



## **HYRUM JAMES ROMRELL**

### **1880-1968**

Hyrum James Romrell was born 31 March 1880 in a humble log cabin located in the center of what is now 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Ogden. The cabin faced east toward Lewis Peak and Waterfall Canyon. Hyrum was the son of Patience Swingewood and George Romrell. His grandmother, Jemima Baker Swingewood Rowley White, lived in a log house in the field in back of their home.

Hyrum was baptized into the LDS Church in the Lynne Irrigation Ditch by Alonzo Perry. His family was sealed in the Logan LDS Temple on 30 November 1887.

Hyrum's family grew a variety of apples. Hyrum and his brother, Lorenzo, liked to climb the trees to find the sweetest and the best. There was one tree that was only good for making apple cider. The family made two or three barrels of cider each year. They had plenty to drink, and when it turned into vinegar, they sold it. It is said that his father was first to grow strawberries in Ogden. He also grew fine peaches. He was a good shoe maker and half soled the family's shoes to make them last longer by using wooden pegs for nails. The older boys gathered round rushes for their mother who boiled them so they would be soft and tough. Then she used them to make the seats for chairs that her husband made. They sold the chairs to Boyles Furniture Store.

There were two large cottonwood trees near their home. Hyrum's brother, Lorenzo, put a high swing in one of the trees about twenty feet from their house. They spent many pleasant hours swinging in the shade. Hyrum and Lorenzo liked to ride horses in the fields on Sunday afternoons and have races. Hyrum thought "Dollie" was the best horse in the world and she could run fast. "Billie" was her mate, but he was tricky to ride and sometimes bucked the boys off. Riding him taught the boys to be good horse handlers. Hyrum also became very skilled at handling a team of horses. This proved to be a blessing in his life and later provided a way for him to earn money as a teamster.

Hyrum went to a school located on Second Street. The student's parents paid tuition every three months. Students were not divided by grades when he started school. The community used the same building for school and for LDS Church meetings until the church moved into the dance hall and built onto it to make it into a meeting hall. The school relocated upstairs over the mercantile store on the corner of Third Street. Later a school was built with four large rooms. It was eventually enlarged several times and became the Lincoln School.

His sister Mary, born in 1865, died when Hyrum was six months old. His brothers and sisters included: George (1863), Elizabeth (1868), Joseph (1870), Alfred (1870), Lorenzo (1877) Fannie (1874), Josephine (1883).

Hyrum's father hired a contractor to build the family a brick home on Washington Boulevard. They only lived there about three or four years, then their father hired a new frame home to be built on Fourth Street. When the house was finished, his father bought some beautiful furnishings which included a hanging lamp of cut glass. It was one that pulled down and had a double kerosene burner in it with a chain that would turn out the lights.

One time Hyrum was raking hay and the rake wheel caught in a small ditch and one shaft broke hitting the horse in the side, which made it jump and run. Hyrum slipped off behind the single tee and was dragged about 250 yards. The horse kicked him until he fell in front of the rake's teeth which rolled him over a few times before dumping him out when the rake went wheel over wheel. Hyrum was bruised and sore for a while. His father had to buy a new rake.

One fall when his brother George came down from Idaho, Hyrum went back up with him. They took a 1,500 pound load of salt, and a lot of little blue plum trees. They sold their salt at Collinston. It took them two weeks to get to George's place. His brother Joseph was living in Wilford, Idaho, and his brother Fred in Marysville. Hyrum stayed in Idaho, rolling the grain, plowing, fencing and planting garden. He hauled water three miles for drinking and also for the horses. He also worked at the head of the Fall River with a team and scraper on the Brady Canal for Bishop Wilson. They camped out but had a tent where they ate. In the fall, he returned to Ogden.

Hyrum, Lorenzo, and Fannie all went to the Weber Academy when they could get enough money for tuition. They generally rode the street car to school and walked home. There was no school during the Christmas holidays for two weeks, so Hyrum and Lorenzo took a team and found work hauling gravel to earn money to pay tuition. Each fall after the farm work was finished, their father had the boys cut wood around the place. They did not have a saw so it was done with an axe.

Hyrum's mother was hard of hearing but she learned to read lips. She was very good at knitting. Besides knitting socks and gloves for all the family, she knit many pairs of socks and sweaters for the U.S. soldiers.

When Craig's Canning Factory started up on Third Street in Ogden, Hyrum joined a large crowd gathered to get jobs at the factory. He had not worked there the year before, and to everyone's surprise, he was hired. The next year he got a job there before the seasonal work began. He worked as a plumber and he helped put in a large boiler and cooking tanks. When the seasonal workers started, Ruby Rosetta Taylor caught his eye. She had very light blond hair and he had never seen a girl with such light hair. The more he got acquainted with her, the better he liked her. They began dating and went together for two years.

Before he was married, Hyrum worked at the ice house one summer, and he traded his bicycle for a buggy horse. He bought a second hand buggy, and then he went to C. W. Cross and had him make a single harness. He had him doll the bridle up with buttons. It cost him \$6 but it looked nice. Hyrum was the only boy that had a buggy and horse to go see the girls. He and Ruby had lots of good rides in the buggy. She was the first and only steady girl he ever had.

While he was going with Ruby, Hyrum and Lorenzo decided to go to Idaho. Their father had traded a city lot for two farms. He gave the partially cultivated, 50 acre farm in Wilford, Idaho, to Joe and Fred. Hyrum and Lorenzo received the other property in Salem, Idaho, which was about 60 acres but had never been worked. It was all sage brush and had no water on it. They lived in a camp wagon while they worked the ground. They had four horses and no money.

