did other minor surgery. He delivered most of the babies, gave free advise, and made house calls for almost 50 years.

He talked in a lot of funerals

Abe had a philosophy that if each father gave his sons a start in life, his daughters would be taken care of by their husbands. As each of his sons married, Abe gave him a piece of farmland and a start in Cattle, for they had all worked hard at home. His grown sons took much of the burden of hard work from their father, especially during peak times of haying and harvest. They took turns going out to the fields at all hours to irrigate when they had a water turn. Each had his own brand, so they ran their cattle together and shared the work of herding, branding and the long dusty cattle drives. Abe had been a strict disciplinarian, and his boys knew how to work. He was not a tall man, but he wore a high-crowned cowboy hat and always stood that way.

Elizabeth's life was becoming easier, also. Her married children started having the babies, and Reid was now old enough to be cared for by the older children. She had a milk separator that separated the cream from the milk so she no longer had to set the milk in pans till the cream came to the top. Her family still loved to smear a slice of her bread with the thick cream and sprinkle it with cinnamon and sugar. They had two stores in town, where they could buy most of the things they needed, but the whole family loved the wonderful mail-order catalogs. The arrival of a new Sears & Roebuck catalog was always an event, with everyone crowding around to pick out what they wanted most. The life of the old catalog did double duty, for it would be hung in the out-house where one by one, the pages disappeared.

Another of the terrible epidemics came to Ferron, and 6-year old Rita was desperately ill with Typhoid Fever. After she was treated by the Doctor, she slowly got better. When Rita was well again, Abe went to the World's Fair. Liz felt she could not leave the children, so he went without her. Liz said that he was wearing high-heeled boots and his hat was tipped to one side as he left her home, stirring gravy. Stir a lot of gravy, she did, for early every morning, Abe first built up the fire in the big stove, then he roused the boys out of bed so they could all milk and do the chores, while Liz cooked the breakfast. She often fried thick slices of their home-cured ham, and then made a rich milk gravy in the drippings. She either made hot biscuits, or the men crumbled slices of her bread and covered them with gravy, The whole family did love her "white eyed" country gravy.

Many of the young people met at the dances held in the small towns. Ferron and Castle Dale held them often, and people would come 30 or 40 miles from the surrounding towns to attend. Wilburn met a sweet young woman from Price, Blanche Stoker, and they were married the 3rd of May, 1907. Wilburn was a lot like his mother and was always saying or doing humorous things. Once, he got all dressed up in his wife's clothes and put on a big hat. He came mincing down the street in front of his parents' home just at dusk. They were sitting on the front porch in their rocking chairs. As he got in front of them, he gave a little nod and in a high voice said a quick "good evening". Liz turned to Abe and asked "Now who's that silly fool?" "Danged if I know" answered her husband.

Liz's mother, Matilda died the 7th of March, 1909, and she was the last of their sturdy pioneer parents to go. In 1912 Jess married a local girl with flashing dark eyes, lone Stevens. Abe and Liz were now able to leave Ferron occasionally, and knew their "boys" would care for things at home. In 1915, they both went to the World's Fair and had their picture taken in an automobile. The following year, Abe bought an automobile for himself and his family, and a piano for Rita. Electricity, radio and a telephone also came into their lives. Abe would soon be 60 years old and he was ready to enjoy life at its fullest.

Alta had moved to Salt Lake with Mark and her family and Rita started going up to stay with them part of the time. Abe and Liz still maintained an active farm and home, especially at planting and harvest time. They wasted nothing, and when they had some over-ripe fruit, Abe would put it in a crock, add sugar and let it ferment. They ended up with a few bottles of tasty fruit brandy which they did use as medicine. At times though,, a small bottle might be passed around at the end of a long hard trail ride to keep the weary men going. Abe worked hard, and there were times he felt he deserved to go out and "kick up his heels". The L.D.S. Church did not particularly stress the "Word of Wisdom" in those early days, so alcohol was used, very sparingly. Coffee had been considered a staple when crossing the plains, and was still used by most of the settlers, at that time.

