Lettie Bell Hancey Rich was born at Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah, on 27 Aug. 1872. Her parents were Dr. James Hancey and his 2nd wife Louisa Purser Hancey who were pioneers of 1860 and 1863 and among the first settlers in Hyde Park. Lettie was the 5th child of 9 children born to Louisa and James, 3 of whom died in infancy. Her parents were converts to the LDS Church and they taught their children the principles of the Gospel. Lettie was baptized 16 Oct. 1880, in Hyde Park by Carl Jorgenson.

She attended school in Hyde Park in the “Old Rock Church House” her father had helped to build. She always took an active part in church work, and was a member of the Hyde Park choir as a young girl. At the age of 16, Lettie left home to go to Logan to attend the Brigham Young College. The Wilkinson family, good friends of Lettie’s mother, took her into their home where she helped with the housework, and clerked in the store on Saturdays, to pay for her board and room. Money was scarce, but Lettie was thankful she could work and help pay for her education that she was so anxious to get.

Lettie was 19 years of age when she married Attorney George Q. Rich, son of Apostle Charles C. Rich and Emeline Grover Rich. They were married in the Logan Temple on 9 Dec. 1891, with Apostle Marriner W. Merrill performing the ceremony. They became the parents of 7 children: Portia, Emeline, George Jr., Lettie, Russell, M. Logan, and Virginia Louise (Polly). They lived in the Logan 4th Ward throughout their married life.

While her children were young, Lettie taught in the Ward Primary and Sunday School organizations. Later she was an active worker in Ward Relief Society, serving as a teacher. She also served in the Presidency for 8 ½ years, from March 1914 to Sep. 1922. She was appointed Chairman of the “Cheer-Up Committee” of the Relief Society. In this assignment she did a wonderful work in bringing cheer to the aged, the sick and home bound. It was stated that her spirit of service, her thoughtful attention to the sick, and her cheerful, jovial disposition in public and private life were an inspiration to all who knew her. She was usually the first to show up at a home when there was sickness, and she was famous for her beef stew and chicken soup she would take to those in need. She compiled and wrote the history of the 4th Ward Relief Society from the organization 23 May 1868, up to the time she was released.

When the Relief Society established a Library in the Ward organization, Lettie was selected Librarian, a position she held until August 1935. At this time, 1935, she was called to serve on the Cache Stake Board of the Relief Society where she served for 9 years. She compiled and wrote a history of the Cache Stake Relief Society from the first organization. It took her 3 years to gather material and pictures of all the women who had worked in the organization. Many had passed away and she had to contact their relatives from Canada on the north to Mexico on the south. The completed history was placed in a beautiful leather-bound book. It was a worthwhile effort and a great accomplishment. She was proud of her work and received many compliments for it.

During World War I, Lettie was the first Secretary of the War Mother’s organization. When they reorganized as the Service Star Legion, she was the first secretary for that organization. She always contended that women should make more use of their voting franchise in local, state and national government affairs. She felt that a woman’s influence should be felt for good in our great nation, and she took an active part in civic affairs. She was County...
Chairwoman for the Women’s Republican Organization of Cache County for a number of years, and was also a member of the Ladies Republican State Committee for some time.

Lettie was an active member of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. She served on the County Board for 8 years and was the secretary and historian for both the Zina D. H. Young Camp and the Thomas X. Smith Camp.

She was one of those talented individuals who could express her feelings in verse, and did so from the time she was a young girl. It was said that her beautiful, inspiring poems caught the spirit of the occasions, as she wrote impressions of a beautiful day, or the birthday of a dear friend, or of a family occasion. Many of her poems were published in the Relief Society Magazine, some eastern magazines, and the local newspapers. One of her poems follows:

SUNRISE AND SUNSET
I watched the sun rise this morning coming over the rim of the earth.
Heralding forth a glorious day, smiling upon its birth.
Clouds of fleecy gold were drifting In a sky of azure blue,
Another day was passing lulling all nature to rest.
While gazing upon its beauty it’s colors so brilliant and rare,
I was thankful for the sunrise and sunset, they lifted my soul in pray.

Lettie B. H. Rich

When their family was young, Lettie and George Q. Decided to homestead, and they built a summer home in Logan Canyon. The first one built there. It was located at the forks, 12 miles up the Canyon. It was a rustic, log building among the trees. It had a porch that was enjoyed in the evening for the family to see and hear the beauties of nature. George Q. Was interested in the planetary system and studied and learned much about the stars. When the house was first built, in 1903, the family would travel to their summer home in a horse-drawn “white-top”. Later they owned a Ford sedan that furnished transportation. They had a telephone installed so George Q. was available for his business when needed.

The family had enjoyed this home for many years when the Cache National Forest decided they did not want privately-owned homes in the area. George Q., being an attorney, fought for his rights through the courts, and after 10 years got a deed for his home. This was the family summer home and they all enjoyed the beauties of the mountains and the river. They planted and maintained a lawn and flowers around the house. They raised a good garden every year and planted fruit trees and berries. It was said the pears they raised were the finest ever grown.

This home was open to friends and family and many enjoyed their visits there. J. Golden Kimball, one of the General Authorities in the LDS Church, was a life-long friend of George Q. From their childhood days in Bear Lake area. He would come every summer and stay for a week or so at a time in this summer home. A story is told of one of his visits there:

J. Golden had spent the morning writing. At noon time, Lettie asked what he would like for lunch. He answered that anything she prepared would be fine. He had eaten many meals in her home and knew she was an excellent cook, and thought whatever she served would be nutritious and delicious. Lettie went out to the mountain side and cut some sage brush and brought into the kitchen. She chopped it very fine and made a “sage brush” sandwich and took to Brother Kimball. One bite was enough. They both had a good laugh about the joke she played
on him. This story cannot be confirmed, but many family members have heard it, and enjoyed
the wit and humor it tells.

