

LESLIE P. HANCEY  
1892-1983

I was born 1 Oct. 1892 in Hyde Park, Utah, to James Hancey and Annie Marie Christophersen. My father came from England and my mother from Denmark. Both were pioneers and converts to the LDS Church. The family home was 2 rooms—one log and one frame—that faced south on 33<sup>rd</sup> West 200 North in Hyde Park. The log room had one window, a straw and dirt roof, and one outside door to the south and one to the north. This room was used as a kitchen and a living room. The other room was the bedroom with one window and outside door on the north. This door was not used in cold weather. A shanty was on the north and close to the kitchen door. The room was about 10 ft by 12 ft. and was used as a summer kitchen for cooking, baking, washing, ironing and canning fruit. There was an attic over the bedroom that was used as bedroom for the 4 boys in the spring and fall. In hot weather we would go to the barn and sleep on the hay, then to the bedroom in the winter.

Father and mother had 9 children in the 2 rooms until 1900, when a new house was built. Later 2 girls came, making 11 children born to my parents. Georgene died in infancy. I was in the middle of 11, 6 boys and 5 girls. It was hard to raise a family under those circumstances compared to the present.

A well to the west of the house provided water for the house. Water was drawn by a wooden bucket on each end of a rope in a pulley at the top of the well curb to provide for the family's use.

We all had work or chores to do inside and outside the home when old enough. We always had one or 2 cows for milk, cream and butter, 2 pigs for meat, some chickens for meat and eggs, 2 to 4 hives of honeybees, a large vegetable garden, most kinds of fruit trees and berries to supplement our living. Our entertainment included games, ice skating, sleigh riding, hiking in the mountains, school and church-sponsored plays and dances. My favorite sport was baseball which I loved to play. Swimming in the canal that ran through the back of the lot helped us cool off and was a lot of fun. In the winter it provided many hours of ice skating and playing hockey. Many times we would skate to Logan or Smithfield.

When I was 7, my first paying job was driving cows to the pasture. I would gather cows from 4 different places and drive them west of town below the Union Pacific railroad tracks to 2 different pastures—walking both ways. I would take them in the morning and bring them back at night, for which I was paid \$1.00 for a month for 6 or 7 months of the year. When autumn came I had saved enough money to buy a suit of clothes, a pair of shoes, shirts and had 50 cents for winter spending money.

We were a happy family and lived pretty well. We had honey candy, popcorn, apples and black walnuts.

My schooling consisted of 8 grades in Hyde Park District School from which I graduated in 1909. I first attended school in the old rock meeting house and Lydia Daines was my first-grade teacher. I went to school for 6 years in the rock building. Then the new red brick school house was built in 1904. My half-brother, Jesse Hancey, was contractor for this building and several Hancey's helped in the construction of the new school. I was absent from school one day and the teacher asked me where I had been. My reply was that I had to stay home to turn the washer for my mother. We had only hand-powered or agitated washing machines in those days. I graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but after that worked to help support the family. A smallpox

epidemic closed all schools for about one year in 1902. Other sicknesses slowed all students down in their school work. For entertainment in winter, a group would go to Logan in a bobsled. When their feet would get cold they would sometimes run behind to warm them for awhile.

As I grew older, I worked in the sugar beets fields and hay fields whenever I could get a job, starting at 25 cents a day. By the time I was 18 my wages had gone to \$1.00 a day. In 1910 J. W. Matkin gave me a steady job on his farm. I also drove a milk wagon pulled by a team of horses to the Smithfield milk condenser. It took half a day to gather the milk cans, take them to Smithfield and bring the cans back to the farmer. In the winter we exchanged the wagon for a bobsled. I recall one long winter we used the bobsled until 4 April.

This job lasted until 1914. At that time Hyde Park was installing a water system and I worked part time digging trenches for the pipe. During this time I bought 2 colts and raised them so now I had a team of horses of my own. I bought a harness, a wagon and built a beet rack. With a pal of mine, we rented a 50 acre farm one year and made good wages from the crops. I worked with my horses and wagon when I could find a job until 1917, when I sold them.