Abe could see that the level of brandy seemed to be going down awfully fast. He wondered if Liz had taken up drinking. Liz didn't use it, but she had noticed that Ann's husband, John Funk, had been hanging around the kitchen a lot. The brandy was kept in the very bottom of a tall cupboard by the back door of the kitchen. It held baking supplies and spices, bottles of vanilla and lemon extract, etc.. She also kept a bottle of iodine that she had to take for her goiter. The bottle was quite similar to one that held the brandy. She emptied the iodine in another bottle, then filled the original one part way with water. She then added just enough iodine to give it a dark amber color and a very bitter taste. One day she came in from gathering the eggs and found John. He was gagging, and the bottle was in his hand. "John" she screamed, "that's the iodine for my goiter - more than a few drops is poison!" "Poison - I've been poisoned" he yelled. Liz told him that strong black coffee would neutralize the iodine, and his hands shook as he downed several cups. "Have another cup, John," she said, "remember it takes poison to kill poison." John ambled along the ditch bank on his way home, and Liz could hear him gagging and retching till he reached the top of the hill. John never saw much humor in the situation at all, but the rest of the family just "screamed" every time the story was repeated.

Chall and Esther Carlson were married May 15, 1898. She was a gentle girl from Salina who was a friend of his sister, Rita. They moved less than two blocks away. Now all the married children of Abe & Liz lived within 2 to 4 blocks of their parents. Alta and her family lived in Salt Lake.

Wilburn was ambitious, he was hauling freight for the Co-Op and had nice little farm and three growing children. A deadly epidemic of Influenza hit Ferron, and fun-loving Wilburn passed away on the 7th of February, 1920. His death left another terrible void. It was difficult for his little wife, Blanch, and her young children trying to take care of all the work on a farm. She was acquainted with a kind man, LaMar Jensen, whose wife and children had died from the same disease. He was the brother of Seel's wife, Ethel. They decided to marry and help each other through their double tragedy. LaMar and Blanche were married on June 14, 1920. They later had two boys, Lee and Ralph whom the family loved dearly. Just one month after Wilburn's death, the little meeting house in the grove burned to the ground. 1920

Rita had met a handsome, brown eyed young man in Salt Lake and she and Joseph S. Fisher were married February 26, 1921, in Castle Dale. Joe and Rita visited Ferron often, and Joe helped Abe tear out the pantry and put in a bathroom. They installed a tub, wash basin and toilet. They added a water heater and ran hot water to the sink. Abe and Liz also got a new electric refrigerator with the round motor on the top. Liz had a washing machine, and Rita gave her mother her first electric iron. Liz had almost every modern convenience now, but she never would part with her big black coal range which she used to the end of her life.

Reid married Louise Pettey of Emery July 23, 1924. She was young and petite. They moved 2 blocks east of Reid's parents home. The family visited often and stayed close. All their sons had wives who were good cooks and housekeepers. Their married daughters were a lot like their mother, cooking, cleaning, scouring and rinsing. Most of the children inherited Abe's common sense and Liz's sense of humor.

Rita and Joe built a new home just one block from Alta. They had one little girl, Faun Elizabeth, who was three, and were expecting their second child. Abe and Liz began coming to Salt Lake to spend part of the winter with Rita. Sometimes they came before Thanksgiving and did not return to Ferron till February. Rita enjoyed her parents and they often talked about early days and old times. One winter, things must have become a little dull, for one afternoon Rita was alarmed by some loud moaning coming from the living room. She rushed in to find Liz on the floor. Her arms were flung out and her mouth was pulled to one side as she muttered "Stroke - -stroke". Rita screamed "dad!" He came rushing in and looked at his muttering wife. He gave her a gentle push with his foot and said "oh for hell's sake, Liz - get up", and left the room. As the "stroke" victim sat up, there was a small sweater neatly folded into a little pillow that had been under her head.

Another time, Liz pulled much the same trick and lay groaning loudly at the bottom of the basement stairs. Rita went down "two steps at a time" and feared the worst, but there was another little article of clothing under her mother's head. Abe and Liz were fun to be around, and told lots of stories about the "early days".

Deadly epidemic of influenza hit Ferron in 1920

In 1929, a new structure was begun on the hill just north of the little meeting house that had burned. Much of the labor was donated. The building would serve as the Ferron L.D.S. Chapel and a was used as a community center as well. In 1933, this building also burned, but the foundation and walls were sound so a new and even nicer one was soon built. In this last building, the stage at one end of the assembly hall was elevated, and it was from there that the town band, including Lizzie, played on.

Abram and Elizabeth celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary Wednesday, December 4, 1929. All their eight children were there as well as 31 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. The new Chapel had not been completed, so the reception was held in the Presbyterian Church in Ferron. One hundred close friends and members of the family were served at a banquet. Elizabeth's half-sister, Ellen came from Provo. She had lost her husband, Eph some time before. According to the article in the paper, "Dancing followed in the auditorium where about 500 were present. Toasts were given at the banquet by stake, ward, town and county officials who referred to the trials and hardships through which the couple had gone to start the building up of Emery County."

