



ESTHER MARY TAYLOR CHUGG (1891 – 1984)

At just a few minutes past midnight on Christmas Day, 25 December 1891, Esther Mary was born to Flora Genet Bingham and Levi James Taylor in Harrisville at 1174 North Harrisville Road. She was their sixth daughter and ninth child. She joined her brothers and sisters including: Levi James Jr. (1874), Willard (1875 - 1876), Parley Pratt (1877), Clara Gennett (1879), Florence Ellen (1881), Alice Matty (1885), Julia Amanda (1887), and Nancy Vilate (1889). A few weeks later on 9 January 1892, a son, Wilford Joseph, was born to Levi James Taylor and Josephine Bingham. Josephine was a sister to Esther's mother Flora and a plural wife to Levi James Taylor. When each of his two wives gave birth, it was evident to officials that Levi was cohabiting which had become a crime by law. So on 3 October 1892, Levi was sentenced by Judge J. A. Miner to spend three months in the Utah penitentiary and pay the cost of the prosecution. This was his second prison stay. The first was for nine months in 1887, also for cohabitation.

Esther spent many happy childhood hours with her cousin, Mable Taylor, who lived close by. Together they hunted crow's eggs, swam in the canal, helped tend babies, and wandered about the fields. They liked to wade in pools and try to catch pollywogs. Contracting childhood diseases was practically inevitable in those days. Esther's sister Julia was recovering from the measles when Esther and Nancy Vilate became ill with the disease. At age 19, Esther and her mother both had small pox. In those days, in order to help prevent the spread of disease, the home and family were quarantined when a communicable disease was present in the home.

All of Levi's children were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on their eighth birthday. Regardless of being Christmas Day, her parents heated bricks and put them in a trough where the water from the flowing well ran, and Esther and another boy were baptized after the annual children's dance. She was baptized by Nathan J. Harris, and was confirmed by her father. By this time three more children had joined Esther's family: Amos Moroni (1893), Flora Belle (1896) and Warren Lyman (1898). All of the Taylor family members helped with chores around their farm. Her father paid Esther and her sisters for picking berries that grew on their place. This way they were able to earn money for some of their clothes. Milking the cows and straining the milk was often the responsibility of the girls. They also gathered eggs and took care of the chickens.

Esther attended school in the two-room redbrick school house in Harrisville. On 25 May 1907, she was among 40 to 50 eighth grade students from the county schools to participate in a graduation exercise held in Ogden. Esther went on to attend the Weber Academy in Ogden. In September 1911, Esther, Amos, Grace (a half-sister), and Warren all worked at the canning factory and were earning good wages for that time.

One day Esther and her friends were walking up a hill near the Weber Academy in Ogden and Ray Royal Chugg and a friend were walking behind them. His friend told Ray about an upcoming dance and asked Ray who he was going to take. Ray saw Esther walking about a half a block ahead and said he was going to take her. She accepted his invitation to the dance and they continued going together and eventually became engaged. When they were courting, Ray would take her places in a horse drawn buggy. When it was time to take her home, the horse knew the way to her house and Ray did not even have to hold the reins. The horse would trot to her house, turn up the driveway, and stop at the door. The night before Ray and Esther were married, her parents went with them to Salt Lake City where they all stayed overnight with Esther's sister Florence. They were married on 24 December 1913 by President Madson.

Esther and Ray were renting a home in Ogden in the 4th LDS Ward area when on 12 March 1915, their first child, a baby boy, was born to them. The baby was blessed the next day and given the name of Austin Ray. The baby died that same day at 3:00 p.m. A short funeral service was held 14 March 1915, and the baby was buried in the Ogden City Cemetery. Ray worked for the railroad and was gone a lot. Money was tight. Esther had chickens and sold eggs to help out. In later years she sold most of her eggs to Orson Rodgers who packaged them to sell to stores. On Valentines Day, 14 February 1916, their second child Flora Vynetta was born.

When Ray's brother, Gerald, died unexpectedly in 1917, Ray took over his homestead in Noonan, Idaho. He and Esther worked hard there to establish a farm. Esther had a nice vegetable garden in front of the home that she planted and tended each summer. In addition to other crops, they raised strawberries, huckleberries, and wild berries. Esther was always the main picker, and the very best picker according to Ray, but one year Ray had over two acres of berries and had to hire four or five extra pickers. Ray had a little buckskin saddle horse about 20 years old that Esther often rode. One time she was riding the buckskin with Flora in the saddle with her. When they started back up the canyon, a lightning storm rolled in. She was trying to get the old horse home in the storm and both Esther and Flora were very frightened. They made it back to the little log home. When Ray came in, he found them in fear with a quilt covering their heads. Flora had a pet pig that would follow her around like a dog. If the family went to town, the pig would try to follow along. They would have to run around and catch the pig and put it back into the pen. However, it would often jump right back out. Esther did not particularly like the time they spent on the farm in Idaho. It was far from home and family and it was some distance from any other homes.

