

Life History of Adna and Sarah Lillian Ellis Ferrin

Written by Mildred, Mabel and Florence Ferrin, their daughters

Adna Ferrin was born May 4, 1866, in Eden, Weber County, Utah. Eden has since been divided into two towns. The part where he was born is now known as Liberty. His father was Samuel Ferrin, who was born November 12, 1804, in Hebron, Grafton County, New Hampshire. He lived there until he was 10 years old, then he moved to Springfield, New York. He joined the church in Springfield, New York, in 1841, and he crossed the plains to Utah in 1852. He was captain of 10 wagons. He spent the first winter in Salt Lake, and in 1853, moved to North Ogden. In 1861, he married Anna Plant in the Endowment House. To this union was born 6 children Annie, Samuel, Adna, Jessie, Francis, and Phillip. He was a shoemaker, tanner and currier. He owned saw mills, and an interest in a grist mill in Ogden Valley. Adna's father made all the shoes for their family. Up until Adna went to work on the railroad, they had about one pair of shoes a year. In the summer, they all went barefoot. He died January 24, 1890, in Pleasant View, Utah, at the age of 85.

Anna Plant Ferrin, Adna's mother, was born August 14, 1842, in Calver, Derbyshire, England. She moved to Sheffield, Yorkshire, and there joined the church in 1852. She and her mother came to Utah on September 4, 1859. They pushed a hand cart across the plains. She married Samuel Ferrin, and lived in Weber County the rest of her life. She died in Gridley, Butte County, California, on September 11, 1929.

Liberty is on the north fork of the Ogden River. There the snow fell from 5 to 8 feet deep every winter. When Adna was 2 years old, the family moved to Eden, and resided there until 1871. Adna cut his toe completely off with an axe while he lived in Eden. His grandmother put it in place with her "conquering salve" and it healed, and left only a scar.

They then moved to what was then North Ogden (now Pleasant View), about one mile east of the Ogden Hot Springs. Here, they lived in a one room house with a dirt roof. They lived there until

December 15, 1873, then moved to the Promitory on a cattle ranch. At this time Adna was 7 years old. His father was about 70. The children and Grandmother Plant did most of the work. They took care of one hundred head of cattle, and milked about 15 cows. They got half the butter, and half the calves from his herd. They lived there 2 years. The last year was a hard winter, and many of the cattle died. The place was known as the Pettingill Ranch. While they lived at the Promitory, Adna had his neck cut. He ran under an axe his brother Samuel was using, and a deep gash was cut in his neck. His grandmother's salve was applied and his neck healed, although he always carried a bad scar. During the time they lived on the Promitory, they were completely isolated from schools, church, or any social life. During the first year, they lived in North Ogden, there were no public meetings because of the Black Small Pox epidemic.

When Adna was 75 years old, he was hit by a car while he was crossing a street near his home in Gridley. He was hospitalized and x-rays were taken. He bragged that not many people could live to be 75 before they had a broken bone. The doctor overheard his remark, and showed his daughters where the x-ray showed the leg had been broken before, and had mended off center. Adna then said, "Well, I do remember bumping my leg, and it hurt pretty bad, and I couldn't walk for a couple of weeks. That was when I was about 8, and lived on the Promitory. I kneeled on a chair, and pulled it around with me to milk the cows."

Adna was present when the golden spike was driven by Governor Stanford of California at Promitory Point, Utah, on May 10, 1869. His father lifted him to his shoulders so he could see for he was only 3 years old at this time. Adna, Samuel, and Jessie were all baptized in North Ogden in Charlie Reece's pond on November 19, 1876, and confirmed in Reece's house by him immediately after.

