

## ELLA GERTRUDE BIRD

Born: 27 July 1870 St. George, Washington County, Utah

Died: 17 July 1941 St. George, Washington County, Utah

Buried: Provo City Cemetery, Provo, Utah

### Parents:

Jasper Thomas Bird

b. 11 Apr 1848

d. 30 Mar 1901

Eunice Ann Starr

b. 18 Jul 1850

d. 15 Sep 1905

### Marriage:

David Cate Leavitt

b. 25 Oct 1864

d. 4 Aug 1924

(This history is compiled from memory and records and conversations of Ella Maud Leavitt Brown, daughter of Ella Gertrude Bird).

Ella Gertrude was the first of 10 children born to Eunice Starr and Jasper Bird.

The family had been called by the authorities of the Church of Latter Day Saints to move to St. George, Utah and establish a community. Grandpa Bird was a farmer, but as this was the time that the St. George Temple was being built, I am sure he must have put in many hours working on the Temple also.

The family was very poor and had just the bare necessities to get along. As Ella got older she helped her mother with the housework and taking care of the younger children. One Christmas time, she (Ella) sat up nights and sewed rag dolls out of old clothes for the little ones Christmas presents. She and her mother made some candy out of what little molasses they could get (from the Tithing House).

When Ella was 5 years old her mother gave birth to twin boys, Jasper and Orson. When the twins were 2 years old another baby boy was born, Edward, but he only lived 3 weeks. When Ella was 7 years old a baby girl was born. She was named Laura. From then on five more children were born to Eunice and Jasper, but they died within a few months, except Claudin, who lived two years. The last child was born in Clover Valley, Nevada. (I don't know why the family had moved there. Grandpa Bird had a sister (Maribah Bird Woods) living in Nevada).

Ella and her brothers and sister had shoes that they kept to wear only for school and Sunday School, so they went barefooted during the summer. The hard-baked alkali ground of St. George was terribly hot, so they would pick the big leaves off eucalyptus trees and lay them on the ground in front of them to step their feet on when they had to cross the road or where the sun was the hottest.

Ella was now 18, I don't know a lot about her growing up years, except she had to work out of the home a lot doing cleaning, in other peoples houses, etc. When she was 20 years old she met and married David Cate Leavitt on 25 October 1890. This would be an interesting story (I

wish I knew it). Here was Ella, a good little Mormon girl, and David was a bartender who travelled along with the building of the railroads. I imagined he smoke and drank, because as a child I remember that he did in his later years. Anyway, how they met and became well acquainted enough to be married I would like to know.

They must have moved to Provo, Utah as their first child, Charles Lynn Leavitt was born there on 1 September 1891. I remember Ella saying that they moved to Bingham Canyon, Utah that winter and David went to work in the mines. They rented a little house on the side of the mountain and the snow was so deep that they didn't know, until Spring came and the snow melted, that the house had a little white fence around it.

Two years later another son was born to them, 16 September 1893. They named him Don Carlos Leavitt. He was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. I don't know where they were living in Salt Lake or whether Ella had to go there to have the baby.

From there they moved to Sunnyside, Carbon County, Utah. David was then working in the coal mines. A baby girl was born to them while living in Sunnyside on 13 May 1896. They named her Norma. David worked in the coal mines, moving from one to another wherever the wages were the best. The coal mines worked mostly in the winter months and laying off in the summer as there was not so much need for coal in the warm months. There were no Unions and wages were extremely low.

The family moved to Eureka, Juab County, Utah where on 22 March 1898 another baby girl was born. They named her Bertha. They were happy with their family of four. However, it was not to last as little Bertha died three days before her first birthday. She was buried in Eureka on her first birthday.

Ella and David and family moved onto Vernal, Uintah County, Utah where another son, Clifford was born on 22 May 1901. David was farming for a living in Vernal. They lived there for two years in Indian Canyon working in the timber, cutting, and milling. As stories are told of the Indians who were there—they were troublesome. They tell of how David would take Lynn (now 9 or 10 years old) and strap him on a horse so there would seem to be more than one person alone and ride miles to pick up mail and a payroll for the men who were working in the timber.

Ella must have gone back to Vernal, Utah as another baby was born on 30 October 1903, a girl they named Roxie Vivian.

They moved back again to Sunnyside, Utah where on 15 April 1906 a son, Claud Leon was born. From then on David stayed pretty much to working in the coal mines of Carbon County. Ella would run a Boarding House (like a Hotel) wherever they lived, in Hiawatha, Standardville, Kenilworth, Cameo, etc. Norma and Roxie helped from the time they were very little girls.

There was never a time in all those years that there wasn't plenty of food in the house and plenty of clothes for the children. David was a good provider and a good husband. He would share whatever he had with whoever need it. When his brothers were out of work, David would feed and clothe their whole families until they could get back on their feet again.

