By— Ady Richards

# HISTORY OF HUNTINGTON

Sabrina Ison

Mrs. Carter
History 6th
May 10, 1996

# HISTORY OF HUNTINGTON

Julia Adelida Wakefield Richards is eighty-four years old. She lives in Huntington Utah where she has lived all of her life. She was born in Huntington on the 17 of October, 1912 to Don and Irene Wakefield.

Sabrina: Can you tell me some of the history of Huntington?

Addie: Yes, Huntington was founded in 1878 as part of the colonizing efforts of the early pioneers. Huntington has for the most of its history been a quiet farming community. However, since 1972 the municipality has fallen heir to the problems demoted in the phrase "Western Energy Boom Town."

That year marked the start of the construction on the first unit of Utah Power and Light's Huntington canyon coal-fired generating facility, located on the ranch of James W. Bradley. Bradley predicted early that inevitably "something big" is going to happen here. His wife didn't believe him. She would often say, " what could ever happen on our farm." Now stands the majestic generating power plant, overlooking the valley below. Its overwhelming appetite is being fed coal from the busy mines near by, and its thirst from the ~~Christy~~ crystal waters of the Huntington river. A far cry from the little pioneer log cabins of 1880-90's. <cough>

The city of Huntington lies nestled next to the Washatch Mountains in Northwest Emery

County. The rivers that carry water out of the mountains and into Castle Valley first attracted settlers to the area. The settlements along the river indicates the preeminent importance of water to the early settlers. Today this fact still holds true as both the agriculture and energy production are dependant upon the water supply. The climate of Huntington as a whole is continental and dry. Once again forcing the settlement's dependance upon the waters of the river.

Huntington, as with all of Castle Valley is noted for its clear blue skies and clean pure air. A rare commodity today. Sunshine and lovely cool evenings in the summer but the winters are cold and dry.

Huntington's economy has been based on agriculture, cattle and mining, up until the mid 70's agriculture was the main support. When in 1930 to 1950 a coal boom industry attempted to develop the areas massive coal reserves.

During World War II the coal industry boomed and Huntington's population grew accordingly.

UP&L's Huntington Canyon generating facility and the American Coal Company mines represented the industrial base of "Huntington.

The cities primary revenue source, property taxes, did not increase enough in the quantity and speed to fund capital outlays. Since the plant was not in the city, the city received no property tax revenue, yet bore the burdens of servicing its workers. Most workers lived in mobile

homes who's property taxes are about one third less than a home but required the same services.

The impact of the boom began to materialize during the term of Mayor Shirl McArther, who was instrumental in the instigation of the development.

Much good has come from his untiring efforts as co-owner of the American Coal Company. Mr. McArther has done more to help the employment factor in Huntington and Emery County then any other source in its history.

Huntington, like most of Utah, abounds in history, both ancient and modern. --- Prehistoric Indians knew its castles at the east and southward.

There are many controversies as to how and why Huntington was given its name. It seems a proven fact that in the 1850's a party of explores for the Mormon church of whom , three brothers, Dimmick, William, and Oliver Huntington were members. Oliver was a scribe for the church. William a scout and explorer and Dimmick an Indian interpreter. Dimmick was at the Utah Basin treaty conference to make peace with Chief Black Hawk, where he acted as interpreter, both in 1865 & 1868. These men with others in the company made an exploration trip into eastern Utah. Camping at various places which later became known as "Muddy Creek," "the Ferron River," and "cottonwood River."

Dimmick was very well liked and respected by all, went to the river for a pail of water and in his absences one of the group said, " I propose to name this river Huntington in humor of

Dimmick." There are other legions of this but at any rate Huntington settlement undoubtably adopted its name from the river.

Sabirna: Who were some of the original settlers?

