

# Mary Eveline Rawlins Leavitt



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A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MARY EVELINE RAWLINS LEAVITT, BY HERSELF

I was born in Draper, Utah, Salt Lake County, on November 19, 1861 to Harvey McGalyard Rawlins and Margaret Elzilah Frost. My parents were pioneers of Utah in 1848.

We first made our home in Draper, Utah. I was the seventh child of a family of twelve children. Except for the second child, who died as a baby, all grew up and married and raised families.

When I was four years old we moved to Richmond, Cache County, Utah and lived there until I was eleven years old, at which time we moved to Lewiston, Utah where I have lived ever since.

My only recollection of coming to Richmond is a big hill we came down and the pretty green grease wood brush that grew along the road south as we came into the town.

My father bought a lot and a house with three rooms in which we lived. I went to my first school in a small log house built on the public square in the Northwest corner of the Tabernacle grounds, about where the Plant Service Station stands (1948). My first teacher was Aunt Lil Lewis, Beason Lewis' wife. At that time school was held in the summer. My second teacher was a man named Mr. Davey. Mr. Davey stayed among the people whose children he taught for his pay.

When my brother Alma was born, we had the thrashers to feed, and Aunt Jane Carson came and cooked for the men. This was Oct. 25, 1866. When sister Arminta was born, Aunt Nancy Kerr came to take care of the children. The children heard the baby cry and Aunt Nan called them to come see their little sister. The baby had light brown colored hair and a lot of it. She was born May 14, 1869. She was a baby that cried night and day. The neighbors thought that mother must leave her alone, she cried so much. She had to be tended all the time until everyone was completely tired out.

On the 8th of September 1869, Grandmother Frost died. That same afternoon the Marshall Band was drilling out on the public square and the children all sat on the west steps of their house and watched the band. It was quite an impressive day to remember.

My next school teacher was Isabel Kerr Gibson (Ibbie) as she was called. She was also a cousin and she taught school for two or three months in the summer as well.

When I was small all of us children were playing on the ice and my brother Joe fell and cut a gash in his head. Mother took him into the house. Grandma was dressing it. She told mother to get her a clean rag to put on it. Mother went to get it but fainted and fell on the floor, she couldn't stand the sight of

blood.

About 1868 Pres. Brigham Young came to Richmond. The people built a big gate up by Bro. Stillman Pond's home about a block from the meeting house. Bro. Brigham drove through the gate then the Marshall Band followed him, then all the young Sunday School children followed that. The little girls were all dressed in white dresses. They were followed by the remainder of the people who marched to the meeting house where they held a wonderful program.

When I was very young, the people of Richmond put on a Theater. Henry Gibson and Bill Fisher took the leading parts. It was called "Ten Nights in the Barroom". This was an outstanding event in my life, because I didn't see any other show until I was a grown woman.

When the family moved to Lewiston in April, 1872, the two older girls, Penina and Eveline, were left in Richmond to attend school. I stayed with Aunt Nancy Jane Kerr and Penina stayed with Martha Karren. We stayed four weeks, but got so homesick we couldn't stand to stay away from the family any longer so they let us go home.

When we came to Lewiston father built a shanty of slabs standing up to shelter up the hot sun and rain for the summer. It was a little way from the corral where they took care of the cows. The next spring they built a house there with the lumber standing upright.

The spring and summer was beautiful for there was lovely green grass all over. When the flowers came out in the spring it was beautiful to see the wild peas which were thick all over and looked like a bed of blue everywhere. The grass was so high some times it was impossible to see the young calves when they got out in it. There were no roads except cow trails and no neighbors near our home.

In Lewiston the first school was taught by Mary Van Orden Bair. It was taught in the summer and fall of 1872. Next it was taught by Mrs. Julia Rogers, then Sarah Agnes Karren, James Gainbridge, Samuel Allen, Jefferson Huff. Mr. Huff brought his violin with him to school at noon and he would play and teach the children to dance the heel and toe polka and the Varsuviennne. The children all liked school that winter. At this time Fairview and all the way to Preston, Idaho, as well as down in Bear River to old Man Blair's home, all belonged to Lewiston and about this time dances were held in people's homes in the flat. Some of the places belonged to Peter Van Orden, John Strickling, John Standish and many others. There was always someone who could play the violin. Ike Blair was one that could play any kind of instrument and was always ready.

The snow was always deep in the winter and we enjoyed sleigh riding with the bells jingling in the cold air. The snow would freeze hard with a crust that would hold the horses and it was fun to go riding over the top of it. Sometimes the snow would come in November and last until the last of April and into May.

I went on the railroad with father and my brothers to cook for them in the spring of 1880 when the ranchers were driving their range cattle in for the fall roundup. They stampeded across the river where our company was camped. I was alone at camp when I heard a snort and noise just outside. Rushing to the window, which consisted of a hole in the tent, I looked out and was surprised to see the camp surrounded by cattle. One large roan steer with horns about eighteen inches long stood with head erect and fierce glaring eyes looking straight toward me. Each time he snorted the cattle crowded nearer until they were not more than ten or twelve feet away. By this time I realized what danger I was in. There was not time to waste, so I crept quickly to one corner of the tent and knelt down and asked the Lord to turn the cattle away so I would be safe. As I arose from my knees the cattle turned away as if they had been driven. I thanked by heavenly father for hearing my prayer. This was one time when my prayers were answered in time of need.

