

BYRON GOODRICH AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born November 23, 1887 at what is now Maeser Ward, Vernal, Uintah County, Utah, the 11th and youngest child in my mother's family. My father operated the Johnson flour mill and lived in a house close to the mill--the house where I was born. He operated this mill three years. The family moved from there to Merrill Ward, now Naples.

When I was one year old, they built a house on the two acre lot just north of the Naples chapel. Several of my brothers and sisters died from diphtheria about the first year in this place. I went through all that seige without contracting the dread disease.

My first school days were in the log school house located on what is now the Jake Karren corner about one mile north of the present Naples chapel. Our entertainments were held there--programs and children's dances, where I first learned to dance. I was baptized May 6, 1890 by George A. Slaugh in Ashley Creek. I was ordained a deacon and enjoyed my duties cleaning the meetinghouse, passing the sacrament and gathering fast offerings. We had priesthood meeting every Saturday night. My first deacon president was John McKowen.

We lived at the above mentioned place until I was about 13 or 14 years old and during that time witnessed the gathering of materials for the construction of the large brick chapel known as the Naples Chapel, which stood as a monument to those faithful pioneer men and women until 1948 when it was considered inadequate to serve the needs of the increased population and church activities.

During the construction of this chapel I did many little jobs running errands etc. for the men laborers. The adobes were made right there and piled into kilns and baked. I helped a lot carrying these adobes and bricks. During 1948 when the structure was taken down, the materials were used as part of the new chapel built on the same plot of ground.

While we were living at this place, close to the Naples chapel, my father was called on a mission to the Southern States. I don't know just how we managed while Father was on this mission, as he had three large families living under very humble circumstances. None of the boys who weren't married were old enough to do a man's work. I do remember that we were very short on clothing and our food was plain and not much variety.

During the summertime I herded cows much of the time, as we usually had two or three. Most of the time they were herded across the road west from the home. At that time, cattails grew thick and tall and the cows would stay in them for hours at a time. Sometimes they wouldn't come out at evening and I would roll my overalls above my knees and wade through the black mud and swamp water in search of the cows.

We generally kept a pig or two and it was my job to feed and water them. I had to go a little way north in the winter time to get a pail of water for the animals. We could hear the whistle at the flour mill in Vernal as it blew each noon and evening, and I had the habit of stopping whatever I was doing when it started to see how far I could count while it was blowing. One evening as I was

getting water for the animals, the whistle started and as usual I set my pail down and started counting. I counted until I was tired and the whistle kept on going. I don't remember how long it blew, but the next morning I found out that Utah was declared a state which explained everything. Utah, having been a territory, became a state on January 4, 1896 at which time I was eight years old.

We moved onto my father's farm about one and a half miles east about 1901, where I lived until the spring of 1913. I attended district school in Naples in winter, and herded cows and did farm work in the summer, until I was sixteen. During these years of my boyhood my father's three families lived on the farm.

We boys and girls of the three families enjoyed ourselves playing marbles, ball, and other games. There were enough of us for a ball game without the help of the neighbors. However, our place seemed to be a sort of central gathering place where our neighbors and friends came and joined in the games with us.

In the summer we went to Ashley Creek to swim, and in winter to skate. I took such delight in hunting and fishing, also baseball. I did the pitching in most of the games. We had some interesting games competing as wards. There were no picture shows then, but we enjoyed dancing frequently, and had some home parties. Our means of transportation was by foot or horseback, and when the family went together it was by team and wagon. We had no modern conveniences.

It is interesting to me to think of how the three families got along. As we kids played together I don't recall that we ever had any difficulties such as jealousies and quarreling because of us being three separate families. I'm sure we got along together as well as the average single family.

Each family had its own vegetable garden, its own milk cows. Each family had its own home, living about 150 yards apart. Father, with the help of his boys, planted and harvested the crops. Our entire living was produced on the farm. Our living was plain with no luxuries.

I don't recall any trouble or difficulties between the three wives. Perhaps Father was a good psychologist, peacemaker or whatever it took. Father worked away some as rock mason, and also watermaster of Central Canal. We sometimes refer to each other as half brothers and half sisters, but to me they are all the same. To me there is something quite wonderful in growing up in a large family.

