

DIXIE  
FINAL 3/6

EVA WESTOVER CONOVER

Eva Westover Conover, born in Huntington, Emery County, Utah, November 2, 1908, to George H. and Alice Ann Leonard Westover, was the middle child of seven. After attending Huntington schools from one to the third year high school, she graduated from Provo High School where she won the Elsie C. Carroll Short Story Award in 1927. After graduating from the University of Utah's School of Education, she began her teaching career in Ferron, Utah, where she met her future husband. While teaching, she became aware of the discrepancy between women's and men's wages for doing the same work, even though often the women were more qualified. "There should be a law demanding equal pay for equal work!" she declared, and this became her battle cry.

The Conovers were married in the Manti Temple in May, 1933, at the height of the "Great Depression" and moved directly to Harry's run-down ranch in Ferron Canyon where Eva still resides. Times were hard. A world-wide drought lasting two years followed by two years of floods and hail, killed all attempted crop-raising. Work was not to be found. There was no money. Eva kept reminding herself that she was pioneering as her grand and great-grandparents had. "If they could endure, I can, too!"

During this time, Eva became active in LDS church work. She taught Sunday School, Relief Society, and MIA. During the war years, she went back to school teaching, and taught grades 1 - 12 wherever she was needed.

Eva became aware soon after marriage that the town needed more social activities. She organized a group of friends into a club which met once a week. Parties with husbands resulted. Later, she organized all the women's clubs into "The Ladies Associated Clubs of Ferron". Its purpose was twofold: 1) to beautify the town and conduct a town beautification contest; and 2) to provide recreation during the summer time.

Serving lunches and dinners, holding book reviews and programs, the Ladies garnered enough money to build a tennis court. Each Saturday night a dance was held on the court where one club or another sold refreshments. With this money and the consent of LDS church authorities, a weed-grown lot in the center of town was changed into "The Church Park". The Ladies' husbands all turned out to help in this endeavor. An annual County Spring Clean-Up also resulted.

When Mr. Conover was elected president of Ferron's Lions Club, one of the civic projects was to start Little League Baseball for all towns in the county. New uniforms were needed. Eva started a theatrical group of young marrieds who put on several plays in the various towns. From this venture,

money was raised for the needed suits.

At this time, with homework, cooking, canning, gardening, and intermittent teaching, Eva's health broke. Her doctor advised ceasing public endeavors and teaching, but encouraged her to get involved in something she hadn't done before, and get away from home and meet new people. Her husband suggested "politics". They attended the next mass meeting of their chosen party. From there, they went as delegates to the County Convention where Eva was elected County Chairwoman, a post she served for eight years. She also served as a State Delegate. Here, she met several Lady Representatives and one Lady Senator, also Utah's first and only National Congresswoman, Reva Beck Bosone. All of whom encouraged Eva to run for Utah's House of Representatives. She did, and she lost. A rather expected outcome. "Who ever heard of a woman legislator?" Not from Emery County!

Four years later she ran again and won. In the House, she again sensed that "Women don't know much!" But soon it was discovered that Conover did know about agriculture, rangelands, soil conservation, and about needs of young people, education, rural communities, road construction, and about mine workers and mine safety.

In her second term, Conover was given a bill to introduce on equal rights for women. It was held back until the last day. Then a vote was taken to reduce her introduction time by half, and supporting speeches also by half. She agreed to one amendment. A "fellow" legislator took more time than she had been allowed. He started another amendment to which Conover objected. The speaker granted the man the time. Conover arose, snatched the micro-phone from her colleague, exclaiming, "Mr. Speaker, you have granted him more time than I was given, now you give him even more. I protest!" Turning to the House, she said, "Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, this is exactly what this bill is all about. Discrimination and inequality between men and women. It is being demonstrated here and now before your very eyes...!" The women in the gallery screamed and clapped. The men roared with laughter. Question on the Bill was called. The Bill passed. It had been on the floor seven times before.

In 1963, Mr. and Mrs. Conover were chosen by Utah's Farmers Union, the U.S. State Dept., and Farmers and World Affairs, Inc. to participate in the Farmer's Good Will Exchange Program in Egypt. This was the first time Egypt had accepted women (2) exchange members.

For two months the eight members traveled the length and breadth of Egypt, visiting farms (plantations), rural villages, elementary and secondary schools, their two colleges, the Ministry of Agriculture, temples

and pyramids, the Aswan dam (then under construction), crossed deserts, rode camels, sailed the Nile, and visited Governors and national figures at their beautiful plantation homes of marble. After arriving home, it was their duty to lecture throughout Utah for one year to various groups sharing the experience through slides and movies of Egypt. They traveled from Kanab to Heber, from Moab to Salt Lake City on their own expense and time.