When Claud Leon was 6 years old another baby (their eighth) was born in Kenilworth, Utah on 28 March 1912. A girl who they named Ella Maud (known as Maud). At this time Ella was 41 years old and David was 48. Charles Lynn (Lynn), the oldest child, was 21 years old.

David and Ella were still very hard workers and kept Boarding Houses, and David was still working in the mines, he also worked as a Deputy Sheriff for Carbon County, and sometimes as Sheriff of the town in which they lived.

The companies (the mines) owned the stores and all the houses in towns. The workers rented the houses from their employers.

David had one of his eyes put out in an accident in the mine at Segoe, Utah. He wore a patch over it, or sometimes a glass eye for the rest of his life. Maud also had her eye hurt in play, but didn't suffer any permanent damage.

In 1910 (??) the "Foreigners" or "Greeks" (as they were called then) who were working in the coal mines in Kenilworth, Utah became upset as they didn't think the company was being fair with them. So they went into the hills around the town with guns and would shoot down at the men as they went on their way to work. They went on for quite a while so the company closed down the mine. The mine workers needed to work to make a living for their families, so some of them decided to go up into the hills and flush the "Greeks" out. David was one of these men, and along with his good friend. Thomas Jackson, then went in to find the snipers. They separated and went different directions. David caught one of the snipers and brought him back to town and strapped him to the support beam on the front porch of the Boarding House while he went back after more. When the shooting was over David found his friend Thomas dead, killed by one of the "Greeks." The rest of the men rounded up all the strikers and the mine was able to operate again.

On 27 July 1914 Lynn (Charles Lynn) the oldest boy, was married to Louise Jane Jackson (the daughter of the friend who was killed in the "Greek War.")

Ella and David and family now lived in Morland, Utah where they had a family picture taken in about 1916.,,

Their first grandchild was born 26 December 1916. She was named Wanda Lynette.

The family lived in Segoe, Utah and there Norma (the oldest girl) married Lawrence Madsen. Ella was running the Boarding House there in Segoe and people started getting sick. Soon the whole town was down with the "flu." Everyone was quarantined in, but Ella was still going to Norma's, to Don's and back again until Ella caught the flu herself. Norma was expecting a baby at this time and she had a very bad case of the flu and was unable to survive. She died 3 November 1918 and was buried without a funeral, because of all the sickness, in Segoe, Utah—taking her unborn baby with her.

Don was married (first wife) to Mabel Smith, and in 1917 another grandchild, Donna Flavella, a girl was born to them. About this time Don went into the U. S. Army to serve his

country. The story is told of when Ella and David took Don to Grand Junction, Colorado to catch the train to go to the Army—on the way back home their car was hit by a train and dragged several hundred feet. No one was hurt seriously, but Ella's back was injured and she had problems with it for all her years to follow.

In 1923 when Maud was 10 years old the family sold everything and moved to Oakland, California. David had already moved ahead to them down there. Ella left Utah, leaving Lynn and his family, Roxie and her family (Roxie had married Nephi Christensen of Sunnyside, Utah on 24 February 1923) and their baby girl (Barbara only a few months old). It was hard for Ella to leave. Clifford, and a friend of his (Harold Bell), Claud, and Maud moved with their mother. Clifford and Harold drove the car, with all their belongings were piled on top of the car, and hauling a trailer.

David, already in Oakland, had bought a rooming house (or Boarding House) and Ella was going to operate it. We stayed at the campground, and the next day Ella, David and I (Maud) went to see the property David had bought. As we were going through the building Ella got VERY ANGRY (I don't remember her being angry before), and she took hold of Maud's hand and started hurrying them along—cautioning Maud not to touch any of the walls, the doorknobs, or the bannister, and Maud realized Ella was VERY UPSET. Ella wanted us out of the building!!! And out of Oakland as soon as possible!!! I (Maud) didn't know until years later that the property David had bought was a brothel (a house of ill repute) or whatever they called them in those days!

“I have often wondered if my Dad had known about that house all along?? I don't know how Mother (Ella) found out what kind of a house it was—maybe the 'tenants' were still there? When she told me about it later, she just told me the details and was very adamant about not telling me any of the details.”

Of course things didn't work out like they had planned, and the family did not stay in Oakland, California. They moved on to a place about 500 miles northeast of San Francisco, California (where Chico, California is now). David managed a rice farm there. Ella did the cooking again for all the workers. The family lived there less than a year and then moved to the State of Oregon.