On June 18, 1909 I married Violet M. Starkie. The ceremony was performed by Bishop James N. Shaffer in the adobe house on my father's farm. A large crowd of relatives and friends attended the dance in the Social Hall. I didn't have much money to buy the ring. It was only a plain gold band costing \$10.00, but it still shines and means as much to us after 45 years as if it was a costly diamond one.

BYRON AND VIOLET STARKIE GOODRICH

By Lela Goodrich Johnson

Byron Goodrich, son of George Albert and Eliza Ann Taggart Goodrich was born 23 November 1887 at what is now Maeser Ward, Vernal, Uintah, Utah, two years after the family moved to Vernal from Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the eleventh and youngest child in his mother's family. His father operated the Johnson flour mill and lived in a house close to the mill. Byron was born in this house.

The family then moved to Merrell Ward, now Naples, and built a two-room house on the corner north of the Naples Ward Chapel. Several of his brothers and sisters died there of diphtheria, but he did not contract the dread disease.

His first school days were in the log school house located on what became known as the Jake Karren corner, about one mile north of the Naples Ward chapel. Entertainments were held there, programs, children's dances where he first learned to dance, and church meetings.

He was baptized 6 May 1896 by George A. Slaugh in Ashley Creek. Later he was ordained a deacon and enjoyed his duties cleaning the meetinghouse, passing sacrament and gathering fast offerings. They had priesthood meeting every Saturday night.

During this time the old Naples chapel was built and he saw them make the bricks right there. He helped a lot by carrying bricks and running errands for the men who worked there. While they lived in this house his father was called on a mission to the Southern States. None of the unmarried boys were old enough to do a man's work and they were short of clothing and didn't have much variety in food. He herded cows across the road west from the home. Cattails grew thick and tall and the cows would stay in those for hours at a time. Sometimes they would not come out and he had to roll his overalls above his knees and wade through the black mud and swamp water in search of them.

The whistle at the flour mill in Vernal could be heard as it blew each noon and evening, and he had the habit of stopping whatever he was doing when it started to see how far he could count while it was blowing. One evening the whistle blew, he set his pail of water down and started counting. He counted until he was tired and the whistle kept on blowing. He didn't know how long it blew, but the next morning he learned that Utah had been declared a state.

The three families moved then to their farm about a mile and a half east. All the brothers and sisters of the three families enjoyed each other. There were enough of them for a ball game without the help of neighbors. However, the neighbors liked to gather there. They would swim in Ashley Creek in the summer, and skate there in the winter. They played all the games

children knew. He loved to hunt and fish and played baseball where he pitched in most of the games. He also took part in foot races. He once took second place in a mile run, completing in four minutes and 45 seconds. The wards would compete in athletics.

He attended the Uintah Academy where he enjoyed athletics most of all, and English and math. He decided to learn a trade and went into barbering where he was paid \$6.00 a week plus room and board. Later he was paid 60% of what he took in.

In 1909 he married Violet M. Starkie, the marriage being performed by Bishop James M. Shaeffer in the adobe house on his father's farm. The next fall they went to Salt Lake City and were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple, going by team and wagon and taking seven days of travel each way.

Violet Mary Starkie was born 5 December 1891 to Edward John and Tora Nielsen Starkie. She was born in a log house with a dirt roof, had three half sisters and one half brother through former marriages of both parents. When she was two years old diphtheria invaded their home and claimed the lives of two sisters and two brothers. She never had the disease. One sister died just five days after her marriage to Jacob W. Olsen, and they all died within about a week. People were so frightened of the disease that no one was allowed to help another, and families were left alone to care for their sick and bury their dead at night.

Families got together for quilting bees and other entertainments. All the children who were old enough would cut and sew carpet rags, and homemade carpets and rugs covered their floors. Refreshments were usually rhubarb pie and bread and butter sandwiches. Parties were usually potluck.

They gathered wild currants and buffalo berries on the banks of Ashley Creek. The main way of preserving fruit was by drying. They made their own soap.

While Violet was very small she had a bad case of red measles, and then another sick spell which they called "la grippe." This left her deaf, with very weak eyes, a weak heart and a crippled leg. For months she couldn't lift her foot off the floor, and had to learn to walk again. She recovered from the lameness but never completely from the other problems. This condition forced her to develop a liking for sewing, making quilts and making use of whatever they had, and she developed skills that helped much in taking care of her own family.

