William Alfred Gibson was born 27 Dec. 1875, at Hyde Park, Utah, to Phebe Elizabeth Woolf and William Moroni Gibson.

His father, William Moroni, came to the United States from Lincolnshire, England, at 8 years of age, with his mother, Elizabeth, and his sister, Sarah Elizabeth. The had heard the Mormon missionaries and joined the Church. They sailed with 707 other Saints, 18 April 1856, on the ship, “Samuel Curling.” William’s mother died in Illinois, so he came to Utah with his mother’s sister, Mary Ann Perkes.

Phebe Elizabeth Woolf was the daughter of John Anthony Woolf and Sarah Ann DeVoe Woolf, who pioneered to Utah after their neighbor, the Prophet Joseph Smith, was killed. They arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, 6 Oct. 1847, and in 1861, settled in Hyde Park, Cache, Utah.

William Moroni and Phebe were married 8 March 1869, in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, and 23 Nov. 1874, William took Phebe’s sister, Harriet, as his second wife. They lived in Benson Ward just west of Hyde Park, where both wives taught school and William farmed. Then they moved back to Hyde Park, where Willie was born in the “Lars Christensen home” at the northwest corner of town. 3 weeks later, John Willard was born to Harriet, and the little boys were raised as close as twins.

Later that year, they moved to Franklin Canyon, where they homesteaded a large tract of land, and William built a sawmill with the first mill brought across the plains by Brigham Young. They raised cattle and farmed. One wife lived on one side of Maple Creek & one on the other side. One day Willie came crying to tell his mother that the cows were eating the clothes, which had been hung on the bushes to dry.

Another story tells of the Indians frightening the children as they were picking berries; so they dropped their pails and ran. The friendly Indians laughed and said, “Heap scared.”

In 1880 Phebe moved with her 5 children back to her parents’ home in Hyde Park. Her father died the following year, so she assumed much of the work and responsibility of the household, along with her brother, Andrew, who had never married. Andrew helped her raise her children. They all worked hard milking cows, making butter and cheese to sell, and raising calves and pigs. Willie and his friends, Albert and William Perkes, herded cows below town. One day they caught a red fox and brought it home for a pet. Willie helped in the hay fields and worked with the stock. He was a person with a happy disposition, and was good looking, with wavy brown hair and blue eyes. As he grew up, he worked in Logan Canyon cutting and hauling logs for firewood and lumber. Willie told how he wore cowhide boots with no overshoes and his feet nearly froze. Willie worked with others cleaning out the canals in the fall of the year which brought in needed money. He helped haul rock from Logan Canyon for the Logan Temple, which was being built.

He met Nellie Ormond from Greenville (now North Logan) at a dance and rode horseback to court her. She was the oldest daughter of John Jenkins Ormond and Orpha Asenath standage Ormond. Nellit was a very pretty girl and ladylike, even though she worked in the fields with her father. They were married in the Logan Temple, 20 Dec. 1899, on the day that was so cold Willie’s ears were frostbitten as they rode in the cutter to the temple. He didn’t have a wedding, so they bought one the next day.

They lived in one half of a 2 family house. Bishop Charles A. Hyde’s family lived in the
other half of the house. They had a big lot and he later built a nice 2 story house on the corner with a barn, granary, sheds, corrals, and orchard. He acquired a dry farm east of town, beet fields north of town, and pasture land.


In 1919, Willie wanted more acreage, so he and his cousin, Archie Woolf went on the train to Twin Falls, Idaho, and finally to Rupert, Idaho, where they found 40 acres for $10,500, which William bought after selling his Hyde Park property.

They were immensely happy in their new life. They had a good house and barns, and they raised hay, beans, and beets. Soon after getting settled, the bank closed with their last $500 in it. So they actually lived off the land and enjoyed doing it. Nellie always had a good table, (fulfilling her patriarchal blessing) and she made their clothes.

Willie was always very generous with his family, with the Church (which he faithfully attended), and with his neighbors, or anyone who needed help. He was strictly honest in all his dealings. He was friendly, good-natured and good to everyone. He dearly loved his family, and was a good, kind father. He played the harmonica and could also be heard whistling and singing. “Listen to the Mockingbird” or “You are my Sunshine,” as he followed his team in the fields.

He was in the superintendency of the Sunday School in Hyde Park and in Rupert, and became a High Priest 17 Oct. 1926.

In 1922, he took pneumonia and was not expected to live. Nellie, who had great faith, called Bishop David J. Borup, to administer to him. Years later in the Salt Lake Temple, the bishop told how he had seen a vision while administering to William, which prompted him to promise recovery. The bishop stayed day and night with the family for awhile, giving them hope and faith. It was bitter cold, with deep snow, but he also arranged for weeks that the new family in the ward was never alone. When Willis’s lungs filled, the doctor cut out pieces of his rib using no anesthetic, and inserted a drain. For 6 months he was bedfast, but he lived over 20 years longer. His recovery was a great testimony to all who knew of it.

He still worked his farm and milked cows to the day of his death 7 Nov 1945 at 70 years of age. He was buried in Heyburn, Idaho 7 miles from his home.

Typed into the computer 28 Oct. 2002 by Kathleen Jardine Woolf   Idaho Falls, Idaho
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