Mrs. Conover ran again for the Legislature in 1968 and lost. She dropped out of politics because of illness in the family. Since her husband's death in May, 1976, she has devoted her time to genealogical work and writing and publishing her family histories. Her recent two-volume history of her great-grandfather and her grandmother Westover, won third place in the Western Writers Contest for the best biography of a Utah Pioneer. She is currently writing a book about Butch Cassidy, "The Legend of Castle Valley". She has had many articles published in the "Tribune", "Desert News", "The Utah Farmer", and "The Instructor".

Mrs. Conover is "going on 84 years of age" and still lives on her ranch alone. She has two daughters and one son, all college graduates. She has 11 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and one on the way.

Occasionally, she gives a Sunday School lesson, a talk or retold story in church, or is the guest speaker for the Emery County Historical Society (which she started as the Castle Valley Historical Society originally and served as the Charter President). Eva was a member of the Governor's Commission on Women.

Eva Conover is a true advocate of women, a colorful and exciting person and a wonderful example.

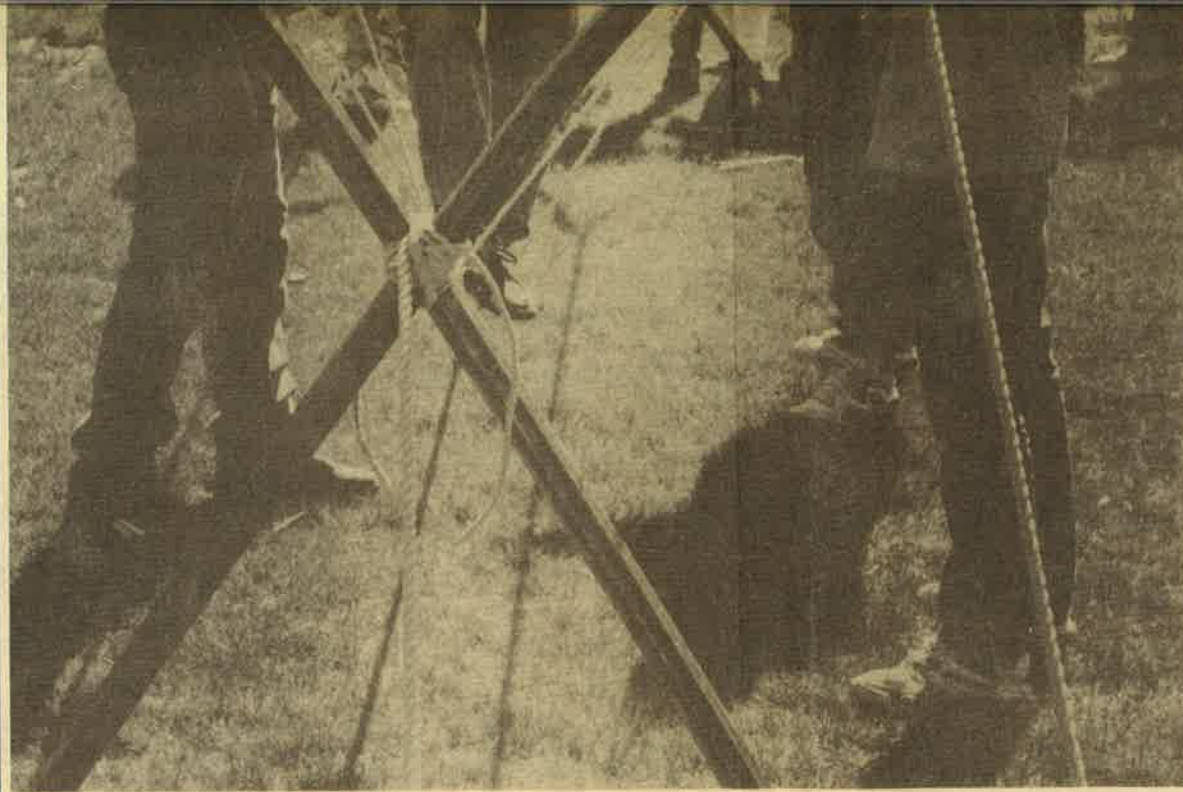
Originally written by Eva Conover and edited with her permission by Sylvia H. Nelson, a friend and admirer.

events and dances, and many other community activities.

Ferron City Councilman Parke Killpack says that construction on the Mayor's Park began approximately three years ago when the citizens of Ferron wanted to do something to "get rid of that eyesore right in the middle of town". He says they first had to go after the money to get drainage, then bought most of the block that the park is located on.