It was hard to get special things for Christmas so they didn't have much. Her mother would save shortening to make cookies for Christmas, and they were lucky if they found a few pieces of candy, a few peanuts and an apple in their stockings. Sometimes in the winter her father would let them take one of his horses and a harness, and they and the neighbors' kids would fasten sleighs together and all take a ride with the horse pulling. Violet was unable to attend school until she was ten years old because of the severe sickness she had after the measles.

In the early spring of 1909 she cooked for seventeen men at the gilsonite mine. It was a terrifying experience to get there, having to go by coach and cross the Green River on the ice, which swayed down and the water ran over it. Then when she came back the ice had melted and the water was very high. Driving the coach onto the ferry from the bank on the east was bad enough, but to get to the bank of the west side they had to drive off the ferry and into the deep water. The water was up to the horses' stomachs and they pawed and lunged for footing among the bushes, willows, roots etc. and the coach would lunge and sway.

Violet said, "The real subject to be discussed is the man I married. I remember how proud he looked when he passed on horseback to see his first girl friend. He was not very old then, but of course, as all young squirts, he felt very much grown up. As he grew older he took up barbering as an occupation. He bought a new buggy and was one of the best dressed young men in the community. And by the way, he had dark curly hair, was a fine dancer, was very polite and gentle in his manners, and always went to church. Of course those were all things that I liked about him." They danced the plain waltz, waltz quadrille, plain schottische, seven-up schottische, rye waltz, two-step, three-step, Chicago glide, Jewel and Varsouvianne.

Violet made her wedding dress of Japanese silk, eggshell color, the skirt gathered full around the waist had a wide flounce with one inch tucks evenly spaced and a ruffle of wide lace at the top of the flounce. The top or waist of the dress had three-quarter sleeves with tucks round and round, a lace yoke and a ruffle of wide lace around the yoke, a high collar with narrow lace frill at the top. She wore white elbow length lace mitts without fingers, white hose and slippers with medium high heels. A wreath of white orange blossoms was on her head. Byron wore a double-breasted navy blue suit and black oxfords, white shirt and a boutonniere of wax orange blossoms. The wedding was in the early afternoon and was followed by a wonderful dinner. They received many lovely gifts, including a pure linen tablecloth which they used for twenty years, a rocking chair and a large trunk which is still in use.

HOW DEAR TO MY HEART ARE THE SCENES OF MY CHILDHOOD WHEN FOND RECOLLECTIONS PRESENT THEM TO VIEW

WE REMEMBER Dad barbered part time and took care of the farm. One day he and the other barber in the shop dared each other to shave their heads. Neither would be outdone, so when Byron came home that night, walked into the lighted room and took off his hat he looked like a peeled onion. He went back to work for a few days but everyone teased him so much that he quit his job for a while until his hair grew back.

WE REMEMBER they had a red Durham cow which supplied them with milk and butter for many years. One time she had twin calves and got milk fever. Dad was away at work most of the time. Mom had heard of using kerosene for such things, so she rubbed the cow's udder several times a day with kerosene. "I've often wondered if that treatment did any good or if the

good Lord saved the cow because we needed her so badly." We remember many times when we had more milk than we needed and Mom would call neighbors who might use it and give it to them. We remember many times that she would also slip in a large piece of butter, home churned.

Dad contracted smallpox in the fall of 1911. It was a terrible disease and the treatment was worse. He told us that the itching was so bad, and in his delirium he dreamed he had a flock of chickens and he had to scratch all of them. The doctor was a short heavy man. When he came he had to crawl through a barbed wire fence because they had no gate. He said, "If you were as fat as I am you would make a gate." He barely stepped inside the door enough to see Dad, said, "I'll say you've got it," put up a smallpox sign and left. When it was all over they had to wash everything and fumigate with formaldehyde, which was so strong it smarted their eyes and noses for weeks after.