At one time I had a boyfriend named Elias Lane and I tried to get rid of him, but he just wouldn't stop coming to see me. So one Sunday, Samuel F. Wiser (a cousin of mine), was at my place and we decided when meeting was out, we would ditch Elias and run away to Samuel's house, so Elias wouldn't know where we had gone. I was told afterward that Elias came outside the house and called and called "Evey, Evey", but no Evey answered. As we were going home to Aunt Patsy's (Patsy Wiser--Sam's mother's) house to spend the night, Elias passed us although he didn't know it. He felt so bad he cried all the way home. His mother wanted to know what she had done to him for he walked the floor and cried, he felt so bad. Some other boy friends were: Elick Harris, Joe Hendricks and Wm. Lewis. Elick Harris used to smoke and then eat Sen Sens and I couldn't stand him for that.

I went out to work for some neighbors when I was very young. sometimes it was when they had new babies and I would stay for a week or two, and sometimes longer. It was hard to get help so they were glad to even get a very young girl to help them. Some of the women I worked for were: Armanda Smith (I helped them white wash their new house), Martha Lewis, Eda Lewis, Amanda Wiser Smith, Martha Karren, Miranda Adella Bugot, Alivia Hendricks, and Mrs. Isaac Blair. Brother Isaac Blair used to sit and sing for half an hour after every meal. I did all kinds of work and helped house clean and white wash. The houses weren't considered clean unless they had been freshly whitewashed. We scrubbed the floors with sand to make them nice and clean like new lumber. All the washing was done on the washboards and the ironing with a stove iron. The

men wore white shirts with pleated fronts and starched stiff in cold starch. The babies dresses were 36 inches long with many ruffles and insertion lace in the skirts and yokes. They were starched and took a lot of time ironing them. The women and girls all wore two or three petticoats with ruffles which were starched nice and stiff and long enough to touch the floor. This made a lot of ironing for the women and girls. They never had time to read novels or get into mischief just playing around.

I was married Thursday, May 4, 1882 to Joseph Wire Leavitt. We went to Salt Lake City by team and Wagon. The first night we drove to Mendon and stayed with Aunt Melvina and Joseph Lemon. One of our horses got sick so we had to stay an extra day and night. Then we stopped in Ogden to Aunt Nancy Kerr's and Uncle Archie Kerr. Then we went on to Salt Lake City.

We were married in the Endowment House by Daniel H. Wells and it was two weeks before we got back home.

Our first home was a tent down on Bear River. Grandfather Leavitt gave each boy, James and Joseph, 40 acres of land down there. We lived in the tent all summer and fall until they built a house. James Leavitt married my sister Penina. James' house was of sawed logs and Joseph's house was round logs. We lived there two of three years. Joseph and James went to the canyon and cut timber and hauled it down and had it sawed into lumber to build the house up town in Lewiston, where we lived for a few years. He bought the lot and built the house after Eulalie was born. She was born at Grandma and Grandpa Rawlins' house on June 7, 1885. We had two other baby boys born before that but they both died at birth.

In Feb. 1891 one evening as the family was bowed in prayer and I was praying something whispered to me to pray for my sister, Penina. She is in trouble. When we arose from our knees, Joseph asked what was wrong with me, and I said I didn't know, only something whispered to me to pray for my sister. A few days later we received a letter telling us that Penina's family were all sick in bed with laGrippe, as they used to call it. Her baby had died from it. She got out of her sick bed and washed and laid it out alone as every family in the valley was sick. This was in Auburn, Wyoming (Star Valley). This was another time in my life I was prompted to pray.

I have washed the wool, spun it and woven it into cloth called lincy cloth. We made dresses and quilts with this material. I have woven many yards of carpet. When my first children were young, I knitted long stockings for them and my husband, and mittens for all the children. It was necessary to have warm woolen clothing because of the winter being so cold. I always made home made soap in a big black kettle outside on a bon fire. It was easier to do it outside in the spring time.

I was second counselor in the first YWMIA in the Lewiston Ward in Feb. 1881. Uncle Harvey Rawlins, my brother, was the first President in the YMMIA. I held this office for four years. I became a member of the Relief society in 1877 and I was a Relief Society teacher for 43 years. I sang in the choir for twenty-nine years. the first choir leader was Henry Talbot, then William Blair, Albert Blair and Theo France.

My husband used to tend the babies when I went to choir practice but we took them to meeting on Sunday. I belonged to the Daughters of the Pioneers when it was first organized in Lewiston in 1908 and served as treasurer for it as a registered member.

I am the mother of ten children, three girls and seven boys. My first two babies died at birth, then Newell, by fifth child, was three years old when he died on Mar 24, the night before Easter. Lamont, the 7th child, was one year old when he died on the 4th of July. A grown son, Arden Odell, died with a ruptured appendix when he was eighteen years old on Dec. 4. My husband died Jan. 7, 1930 when he was 70 years old.

In 1942, I have 24 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, among which were twins, a pair of boys, and a pair of girls. The boys were Eulalie's grandsons. The girls were Eldon's granddaughters.

Note: Mother has always been a good helper to the poor or any one who was in need of help. Her husband was a very fine man in this respect also and they always went to see the sick and tended them when possible. They always attended the funerals no matter where it was and whether it was a relative or a friend of which they had many. This was written as mother told it to me (Eulalie) when she was 80 Years old Nov. 19, 1941. She died Sept. 19 1942 and was buried in the Lewiston Cemetery.