

# Autobiography of James Abram Carson

Written when he was 85 years of age

It was in the year of 1856 that five Carson brothers, William Huff, John, David, Washington and George came to Cedar Valley. There was a quick sand spring boiling right out of the ground when they arrived there. They with two other men, John Clegg and William Berdshall, settled there. They named the little town Fairfield. It was here that Johnston's Army came to camp when they made a bargain with Brigham Young to go at least fifty miles south of Salt Lake City to camp. They called it Camp Floyd. My father was the third son of William Huff Carson. My father's only sister married Robert Walker of Walker Brothers Bank. Father's first wife was Amelia Marintha Burton.

My mother, Kaziah Butler was born in Shropshire, England and came to America with her brother and her mother when she was thirteen years old. Her mother then married Grandfather Hodge and they had several children. My mother and father, Samuel David, were married in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City in 1874. My mother had been married to William F. Carson and they had two children, William and Mary Ann.

Father and Mother had David Edwin, born April 22, 1878 and Daisy Rebecca, born June 22, 1879. Then came James Abram Carson. I was born July 24, 1881 to Samuel David Carson and Kaziah Butler Carson in a small adobe house at Fairfield, Utah. My father was up to Salt Lake with his first crop of wool the day I was born.

My father owned sheep and I remember spending lots of time helping him with them as a small boy. I also spent time playing marbles. When I was nine years old, I went out to Boulder Summit, stayed my first month away from home and herded sheep alone, corralling them each night by myself.

When still real young, I had diphtheria along in the spring time, and never was sicker in my life. I finally licked it, and never had a real severe sick spell since and I am now 85 years old.

When I was sixteen years of age my father died on February 9, 1897. I had gone out to take care of the sheep while my brother came in to see dad because he had been ailing. The doctor said it was diabetes. When Dad passed away we had lots of doctor bills to pay. But my older half brother took over some of the sheep and my brothers and I herded for him.

In 1901 I left and went to school at the B.Y.U., but in the spring I had to quit early. I came home to shear sheep because I didn't have enough money to finish the year out.

In the spring the flowers were all in bloom, they were really thick. We boys had to quit school early to help with the farm work and the sheep. This was in 1890. In 1891, Dad took his sheep into American Fork canyon. I went with my dad in the fall. When we got to American Fork they told us my half brother Will had been killed by a bear. The bear were really thick. Some sheep had been killed by the bear, but Will was alright.

Dad hired a young man to help with the sheep by the name of Langdale. On their way back to Cedar Valley, they went up through Tick Ville. On the way they learned about an execution of a man father had herded cows with when they were boys. His name was Eric Davis. He had killed his wife up in Walsberg and buried her in his cellar. He had been sentenced to death and was being shot not too far from the road.

The man, Langsdale, bought him a 45-70 Winchester rifle from Chipman Mercantile Company. He and I went south of town to herd the sheep. We took the sheep camp far out - five miles out and we had to bring them to water every other day. There were lots of coyotes. Mr. Langdale was awfully good to me. He would let me shoot over his knee or his shoulder. We loaded our own shells. They were very expensive.

He, Mr. Langsdale, got to going to the dances and got to drinking and was arrested. It turned out he had broke out of jail back east and was going under an assumed name. They came and got him and took him back to jail. He was sure a nice looking young man. He was good to me and never taught me anything wrong, but I never heard from him again.

Things had been going well for my father for some time. He had built a six room brick house for my mother in 1892 and 1893 and I started building a home in 1896 on the homestead Dad had filed on.

There had been a well driver come to town and drove some wells. He brought a great big man with him named Si Robinson. He stayed and worked for different people. A man by the name of Charley Birchel let him sleep in his barn. One evening, a bunch of us went to visit some of our neighbors. We stayed quite late. When we came out to go home, we saw a blaze flare in Mr. Birchel's barn. It was two blocks away. Me and another man ran as fast as we could to see what had happened. The whole place was on fire. He went to turn the stock out and I ran around town to wake the people up to help put the fire out. While we were fighting that fire, the fellow went down about a mile where my Grandfather had about a hundred tons of hay in a large stack and he set it afire and burned it up. The people split up and the younger men went to find him and the others went to guard their own places. When they found him, he was going around the field to get back to the upper end of town to burn the rest of the town down. They took him to the school house and chained with a big chain so he couldn't get away. Marantha caught a cold watching our hay stack that night. They just got her house built (it was a brick home) when she died. This happened in October of 1896.