WE REMEMBER when we lived in the two-room log house that Grandpa Goodrich built next to the Naples chapel where Dad's brothers and sisters died with diphtheria. At this time the house belonged to the Ward and they used one room for church meetings such as priesthood meeting and Relief Society. Dad took care of the church grounds in the summer and made fires in the winter to pay the rent. Here they bought a large tent and put it on a good solid frame. It had a good floor covered with inlaid linoleum and lumber part way up the sides, a nice new door and sliding window. It was the kitchen. They loved this tent room because it was their own, and they loved listening to the rain pour and patter on it. They spent many evenings popping corn and making candy and enjoying themselves with their children.

Snug in our kitchen here are we
With candy boiling merrily,
While outside, blustering at the door
The March wind creaks the old porch floor,
And raps wind fingers on the pane
And groans and moans his wind refrain.

But we inside scarce hear him blow,
His voice is lost in laughter's flow.
And all his wildest force can't dent
Our family circle's deep content.

WE REMEMBER that they bought nine acres from Richard (Dick) Harrison just east of the Naples chapel. In 1918 they built two rooms and moved into them.

WE REMEMBER World War I and the dreaded flu epidemic in 1918. All public meetings were prohibited, but Lela and Earl continued going to school. The teacher would take just one or two from a family at a time. Our family did not get the disease, but many times Dad had to help bury the dead or cut hair of someone who was ill and died a few days later. Mom kept masks sterilized for him to wear. We lost one horse from a beautiful team, but not from the

flu. Dad said, "If death doesn't come nearer to our family than that, I won't feel too bad."

WE REMEMBER Mom always had some flowers. Sometimes the water was so low in the ditch or so scarce that all we could get had to go on the garden, but she kept the flowers alive by giving them the bath water or dish water. Elma and Jake Lybbert lived south of us through the field about half a mile, and we could always smell Elma's phlox on the summer breezes. Orlo had a husky singing voice and would use it while milking. Sometimes we could hear Bernice Lybbert join him.

We have often thought that Mom could have been a doctor or nurse professionally, and a good one because she was a good one without any special training. She took care of Lowe when he fell against the red hot stove when he was learning to walk, his hand so badly burned that the flesh fell off of it; Wayne when he was playing basketball at Jensen and he fell against another red hot stove, burning his back terribly; also when a dog gave him trouble on his bike and he received a concussion and many cuts and bruises from the fall. The neighbors would bring their children for repairs when they had trouble like getting fingers in the washer motor etc. After any sickness she would wash all the bedding, air everything thoroughly even in freezing weather. We always slept with doors and windows open to keep us healthy. Between her talents and Dad's priesthood our doctor bills were not so bad.

WE REMEMBER Mom singing as she worked, or whistling. She had a lovely soprano voice. Many happy times were enjoyed at home when she or Dad or one of the kids would start singing something and everyone else would join in, harmonizing pretty well. Dad sang in a quartet for many years. Jacob N. Lybbert, Evan Fowler, Lewis Gardiner, Leslie Anderson or John Hodgkinson participated. Nellie Richens or Melinda Goodrich played the old organ in our home where they practiced. Music lessons and instruments were provided for our family, and somehow they put up with the noise of practicing.

WE REMEMBER that in the summer we had to carry water from the ditch for washing, or if the water was out of the ditch for water turns above us we saved water in tubs and barrels. In the winter we had to cut ice or haul snow to melt for cleaning purposes. At first Mom washed on the wash-board, then with a washer manipulated by hand, and then we had a power washer. That must have been a great day for her! A Maytag!

WE REMEMBER the fly plague! Flies were so thick around the house and everywhere inside and out that you wouldn't believe it unless you saw it. Mom would take a burning torch around under the eaves at night or in the morning early, made all kinds of fly traps and sometimes we would even take towels and drive the flies inside the house where we could kill them with fly spray.

WE REMEMBER that Mom was talented in sewing and taught us early to make many clothes for ourselves. She never had a pattern but could cut sleeves, collars, etc. to fit beautifully. Her darned socks looked like fancy work, the mending was so smooth and even. She made over many old clothes into new ones and dyed many things to improve the color or

change it. She washed fleeces of wool, carded it by hand and made it into quilts.

