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**LIFE STORY OF GERTRUDE ADKINS
WRITTEN BY HER DAUGHTER, VIOLET (ADKINS) NOBLE
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Gertrude Adkins was born 15 June 1892 in Branchland, Lincoln County, West Virginia. She was the tenth child of the eleven children born to her parents, Henry Fisher Adkins and Arabella Bias. Her parents were farmers, and when Gertrude was very young, she helped with the chores by feeding chickens and hogs, plucking the geese for feathers to make pillows and comforters to keep the family warm in the winter. She often had to watch the sheep as they grazed in the pasture to see that they didn't wander off. The sheep provided the family with wool to be knitted into sweaters and socks; also, wool to be woven into cloth for clothing to be worn in the cold winter months.

When Gertrude was seven years old, she went to live with her sister, Sarah and brother-in law, Lew Vigory Vaughan. She was sent there by her parents to help her sister, who had given birth to a deformed, still-born child. One can imagine how small she was because when grown-up, she was only five feet tall. She said "Louie" (as she called her brother-in-law) made her a stool to stand on so she could reach to the top of the stove and sink, when she cooked and washed the dishes. She did all of the housework, and hoed and weeded their vegetable garden.

After the disappointment and loss of her baby, Sarah remained an invalid and had to be "waited on" for the rest of her life. Gertrude remained with her until she was married.

Gertrude's parents had joined the Mormon Church. The Elders who baptized them, told my father, James Bartley Adkins, who was already a member of the Mormon Church, about the beautiful young lady whose parents had joined; and suggested that he might like to meet her. So "Jack", as my father was called, went with the Elders to meet my mother. The result was a romance that ended in marriage, 24 Dec. 1908. Gertrude was sixteen years old when she got married and left her sister to set up housekeeping in her own home.

Gertrude was baptized, 25 Apr. 1909, by Elder Clarence D Davis from Thatcher, Arizona and confirmed a member of the church by Elder N. A. Sorensen. She had beautiful, long, brown waving hair, the pins came loose and her hair floated on top. She secured the pins and was baptized again. This time all of her went under the water. She was one month pregnant with her first child, a daughter, named Violet, who was born 17 November 1909.

In the first year of Jack and Gertrude's marriage, they live in a small, three-room log house on Jack's parent's farm, where Jack farmed with his father and brother, John. The next year, Jack and his brother decided to purchase a farm together on Big Creek (SIAS, W. Va.) in Lincoln County. There were two log houses on the farm they bought: a large one on one side of the creek and a smaller one on the opposite side. Jack and Gertrude chose the smaller one. There,

three more children were born, Gaynell on 24 Jan. 1911, Rupert on 29 Dec. 1912 and Ralph on 28 Jan. 1915.

Gertrude often talked of the hard times they endured while living on the farm. She said that they almost starved to death before their crops “came in” the first year. She, Jack’s brother, John and his wife, Florence, did the farming while Jack was away working for other farmers to pay for the farm they had bought. She said they were desperately in need of clothes but had no money to buy with them with. She was shocked when day when Jack came home with three gingham dresses for her, which he had purchased from the country store nearby. They cost \$1.50 each. Gertrude recalled how pleased and happy she was that day – a day she would never forget.

After the farm was paid for, Jack sold his part to his brother, John, and moved to Yawkey, Lincoln County, West Virginia, where he worked for South Penn Oil Company, drilling oil wells. While living in Yawkey, Jack and Gertrude’s fifth child, a daughter, Janice, was born on 24 Dec. 1916.

Three years later, Jack left his family with Gertrude’s parents to look for job in the oil fields in Kanawha County, West Virginia. While Gertrude was staying with her parents, another child, James Bartley Jr., was born on 9 Jan. 1919. Jack and Gertrude moved to Dawes, Kanawha County, during the great outbreak of influenza in 1919, when millions of people around the world died. All of the family have the “flu” and survived it; which was a miracle, since the disease was so deadly.

In 1922, Jack and Gertrude moved to Landville, Logan County, West Virginia, to be near Gertrude’s sister, Winona, and her husband, John Neace. Here, Jack worked in the coal mines with his brother-in-law, John. This was a happy time for the children. The Guyandotte River flowed nearby. Jack talk all of them to swim, and they spent many happy hours swimming and fishing with their father.

In 1924, Jack and Gertrude move to Verdunville, Logan County, West Virginia, to be near another brother-in-law and sister of Gertrude’s, Walter and Fannie Adkins; and also, to be near a Branch of the Mormon Church, which was located in Verdunville. This was the first opportunity they had ever had to attend church meetings with their children. They decided that this was the place to rear their children – near the church where they could associate with other members of the Mormon faith. Jack and Gertrude lived the rest of their lives Verdunville. It was there that their last child, Rulon La Ver, was born on 2 June 1925.

As soon as Jack and Gertrude we’re located in Verdunville, Gertrude’s sister, Sarah and her husband Louis, moved in with them. Gertrude took care of them both until they died - Sarah on 6 May 1927, and Louis on 9 May 1959.