A sugar factory was being built west of Smithfield where Evan and I got a job working as common laborers for most of the summer. In the fall of that year my brother, Evan, and I went to weston, Idaho, to work for Amalgamated Sugar Co. Receiving sugar beets for about 3 months. After New Years in 1918, myself and 2 pals went to Pocatello, Idaho, to work for the Union Pacific Railroad repairing railroad cars. While there I lived with mother's sister, Aunt Lena. We worked there for 6 weeks and then transferred to Kemmerer, Wyo. My job was to check the journal boxes (the grease box on the wheels) of the trains that stopped there. This lasted about 2 weeks and then we quit.

The war was on (WWI) and Uncle Sam was pointing that finger at me. "I WANT YOU For the U S Army." On 9 March 1918, on mother's birthday, I enlisted in the U S Army and was sent to Fort Logan, Colo. At Fort Logan, I was issued uniforms, vaccinated, inspected and all the other things that a soldier inherits. This lasted about 2 weeks and then I left on a troop train. We traveled the Santa Fe Railroad south to New Mexico, west through Arizona to California, then north to Richmond, and by boat to Fort McDowell located on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. After 12 days of Army life and a boat ride from Angel Island to San Francisco Bay. 1,200 of us boarded the U S Army Transport Sherman (an old cattle boat) and left the Golden Gate on 5 April 1918 for places unknown. After 8 days and nights the ship docked at Honolulu, Hawaii. I was assigned to the Coast Defense, Heavy Artillery at Fort Kamameha at the entrance of Pearl Harbor. After 6 weeks of living in tents, eating out of mess kits, training in infantry drill, signaling and military courtesy, I was assigned to the gun crew of Battery Selfridge. This Battery consisted of 2, 12 inch disappearing rifles measuring 36 feet from muzzle to breach. Each shell weighed a 1,070 pounds with 280 pounds of gun powder behind them when fired. They made a lot of noise which is how I lost my hearing, as I did not get the word they were going to fire and failed to protect my ears.

After about one year of service in the Army, an Armistice was signed on 11 Nov. 1918 and the war was over. If the war had continued I would have gone to Valdovstok, Siberia, then across Russia to hit Germany from the east. I wanted out, but I was in the regular Army. So I transferred to the drafted Army at Scofield Barracks for discharge papers. The Army pay was \$1.00 a day for privates and \$1.10 for First Class Privates. After making a "Markmanship" I was a Private First Class.

On 8 Feb. 1919, I boarded the USA Transport Sheridan and left Honolulu. After 8 days

and nights we landed in San Francisco. After sever days at Presido and San Francisco, I was back in Hyde Park, and my military service was over. The 12 inch guns were hard on my ears, but the hula girls were easy on my eyes.

I started to work for the Amalgamated Sugar Co. In 1920 as a carpenter's helper, remodeling small homes and building sugar beet dumps. I bought a 1917 Model T Fors in 1920 for \$400 and drove it while working for Amalgamated Sugar Company hauling men to work and back home charging 50 cents round trip. Part of 1921-22 I worked on the construction of the Franklin, Idaho sugar plant. Then 2 months for the Phoenix Utility Co. Building a water flume on the north side hill of Logan Canyon, which would bring water for the hydroelectric plant.

In Nov., I sold my 1917 Model T Ford to my brother, Evan, for \$100 and left for Southern California with Rob Christoffersen, Louis Laursen and Willard Hancey in Rob's 1920 Essex. We went to Salt Lake City the first day, but Rob's car didn't run too well. It was a 4 cylinder engine, but some of the time it would only run on 3. On the second day to Beaver, near St. Thomas the 3<sup>rd</sup> night we were sleeping out by the roadside. When a car stopped and started to back up, we had to quickly get out of the way or he would have run over us. Louis jumped to the car to find out what was wrong with him. He was a Danishman and didn't understand where he was. The next day we drove to Las Vegas. It was just a train stop then. Then to Goffs, California, and on to San Bernadino leaving the desert with its poor roads.