WE REMEMBER their quiet way of disciplining us. Their voices were quiet and soft even when disciplining. One child was sent to the willow patch to cut the willow for her own spanking, but the willow wasn't used. Slamming doors was outlawed at our house. Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a small house with all of us running back and forth and letting the doors slam each time? When we let something go with a bang we were called back to shut it quietly, and eventually we learned that it didn't take any more time or trouble to do it right the first time.

WE REMEMBER that they were not demonstrative, but we always knew how much they loved us! They taught us to respect them and each other and other people. We learned early to respect each other's things. No one took advantage of another by appropriating what was not their own.

WE REMEMBER that we never once heard them argue with each other. Some may think that is not possible, but it was with them. Whatever differences they had they settled quietly between themselves. They always demonstrated complete harmony.

WE REMEMBER bushels and bushels and bushels of fruit and vegetables to can. We had our own raspberry patch which we enjoyed most of all, and other fruit that we raised; corn to husk and cut and it was not without worms; peas to pick and shell (we tried shelling them with the washer wringer once, but it was more work to pick the peas up all over the room than to do it by hand.) It was a very slow job, no pressure cookers, just copper boilers or honey cans. The vegetables had to be cooked so many hours one day, cooled and cooked more hours the next day and still again the third day for things like corn and meat.

WE REMEMBER sleeping out at night and having to carry out beds in sometimes when it rained; overnight hunting trips to Diamond Mountain and Horseshoe Bend; drying corn on top of the cellar; taking a hot iron to bed with us to keep warm in cold weather; Dad's sterile masks for meetings and work in 1938; the ducks and geese to pick after a hunting trip and the lovely feather pillows they made, not to mention that yummy fried or roasted meat!

Straw ticks to fill about twice a year to go under the feather ticks; the honey candy pulls; the comb and harmonica bands we had; the toys the boys would make out of spools, soap etc.; Dad's many meetings and Mom sponging and pressing his suits and always having things neat and ready for him; meals any time of the day because often they had to take turns coming to eat.

We remember old coal stoves and our "poker-packin' mama" stirring up the coals to hurry the fire a little; the Saturday cleanings--Wow!--every corner! The good smells from cooking and baking bread; the hot loaves we could load with butter (homemade) and honey to eat; the ditch that ran through the corner of our place and the fear Mom had many times that a baby she couldn't find had fallen in; the swing in the box elder tree; three honey crops practically embezzled, and the next year a hail storm that destroyed honey prospects completely; old "Dirty-

head" chicken visiting Dad's Sunday School class Sunday morning on the church lawn.

WE REMEMBER many things! Wonderful spiritual experiences like Dad administering to us or talking to us while we cleaned the berry patch in the spring; like the time two black spirits came into the church building and had to be rebuked because they were evil and disrupted the meeting; the dream Dad had before Glenn was born that they would have a girl and then he was a boy, so they knew they were supposed to have one more.

WE REMEMBER Dad as County Commissioner, chairman of Selective Service Board for World War II, Conciliation Commissioner for the Supreme Court; member Farm Security Board; President of State Beekeepers' Association; Farm Debt Adjustment Commission, tax assessor etc.

His church work included officer in his Deacon's Quorum, ward chorister, Bishop's councilor, Bishop for eleven years, high councilman, second councilor and then first councilor to Stake Presidents Hyrum B. Calder and Archie Johnson, and then Uintah Stake Patriarch.

WE REMEMBER when they sadly sold their home in Naples and moved to town. They bought the John Hair home by the high school where they lived until Dad passed away and Mom could no longer care for the place.

WE REMEMBER that they sent missionaries--Lynn's welcome home and Orlo's farewell were the same day. Dad said, "It seemed that our financial situation improved as soon as we began sending missionaries." We remember their Golden wedding in 1959 and their 60th anniversary in 1969. And all of us were there. We remember their very major operations and that they both came near death more than once.

WE REMEMBER most of all the teachings we received all our growing-up days and even after, and the example we were set by fine parents. We remember that they don't want us to have trouble after they are gone, over property or any possessions. We remember that they want us to try always to serve our Heavenly Father and return to be together when we have all gone beyond. We remember that they want us to do good to our neighbors. They want us to live happily together and not have bad feelings between families.

ALL THESE THINGS WE WANT TO REMEMBER!

[Return to Goodrich Family Organization Home Page](#)