

## BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN R. DAVIDSON



John Richard Davidson, son of Warren Samuel Davidson and Mary Jane Bonner, was born the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1877, at Knoxville, Franklin, Mississippi.

John's father, Warren Samuel Davidson moved his family from Alabama in 1897 to the Clifton area of Arizona, then part of Graham County.

John was baptized by George w. Lee and confirmed by Charles M. Jacobson on June 19, 1877.

His schooling began at Reform, Alabamba at the age of 8 years old. He had one year of High School.

John was ordained a Deacon by J.R. Welker in 1900 and ordained an elder by J.R. Welker on June 7, 1903.

He married Mary Jane Warner June 8, 1903. Being married by Apostle Cowley at President Andrew Kimball's home in Thatcher, Arizona.

Her father's family came from Montpelier, Idaho, with a company of Mormon pioneers sent by the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to establish a Mormon community in the Gila Valley. They arrived in 1889 and established the community of Layton, a mile south of Safford.

John's mother died in 1904; his father, learning that his mother back in Alabama was seriously ill, moved his family back to Alabama.

In April 1905 he was endowed and sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.

Samuel Claridge gave John his Patriarchal Blessing on July 21, 1914.

John Davidson bought a 20-acre farm a mile south of Safford, making arrangements to pay for it as he could earn the money. Being a carpenter by trade he returned to Clifton where he worked constructing copper ore reduction mills. His first two children were born there, Richard Warner in 1904 and Leland Charles in 1905.

With the mill in Clifton completed he returned to Safford and built a small two-room lumber house on his property. With rooms added later this became the Davidson family home until 1938.

John worked on various construction jobs in Thatcher, Ray, Hayden and Miami until 1915, when he paid off his farm and returned to Safford to farm his land.

He worked as a carpenter and farmer most of his life.

Sometime after his wife died he met and married Teresa Jane Mims who was born January 1, 1880 and died January 13, 1948. Teresa was a very kind woman and a loving grandmother though she was not a member of the church.

On July 16, 1909 John R. Davidson died of a coronary thrombosis.

Five children had been born to them. After Warner and Leland there were Wilma and Arlo, and Retha who died in infancy. Shortly after returning to Safford their last child, LaVera was born. LaVera died five months after birth.

Warner graduated from Safford High School in 1923, with a major interest in business and art. When Leland also graduated from Safford High the two boys went to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Leland stayed only one semester, but Warner stayed through the year, during which he met Bertha Rae Bohn of Beaver, Utah. They were married in 1927 in Phoenix.

In a couple of years they moved to Los Angeles where he worked as a cost accountant and office manager for thirteen years, then as a professional photographer for ten, during which time he studied for Certified Public Accountant at Northeastern University in Los Angeles.

In 1950 Warner moved his family to Mapleton, Utah, about 10 miles south of Provo, so that his children could attend college at this old Alma Mater. His wife, Bertha, had been teaching school in California, and now joined the faculty in the Department of Education at BYU, where she spent twenty-two years, during which she earned the reputation of an outstanding master teacher.

Warner joined the University in 1952 and spent his career of 22 ½ years on the Administrative Faculty in the Purchasing Department with the principal responsibility of planning, specifying, buying and placing all furniture and interior equipment in the new buildings constructed during the intense expansion program of that University. Additionally, for seven years of this time he had the responsibility of doing the same service for Ricks College (a related school) in Rexburg, Idaho.

Planning ahead for his retirement he attended night school at the University and took private instruction in art for fourteen years. In statewide competition he won all awards from Honorable Mention to First Place, and Best in the Show. He retired from the University in 1974, and is now a practicing artist in landscape oils. His paintings are owned by individuals and business offices all across the County, and his work has been published in an art book distributed in the U.S., Canada, England and Australia.

When John's wife, Mary Jane, died in 1938 he sold his farm and moved to Los Angeles, where he died in 1950. He was buried in the family plot in the cemetery south of Safford.

Leland became a fireman in Los Angeles, retiring after 30 years to a home he purchased in Paradise, California. Wilma lived in Los Angeles. She married Norman Verdell Merrill of Safford, who was murdered in a holdup where he worked. Arlo had a hardware store, "Reliable

Hardware” in Chandler, Arizona, until he closed it out in 1976 and retired. He married Vivienne Lamson of Pima.