In November 1918, many people suffered from influenza. LDS President Joseph F. Smith died from it. Esther caught the flu while traveling from Idaho. Her baby, Flora, soon came down with it as did Esther's mother and father, Amos, and Flora Belle. Wilford and his family also became sick. While the family was ill, Ray was fortunate to remain in good health and was able to help finish hauling his father-in-law's beets.

Ray and Esther were both sick with bad colds in January 1919, and they moved into Esther's

mother's home for a while. They lived in the original single story adobe portion of the home Levi had built in 1871. They were living there on 22 December 1920. It was a cold winter morning with about six inches of snow on the ground when Esther gave birth to a baby girl at 2:00 a.m. The baby was blessed by Levi J. Taylor on 1 April 1921, and given the name of Myrtle.

They were at her mother's home 28 November 1922, when Esther gave birth to a son, Raymond Joseph. They went to Idaho that summer, but returned in September 1923. They gave up the homestead in Idaho after seven years. On 21 August 1924, Esther gave birth to a baby girl, Lucille. Shortly thereafter, on September 11, 1925, Esther was operated on to have her tonsils removed. She suffered several bouts with illness the next year. Thanksgiving Day 1926, Lucille was not well and Ray lost his job at the Railroad shop. On 15 November 1926, Esther gave birth to another baby daughter. The baby was blessed by her Grandfather Taylor and was named LouJean.

Ray and Esther were ready to move into their new house on 10 March 1929, (1139 North Harrisville Road) when a heavy rain storm caused some flooding and the basement of their house had about eight inches of water in it. They were finally able to move in the first part of May.

Esther went to the hospital in Salt Lake City for surgery on 21 August 1929 to have her gall bladder and appendix removed. It took a little time for her to recover. Through the years Esther often suffered with physical discomforts. She was a small woman, short, and seemed quite frail.

On holidays the Chugg family mainly stayed home and worked. There was just too much to do, and they did not have any money. At Christmas time they had a tree that they decorated. Esther always fixed a good meal including steamed carrot pudding with a white sauce over it. The children usually got one small present, perhaps a pair of stockings.

At harvest time, Esther always fed the "threshers" who came to thresh their wheat. The men would come in the house and eat at the table, and she would feed them big meals, including apple pie. In those days feeding the threshers was almost a competition among the women to see who could prepare the best food. She also fed tramps that came up the lane from the railroad. She tried to get them to work for their meals, but she did not allow them to come in the house to eat.

The Chugg's daughter, Flora, married Leonard Edwards in the Salt Lake LDS Temple 23 April 1935. After their marriage they lived in Willard. They had two sons, Ralph Leonard (1938) and Lynn Wayne (1941). Flora became ill after giving birth to Lynn. Because of the condition of her health, she and the boys were staying with her parents while Leonard continued to live in Willard and work. After spending the day of 8 January 1942 together, Leonard returned Flora to her parent's home, but she wandered away instead of going into the house. Her body was not found until March. After her death, Esther and Ray raised Ralph and Lynn along with their own children.

Their children married and left home. Ralph left to serve in the U.S. Navy. Lynn (Ed) served an LDS mission to the Western States. Upon returning from his mission, Lynn married Shanna Lee Crowther. After two years, they returned to Harrisville to live on the same street where her parents and Ray and Esther lived. The Chugg's son Raymond preceded them in death 29 August 1980, when he suffered a heart attack in Jerome, Idaho. When Esther was in her late 80s she underwent surgery to remove blood clots from her brain. She hated having her head shaved, but she came through the operation surprisingly well, and her hair totally white by now, came back in nicer than before.

Esther and Ray lived to celebrate seventy years of marriage together. Because Lynn lived close by, he was able to help them as they aged. In February 1984, Esther fell and broke her hip. She never fully recovered from the hip surgery, and died 5 March 1984, in South Ogden. She is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

SOURCE:

Edwards, Lynn. Family Records.

Nebeker, Lucile Chugg. Oral History of Lucille Chugg Nebeker. Personal interview with Ray R. and Esther Chugg. (interviewer, Neil Nebeker). 1983.

Taylor, Levi J. *Journals of Levi J. Taylor*. Unpublished manuscript

Bingham, Flora Genet Bingham Chugg, Austin Ray	Taylor, Alice Matty Taylor, Amos Moroni
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Chugg, Flora Vynetta	Taylor, Clara Gennett
Chugg, LouJean	Taylor, Flora Belle
Chugg, Lucille	Taylor, Flora Genet Bingham
Chugg, Myrtle	Taylor, Florence Ellen
Chugg, Ray Royal	Taylor, Grace
Chugg, Raymond Joseph	Taylor, Josephine Bingham
Crowther, Shanna Lee	Taylor, Julia Amanda
Edwards, Flora Vynetta	Taylor, Levi James
Edwards, Leonard	Taylor, Levi James Jr.
Edwards, Lynn Wayne	Taylor, Mable
Edwards, Ralph Leonard	Taylor, Nancy Vilate
Edwards, Shanna Lee Crowther	Taylor, Parley Pratt
Harris, Nathan J.	Taylor, Warren Lyman
Madson, President	Taylor, Wilford Joseph
Miner, J. A. (Judge)	Taylor, Willard