

*A Brief History of Vida Erickson Manning Heaton*

*I can barely touch on parts of my life at this time. It would be too long otherwise. The time is now December, 1977.*

*I was born the 5th day of January, 1898 at Beaver Dam, Box Elder County, Utah. The first child of twelve born to Michael Christian Erickson and Ethel May Durfey. My mother had only a midwife to wait on her there in the little house near the foothills in the very south home. She had a doctor for the last four.*

*They were, in order in order of their birth: Vida, Mary Elizabeth, Sylvia Sarah Ann, Alta, Michael Durfey, June, Norvil Francillo, Ethel, Dean Durfey, Lucy (stillborn), Grant Durfey, and Shirley. There were just 25 years and one day between me and Shirley. Grant and Shirley were born after I was married, so they hardly ever really seemed like my bother and sister.*

*Thinking back on my early childhood I remember it as a wonderfully happy, carefree time. I felt so secure, so lighthearted and free. I wish I had the words to describe it.*

*The farm we lived on was a dry farm. We had no lawn or trees but the sunflowers grew thick and tall and I remember the grasshoppers would jump and fly from plant to plant.*

*We had an old dog we called "Rowd", He was my constant companion. We also had a horse called "Ted" and as soon as my legs were long enough to straddle him I rode him.*

*One of my earliest recollections was of Mary and me standing by the south window early in the morning in our nightgowns watching for our mother, who we called "mama", to come back from the pasture where she had taken the cows.*

*Our dad, who we called "papa", always ran a harvesting crew and was away much of the time in the fall, so mama tended the stock, milked the cows, then saddled old Ted and took them to the pasture.*

*Sylvia was the baby at this time and she awoke this certain morning that I remember and was fussing a little. I decided to tend her so I pulled her off from the bed and in doing it, I dropped her on the bare floor. It bloodied her little nose. I was scared to death and now there were two of us crying. I picked her up just as mama came in the door and said, "Mama, I've killed your baby." I really didn't though, Sylvia is still alive and is in her 75th year, my choice sister.*

*We didn't have any light except the coal oil lamps or a lantern. When the sun went down and night came it was very dark. There was only one house that we could see and that was just a glimmer at night. It was Uncle Joe and Aunt Eliza Bitter's home and it was almost a quarter of a mile away.*

*We got our water from a well out at the side of the house. It was drawn up with a rope with a bucket tied on the end.*

*It was always exciting when the header and thresher crew came to our farm to harvest the wheat. The machines were run by horses. The men worked early and late. I remember my sister Mary and I lying in bed in the pitch dark bedroom hearing the horses jostling and pushing each other, the harnesses jangling. Our Uncle Al would draw up the water and pour it into the trough. Sometimes the bucket would hit the side of the rock wall of the well as he'd give it a flip to turn it upside down to fill it with water.*

*We'd hear the men laughing and joking with each other as they washed up in tin basins set by the side of the house. We could smell the meat frying, too, and hot biscuits that were being made in the kitchen. The plates and cups rattled as mama and the hired girls set the table for the men's breakfast.*

*It was such fun in the day to watch their operation. I can't remember how many horses powered the thresher. I think eight teams going around and around again until dark. It was great, too, to see the golden wheat pour out of the spout into the burlap sacks and watch the men sew the sacks fast like one-two-three and take another and fill it. It smelled so good, I can almost smell it now, after all these years. It was a very happy time!*

*Of course there was no refrigeration in those days. Each morning after breakfast Mama would hitch up a team of buggy horses - fast trotters - and dash off to Logan to the Bell Meat Market to buy meat for the day and the next morning's breakfast. She would be back in time to cook the roasts for dinner.*

*In the meantime, the hired girls would be making pies, cakes, or pudding, and bread. It was all done on the old coal range. It was terribly hot, but no one made any fuss about it.*

*When I was 7 years old we moved down to Beaver Dam proper so I could go to school. The school I first attended was held in the basement of the Beaver Dam Church, there on the hill. There were nine grades held there with curtains pulled to separate the groups.*