As we were driving in downtown Los Angeles, we were trying to turn from the wrong lane. The traffic cop stopped us. Rob told the cop, "I guess we'd better get outa here." The cop said, "You'd better get out of this land of traffic. Back up. Back up." Rob started to back and the cop said, "For hell's sake, can't you even back straight? We have more damn trouble with you out-of-state drivers." The guys on the sidewalk were laughing at us "country hicks" in a car plastered with mud.

We finally arrived in Whittier and found a job working on a bank building. We stayed in the Greenleaf Hotel on Whittier Ave. For \$7 a week—all 4 of us in one room. I would bank one week's pay and live on the next. That way we were able to save half of our pay. Louis, Willard and I were carpenters and Rob was a helper.

In March 1923, Louis left to go home to shear sheep, Rob to farm and Willard was tired of it. The bank job was over and we had completed 6 stories.

I then found a job working on house construction at \$1.00 an hour. Later, I went to Los Angeles and found a job working on a hotel. The hotel was steel and I had to do carpenter work on the beams installing the forms for the floors. The height and walking on the steel was not to my liking. One day in May I said, "this work is too high for me." I quit and took the train back to Hyde Park. I started working for the Amalgamated Sugar Co. Building beet dumps at many locations in Cache Valley until Nov. 1923.

I bought a new 1923 Model T Ford, 3 door, 5 passenger touring car for \$535. This price did not include side curtains or shock absorbers. They were extras.

In late November, my brother, Clarence, and I left for South California in my new car, going as far as Salt Lake City the first night. We left Salt Lake City Thanksgiving Day in a snow storm, stopping in American Fork to buy a windshield wiper. The wiper was clamped on the windshield and operated by hand. We went as far as Beaver that night. From St. George the road or trail through the canyon was very steep and rough; we had to go in low gear. We stopped and blocked the wheels to adjust the low gear band on the transmission because it was slipping.

The Model T Ford had only a high and low gear and a reverse. Sometimes we would turn around and go backward to get more power. My new Ford had battery-operated lights which made it better for driving at night.

As we drove that night across the desert, we could see a small light once in a while in head of us. When we caught up with it, we found a car with a man on the fender holding a flash light. The car lights had gone out. We stayed behind them to help light the road until we arrived at St. Thomas (which is now under Lake Mead). "How much do we owe you?" the men asked. "Not anything," I replied, "Just glad to help you." They were 2 guys from Gunnison headed for California to study auto mechanics. I advised them to travel only in the day time.

That night we stayed in an old adobe house. We had to get a flat tire fixed the next day before leaving for Goffs, Cal., so we never say them again.

The next day we had a better road on the dry lake beds. We could then travel faster arriving that night in San Bernardino. We didn't want to go to Los Angeles at night, so we waited until the next day. We found a carpenter job on the Hotel Roslyn. Later we found work at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Depot. Until we left California in March 1924.

My next job was with Phoenix Utility Co. Building the Cutler Hydroelectric Dam and Power Plant in Beaver Canyon. I drove the Model T nearly every day, 48 miles round trip, hauling 3 passengers at 50 cents a trip. I worked there 2 years and never missed a poay day. My wages were 70 cents an hour, big pay in those days and no taxes.

Time marches on and the years are counting up on me. My pals are married and I had better start settling down to life. "Be a lone hawk or find me a wife. Never was much for courting the fair. The job was hard, but finally did I dare. So I looked to the north and looked to the west and really came up with one of the best, Gladys Lamb."

The knot was tied on 30 Sep. 1925, forever and ever, in the Logan Temple. Gladys and I lived in a 2 room log home at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> West and 2<sup>nd</sup> North for 1 ½ years. I bought a lot just east of us and built our home in the fall and winter of 1926 and 1927. We finished 2 rooms and a closed-in porch to the back. From 4 Oct. 1927 to 4 Jan. 1928, I worked 92 12 hour shifts without a day off at Smithfield Sugar Factory for 40 cents an hour, oiling bearings.

Then a great event happened. On 24 Feb. 1928, a fine son, Spencer, was born to us in our home with the help of my mother as midwife. 2 cows were given to us by Gladys's father, John Lamb, to help supplement our living. We had milk, cream, butter and a few dollars for winter. I always had a garden for fresh vegetables.