Addie: Well, in the spring of 1875 four stockmen, Leander Lemmon, James McHadden, Bill Gentry and Alfred Starr, brought horses over the mountain from San Pete through Huntington canyon into what is now Huntington. McHadden and Lemmon, intrigued by the area, decided to homestead 320 acres and were soon working on an irrigation ditch, which became known as the Mchadden Ditch. These two men are given credit as being the first settlers in the valley, but perhaps the honor should be divided four ways, for all four men built dugouts and stayed through the winter of 1875-76. Leander Lemmon built a cabin on his land the following year.

In the spring of 1876, water was flowing in the McHadden Ditch, and enough land had been cleared to put in crops. After leveling the land they planted wheat and oats which see had been packed in on pack horses, from Sanpete County. They also sowed alfalfa with the grain. The acting as a nurse crop. They planted potatoes and a vegetable garden.
James McHadden and Bill Gentry went to Salt Lake to buy a herd of cattle for James and Bill and a herd of sheep for Alfred Starr, in the summer of 1876.

They took their cattle and sheep on the mountain for summer grazing. To this day various

sections of this region still bear the names of these mountaineer pioneers. Gentry Mountain, McHadden Flat, McHadden Ridge, Starr Point, Lemmon Flat, Millers Flat, and some others.

In the spring of 1876, a company of stockmen of Sanpete organized a partnership for the purpose of purchasing sheep in California to be trailed to Huntington. The trip took most of the summer. They had an Indian guide but lost their way and wandered in the desert without food or water for three days.

After a few years in the sheep and horse business, Lemmon branched out into the cattle industry.

Leander Lemmon later married Diserene Erickson, reared a family of five. Lemmon and family later moved to town in a lovely home on center street.

At a priesthood meeting at Mt. Pleasant in September 1877, encouragement was given to settle Castle Valley. Christian G. Larson was chosen leader. Seventy five men were called but few responded.

In the fall of 1878 the church authorities made a second call and several more responded. Vivid memories of the Black Hawk War and not too favorable reports on the region made the volunteers reluctant to chance another move.

The first attempt to form a colony on the Huntington River was in November 1877, when a group of settlers from Fairview answered the call of the church.

Elias Cox, an elderly widower, a good, honest and broad-minded man with extensive pioneer experience was chosen leader of the group. Elias had driven an ox team across the plains when but a boy of thirteen. His integrity and ability as a surveyor and organizer granted him this privilege.

This company traveled through Spanish Fork and Soldier canyons and what two years later became known as Price, Utah. They built dugouts on the north side of the creek and stayed in the valley the winter. In the spring the Avery ditch was du to convey water to the Avery homestead and to others. Crops were planted and watered a few times, but the prospects of realizing a good harvest were so poor that July the settlers had all left Huntington Creek to return to their former homes in Fairview.

The following November Elias Cox and some of the others returned. The were accompanied by their wives and families. Dugouts built the previous year were agin used and more were built. What was left of their crops planted in the spring were harvested.

In December 1878 the wife of Benjamin Jones gave birth to a daughter whom they named Celestial Castle, the first white child born on the Huntington river.

William Avery built the first log cabin to be erected by this company. This house was the only on with a wooden floor so the first dance in the valley was held there. The men out numbered the women so they got divided into I believe six groups and had to take turns to dance.

James and Anna Petersen had just been married and walked from Castle Dale to the dance.

Crops were planted along the north side of the creek in the spring of 1879. A good crop of potatoes, grain and sugarcane were harvested. Settlers continued to arrive through out the summer and fall of 1879. Some men came without their families at the time, to establish a homestead in the valley.

Sabrina: Where and when did they have the first school?

Addie: After they had enough children school was opened. It first one was in the little dugout on the river bottom with Sally Whimmer as the teacher. Then for the next few years school was held at various dugouts of

Sabrina: Can you tell me about the first church?

Addie: It was of course a Mormon church. After the first settlers had been established on the Huntington River in 1877, it was advisable to establish and active branch of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This was the custom and beliefs of the Mormons, that the Church ranked first along with the importance and welfare of their families.