*My first teacher was Alice Yeates, later Mrs. Frank Merrill of Brigham.*

*I loved school from the first day I went. It was easy for me. Too easy, I think now. They put me from beginners on through the eighth grade in seven years. I really missed some fundamentals and it made it harder later when I attended the Old Brigham Young College in Logan.*

*I always loved sports. We played ball, raced, played Pomp, steal sticks, hopscotch, and we dug Segos on the hills in the spring.*

*We always walked to school and generally to church. The winters got really cold. The snow was deep and crusted and we could walk on top of the crust. About the first of the year there would be, what we called, a January thaw. The snow got soft and many is the time as we'd walk home on the drifts, they would let us sink through. We'd get home soaking wet. It didn't ever make us sick, or so it seems. I did get chilblains on my heels some times and they'd swell until I couldn't wear my shoes for a few days.*

*My sister and I rode horses practically every day during the summer and lots of times in the winter. I had my horse I called "Red", a beautiful sorrel. Mary's was a Bay called "Snip". They ran free in the field and we'd have to catch them when we wanted to ride. A pan of grain would coax them to us, then we'd bridle them. Sometimes they didn't want to be caught and would grab a bite of grain and dash away. We were persistent and stayed with them 'till we got them.*

*In our family there were four girls before any boys were born, so us girls were Papa's helpers. I would drive four head of horses on plow or harrow. Once as I was going home from the field driving my four, not on the plow, I had a bridge without railings to cross. One of my horses was an old stallion "Monto" by name. As we crossed the bridge this old Monto simply crowded over until he pushed all three over the edge into the little creek some 12 or 15 feet below. They were all harnessed together so they were in a heap in the bottom of the creek.*

*Papa had just gone up the hill a short distance on his saddle horse. I ran screaming for him. He heard. I was so scared I could barely stand up. I thought he would scold me and I felt like I couldn't bear it. He just got down among those floundering horses, straightened them up and drove them out. He just said, "Take them home."*

*I don't think I was ever more relieved and grateful in my life. He was a great horseman and a good, kind father to me.*

*My mother was always gentle and kind to me. She had a way of having us do right. She'd say, "Papa wants you to do this or that", or "Papa doesn't want you to do thus and so." She always, said, "Papa has good judgement." We really honored our father and mother.*

*There were no movies or places of amusement then, so we made our own. We had a player piano and we'd play it and sing by the hour. Our parents like to hear us sing.*

*I guess Thomas Y. Simmons was my first date and we went together for a long time. Then it just eased off.*

*I went with a number of fellows. When Mary and I didn't have a date, lots of times Dad would take us in the sleigh to dances in Fielding or Collinston. In those days we didn't dance with our partners all night like now. We had dance cards with little pencils on and after the first dance with our partner the fellows would gather round and fill our cards. It was a great thrill to have the boys crowd around and fill my card and then just dance, dance, dance the whole evening.*

*I loved to dance and was never happier than when sailing down the dance floor in a two-step, a polka, three-step, Chicago Glide or in a Quadrille or Virginia Reel or a lovely, graceful waltz.*

*When I came to Logan to attend old B.Y.C. (Brigham Young College) I lived with Grandpa Francillo and Aunt Lucy Durfey. That was my first year in college (really High School) and I was a little country girl, afraid of my own shadow, almost. I took elocution and classes in art. I crocheted wide lace and insertion on a luncheon cloth; also a long filet lace for a dresser scarf. I still have the luncheon cloth.*

*I was in the school choir. I loved music and to sing. I wanted to take voice training but Papa said I could sing good enough, and what Papa said was law to me. Whenever he said, "No" that was it. No coaxing or no more asking.*

*After the first year- I stayed out a year- then Mary and I went and lived in a room in our Aunt Annie Durfey Wood's house with Elizabeth Simmons. After Christmas we dated. I went with Leonard Hamp and might have married him, but just in the nick of time LeRoy Manning asked me for a date and our first date continued until we were married. I didn't go with anyone else.*