In 1875, they moved back to their home in North Ogden. That fall, they built a nice log house2 rooms downstairs, and 2 upstairs. While they lived here, Adna worked on the farm. There were 10 acres on the home place, and his father bought 80 acres on the "Bottoms." They always had cows and a dairy farm then on it. The people of the town depended on the boys of this family to herd all the cows of the community. They were paid two cents per day per cow. In the spring, they herded the cows in the foothills, and in the

summer, they took them down near the lake to the big sage. They did this for a period of 10 or 12 years, all the boys taking their turns. Adna herded the cows one 4th of July. His mother gave him \$.10, and he spent it all for candy at the Hot Springs Store. All day, he munched it bit by bit, planning to take some home to the other children. However, by evening, it was all gone.

Adna went to his first school 2 months in 1873, at the home of Mrs. Henrietta Williams, wife of Dr. Frederick G. Williams. She cleared one of the 2 rooms in her adobe house for the school. They sat on slab seats, and used slates. At no time did Adna receive more than 2 months of schooling in the middle of the winter, in any one season. Although he went to school only a short time, he mastered long division, and the 5th Reader. At that time it was considered about an elementary education.

On April 16, 1881, he started to work on the railroad. He was 15 years old. His father sent him out with two teams of horses to work on his half-brother's (Josiah Ferrin) construction jobs. His pay for a year's work with his brother was a solid gold watch. When we felt that was small pay for a year's work, Dad was most indignant, and thought it was very good pay. Up until this time, he had always stayed at home. This was his first experience out in the world, and, at first, he received many shocks. They went to the Bear River Valley near Evanston, Wyoming, and bought 60 head of wild horses. Two Spaniards were on the ranch, and they gathered the horses, which took 3 weeks. Adna helped herd these wild horses, and helped drive them to Evanston to the railroad, and shipped them to Denver. The Spaniards were excellent horsemen, but their swearing was the first Adna had ever heard. They stayed in Denver, then a town of 60,000 people, several days, and took in the town. During these days, he received no cash wage. His board, clothes, and expenses were all paid by his half-brother. From Denver, they shipped to Gunnison City, Colorado, and there built one mile of railroad (for the D&RG) to a coal mine. They stayed there 7 months, and did work for the railroad building spurs and switches. While here, they broke the 60 horses. There was a runaway almost every day because so many of the men were unused to handling horses. Adna was sent the 18 miles to Gunnison City with a 4 horse team to get grain for the horses. About 8 men went to town with him. When he had his load ready

to go home, all the men were drunk except one. They had a hard time getting the men on the wagon. One was an Indian and he was mean. He had a gun, and got into a quarrel. Adna got his gun away from him, and hid it among the grain. It took them a week to get home from Denver to Ogden on the railroad that winter. Adna worked hard at home during the winter getting the wood and caring for the cattle.

The next spring, April 1882, they shipped to Portneuf Station. Then they did work two or three miles above what is now Pocatello. At that time, there wasn't a house in Pocatello. Adna used to go down to a box car there to get the mail. Bishop Ferrin and his crew went into Butte, Montana and hauled cord wood in 1882. The next year he went into Washington and built the first railroad into Yakima. Adna brought the three teams home and hauled salt that went to the mines in Butte, Montana the following year.

In 1884, he helped drive a bunch of cattle from Ogden to Salmon City, Idaho. He stayed there and worked in the Lemhi Valley all summer. The next summer he and his brother, Jesse, went back and worked in the same valley. In 1886, when he was 20 years old, he went back into Colorado and helped build the Colorado Midland Railroad. Although thousands of dollars were spent here, the railroad was never finished. During this job their camp was down in the Grand Canyon. The next winter Adna went into Beaver Head Valley, Montana and helped widen the narrow gauge railroad. Part of the summer he hauled cord wood which he sent down the flumes to the smelters above Butte. Then they went to Anaconda and built a canal for the rest of the summer. In the fall, he went into the Lemhi Valley and helped build a road bed.