In 1930, I built a home for Suel Lamb and 2 bridges in Logan Canyon. In 1931, I built a home for Orval Colman in Smithfield. The Great Depression was on in 1932, and times were bad. Clarence and I went to the hills east of town to cut maple, then borrowed a team and wagon to haul it home. We cut it up by hand. Gladys and Spencer stacked it in the basement for winter. We burned wood all winter and didn't buy any coal.

In 1933, I found more work in Logan Canyon on the road and bridges. I helped build 5 bridges in all. In 1934, one more great event, a 2<sup>nd</sup> son, Harold, was born 8 Feb. making a family of 4. The year 1934 was a great drought year and I was a member of Hyde Park Town Board in charge of the water system. The spring had gone dry and we extended the pipeline 2 miles farther up Birch Canyon east of Smithfield and developed a new spring. George C. Clyde was the engineer. He later became the governor of Utah. He stated that this gave Hyde Park one of the purest, best-tasting, and cheapest culinary water systems in Utah.

In 1935 and 1936 2 more rooms and a bath were finished in our home. In 1937, I worked

for the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation building Hyrum Dam. I bought a 1936 Chev, like new, a real car. In 1938 the family went to Yellowstone National Park. It was the first time I had seen it.

In 1939, I built a home for my sister, Leda, in Logan. 6 August 1939, the family left for San Francisco and the Golden Gate Exposition on Treasure Island, then north up the coast to Portland, Seattle, Vancouver British Columbia, Yakima to see Aunt Lena, mother's sister, and home. We all had a good time. In 1941, we traveled to the Grand Canyon, Zions, & Bryce Canyon.

World War II started and I worked March, April and May 1942 at the Logan Airport; then one year at Bushnell Hospital in Brigham City, 1946 and the war was over, and we could again take to the road. We took a trip to Los Angeles, San Diego, Tijuana, Mexico, Las Vegas, Boulder Dam and home.

1947 was the year my brother, Clarence, and I started building new homes. First, we worked by the hour, then started contracting the carpenter work. Later we contracted all the work and materials. We didn't want for work at any time. We built homes in many of the valley communities from Wellsville to Smithfield, Hyrum to Trenton. Most were in Hyde Park and Logan. Clarence and I had a good relationship. I did the bookkeeping as we worked together on construction. He also did the electrical work on some jobs. When it was time for the finish work, I built the cabinets. Clarence hung all doors, shelves, casings and base boards.

Over the years our sons worked with us and learned to work with their hands.

We always took pride in our work and tried to give the customer his money's worth. One man said as he watched us work, "Don't you fellows ever stop at oil?" inferring that we rarely took a break for even a drink of water. One year a broken leg slowed me down, but there was work to be done and I continued as best I could with the cast on.

Much of the reward for our efforts came years later when someone would say: "You know that cabinet you built, or fireplace mantle, is just like it was when you finished it. How we have enjoyed your expert workmanship each day. You took such a personal interest in our project and in us. We have recommended you to our friends as builders who can be trusted and will do the finest job possible."

In 1949 I purchased a new 2 door Chevrolet car. The family took a trip to Yellowstone National Park, north to Cardston, Canada, back through Glacier National Park, the four of us and Spencer's bride-to-be, Nellene.

Spencer and Nellene were married later that fall. In 1950, with 5 in the family, we started on a 23 week vacation by car to the east coast, to Denver, Kansas City, St. Louis, Columbus, Washington D. C., Philadelphia, New York City, Albany, Palmyra, Niagara Falls, Chicago, Rapid City and home making a wonderful trip of some 5,000 miles.

I bought a new Chev in 1953, a 4 door sedan, and it was a beauty.

Harold married Erma Jean Call in 1955.

I built Spencer a new home in Logan in 1956. I purchased a new car in 1961, a Chev. In 1963, I built Harold a new home in Bountiful, driving back each day accompanied by Clarence and some days Gladys.