*Sometimes he would drive a horse and buggy from Garland to Beaver Dam to see me. I loved him dearly from the first.*

*He enlisted in the army. He contracted Pneumonia and missed going overseas. He was in a hospital in Hoboken,*

*New Jersey and had an Honorable Medical Release.*

*He played the trombone from the time he was a teenager until the year before he died. He played for dances from Deweyville on the south to Holbrook, Idaho on the north, and to Park Valley on the west. He was good and he loved it.*

*We were married January 15, 1919 by Bishop R. A. Johnson at my father's home. The temple was closed at the time due to the flu epidemic. We were sealed February 19, 1919 in the Logan temple.*

*Roy was working at the Garland Sugar Factory when we were married. They worked 12 hour shifts at that time.*

*The first months after our marriage we lived with his parents because there was no time to fix up the farm house. When the sugar mill closed we moved to the farm 1 1/2 miles north and west of town by the canal. We lived in two rooms at first and in later years moved into the other four rooms.*

*We bought \$100.00 worth of furniture and were pleased as could be with a bed, table and four chairs, and a kitchen cabinet. The folks had left a kitchen coal range. We had a water pump around the corner of the house and a teakettle and reservoir on the stove to heat water in. A wash stand with a tin wash basin and a bucket with a dipper in it sufficed for hand washing and drinking water. Our "bathroom" for the first 18 years was a two-holer around the house north, say about a quarter of a short block or so. We also had a pail with lid at the foot of the bed for night use.*

*The babies started coming. The first one, Melvin LeRoy on June 1, 1920. LeRoy had some G.I. schooling coming so we moved to Logan for a couple of years. Ethel Mae was born there in 1922, November 30, Thanksgiving Day. She kept her dad home from Salt Lake where he would have been playing his trombone with the A. C. Band. He forgave her.*

*Glenn Erickson was born back in Garland December 18, 1924 during a terrible blizzard. David Kent was born October 5, 1927; Earl James, January 17, 1931; Marie, April 12, 1937. I had thought six children was a fine family but in the meantime Melvin had graduated from U.S.U. at Logan and had gone into the Marine Corp in the Second World War. Ethel Mae and Clair were married and she was with him in Mississippi and no grandchildren coming. I wanted a baby and thought I'd have one myself if I could. I could - and did. Dorothy Ruth was born in the Logan Hospital April 26, 1945, a darling baby girl. Six months later, Ethel Mae and Clair had our first grandchild - Carol, born October 9, 1945. Happy Day!!*

*From then on, grandchildren and later, great-grandchildren have come along periodically until now, as I am writing, December 1977, counting LeRoy and me, Vida E. Manning Heaton and Elvie W. Heaton and his posterity and Earl and Kae's family, there are 91 souls and four more known unborn babies. Two people really started something. I am grateful for every one.*

*LeRoy Wilcox Manning died after a lingering illness on October 23, 1959 and was buried in the Garland, Utah Cemetery.*

*I am so very grateful to be able to say I am a Latter-Day Saint - a Mormon. From the time I was 13 years old and became the chorister in the Beaver Dam Ward Primary, I have worked in the Church. I never refused a calling from the priesthood. At an early age my mother told me to never refuse a calling in the Church. She said "...do it and the Lord will bless you."*

*It is true. The Lord has blessed me so abundantly all of my life that I can never do enough to repay.*

*For many years I worked mostly as music director in the Junior and Senior Sunday Schools, Primary, M.I.A., Ward Choir and fifteen years as Singing Mothers Director. I loved every one.*

*My husband, Roy, and I sang in the ward choir for years and when gas was short we rode our bicycles to choir practice in the summer.*

*He served three stake missions and was Sunday School Superintendent, Counselor in M.I.A., and was always a stalwart worker in the Church.*