The next spring Adna went over to Huntsville and worked for a few months. Then he quit there and worked on the section for a few months. He went that fall to the Promitory and worked for the Cattle Company there. In December he went back to Pleasant View and was married December 14, 1888. Adna went with Lillian Ellis a little over a year. She had kept company with George Seamon some, also a few times with Adna's brother, Samuel. They went to the Logan Temple with Lillie Rose and Andy Wade. They had a hard trip Adna's horse died and they had to get another one to finish the trip. It snowed and rained on them

on the way. They traveled in a white top buggy. Andy Wade died in three months of Typhoid Fever. Their first year of married life was spent with Grandfather and Grandmother Ellis. In the spring, they rented one room of Adna's mother's house. In the next spring, they (Brother Ellis and Adna) built their first home one room just west of Adna's folks (about one mile east of the Ogden Hot Springs), and the next fall built two rooms onto that one. Their first child, Irene, was born November 25, 1891, but died 2 days later. Mabel was born July 24, 1893 and her sister, Irene, was lost and caused much excitement that day. She and her cousin, Hyrum Cragun, had gone up in the Cragun foothills to find magpies in the oak brush. They had wanted to put salt on the magpies' tails.

In the spring of 1896, Adna traded his home in Pleasant View and 12 acres of land on the Bottoms to his brother, James Ferrin, for 40 acres in Ogden Valley (Liberty). Florence was born that May 31, 1896, so Lily did not move until the 4th of July, but Adna went over early. Adna's mother lived there by then, also Phillip, who was single, lived in part of their house. The snow was so deep that winter (6' on the level) and spring so late they decided to move out of the valley to North Ogden. They accomplished this by trading places with Orson Shaw in the spring of 1897. (Adna dictated this much of his story to his daughters before he died). Shortly after they were married, they went to Fort Bridger where Lilly cooked for a construction crew for Bishop Ferrin. He had a contract to build canals in the Fort Bridger area. They had many interesting experiences during the summer they spent up there.

Wallace was born on April 26, 1899, in Pleasant View, and Don was born on March 2, 1904. On November 15, 1905, Adna left for the Eastern States Mission. He was set apart for his mission by Seymour B. Young on November 14, 1905. He spent time in Concord, New Hampshire, and Lowell and Boston, Massachusetts. He returned home July 14, 1907. Lilly sold butter and eggs to support the family. She delivered these to the houses in Ogden with horse and buggy. He was gone 18 months. A cow died and this looked like a dire tragedy to Lilly, but the Elders Quorum brought a cow Adna had sold before he left to go on his mission and gave it to her. His mission cost about \$500. They sold some stock they had bought to finance him.

During 1901, Lilly's father and Mother became ill. They sold their home and built two bedrooms on the north side of the home of Adna and Lilly. Lilly cared for them until their deaths. Her mother was completely bed-ridden for two years before she passed away on July 12, 1904 from dropsy and rheumatism at the age of 72. Her father died May 7, 1903 at the age of 81 of pneumonia. He died happy singing the songs of Zion until 10:00 o'clock the night he died.

Adna farmed and worked on a thresher while they lived in North Ogden. Phillip was born July 17, 1908 and Mildred was born November 19, 1910 in North Ogden. Lilly was made Primary President in North Ogden January 12, 1906. She was released in March/1912 when they moved to Metropolis, Nevada and settled on 40 acres on Bishop Creek Flat. There, they built a four room house. Soon, they took over a house and 40 acres of Lilly's brother, William Ellis, who moved back to North Ogden. Adna had always wanted to own a ranch, especially since he now had 3 sons to help him. Here Fern was born on November 29, 1913. Adna milked cows and farmed the 80 acres, and Will Hutchinson worked for him for at least 2 years. Lilly was made Primary President on September 3, 1916 and served continuously until she moved to California in 1926.

Irene married Oscar Rice on April 2, 1914 in the Salt Lake Temple. She died on December 1, 1914 giving birth to twins, Oscar and Irene. Baby Oscar died December 12, 1914. Oscar (father) remarried, and Lilly cared for the little girl until November 1916. She weighed 7 pounds and had to be fed with a dropper at first. Mabel was married to Jesse Jensen in the Salt Lake Temple on December 23, 1914 by Alvin A. Smith. Florence married Reuben A. Jensen (brother of Jesse) on June 8, 1916 in the Salt Lake Temple ...also by Alvin Smith. All three daughters went to live on farms in the Metropolis community.