In October 1956, we went by car to California, then by plane to Hawaii—a second honeymoon. Gladys's sister, and her husband, Arley and Orval Colman went with us. We visited 4 islands spending most of the time on Oahu. We went to Fort Kamehameha where I was soldier

for a year in World War I. After nearly 50 years, some things were the same, but many had changed or disappeared.

In 1966 I purchased a new car and went to Canada taking my brother, George, and his wife, where we enjoyed the National Parks and natural scenery of the Rocky Mountains.

In 1970, Spencer, Harold and I planned a trip to Reno to see the collection of old cars at "Hurrahs." We decided it would be fun to invite my brothers, George, Lee and Clarence to go with us. How we enjoyed spending 4 hours looking at and talking about the hundreds of old cars, talking and laughing about the old ones that had come to Hyde Park. The one mistake made was not taking a tape recorder and getting all the jokes and stories of their doings in the past. It's a trip I'm sure will never be forgotten by any of us.

30 September 1975 was a great day—our Golden Wedding Anniversary and October 1<sup>st</sup> was my 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday. We celebrated these events on 4 Oct. At Maddox Ranch House in Brigham City. All of our family were there—21 in total. That evening was enjoyed by all at our home, and a beautiful wedding cake from our sons was served to those present.

Our family has always been close and we loved to associate with each other. For more than 25 year, Labor Day was a 3 day holiday for 4 or 5 of the Hancey brothers. We would go to a different place each year, north to Yellowstone, east to Vernal, south to Moab and Montana, and west to Reno. Great were the trips we so enjoyed and the memories that were made.

I was a charter member of the Hyde Park Lions Club and enjoyed participating in their service projects. I am proud to have been a member and supporter of the American Legion for 45 years. This association gave me the opportunity to place flags on the graves of war veterans who are buried in the Hyde Park Cemetery. I did this each Memorial Day for over 40 years. I respect the flag and love the country it represents.

At the James Hancey Reunion in 1980 Gladys and I were given special recognition. Erma R. Waite wrote the following verse:

Leslie Perer Hancey, a man of great worth. This year we commemorate 90 years since his birth.  
Let's extol some of his virtues, his vices are few he belongs in a class that not many men do.  
He has worked all his life—mad perfection his game  
Whether carpentry, plumbing or mechanics, it all was the same.  
He is a "first class" great man, always willing to do almost anything anyone asks him to.  
He fought for his country, a patriot we's say, Yes, he carries the battle scars right to this day.  
A father, a husband, his posterity is numerous, his counsel is profound, yet he also is humorous.  
A neighbor, a friend—a booster of good. He helped build this community like everyone should.  
As he reaches the milestone of 90 good years, We love him, we toast him and give him our  
cheers  
May he remain healthy and happy the rest of his days  
We honor him and respect him in hundreds of ways.  
This world we live in would not be so "chancey"  
If there were more men like Leslie Peter Hancey.

On 1 Oct. 1982, I was 90 years old. The family planned a birthday party for me which was at the China House Restaurant in Logan. A birthday party, a 57 wedding anniversary and a going away party all held the same night. The guests included family and friends—45 in attendance. The going-away party was for Marie, our granddaughter, who had accepted a mission call to Norway.

Dad's hearing handicap did not stop him from conversing with people. He learned to lip read and could hear those who spoke clear and distinctly. He was even able to converse on the telephone to order concrete and materials from the lumber yard. Sometimes when he didn't hear all that was said, he used the by word "Is that a fact."

Leslie suffered a stroke in early October, 1982, from which he recovered. In March, 1983, a heart took him from this life on 22 March. The funeral services were held in Hyde Park on 25 March.

We all miss this good man and the examples he set for us to follow—that of helping others by doing what he saw needed to be done without being asked. His poay was the satisfaction of helping family, neighbors, and friends in using his many talents for the benefit of others. A quote often used that he attributed to James Hancey, his father was: "Anything worth doing was worth doing well." This he believed and practiced throughout his life.

"AND THAT'S A FACT"

Written by himself. Information taken from the book JAMES HANCEY AND FAMILY  
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