*I worked in Ward and Stake Primary, Ward and Stake M.I.A. through the years. In 1949 I was sustained as the first President of the Garland Second Ward Relief Society when the ward was divided. I served in that capacity for eight years. Those years were a joy to me and I shed many tears when I was released - not that it wasn't right - I knew that every position in the Church is just loaned to a person for a time, then another is called to take it. It gives each person an opportunity to grow while they serve.*

*I loved the sisters and working with them.*

*I was then called as counselor in the Stake Relief Society with Cora Nielson President and Lucille King as the other counselor. Two years later I was sustained as Stake President of Relief Society. I served in this capacity for six years. I was released in March of 1963.*

*In July of that year I was given the opportunity to go to Denver to work in the Western States Mission at 709*

Clarkson Street. That was a wonderful 2 1/2 years serving those choice missionaries - cooking their meals, mending their clothes, listening to their problems, and going with them on their preparation days. I loved it.

I came home in December of 1965, and was called as an officiator in the Logan Temple April 15, 1966. Such a glorious calling! Two years and two months later I was offered a position at Mercer Island, Washington to work in the Mission Home there. I asked President Raymond if I might go and "serve the living for a time then come back and work for the dead again?"

He said, "Sister Manning, go with my blessing."

I went in October of 1968 and stayed until July 1969 when Glenn's wife, Thelma, became so very desperately ill that we feared for her life. There were seven young children in their home so I came home to help. I loved the mission and President Joe and Lazelle Whitesides, the Elders and the Sisters, but I felt the need to help my own. I prayed about it humbly and the Lord inspired and directed me to come home.

Thelma did get well and I began working in the temple again.

President Raymond had been released and President Elvie W. Heaton was President. A new turn of events in my life came about during 1969 and 1970. In August of 1969, President Heaton's wife passed away suddenly. I was living at my son Glenn's home still, having moved out of my own Garland home shortly before I went to Washington to work. The day Sister Pearl Heaton died, my Sister Sylvia Simmons called me and told me. As she said it I exclaimed, "Not our President Heaton's wife?" She answered, "Yes."

As I live, at that moment, the thought came forcefully into my mind, "You'll be his wife." I was ashamed to have the thought, but it was there and it persisted. I would wake in the night with this same thought going through my mind. I tried to dismiss it. I knew that logically it could never happen - that men never married women who were strangers to them. They always married someone who had been friends with them and their wife before.

From August 19, 1969 to November 14, 1969 no sign of any kind was made to me by President Heaton. Then on that day he invited me into his office and after a sweet talk about the sacredness of the temple and its purpose he asked if I would be willing to assume more responsibility in the temple. At the moment I couldn't think of any more responsibility I could assume. I really didn't even think of what he might be going to say. Then the bombshell ! ! !

He said, "Would you consider being the Matron of the Temple? Of course that would mean you would have to become my wife."

There it was! My premonition was true and all at once I realized it. I knew then that I would and although I didn't know how to do it, I also knew that with his help and the help of the Lord, I could do it.

He asked that we keep it a secret because of his position and because of him losing his wife such a short time before. It made it hard for me not to be able to share with anyone, but I respected his wishes. It really gave me troubles. I'd awaken in the night, sitting straight up in bed thinking, "I can't be a Matron in the temple. I don't know how." I was scared. I couldn't eat - the first time in my life I lost ten pounds in two weeks. Later, as Elvie and I began to get acquainted by taking rides in his car, this awful feeling left me and I was happy.

We made plans and I would meet him at various places. I'd leave my car and we'd ride and ride, up the canyons, on back roads all over the country going at about 45 miles per hour, talking, talking, and never running out of things to say. Always on Sunday we would find a Church somewhere to go to. I'd go in first, he'd park the car and come later and sit in another part of the chapel because he was known far and wide. It was the most wonderful courtship anyone could have.

He wrote me wonderful love letters almost every day.