Adna was ordained a high priest on June 29, 1913 by President James Wetherspoon of the North Weber Stake, and at the same time, was called to be 2nd counselor to Bishop Wilford A. Hyde in the Metropolis Ward bishopric. He was released at the death of Bishop Hyde in February 1916. Adna traded his property on Bishop Creek for ½ of the old U-7 Ranch further up the canyon. It was 320 acres but no buildings of any kind, so the house was

moved up from the Bishop Creek Ranch. It took 16 head of horses to move the house. This was in January/1917. This was, and still is, a very fertile, productive ranch on the old 49er trail.

On October 21, 1919 Phillip Ferrin (Adna's youngest brother), and Grandma Ferrin brought Lavern Viola, Phillip's daughter, to the home of Adna, and asked them to care for her for a "time". She was just 3 weeks old at the time. It became her only home, and she spent her life as part of this family. Wallace married Alice I. Hepworth September 13, 1922 in the Salt Lake Temple. He had filled a mission for the Church in the Central States, leaving December 1, 1919. He served in Independence, Missouri, and part of Texas and was released November 22, 1921. Don attended art classes at the University of Utah the winter of 1924, and then left for New York City in 1925 to attend an art school there.

On March 2, 1926 Adna and family moved to Gridley, California having sold the ranch to Reuben and Florence. They came by train down Feather River Canyon from the snow and wind of Utah to the beautiful spring of California. They bought a 10 acre fruit ranch from Mr. Johnson, about 1 ½ miles west of Gridley. Fern died February 25, 1927 of a mastoid infection following the mumps.

Grandma Anna Ferrin spent part of the fall of 1928 at Adna's home, then came back in 1929, and died of a stroke on September 11, 1929. Lilly was made Primary President of the Gridley Ward on December 5, 1926, and was released October 17, 1930. Mildred was married to Lester D. Call in the Mesa Temple on January 6, 1932. It was discovered by the doctors that Lilly had cancer of the stomach in August/1932. She died November 20, 1932. Don returned from New York after studying there for 8 years. Lilly expressed a desire to see him before she passed away. Although she suffered much pain, she complained very little. Don married Mildred E. Jones on October 10, 1934 in the Salt Lake Temple.

Adna sold the 10 acre ranch to Wallace in about 1935, and moved to a small house next to Jess and Mable on Sycamore Street in Gridley. Here he married Ada Packard Wright in July/1937. She died in Orville in November/1939. Laverne went on a mission to the Central States in 1940. Phil supported her on her mission. She

married Thomas Hodgkin in Reno, Nevada on September 21, 1946. They were later sealed in the Salt Lake Temple in June/1951. Phillip lived with Adna part of the time. They enjoyed auction sales and being with each other. On July 16, 1951, Phil married Twila Kinghorn Lewis in the Salt Lake Temple. On October 1, 1951 Adna fell while visiting Mildred, and broke his hip. He was hospitalized for awhile, then used a wheel chair to get around. He lived with Wallace, Mildred, Phil, and Mabel. On April 14, 1953, he broke the other hip and thereafter was bed-ridden in a rest home in Chico. He passed away from a stroke on June 11, 1954. On November 20, 1953 Mabel died of a heart attack in Gridley, California. Wallace died March 17, 1955 of heart failure in Chico, California.

As a young man Adna was tall (6'3"), slender, with blue eyes, dark brown hair, and very fair hair. He wore a mustache most of his life. As a young man, he had a quick temper, but in his later years, he became very mellow. He knew all the presidents of the church during his lifetime except the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was a very good manager, and a shrewd trader.

The following history was dictated by Adna Ferrin to his son, Phillip, on July 29, 1943: I, Adna Ferrin, age 77, am the oldest living child of Anna Plant and Samuel Ferrin. It is my desire to record here the events that I remember hearing my father tell of his life.