In the summer of 1934, Rita took Abe and Liz to the "Old Folks Day" celebration in Liberty Park in Salt Lake. Rita's daughter, Bonnie, remembers seeing her grandmother on the stage singing as Rita accompanied her on the piano. A nice picture and article appeared in the Salt Lake paper. "Mrs. A. G. Conover, 73, composed a song for the old folks and is here seen singing it to them." A nice lunch was served, and Abe & Liz enjoyed the day very much.

On July 29, 1936, Alta and Rita got word that their mother had been missing since early morning. The whole town had searched every where, but there was no sign of her. They left Salt Lake early the next morning. There had been flooding throughout the State and part of the road between Provo and Ferron was washed out. They had to go through Manti and down across Salina Canyon to reach Ferron - The route their parents had taken 55 years ago. The sky was grey, and it was pouring rain as they went into Abe's little home. Most of the family were gathered there and had hardly slept. The sheriff had called for a search posse, and some 100 men had responded. They had begun to search again that morning just as soon as it was light. Most were on horseback, and they fanned out for miles in every direction.

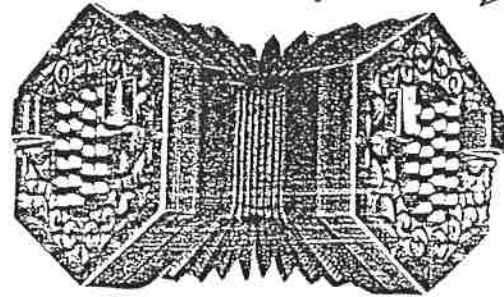
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Abe said that Liz seemed to be failing lately, and became disoriented or forgetful at times. She had a friend in Emery who had died and the funeral was to be held that day. Liz had awakened at one in the morning and got up. She told Abe she was worried that they would not be able to go to the funeral because of the storm. Abe had called her back to bed, then he went back to sleep. The next morning, she was not in bed and was no where in the house. He called every place she could have gone, but no one had seen her. Liz could be very determined at times, and Abe felt she may have decided she would get to the funeral, even if she had to walk.

Floods occurred with little or no warning, as the water would build up in the high mountains to the ~~east~~ and then come roaring down the gullies carrying trees, boulders and everything in its path. There had been a cloud-burst in the early morning hours and some areas had been flooded. Her body was found later that day, about 2 1/2 miles from Ferron. A flood had caught Liz and swept her into a field on the east side of the highway leading to Emery. Her body was in a dry wash and was half covered with mud and debris. She was bruised and her shoes had been pulled from her feet. When shots were heard, everyone knew she had been found.

The body was returned to her little home where she was placed on the kitchen table. Her muddy clothing was removed and her body tenderly washed by the women before being sent to the mortuary in Price. Her funeral was held in the new meeting house just up the hill north and east of her home. The service was conducted and the choir sang from the elevated stage in the assembly hall.

Her much-played ^{accordion} concertina now is still,
As peacefully, the aged figure lies,
Whose fingers had the touch of magic sound,
That lifted to the quiet, list'ning skies.

She touched so many lives while she was here,
A portion of her tunes will linger on,
In hearts of those who loved to whirl and dance
To the music of a happy old-time song.



Grandma Liz concertina

she played it a lot.

END

Abe's companion of 57 years was gone, and one of the greatest challenges of his life was that of living alone. His family all gathered around and helped, but he felt his wife's loss deeply. He came to Salt Lake and visited with Alta and Rita, but it was not the same. He was getting close to 80 and wanted to stay in his own home. Refd and his little wife, Louise moved into his father's home to care for him. When Abe was 81 years old, Joe had a large cake made which read "Happy Birthday, Father, 81 years". Rita carried it on her lap on the drive to Ferron. Most of Abe's family were there to celebrate, and his brother, Don came from Provo. Tables were set up outside and a wonderful meal was enjoyed. Old stories were exchanged, and the brothers and sisters remembered how things used to be with their mother and father.

Rita's husband, Joe, died the 4th of July, 1940. He had been ill for about 3 months, when he passed away on the day before his 42nd birthday. Abe's health had begun to fail, and in October it became evident that he was dying. Some of the family were at his bedside when he roused himself and asked little Annie (as Liz had always called her) if she could see her mother. When Ann answered "no", Abe said that Liz had been standing by the bed since the previous day. He died peacefully October 19, 1940.

After the services, the procession started down the road to the cemetery. In the distance, the pines that Abe had helped to plant stood tall and dark against the Autumn sky.