This was an especially hard time for Gertrude. She now had 11 persons to care for: seven children, herself, and her husband, her sister, Sarah and her husband. She cooked three big

meals a day; in season, she canned vegetables from her garden, blackberries that grew along the creek bank, that we children picked, so that we can have cobbler pies later on. She bought fruit from the farmers and candied; I made apple butter from the apples, which required stirring all day long. She pickled corn, string beans, and made sauerkraut in ten-gallon crocks. She even made her own laundry soap. There were two cows to be milked daily and butter to be churned. It took all day to do the washing. In those days, no one had a washing machine. She scrubbed each piece of clothing on a wash board, wrung it out by hand, put it in a tub filled with water to be boiled after the clothes were boiled, they were rinsed and hung on the line to dry. Washing took several hours to complete. When Gertrude's children grew big enough to help, she kept one of them home from school on wash days to help her. One of my most vivid memories of my mother, Gertrude, is her standing by the stove in the kitchen, perspiring profusely, as she did her canning for winter food. As young as I was, I didn't realize the extent of her burden, and what a hard life she had. Yet, never in her life-time see, did I hear her complain.

There was no electricity in the house and no water. Kerosene lamps were used for lighting and water came from a well in the backyard, which was dug by Jack and Louie. Coal is burned in the fireplaces to heat the house in winter, and wood and coal were burned in the big, iron kitchen stove for cooking.

The well-being of her family was the most important thing in Gertrude's life. She was concerned about her their spiritual growth, as well as, their physical health. She taught them right from wrong and expected them to do the right thing. She had rules of conduct for her children, and if one disobeyed, he was punished. It was often a tingling on the bare legs with a switch from the peach tree that grew in the backyard. Gertrude never visited in other people's homes, except to take food to the sick. She was always home with her children-watching over, guiding, and protecting them.

It was extremely rare for a doctor to be called when one of Gertrude's children became ill. She relied on her own home remedies, the Priesthood, and prayer. She called the elders into the minister to those who were seriously ill. She went to the hill-side to pick the wild plants that she had been taught to use for minor ailments. Some of these were: blood root, Pennyroyal, fennel, Chamomile, ground ivy, peach tree bark and others. All of these, when boiled, became a bitter-tasting liquid that her children were required to drink for such ailments as: stomach ache, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, colds, and coughing. Peroxide was always on hand as a disinfectant and healing of wounds. These remedies, along with Gertrude's strong faith and prayers always resulted in the recovery of her children.

Gertrude had a strong testimony of the gospel. No one has a greater faith in God, his son, Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith, as a true prophet of God, as Gertrude did. She received this faith through studying scriptures, which she did daily. She could tell you book, chapter, and verse where any quote from the scriptures could be found.

Some of Gertrude's brothers and sisters were very hostile toward the Mormon church,

especially her sister, Leota, who attacked the church every time they met. When Gertrude went to visit her family, she always took her Bible. She knew she would have to defend the Mormon church, as well as herself, for joining it. This went on all through the years, until Leota's death.

No one in Gertrude's family, except her parents and herself, joined the Mormon Church. They were all good moral people. Some joined the Baptist Church; others have no church affiliation. They turned the Mormon missionaries away and wouldn't listen to their message. Although this saddened Gertrude, she had a warm and loving relationship with her brothers and sisters all of her life.

Gertrude was never called as a missionary, but she was a missionary to her friends and neighbors in the community. All who came within the sound of her voice heard the story of Joseph Smith and the restoration of the gospel. She converted many of her in-laws, neighbors and friends. Her grandsons and great grandsons have filled missions, as well as sons and daughters of neighbors and friends whom she converted. How happy she would be if she could know this.

After the birth of Gertrude's last child, her health began to deteriorate. In her last years, she had very poor health with: high blood pressure, gallbladder trouble, diabetes, and finally heart trouble. Through all of these afflictions she remained cheerful, never doubting the goodness of the Lord. She still cooked the meals and washed the dishes, but had to depend on others to do the house cleaning, washing and ironing. Her husband Jack was a lot of help to her at this time. He learned to do most of the household chores. He was so proud of his cooking (which he had never done before) and when I went to visit my parents, he insisted on cooking the meals by himself, without any help from me.

Gertrude had never traveled more than one county beyond her birth county, (except where Jack held jobs in Kanawha and Logan counties) until the last four years of her life. She and Jack took their daughter, Violet and her three sons home (by car) to Phoenix, Arizona, after Violet had visited him during the summer vacation from teaching. They enjoy traveling and made three more trips to Arizona before Gertrude's death. After the last trip, Jack bought a house on 1330 W. Linwood in Phoenix. They lived there one year; then return to their home in Verdunville, West Virginia in April 1958. In September 1958, Gertrude had a massive cerebral hemorrhage. She lay in a coma for eight months, never regaining consciousness. She died 11 April 1959 at the age of 65. She is buried in Forest lawn Cemetery, Peck's Mill, Logan County, West Virginia. Of all people, Gertrude, my dearest and most beloved mother, had the greatest influence on my life.