Then on February 9, 1897, my father passed away. My father had sheep, but he had taken them on what they called shares. He took these sheep giving the owners one and one half pounds of wool for each sheep and one lamb for each ten sheep. He began leasing them on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. So that meant in June that we notified all of the people who had sheep to be there on July 1<sup>st</sup>. My half brother, Will, leased a herd and I went to work for him. We took the sheep up around Box Springs. He went down to Mercur and engaged Andrew Young to come and herd the sheep while we went to Salt Lake to the Great Jubilee, but he failed to come and I got fooled again.

Then I went to work for Uncle Jim getting out mining timber for the mine. My sister Becca came up there to work for a cousin, Morgana Hales. We were there when the soldiers came back from the Spanish American war. There were thirty two that went from Mercur. There were seventy two hundred people in Mercur at that time.

Al Egbert and I built the drag trail around pole canyon break. Uncle Jim was a great timber man. He would cut the trees down and trim them and I would slide them down to the drag trail and Al would drag them around to the summit. Then the two horses would drag enough to load our wagon and we would take it to the mill or the mine. We would get a load 6 days a week. We didn't get very big wages. The men worked twelve hours a day for \$2.50. I worked until the snow got too deep and then I went back to the sheep camp for the winter. Then I worked at the shearing corral for about six weeks. I worked for Will Thomas. We sheared about 143,000 in one year.

In 1908 Teddy Roosevelt sent the American Fleet into the California bay for everyone to see. Alma and I went to California to see what was there. The commander was from Utah and the Salt Lake Cadets led the parade. It was right after the big earth quake and there wasn't over twenty automobiles. There were piles of mashed timber as big as hay stacks. If the wind would of changed, they said it would have burned the whole city to the ground, but when the wind changed it just burned to the street and stopped. They estimated the people out on Goat Island that had come to watch the fleet at one million, but we chartered a small boat and went past seal rock and on into the ocean to meet the Southern Fleet. The parade was five mile long; all pulled by horses, except maybe a dozen dignitaries. There were fifteen war vessels in the pacific fleet and twenty four in the Atlantic fleet with perhaps a hundred small craft. It put you in mind of an old duck with her little ones swimming around. We went from there to Los Angeles on the train. We went through nine tunnels on the way down. We spent a couple of days driving. We stayed at the Nalic Hotel. They charged 35 cents per meal no matter what you ordered. We came home over the San Pedro, Salt Lake and San Pedro railroad. It was just finished in 1902. It took the place of the one that went through Cedar Valley and went

around through Tooele. There was 8 to 10 inches of snow when we got to Tooele. It was so hot coming through the desert that you could hardly breathe. We had to go back to the herd, it was quite a change, but we were used to that.

We bought a herd of yearlings. I went to Kansas with Will and four carloads of sheep. There was a slump so we didn't make any money on them. We had done well though; we had two herds or 7,000 head. We then gave up the ones we had leased but still had 3500. I then went up to Idaho with my cousin to buy a carload of calves, but someone came along and bought them all while he was down there visiting. I visited all my relatives. I was there for ten days. I came back home empty handed but ready to go to work.

The Sunday after we came home, I went to Sunday School. There was a well there and my future wife was there getting a drink. I had lived with her family and had worked for her father quite a lot, but when I saw her that morning, I knew she was the girl for me.

Murrel and I worked in the Sunday School for some 27 years. I was also president of the young men's mutual for three years.

We also did home dramatizations. I remember the first play we put on was "All that Glitters is Not Gold". I played opposite Murrel's sister, Sybil. That was before I started to go with Murrel.

My brother, Dave, had got married in 1907. He then got a nervous spell and had to come home. That left me pretty well alone with the sheep.