Hyrum came home in the fall of 1901 and got a job on the railroad taking care of the engines. He worked for 17 ½ cents an hour, seven days a week working twelve hours at night or nine hours a day. The second year he worked there he married Ruby. They were married 10 December 1902, in the Salt Lake LDS Temple, after which they had a large wedding supper at her mother's home.

He worked for the railroad two years, and then he and Lorenzo decided to go back to Idaho. When they got there, the house they were to live in was taken so they found an old house without a door and no floor. They got a tent and lived in it for a while. Lorenzo bought a log cabin for \$10 and they put it up on his place for a time. When the sugar factory was built, they all worked at the sugar factory but the pay was not much.

Ruby and six month old baby Belva, went up to Idaho on the train to visit. Hyrum had written and told her to stop at Sugar City and he would meet the train there. The train came before his brother got back with the team, and she was standing out in the dark alone with the baby and her trunk. Hyrum was in such a hurry to get to her that he made a dangerous but successful crossing of the stream to get to her as soon as he could. She was glad to see him. They had their own house to stay in on Lorenzo's place. They kept about five boarders, but when the work stopped, the boarders went home and Ruby also went home for a visit. When she came back, Hyrum was sick. He had typhoid fever and pneumonia. He was in bed for 90 days. They returned to Ogden and lived in a part of his father's home and he got job with the railroad. Levi J. Taylor talked Hyrum's father George into selling his home to Hyrum. His parents remained living in part of the house. Hyrum sold the place in Idaho and bought his father's home. Belva (1903), Mildred (1906), Fern (1911), and Leonard (1927) were born while the family lived on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. George Romrell had a heart attack and died 31 December 1912. Hyrum worked at the train depot sorting mail for the west and California. One time he got a railroad pass for Ruby, Belva, Mildred and himself to go to California. They had a good time in spite of the fact that Ruby was sick most of the time.

In addition to the illness Hyrum suffered earlier, Ruby, Belva, Mildred and Hyrum all had diphtheria. Later all except Ruby had whooping cough. Belva had scarlet fever.

Hyrum had previously bought six acres of pasture from Ruby's grandfather, Pleasant Green Taylor. Taylor wanted to sell his farm in Harrisville and he offered it to Hyrum. Hyrum sold the home on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and bought the farm and the house (1193 North Harrisville Road) and a little house nearby for his mother. He built a chicken coop and contracted to furnish eggs for the Dee Hospital and did so for 20 years. Their son Roland (1922) was born in Harrisville.

The family enjoyed attending the Farmers Encampment at the Agricultural College in Logan. The college furnished tents and straw mattresses, and everyone camped around the edge of the campus. They stayed five or six days there swimming, playing games visiting experimental farms and judging horses and cattle.

Ruby suffered for years from gall stones. She had surgery, developed pneumonia, and passed away 11 October 1927 at age 45. Belva was married by this time, and the house work was left mostly to Fern and Mildred. Roland was five years old.

After Ruby's death, Hyrum was very lonely. He started dating some. In 1933 he married Lucille Rowett. It proved to be a very unwise marriage and ended in divorce. One night he went to the Berthanna Dance Hall. He saw Evelyn McGregor and asked someone who she was and said that she was the girl he was going to marry. They were married 1 February 1939. Her Uncle S. Dilworth and Aunt Gladys Pratt Young gave a reception for them at their home in Ogden.

Hyrum's children loved and respected Evelyn. They never called her "mother," she was too much their same age, but they loved her and the grandchildren called her "Grandma Evelyn." Hyrum and Evelyn were very happy together and enjoyed several trips, some with Mildred and Harvey Hardy to the northwest and California, and to visit family in Idaho. Before Evelyn died, Hyrum was very solicitous to her welfare. She died 28 October 1965.

Part of Hyrum's farm was taken over in 1940 for the Utah General Depot site. This helped him financially and left him enough property, with the house, that he still kept a cow and raised animals and chickens. Leonard was still living at home and helped his father throughout the years.

Hyrum was active in the LDS Church and served as High Priest Group Leader in Harrisville. He was 6 feet 1 inch tall, weighted 180 lbs. In his younger days he had beautiful dark brown wavy hair. He had hazel eyes and was always particular about how he looked. He was a good cook and kept his home and grounds well maintained.

When Hyrum retired, he kept busy gardening and doing things in his shop. He made toys for his children and grandchildren, as well as other things. He repaired chairs for the Harrisville and Wilson Ward church houses, and he made benches for the Harrisville Junior Sunday School, and made quilt stands,

On his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday the family had an open house for him, but before the day was over he said he had nothing more to look forward to. He was in poor health and it became necessary to place him in rest home where he lived three weeks and died 30 July 1968 in Ogden. He is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery by his wives and his parents.

**SOURCE:**

Romrell, Hyrum James. Autobiography of Hyrum James Romrell (includes a section added by Fern Romrell Steiner. Unpublished manuscript.

Grange, Maxine Hardy. Family Records. Unpublished manuscript.

Cross, C. W.	Romrell, Mary
Hardy, Harvey	Romrell, Mildred
Lynne Irrigation Ditch	Romrell, Patience Swingewood
McGregor, Evelyn	Romrell, Roland
Perry, Alonzo	Rowett, Lucille
Romrell, Alfred	Rowley, Jemima Baker Swingewood
Romrell, Belva	Swingewood, Jemima Baker
Romrell, Elizabeth	Swingewood, Patience
Romrell, Fannie	Taylor, Pleasant Green
Romrell, Fern	Taylor, Ruby Rosetta
Romrell, George	White, Jemima Baker Swingewood,
Romrell, George	Rowley
Romrell, Joseph	Wilson, Bishop
Romrell, Josephine	Young, Gladys Pratt
Romrell, Leonard	Young, S. Dilworth
Romrell, Lorenzo	