We were married April 3, 1970 in the temple with all of our children there with none of the temple people aware of it. President Evan O. Darley performed the ceremony after which about 35 family members including Pat and Harold Heaton from Portland, Oregon, Julia and Cliff Frye, RuLon and Aglaia Manning from California, LaVera and Douglas Bone from Bountiful, had a Wedding Breakfast at Glauser's Restaurant here in Logan.

We had a beautiful wedding cake made by Thelma's sister, Carol Barker.

We left and went as far as Ogden and stayed our first night of marriage at the Ramada Inn. Spent two days at Conference in Salt Lake City, went to Provo and back to our glorious work in the temple. No woman could be more blessed than I. To be one of only thirteen women to be a Matron of a temple in the whole world! It was a blessing that could not be surpassed.

I am so very humbly grateful to my Heavenly Father for this great and glorious blessing.

President Harold B. Lee set me apart as Matron of the temple. One thing he said was, "Sister Heaton, the Lord

*has been preparing you for a long time for this great and glorious position.”*

*I was not aware of this. None of us know what our futures will be - what we are being prepared for. The Lord surely answers our prayers when we work and have faith.*

*After Elvie and I were released on November 25, 1973, the following March 23, 1974, we reported into the Kansas-Missouri Mission where we spent 19 months. He was called as Director of the Independence Missouri L.D.S. Visitors Center. It was a wonderful experience. The Center is a beautiful building and has a great Gospel teaching message.*

*We lived in a darling little white house on North River Street. How I wish we could turn back the pages and do it all over again. That isn't how life is though, so we go on from wherever we are.*

*We returned home October 2, 1975. As we came down Logan Canyon that day, the mountains and hills were resplendent with color - so beautiful we could hardly stand it. At every turn in the road we would exclaim, “How beautiful - how glorious!, and we were coming home!*

*A funny thing happened. We had driven all the way from Independence, Missouri with our license number expired. We stopped in Laketown at Bear Lake to have the man change it but he had no time and said for us to go home and take care of it. When we were two blocks from home, this sharp-eyed cop stopped us. President told him how it was. The young man said, “I know you President Heaton, you married me and my wife three years ago.”*

*President said, “Are you still married?” He said, “Yes, Sir.”*

*We came on home. Home to an almost empty house, but HOME In Logan, Utah! We were happy! On the floor was a big sign saying, WELCOME HOME!*

*On October 3, sixty-five of our family members came bringing finger food and we really had a reunion. We'd had Bishop Robert Everton arrange for a photographer to come and he took pictures.*

*As all things do, this phase of my life closed on November 28, 1975- the day after Thanksgiving when Elvie William Heaton, my dear husband, died suddenly of a massive coronary occlusion.*

*We had gone to the temple that morning where he was to have sealed two couples from Independence, Missouri. They'd called the night before and made the appointment. He took violently ill about ten minutes after we got there. He was rushed across the street to the hospital. He died not more than 30 minutes after. The two doctors could not save him. I was by his side when his great heart stopped.*

*I was called back to work in the temple on January 23, 1976. The third time I've been set apart for this work. The beautiful Logan Temple closed its doors on October 2, 1976 for renovation and remodeling. Oh, sad day!*

*On October 28, 1977 I was called and set apart to work in the beautiful Ogden Temple and it truly is a joy.*

*Now I am on the last chapter of my life, almost to my 80th birthday.*

*I am so grateful to be well and able to care for myself; grateful for my lovely home, for my wonderful family and friends. I am proud to say I am a Latter-Day Saint, a “Mormon”.*

*My testimony is that I know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is true. That Jesus is The Christ, the Son of the living God; that Joseph Smith was, and is, a Prophet; that through him the Gospel was restored in this, the Dispensation of the Fullness of Time.*

*I know that our Heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers. He has answered my prayers so many times that I could not begin to number them.*

*I fully believe in his words that were given to us in the Doctrine and Covenants 14:6-7 :*

*“Keep my commandments in all things. And if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.”*

*Now, I say to you, my children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and to any others who may read this short history, “Believe in our Heavenly Father. Live worthy lives, and He will bless you.”*