Funding for the Mayor's Park came from many different sources, says Killpack. A portion came from federal monies, and the city paid for some out of its own funds. Many citizens of the community volunteered their time and labor to the project. The little league was in charge of the fencing, the county hauled the dirt for free, Mike Riley put the sidewalk in, and the Eagle Scouts are planning on putting up a sign designed by Brandon Conover, son of Gil and Melody Conover of Ferron

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## Scout-O-Rama

The Castle Dale City Park was buzzing with activities throughout the day Saturday, May 2, as Scouts from the area hosted a Scout-O-Rama. Games, prizes, competitions and food

were all part of the day's activities. The theme of this year's program was "Scouting, the Keeper of Light." Above, Cub Scout Chris White of Pack 315, Castle Dale, competes in the rope race. Photo by Larry Davis

by tourists 13 miles west of Green River months after the actual murder had occurred. The murder weapon was believed to be a large ax handle which was found approximately 70 feet from the body. The autopsy report showed the cause of death to be multiple blows to the head with a blunt object.

Defendant Lawrence was first arrested in May of 1991, then extradited to Emery County. He was also investigated by a federal grand jury. He was believed by the state to have been the last person to see the victim alive. Pickering worked for Lawrence as a loader for a vanline company, and witnesses testified to seeing the two together the day before Pickering disappeared.

The trial began on Wednesday, April 30. Ms. Patricia Geary, Emery County attorney, began her opening statement by claiming Lawrence had murdered Pickering on or about the 17th of September 1986, dumped the victim's body near Green River, then told a string of lies to cover his

claimed Lawrence had told her that Pickering had been "drinking and yelling at women along the way" from Albuquerque to Salt Lake City so Lawrence had "thrown him out."

Ms. Geary also submitted evidence of a collect call made to Lawrence's father's home from Meadow, Utah, on the alleged date of the murder. Lawrence denied being in the area and making the call and suggested some other trucker who was looking for loaders had phoned his father's home that day.

Mr. Gil Athay, attorney for the defendant, claimed in his opening statement that the state had no single witness who could prove Lawrence was the murderer. He stated that all of the state's evidence was purely circumstantial, and that just because Lawrence was allegedly the last person to see Pickering alive did not mean he murdered him. Mr. Athay called only one witness, Mr. Lawrence.

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# Eva Conover honored for political service

By Sylvia Nelson  
Emery Historical Society

It all started with the letter deposited on Sylvia Nelson's desk by Emery County Commissioner Dixie Thompson, indicating that a two-page history of a deceased Emery County woman who had been actively involved in her community, in politics and in women's rights and voting, was to be written and submitted "within a week" to be published as part of a booklet celebrating Women's History Month.

Hurried discussions with

Dixie Swasey, Emery County Historical Society president, and Janet Petersen, secretary, and posing questions to several knowledgeable people in Emery County towns left Sylvia with no answer and only one more question.

"Does this woman have to be dead?" was the question Sylvia asked the receptionist at Olene Walker's office, which started a series of phone calls.

The next phone call was a "no" answer from Thuryle Clyde, staff member of the commission.

"Good," said Sylvia, "as we have a perfect example of the woman you are looking for who is still going strong!" She described Eva Conover of Ferron, telling the few activities and accomplishments that she knew and was set to write up the article.

The next phone call was to Eva who consented to the history but modestly expressed her concern that she wasn't sure she measured up to all those things.

Call number four that day was again from Thuryle Clyde, asking if Eva might

even consider speaking at the up-coming panel discussion on Women's Roles in Early Utah Politics.

With call five, Eva agreed to speak. The paper was written and submitted.

All this excitement sparked the desire of several ladies to go to the discussion.

On Tuesday, March 31, 1992, Eva Conover, her sister Roxie Nelson, niece Alice Ann Snyder, Janet Petersen (all of Ferron), Dixie Swasey of Castle Dale, and Sylvia Nelson of Huntington, met Eva's daughter Linda Staker,

daughter-in-law Florence Conover, granddaughter Rebecca VanSkyhawk, and Mrs. Dawna Staker at the Utah State Office Building on Capitol Hill in Salt Lake City.

Olene Walker, commission member and moderator, introduced Scott Howell, state legislator, who in his address on Utah's first woman senator, Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, happened to name-drop his grandfather, Jesse Tuttle of Castle Dale. So it seemed like "down-home time" to Eva as she rose to speak. She told Mr. Howell that Mr. Tuttle had

been a legislative colleague of hers.

Eva had prepared (as her letter had instructed her) to speak on her county. But she decided as she read the program, felt the tone of the meeting, and heard the opening speakers, that she needed to tell of her own experiences as a political figure, teacher and woman. Her ad-lib speech was so personal, fun and exciting that it was happily received by each person in the audience.

