

Joseph Arnold Sechrest--Life Story

Joseph Arnold Sechrist was born Jan. 21, 1916, Mt. Airy, Surry, N.C. in Salem community. My father's name was William Addison Sechrist. He was born July 9, 1876 in Stokes County, and he was the son of Louis Sechrist born Jan. 2, 1853 and died Apr. 4, 1933. He was married to Zera Ellen Barnes. She was born August 3, 1883 in Surry county.

I was born in a two-room log house on a farm near Salem Church. My parents were farmers. My brothers are Alvis, Marvin, Ed, James, and Gaston. I have two sisters Birdie and Ovie. My family's health was good except for my mother. Due to her poor health, I didn't get to attend school regularly. At the age of nine while at school I fell off a fence and broke my arm.

My main amusements in childhood were riding sleds in the woods, riding wagons that my brothers and I made, playing ball, swimming, ice skating on the ponds that would freeze over, and horseback riding.

My parents, brothers and sisters, and I were all members of the Salem Methodist Church and attended there quite often. We had family prayer in our home. Also we read the Bible a great deal.

My job in the home was to help with the washing. We had to carry water from a spring down a steep hill and also cut wood for the fireplace and cook stove. I helped my mother with the housework. I also helped my father on the farm. We raised tobacco, corn, and did gardening.

My courtship was short. We were introduced on a Sunday afternoon by a friend of mine, Reid James. I thought Delia was a real nice girl. After dating for a while I found her to be just what I had been looking for. I knew she was the one for me. We dated about seven months and were married at Hillsville, VA, January 28, 1940 by a Methodist minister. We lived with my brother for a short time. We built a house in Salem Community and then our daughter Verona Gail was born. We lived here about three years.

Then we moved to Newport News, VA. We enjoyed living there very much. We were swimming at the beach often and also fishing and boat riding. While there we got to see some of the historical places such as Yorktown, Jamestown, Williamsburg, VA, and others. We went to Sunday school there. I wasn't a member of the church at that time, but I had begun to see the difference in the teaching of other churches. We lived there about three years and moved back to our old home in Salem. In a short time our son Wayne Arnold was born.

In the meantime I had built a store building and stocked it with groceries. I feel Delia helped me in the store, also my brother Ed and his son Otis on weekends. We run the store for about 2 and half years and decided to sell the store and home and move to Shelton town into our new house. It was a new house; it was a two room house near Delia's parents. We lived in it for a while. I worked for Granite Wholesale Grocery Store and A.L. David and sons Grocery Store. After that Earl King and I bought the Granite Grocery Store near the N.C. Granite Co. I sold my store to Earl King and went to work for N. C. Granite Co. I have been working there for about eight years and enjoy it very much.

We have built us a new brick V. house with bath and forced air heat. We sure do enjoy it. We attend Sunday school and Sacrament Meeting. The missionaries met with us for a while and by their help and my good wife and her father-he was one of the best men I ever saw-I was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S. I was baptized July 24, 1949. In 1953 I was ordained to the office of a teacher. Also the same year to the office of priest, and in 1955 I was ordained an Elder. During this time I served on the building committee and saw our new church go up step by step. It was about two years before it was completed. The Church cost about one hundred thousand dollars. I was secretary of the building committee.