In the meantime, Don was divorced from his first wife Mabel, and he came up to Oregon to live with the family. David had contracted a job—to put up the hay on a large ranch just outside of Kelso, Washington. One day, as the men were in to eat dinner (Ella cooking for them) David sent Claud and another boy to give the horses their water. They had several miles, so the boys decided to ride the horses. There was an old gravel pit and the train would go there every week or two to get the gravel. The train coming blew its whistle as the boys were riding—and the noise of the whistle scared the horses. The horses ran straight for the train, it whirled around, throwing Claud off of the horse and right under the wheels of the train—the last two wheels of one car ran over his legs, and the front two wheels of the second car ran over them also!! It cut both his legs completely off just below the knees!! The train stopped as soon as it could and they put Claud in the cab of the train. He had not lost consciousness, and he had managed to put some kind of tourniquets on his legs. The engineer took him to where the road crossed the track and hailed down a car to take him into Kelso to the hospital. The other boy rode back to the ranch

and told us what had happened. Everyone hurried to the Kelso Hospital and found Claud (still conscious) waiting in the hall on a stretcher for them to take him into the operating room. This was an awfully hard thing for Ella; away from her home (Utah), and away from most of her family.

Ella and Maud stayed in Kelso for many months until Claud was released from the hospital. The accident was published in all the surrounding papers, and the L. D. S. Missionaries (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) who were serving in that area read about it and learned that our family was L. D. S. so they came to Kelso and located lodgings for Ella Maud with another L. D. S. family who had been converted a few months before.

Ella was a strong believer in the truthfulness of the Gospel and she bore her testimony many times at cottage meetings that were held in that family's home.

Claud was a very long time getting well. Both legs were gone below the knees. He also was anxious to come back home to Utah. When he was able to travel—Don carried him on his shoulders to and from the car, lodgings, etc., and all the family came home to Utah. They lived in Salt Lake City, where Claud could go to the doctors and start having some artificial legs made. When he had these wooden legs made and wore them I (Maud) remember him taking them off to change the bandages and pads of material on his legs to protect them. They were not much protection though, because I would also see how bloody and sore and raw looking his legs were. They rented a little house on 8<sup>th</sup> South and 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> West, later they bought and moved to a house on Floral Avenue (between State Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> East, and between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> South). David sold the house on Floral Avenue and bought a home at 12<sup>th</sup> D Street. Claud got his new legs and would walk back and forth from home to school (he was attending a telegraph school) up and down the hills of the avenues.

David was ill with what they called “Black Lung,” but was still working in the mines. He would come to Salt Lake City on weekends and whenever he could. He came home one time and was very sick with pneumonia and a bad heart, and on 4 August 1924 he died. Ella had his funeral in Provo, Utah. That was where all his brothers lived, and he was buried in Provo City Cemetery in August 1924. The Bishop of the Ward they lived in in Salt Lake City, traveled to Provo to speak at his funeral. David had been a good man, and a good father, and grandfather. Ella would miss him terribly, but she continued on with her lot in life.

Ella went to the temple and performed David's ordinance work (4 Sept 1924), she also did the ordinance work for Norma and Bertha, (10 Sept 1924) and Maud was sealed to her parents David and Ella.

She remodeled their house into two apartments and rented one side to earn money to help them live she still earned money cleaning homes (very little money). This enabled them, Ella, Claud and Maud to keep a home for themselves. She and Claud were very close. Ella tried to be wherever he needed her (as his job as a telegraph operator took him to many places, even out-of-state). Ella kept the house for a few years and then sold it to buy a smaller house at 415 Cleveland Avenue. There she still did housework for others and she was also custodian of the Waterloo Ward Chapel. Maud helped her with both of these jobs after school and on Saturdays.

She had a hard time making ends meet. (I, Maud, remember washing and drying, by hand, all the sacrament cups, they were glass in those days. Ella was VERY PARTICULAR that the cups be perfect. They could not have any water spots, or dishtowel smears. I had to make them “Shine Like The Sun.”)

When Claud was out of town, Ella would go with him, and Maud would be sent to live with Roxie and her husband Nephi Christensen and their two children (Barbara and William) in Kenilworth, Utah, Carbon County. Ella would also live with them quite often—still going to be with Claud whenever it was possible. In 1926 or 1927 Claud was in Butte, Montana. Ella took Maud and they moved there also. They were there for about a year and Maud attended school there and was then sent back to Roxie and Nephi when school was out. Ella and Claud went on to Helena, Montana and then Claud went into Canada and Ella moved back to Kenilworth again. From then on Maud attended school in Carbon County.

Ella must have sold the house on Cleveland Avenue, because in 1929 Ella and Maud moved in to Salt Lake again to take care of David’s mother (Harriet Lovina Bowen Leavitt Lillywhite b. 23 Oct. 1844/d. 7 May 1942—see her history). She (Grandma Lillywhite) was then 85 years old. Grandpa Lillywhite’s family had taken him to live with them and Grandma could not be left alone. We were living there when the news came that Claud had been killed. (died 16 June 1930).