Orange Seely, who had been appointed by the church authorities to the position of bishop of Castle Valley, was instructed to organize a branch on the Huntington River. Early in January 1879 Bishop Seely came to the river, after preaching to the saints, who were assembled in a

dugout along the river banks and he called Elias Cox to be president of the branch.

In the latter part of November 1880 most of the men on the creek made a road into what they called meeting house canyon. They cut logs and hauled them to the site where they constructed a log meeting house on the south-east corner of center and main street. They didn't get it finished in time for Christmas but they did get it done by New Year's Eve. The first building of any description to be built on any town- site was to be the meeting house for church as well as for other gatherings.

The lumber used in the building was sawed at Bishop Cox's saw mill at the mouth of mill fork canyon. The rough lumber had to be plained by hand. From the time of its official opening it was in constant use in one branch of service or another. It burned down on the night of

November 11, 1918.

The first public Thanksgiving celebration was held in the old log meeting house in November, 1881. Songs, recitations, and speeches were conducted from afternoon until midnight. This was followed by a midnight supper and then dancing until dawn. Huntington was the first town incorporated in Emery County.

Sabrina: When were you born and what is some of your childhood memories?

Addie: I was born on October 17, 1912 to Don Angus and Irene Bradley Wakefield in

Huntington Utah. When I was five my father was barn boo for the U.S. fuel company at Moorland. Our family moved to Moorland the fall of 1917 and lived there throughout the winter.<cough> Mother wanted to stay there but father was concerned about his farm and cattle, so we moved back to Huntington. We enjoyed our stay at Moorland even though there was a flu epidemic and we were quarantined.

Our water was drawn from a single cold water tap, just inside the kitchen door. Each day we filled the reservoir on the side of the large cook stove. The reservoir provided ample hot water for our various needs of cleaning and bathing. When I was about twelve my fathers youngest sister came over to our house to do some mending. I was filling the reservoir with a big bucket. Mother told me that I was filling the bucket to full to carry, but I was trying to save time. I walked in and slipped on the floor and the bucket full of water went flying all over me and Vesta. We had quite a time trying to get all the water up.<laugh>

When I was six my mother took me to my first grade of school. Kate Robbins was my teacher. I loved her dearly. One day I decided I wanted to go over to my sisters room so I went across the hall past the drinking fountain into her room. My teacher got kind of worried until she finally found me. She took me back to our class room and asked me why I didn't' t like her, but I said that I really did like her and she said no you don't and I said but I do and she said then why did you try to leave me. After that I had to stay in my own class. My second year of school I

went for about three weeks and then several of us got move upstairs into the third grade. Luella Washburn was my third grade teacher. I was the fairy in the school play that year. I feel that I missed out on something because I didn't get the chance to go to full year of second grade. It was also that year that the school house burned down. We always had a lot of fire drills, I guess it was because the furnace was put in a very foolish place. It was under the stairway where the two stairways joined. One day the fire bell went off and we just thought that it was another fire drill, so we weren't too excited . Aunt Vesta Jarvis used to play the piano for us to march to. We always did everything very military like. The teacher would say one and we would all turn. They would say two and we would all stand up then they would say three and we would all march. We did that anytime we went anywhere. Any ways, she started to play the mach song that she always played and row by row we got up and marched to the door. In the hall way was a lot of smoke but we thought it was just to drill us better and make it seem more real. They told us to leave our coats and everything in the room. Aunt Vesta played faster and Billstood there and clapped

his hands. Not until we were down the fire escape and looked back did we know the building was on fire. Thanks to the quick thinking and leadership of Uncle Bill and Leonard every child was saved. It was very military and well done- we were trained well. Aunt Vesta did a brave thing also, she sat right over the fire at the piano and played until each one was out . The piano stood just in between the two stair ways which was above the furnace. When we got outside our

parents were all out there. I started to cry I guess because everyone else was crying too. My sister Reva told me not to cry because mother would buy me a new coat but that was not the reason I was crying. Oh --I forgot to tell you that Leon Lenord and William Jarvis decided to build a fire escape, so they opened up on of the walls and put a door there and it went out onto the fire escape. There was a very long stairway down to the ground.