When Murrel and I decided to get married, we rented a couple of rooms from my sister Becca and her husband Lehman. She and I came over to the Lehi Co-op and bought furniture and what else we could get into the two rooms. We lived there until Lehman sold out and then we moved into Alf Cooks old home. We then sold our sheep and I built our home. We moved into it just before Christmas of 1911 and Nora was born February 25, 1912 and Verna was born August 14, 1913 and Herbert was born February 18, 1914.

Mother (Kaziah) died January 17, 1915. Then my sister, Nellie Louise married LeRoy Wilson February 2, 1915. My brother, David Edwin died November 24, 1917. Our little girl, Ada Kaziah was born May 30 1916 and lived for fifteen days. (She died of prematurely).

After we sold our sheep, we got a baseball team together. We used to go west to Vernon, Mercur, St. John and Ophir to play with their teams. On the east we would go as far as Payson. We had a right good team. We used to play once a week. We played a traveling team called the bloomer girls in Lehi. They beat us one point.

Ether and Ray Carson and me went up to Strawberry with our families in 1920. That was just after they dammed the river and made the reservoir. We camped there for about ten days. Charley Flack was camped pretty close. We went to his camp and had sour dough bread. How we did enjoy it. Those were the good old days. There was a man from Goshen who had the boating rights. He would row us around by hand, three of us most of the day for a dollar a piece. There were five of us and six of Ethers' family and five of Rays or sixteen all together. We had a great time. There were no paved roads there then. We just followed the creek up Daniels canyon. I had our little Eastman Kodak camera that I gave mother (Murrel). I think it cost about \$16.00, but I got lots of pictures with it. It is still here on the top shelf in the closet.

Since we moved to Lehi and I joined the Mormon Battalion, Mama and I have had a lot of fun with a lot of nice people. We have marched in many cities and states from California to Canada and have visited all of the western temples. We took part in pageants in Salt Lake and Omaha. We had a chance to do a lot of missionary work in our travels. I was the oldest Mormon Battalion member to march in an inaugural parade (for John F. Kennedy). I was 79 then. I marched in the 24<sup>th</sup> of July parade in Salt Lake on my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I have a picture of that. John Bushman and a man by the name of Efferson and I marched together behind

some horses. We marched from the Brigham Young Monument to ninth south and then to third east. When they moved the monument, we had our names place in the box in the bottom of it.

The last week it has seemed as though I was with some of my family all night long. They would be working so hard and they would be helping me. One morning I woke up and it was so real when I awoke, that I reached for my dear wife and was so disappointed when she wasn't there.

Aunt Ruby added some of her thoughts.

Dad engaged in several occupations besides farming and being a wool grower. He worked at the clay bed at five mile pass west of Fairfield. When the Deseret Chemical plant was operating, he worked there for fifteen years and retired when he was seventy seven.

Dad was a religious man and had a testimony of the gospel. He was in the Sunday School and MIA in Fairfield and then when they moved to Lehi, he was ordained a High Priest and served as group leader of his quorum. He liked meetings that started on time. He always paid his tithing and his Church dues. He did a lot of Temple work. He loved his family and all of his grandchildren and was very proud of them.

It was a very hard day for Dad the day Mom died, May 12, 1962. She had undergone surgery for a hernia and passed away the next morning, probably from a blood clot. Dr. Larsen called and informed me of Mother's death, and asked me to please hurry and come to the hospital before Dad arrived because he wanted someone there when he told Dad that Mom was gone. When Dad arrived

Dr. Larsen told him that he had some bad news and then told him about Mom. Dad stood there, thinking, then he walked over and shook Dr. Larsen's hand and thanked him for all he had done for Mom - for keeping her alive this long. I will never forget the impression my Dad made on me that day. His heart was breaking, yet he was comforting Dr. Larsen. My Father was a strong man and had endured many heartaches in his lifetime. I will always be grateful for the good relationship that I had with him.

He was very lonely without Mom, but he did a good job of trying to keep the house and yard neat and tidy, going to Church and going to the cemetery every day. He kept flowers on Mom's grave, trimmed the grass and planted some trees, like he thought Mom would want him to.