



## **LEONARD HYRUM ROMRELL 1927-1997**

Leonard Hyrum Romrell was born 25 June 1927, to Ruby Rosetta Taylor and Hyrum James Romrell in Ogden Utah, in a fourteen-room house built by his grandfather George Romrell. The home is east of the Romrell Park on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. When he was nearly a year old, his parents moved to Harrisville and bought a farm from Pleasant Green Taylor. His father also bought a house and lot from Floyd Taylor (1193 North Harrisville Road). It was the most modern house in Harrisville at the time. Leonard's grandmother, Patience Romrell, lived in a little two room house next to his family's home until she died, 23 June 1923.

Leonard was blessed by his grandfather, Levi J. Taylor, 5 August 1917, in the Harrisville church house. He was baptized a member of the LDS Church 25 June 1925 in the Harrisville Coldwell Reservoir, and was confirmed the same day by his father. Leonard had three older sisters, Belva (1903), Mildred (1906), and Fern (1911), so he was excited to finally have a brother when Roland was born (1922).

One day when Leonard was about 3 or 4 years old, he went down the lane near where his father was working in the field and began playing right in the center of the railroad tracks. His father looked up when he heard a train coming from the north and saw Leonard on the tracks. He ran and grabbed him from between the tracks just before the train got there. When Leonard was a baby he fell on a water bucket and for several years after that, his eyes were crossed. He started wearing glasses when he was six years old. When Leonard was older, he was working on an automobile and got his little finger on the right hand caught in the car door. It was nearly cut off, but it healed.

The Romrell family home was located about a block from the yellow brick four room schoolhouse where Leonard attended the first through ninth grades. In the first grade room, there was a large sand box about eight feet square that stood on legs. He spent many yours making tunnels and fences and other things in the sand. For several years, his mother made soup at home and carried it in ten gallon milk cans to the school and served the children hot soup each day for a small charge of five cents per bowl.

When Leonard was in the fifth grade, his mother had a gallstone operation. She died a few days later of pneumonia, 11 October 1927. Leonard was only ten years old and the death of his mother was a great loss in his life. Bishop Richard D. Brown who was the bishop of the Harrisville ward for many years was a guiding influence in Leonard's life.

The great depression was hard on the Romrell family who experienced some crop failures due to not enough water. His father milked cows and raised chickens and furnished the Dee Hospital with eggs. During the winter of 1933-34, two of the family work horses and their

riding pony were killed on the railroad tracks. This was a real loss to the family. His father borrowed a horse to work on the WPA until he could buy another horse. It was hard to get enough money to pay for Leonard's high school registration and books. When school was out in the summer, Leonard worked hard on the farm helping to raise enough money to pay the Federal loan interest on the home. He also worked several summers for Alphonso W. Taylor harvesting sugar beets. They loaded them by hand which was hard work. He also topped the beets, but he had a hard time keeping up with Alphonso's daughters in the work. Alfonso's wife cooked every day meals that were like a Thanksgiving dinner to Leonard. Leonard liked to join the neighborhood boys at the swimming hole behind the brickyard every day after dinner in the summer. It was nice to go for a swim after hauling hay.

High school years were not happy ones for Leonard. His clothes were shabby, his shoes worn out, and he was very self conscious, but he did enjoy seminary class. Although he was short a credit and a half to graduate from Weber High School, he graduated from Weber Seminary in 1936.

After high school, he worked during the summer at the American Can Company on 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Wall Avenue in Ogden. The next February, 1939, he worked at Joe's Chicken Inn on North Washington Boulevard where he worked ten hours a day for \$1.00. In the spring of 1940, he got a job at the Ogden Pressed Brick and Tile Company (Harrisville Brickyard) making \$3.00 a day. He was paid 50 cents per thousand or \$4 a day for wheeling brick out of the kiln. He worked five seasons from April until October.

In July 1939, his friend, Hubert Miller, bought a new 1939 Plymouth Coupe. Hubert and Leonard went on a trip through Idaho and followed the Columbia River to Portland, Oregon. They stopped at Dalle in Oregon and watched the Indians net salmon. They bought a salmon from the Indians and stopped at a motel in Portland and cooked it. They continued down the Oregon coast through the redwood forest to San Francisco.

Leonard married Betty Cunningham on 23 April 1941, but the marriage did not work out. In October of the same year they were divorced.

Leonard worked for the Union Pacific Laundry from 1941 until 1945. Then he went into the café business with Russell (Jack) Oakey. He sold out the café business and went to work for the Union Pacific Commissary. In July 1955, he started working for the United States Post Office. He worked as a mail handler for two years and then worked as a mail carrier until he retired.

Leonard was active in the LDS Church. He served in scouting. He was secretary to each of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums, secretary to the ward and stake YMMIA, and the Elders Quorum. At one time he served as second counselor in the Elder Quorum. He was ward clerk, finance clerk, and executive secretary in the bishopric.

In 1957, Leonard bought the top story of an Army barrack 30 feet by 39 feet and had it moved onto his father's property at 1155 North Harrisville road. He spent five years turning this into a nice red brick home. He paid for the work as it was done.

In 1962, Lena Maxfield introduced Leonard to Della Burton and they began dating. In April 1963, Leonard took a trip with friends to the Havasu Indian Reservation in the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The water falls and blue green waters of Havasu Creek were something to behold. After an eight month courtship with Della, they were married 23 August 1963.

About two years after Leonard and Della married, Mrs. Manning, a woman on Leonard's mail route, gave him contact information for adopting a baby, and they went through the process. On 1 September 1965, they got word that there was a baby girl for them. They had their first experience on an airplane when they flew to San Francisco to get the baby, Cindy. In February 1967, they made another trip to San Francisco Children's Hospital for a boy, Rex Burton, born 9 February 1967.

Cindy and Rex grew up, married, and left home. Della and Leonard were thrilled when they became grandparents to Rowdy Burton Romrell, son of Rex and Shantel. Leonard was able to hold the baby a few times before he suffered a stroke and died, 7 February 1997. He is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

**SOURCE:**

Family records.

Romrell, Leonard. *Autobiography of Leonard Romrell*. Unpublished manuscript.

Brown, Bishop Richard D.	Romrell, Hyrum James
Burton, Della	Romrell, Mildred
Cunningham, Betty	Romrell, Patience
Manning, Mrs.	Romrell, Rex Burton
Maxfield, Lena	Romrell, Roland
Miller, Hubert	Romrell, Rowdy Burton
Oakey, Russell (Jack)	Romrell, Shantel
Ogden pressed Brick and Tile Company	Taylor, Alphonso W.
Romrell, Belva	Taylor, Floyd
Romrell, Cindy	Taylor, Levi J.
Romrell, Fern	Taylor, Pleasant Green Taylor
Romrell, George	Taylor, Ruby Rosetta