After that there was no place for us to go so we just had to abandon the building and we ended the year. The next year, the fifth grade . We went in a building, Elsie Olson had a military store just south of town where the new library is now. She had two large rooms one that she lived in and the other one that was her store. We used both sides. She always had fancy hats that she kept in large glass show cases. Mother would go over and help her decorate them. Stella Larson or Stella Leonard at that time was the teacher in one room and Leon Leonard was the teacher in the other room. We each had fifty six students, we had a lot of children that age. We always had two classes all through school. Just before the snow came one day we were outside playing and someone suggested that we break the windows of Uncle Milas Johnson's store that was just across the street. That is all it took and soon all that could be heard was glass breaking. Of course I threw as many rocks as anyone else. The next day we each had to bring 25 cents. After the first large snow of the year and back at that time we used to have a lot more snow in Huntington. The eight grade challenged our fifth grade to a snow ball fight. They came over

from the old um , I guess it must not have been the eight grade it must have been the seventh grade. So the seventh grade came over from their school it was in the old relief society building . It was west of the building that is there now. So there we all were out in the in the middle of main street well covered in snow throwing snowballs at each other. Back in those days there was no cars so we weren't in any danger. I remember Nedra Grange decided to wash my face in snow me. I don't know why. She was a large girl and I was quit small. I was short and she was extra tall for her age. She got me down into the snow and held me there <laugh> until I was soaking my hair and my dress were wet. Finally Stella Leonard came and got me and took me back into the house. She dried my hair and dress by the fire. Then she scolded that girl, she said your too big for Addie.

In the spring when the leaves were all out the girls would play in the back where there was an old hop vine arbor. We even brought our dolls. The boys were the soldiers and husbands and we were the moms. My seventh year as in all of the past years our class had to be divided. It seemed to be the largest in the whole school. I had a music teacher by the name of Wright Weaver and his wife was also a music teacher. They directed the play of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. I had the role of Snow White. I remember feeling so grown up. My first year of high school I went to the fairly new high school building. I was chosen cheerleader, which I kept

for four years. At that time we only had one cheerleader. We didn't have a pep club so Miss Osmand told me that she would help me set up a pep club. I didn't even know what a pep club was, I knew that it was something that we would enjoy. As soon as I found out then I started choosing the members and getting everything all in organized. At that time for our drill team we had white booties and black booties and pleated skirts. We didn't have the uniforms they have today the were cute though. They would march all around campus and drill and then. Junior no senior year they decided that they needed a name for our team. We had a good football team, and basketball team and baseball team and we had very many real athletes in our school. Track and everything. So they asked everyone to submit a name for the teams and there was a big box to put them in. I put in the name Ranger. It was just chance that it was the name they choose. I was very surprised because It just came to me I thought it would be a pretty good name. I guess it was because me father was a ranger. I was on the prom committee. We spent several weeks getting ready for prom. We had a corner for each class. They would all decorate their corners and had refreshments that you could buy there. Some had punch and cookies and other goodies. It was quite a contest to see whose was decorated the best. The juniors didn't have a corner because they had to decorate the whole room.

It was so lovely. My senior year I was secretary to the principal, Fisher. He had a picture there in his office and I walked in one day and I looked at the picture and it looked so familiar. I went to

ask him a it startled me and he said yes it looks like you, its my daughter. She did look an awful lot like me. He was a perfect stranger to me he was from Salt Lake, but he said as soon as he saw me I looked like his young daughter, she was fourteen, fifteen somewhere around there. Of course we had our graduation. It was a wonderful time. My dearest friend was Luella Leonard. We were friends from the day we met, we shared all the same interests. We dressed alike and sang together at church and at school. She had a lovely voice. We were unseparated until the day she moved to Salt Lake. She lived until in 1960 she was shot while and work as the head cook at the Salt Lake Country Club.