The panel of four noted Utah women holding a docto-

(Continued on Page 2A)

# COUNTRY LIVING

## An advocate of rural Utah



Eva Conover

equal work" she declared, and this became her battle cry. The Conovers were married during and intermittent work, cooking, canning, gar-

dening and intermittent teaching, Eva's health broke. Her doctor advised ceasing 1933, at the height of the "Great Depression" and ing, but encouraged her to get involved in something she hadn't done before and get away from home and meet new people. Her husband sug-

gested politics. They attended the next mass meeting of their chosen party. From there, they went as delegates to the county convention where Eva was elected county chairwoman, a post she served for eight years. She also served as a state delegate. Here, she met several lady representatives and one lady senator, also Utah's first and only national congresswoman, Reva Beck Bosone, all of whom encouraged Eva to run for Utah's House of Representatives. She did, and she lost. A rather expected outcome. "Who ever heard of a woman legislator?"

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men roared with laughter. Question on the bill was called. The bill passed. It had been on the floor seven times before. In 1963, Mr. and Mrs. Conover were chosen by Utah's Farmer Union, the U.S. State Department, and Farmers and World Affairs, Inc., to participate in the Farmer's Good Will Exchange Program in Egypt. This was the first time

our world." Dixie also indicated her wish to present the future Historical Society "Voices Panel" material at a meeting "because of its excellence, and the women of Emery County would certainly relate to it."

Eva Conover's story—"A Brief History of an Influential Woman from Each of Utah's Counties," as prepared for Women's History Month, March 1992, by the Utah Governor's Commission for Women and Families, follows: Eva Westover Conover, born in Huntington, Emery County, Utah, Nov. 2, 1908, to George H. and Alice Ann Leonard Westover, was the middle child of seven. After attending Huntington schools from one to the third year high school, she graduated from Provo High School where she won the Elsie C. Carroll Short Story Award in 1927. After graduating from the University of Utah's School of Education, she began her teaching career in Ferron, Utah, where she met her future husband. While teaching, she became aware of the discrepancy between women's and men's wages for doing the same work, even though often the women were more qualified. "There should be a law demanding equal pay for

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Now playing, call for times STAR THEATRE The head of the family is the one

rate presented a dialogue of "Voices of Women for Suffer- age and Equality," including even a short song, taking the audience through women's struggles and triumphs to be recognized as equals, to receive the vote, and to be accepted in the work place and on professional levels.

The social hour around the lovely silver punch bowl, and straws, berries and cake setting, revealed that several in the audience knew or were related to people in Emery and Carbon counties and shared the experience of women of smaller counties.

"We are proud to have such a fine example as Eva Conover representing us to the rest of the state of Utah," declared Dixie Swasey. "One who shows the accomplishments and dedication of rural women to excel, to raise and be a part of fine families, and to better

may has been proclaimed "Better Hearing and Speech Month" Hearing Tests FREE Belone Offers

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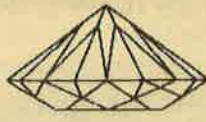
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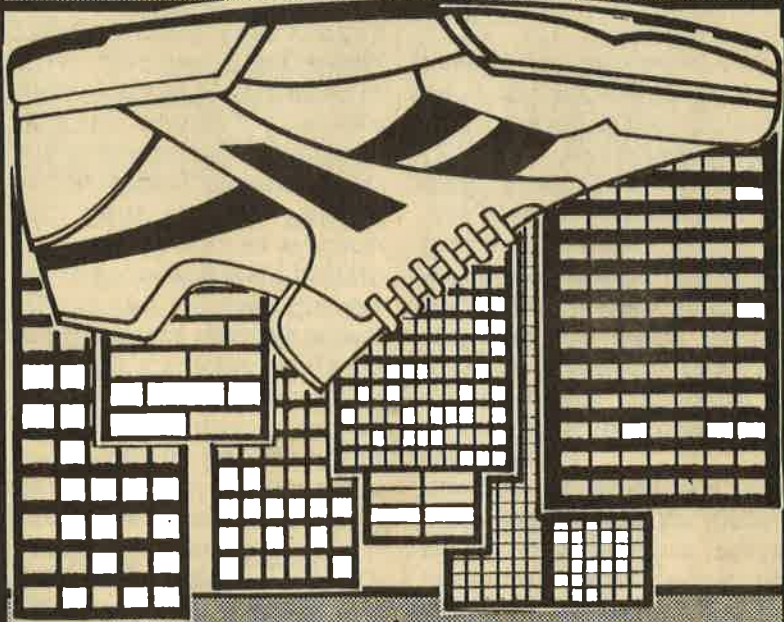
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