After the family married and moved away, the house was used for family parties and get-
togethers for both the Hanceys and the Rich families. It was later sold, and then the U. S. Forest
Service took it over. In 1987, it is still standing, but certainly not the beautiful canyon home it
once was. Both Lettie and her husband, George Q., possessed a great deal of charm and wit and
would provide an evening of enjoyable entertainment whenever family or friends were together.
They were a hospitable and welcomed any and all into their home. They were compassionate
and went the “second mile” in assisting any who needed their help, financially or otherwise.
George Q. Was considered one of the most brilliant and outstanding attorneys in the state. In
1935, when he passed away, the newspaper article had this to say about him. “George Q.
Transferred to Higher Court.” The bar loses a brilliant defender of the underdog. This describes
his concern and devotion to those in need of his assistance through the years.

After her husband’s death, Lettie continued to live in her home in Logan and kept active
in church and civic affairs. Her children married and moved away from the area. She enjoyed
visits from them, and would travel whenever she could to visit them in New York and California.

Although she suffered health problems in her later years, she maintained her cheerful
attitude and it was always a delight and joy to visit her. She always had a joke to tell or a story to
relate. She was affectionately known as “Aunt Lettie” by the young neighbors and friends.

After an illness of several days, Lettie passed away in an Ogden hospital on 4 July 1956.
She is buried in the Logan City Cemetery by her husband, and her first-born daughter, Portia,
who died when only 5 years of age.

“LETTIE” by daughter Virginia Louise (Polly) Griffin

Mother was affectionately known as “Lettie B” to all her family and friends. She was
known for her outgoing and happy spirit. After one of her bouts with bad health, and she had her
share, an excerpt from the Relief Society sister’s letter to her said, the warmth of your love
makes you an angel of mercy to the “shut-ins” and the lonesome, and by your courage and
devotion you have comforted and blessed the health of many.” She was head of the “cheer-up”
committee for many years in the Logan 4rh Ward. She was a member of the choir and had a
lovely voice. She and Sister Rudd would sing duets at many funerals. I remember her singing
around the home as she worked, mostly Sunday School songs, and she would have all 4 verses
done perfectly. One of her favorite sayings was “Blessed be the Peacemaker.”

“Lettie B.” started working in politics in 1925, and with her natural congeniality of spirit
and love of people, soon became Cache County chairman and organized many districts
throughout the valley, covering Logan, Smith, Richmond, Mendon, Hyrum, Lewiston and
Clarkston. She enjoyed having all of these district chairman in for teas at the Eccles Hotel to
meet the different candidates. One of her greatest thrills was when Herbert Hoover was running
for President of the United States in 1929 and came to Logan and spoke at the Tabernacle. Lettie
B. Sat on the stand with him, and later, he sent her his picture with the inscription, “Best regards
to Mrs. George Q. Rich. “She loved going to Salt Lake City to the conventions and endeared
herself to many people.

In her later years “Lettie B.” wrote in her journal every day. We have about 20 big
notebooks to read, full of news of the time, weather of the day, family births and dates and many
newsy items. Most of her daily journals would begin with, “it”s such a beautiful day.” Later she
may mention there were about 6 feet of snow on the ground and the temperature was down to
zero, but it was always a “beautiful day” to her.

In 1960, my brother George Jr. Published a book of her poems called “There is Beauty.”
Many copies were given to relatives and friends. It was a group of about 60 of her lovely poems
on nature and different friends. One of her best known poems, “The Old Juniper,” was used by
the Forest Service in one of their magazines.

The Old Juniper was assumed to be the oldest living juniper tree in the United States. It
was discovered in 1923 by Prof. Maurice Linford in Logan Canyon and is protected by the U. S.
Government. Mother and a group of her children and grandchildren climbed the mountain to see
this beautiful tree. It is in the vicinity of “Rock Spring.” The poem reads as follows:

We followed the trail up the mountain to the old Juniper one day.
As we climbed to lofty heights the wild flowers strewed our way.
Far down below flowed the river. An eagle soared overhead;
There were footprints on the mountainside where the bounding deer had sped;
We heard the mournful cooing of a dove as it called its mate;
In all that majestic setting there was not a strife and hate.
From that lofty throne on the mountain we could see far snow capped peaks;
Could hear the voice of the forest where whispering breezes oft speak.
We saw giant pines and cedars, but old Juniper reigns king of all.
Its bark is all dry and crispy, its branches all twisted and gnarled,
Like a silent sentinel watching each day and throughout the night.
In the spring, summer, autumn, and winter the old Juniper stands in its might.
We felt its aged influence as we stood beside it there,
Watching its wind swept branches bowing as if in prayer
Up in that mountain vastness, living a long, long span, looking so old and ancient-
Like the mummies we see of man. Now the silence of ages is broken
And many that long trail will climb to gaze upon the old Juniper and view that scene sublime.

Mother never knitted or crocheted and she didn’t leave any “handiwork”, but she did
leave wonderful memories to all who knew her.
(Written by herself and includes information from other sources.) Information taken from the
book JAMES HANCEY AND HIS FAMILY Publ. 1988
Typed into the computer 30 Oct. 2002 Kathleen Jardine Woolf Idaho Falls, Idaho