He had been working in the eastern United States and had been laid off. It was then the start of the “Great Depression” Claud was working his way back to Utah and was in Omaha, Nebraska. He was working for the railroad and had train tickets in his hand when he was either knocked down, or pushed, or fell (we don’t really know) off the platform and under the moving train! The same way he had got his legs cut off years before!!! The news of this was almost more than Ella could bear, but somehow even though you don’t think you can, you have to go on—and Ella did, with her faith in God!

Claud was buried in Provo City Cemetery beside his father.

At this time Grandma Lillywhite’s family decided to take her to live with them, so Ella and Maud moved up to 280 “G” Street to live and keep house for Elizabeth Jackson Moffatt. She was the sister to Ella’s daughter-in-law Louise (Lynn’s wife). Elizabeth was a widow and had two small girls, plus her mother, Grandma Jackson, living with her. Ella and Maud did the cooking and cleaning and tending the children in payment for their board and room.

Maud was married the next spring (21 March 1931) to Harold Lawrence Brown, and they moved to Midvale, Salt Lake County, Utah. Ella kept working at the Jackson’s but would spend her days off visiting with Maud and Harold in Midvale.

Roxie and Nephi and family moved into Salt Lake City about this time, and Ella then divided her time (when she wasn’t working) between Roxie’s and Maud’s homes.

This went on while more grandchildren were born. When Ella reached the age of 60, Roxie worked at trying to get some financial aid to help Ella. Finally she was able to get her an

old age pension, which meant that she wouldn't have to work quite so hard. But Ella still worked hard anyway.

Ella got awfully sick in 1936 (she was then 66 years old). She was in the hospital for many weeks. The doctor finally determined that she had Typhoid Fever. She was in intensive care, and Roxie visited her every day (the hospital was within walking distance of Roxie's home). Maud was living in Sandy, Utah at that time and there was no transportation available. They (Maud and Harold) had only one car and Harold needed to drive that too and from work, but on his days off and in evening they drove to the hospital (12 mile trip). They (Maud and Harold) also had two small children...so traveling to the hospital was difficult.

The three sons, Lynn, Don, and Clifford all lived in Carbon County still.

Ella was never able to do the hard work she had done before, but she still had her own apartment and went to do Temple Work every day. She was still at Roxie's or Maud's whenever she was needed, and lived with one or the other of them off and on.

In 1939 or 1940 Maud and Harold were remodeling their house in Sandy, Utah and Harold decided to build a little house for Ella. We had a large lot and there was room to build a home for her there. Ella paid for the lumber, materials, etc., to build the house at little at a time. and eventually Harold was able to complete the two-room house for Ella. She moved into the Spring of 1940. She loved it! And fixed it up and decorated it so cute. She was very, very happy about this!!

The summer of 1941 Ella's cousin (Roxie Wood Terry) came and spent a few days with her. When it was time for her to leave she talked Ella into going back home with her to St. George, Utah for a visit, Ella did. They had a wonderful time that summer (this was only the second time that Ella had been back to the place of her birth in the 69 years of her life). They visited old friends, and old places they had known as children. One hot day they took a lunch and walked out to "sugar load" (a flat top mountain where they used to play). The sun was very hot and they had walked a long way, and they were very tired when they arrived back home. Ella got sick, and through exhaustion she suffered a very bad Stroke. Her cousin called the children in Salt Lake City and they, Maud and Roxie, got on the next bus leaving for St. George. When they arrived there Ella could not talk, and could not move one side of her body. It had been a really bad attack! The girls knew she wasn't going to live. They sat by her side all during the day and night. The next morning around 10:00 o'clock on 17 July 1941 Ella was taken home to live in eternity with her dear husband, their two daughters, and their son.

The three sons, Lynn, Donald and Clifford arrived just after she had died.

We brought her back to Sandy to the little house she loved so much at Maud's. We had her funeral in the Sandy 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward with Bishop Marlon S. Bateman conducting. She was buried in the Provo City Cemetery between her husband and her son Claud. She was buried one week before her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

She had lived a good life. A very hard life—although I am sure she didn't think it was hard. She accepted things and made the best of all she had and every day she lived. There were many beautiful and happy times to counter-act the bad ones. She left a wonderful posterity and 19 grandchildren. Everyone who knew her gained and grew by her beautiful spirit and her understanding heart. She had helped other less fortunate than she throughout her life asking nothing in return.

She had served as a Relief Society President in Kenilworth, and I'm sure many other callings that I don't remember. She loved people, and is to this loved and missed by many (certainly by me).

I am writing this as I remember my Mother, and some of the stories that were told of the times before I was born by the help of my sister Roxie. As of this writing (Roxie and I) are the only two still living of the children of David and Ella. I have fond memories of both my parents, and hope this story will enable those who did not get a chance to know them, to at least know about them, and love them as I did.

I remain, Ella Maud Leavitt Brown  
Dated: 24 March 1979  
In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.