

Alford Andersen Rasmussen
(edited by his granddaughter – Laurel LaRue Hogan Young)

My Fathers Life History – After which, Mine
(What my Father used to tell me about the younger days of his life)

He said that his Father's family was poor, and they lived on an Island called Loland, a part of Denmark, close by the sea. He, being the oldest child in the family of eight children, used to go out at night with his father to gather wild duck eggs in the hollow trees and other places where they made their nests. These eggs his mother would use as part of the food for the family. On one occasion his father happened to put his hand into a nest that belonged to an owl, who scratched his hand very badly. After he became large enough, he used to go to work on a farm which was a long distance from home. So he had to stay and work for his board and lodging and, if I can remember correctly, he got \$.50 a week in wages which he used to take home to his mother to help keep the family. When the time came for him to go home to visit the family as well as to return, was after dark. He used to be afraid because he had to cut through the woods which made him feel very frightened. It seemed so good to him when he reached home, but the time soon passed and he had to go back the same evening because he had to be ready to work just as soon as day break appeared. His trip forth and back used to make him feel so frightened of the dark so he used to tell his mother how frightened he was. His good loving mother used to tell him that if he would go in the name of the Lord Jesus, he need not fear, for he could go to the ends of the earth, and there would be nothing to worry about that could harm him.

When he became older, he had to go into training as a soldier to serve the King six months out of each year. So then when his brother Peter was old enough, he had to do the same. He was the fourth in the family. About that time, England was offering free transportation for anyone who would care to go to New Zealand to settle. He and his brother decided to go, so they left their native land, with their few belongings, and got on board a sailing vessel and started along with many more. They sailed out as far as the North sea, and a bad storm struck them which tore the sails and masts off the ship and even broke the rudder. There they were splashing around in the sea for ninety days and nights. During all that time the sailors were splicing the ropes and tying the masts to the side of the ship and doing such other things that needed repairing. One day a German ship came along and found them coupled up to their ship and towed them into Hamburg, a German Port, for repairs. After the ship was repaired and ready to set sail again there were quite a number who got cold feet and decided to go back home. But Father and Uncle Peter decided that live or die, they would still go to New Zealand. After a long voyage they landed on the North Island. They were so happy to think that their travels were over and they had found such a nice place to live, saying they were going to live and die there. So they got a contract to build long fences for sheep, as that was one of the industries of those Islands. They also herded and sheered sheep, burned weeds and brush off the land, and sowed grass seed with hand seeders. The land being very fertile, the grass grew fast, as they had a lot of rain which made fine pasturing. As time went on, they learned the English language. So Father

bought a Bible and read in the New Testament how the Lord organized His church with Apostles. So one day they heard there were two Mormon Elders coming to preach in the little town they were living in. So they with the others said, "Let's go and hear what they have got to say." While one of the Missionaries was talking Father heard a voice saying, "These are mine Apostles." He looked around to see who said so, but could see no one who might have said so. He decided it was a message from the Lord, so he started to investigate and found that one of the missionaries was a Seventy, the other was an Elder. After being baptized he was ordained a Priest and traveled along with the Missionaries. He also told of one of the meetings that one of the Elders had said something that he couldn't prove which called a mob. He said it looked as though we were going to all be killed, but he noticed that Elder Sorensen was standing out alone with a smile, so he thought he had nothing to fear for he had baptized him. He saw Elder Sorensen raise his hand to the square and rebuke them in the name of the Lord and the powers of the Priesthood. They all calmed down and finished their meeting. After the meeting they had to go past the house of the leader of the mob. He looked yellow in his face, being left so weak. But he sat in front of the back foot step and had gathered a lot of rocks he threw at us and the crowd as they passed by him.

After sometime, there were eighty converts who gathered to get ready to sail for Zion with some of the Missionaries who were released to return home. So when Father reached Salt Lake City, he started to work in a second hand store, repairing furniture and etc. The man he worked for baptized him, he was John P. Sorensen. As time went on he met my mother who happened to work for one of Sorensen's wives as a hired girl. John P. Sorensen is the Father of May Arnold and Grandfather to Reed and John Arnold. Father used to take the hired girl home and so got acquainted with her and married her April 15, 1883. Her name is Hannah Andersen. They went to live in Blites Hotel, located on State Street, between first and second South where I was born, Feb. 4, 1885. They later moved into a little home which they bought, located on Union Ave., on third East, between third and fourth south. My little brother James was born May 30, 1887. When he was six weeks old, Pres. John Taylor died and we four attended the funeral. Mother was sunstruck, which caused her death at the age of twenty. A few days later, little James died of canker, and was buried with Mother in the same grave. So there I was, poor little Alford A. with two of his best friends gone. Well, my Grandmother, Betsy Andersen, my mother's mother, and wife of Grandpa Jens Andersen had a pretty well grown family. So they thought it was a treat to have their oldest grandson and little nephew. I didn't see much of Dad, as he was in debt for our little home and the funeral of our two best friends. So now you can understand why it is they all think so much of me they were all so sweet and kind to me.

On Nov. 11, 1887, father married Dorothea Axelsen, who came from Aarhus Randers Denmark. She lived on a farm in Denmark and her folks were well to do farmers but when she joined the Mormons, she was kicked out. When she came to Zion she could not speak a word in English but Harriet Amelia Folsom, the ninth wife of Brigham Young, took her in as a hired girl. Father met her and married her Nov. 11, 1887. He also married Sine Neilsen, March 12, 1888. She gave birth to two boys, Erastus and Hyrum, who I never knew. Her mother lived with her and she took in

washing to support her mother along with what father could give her to help support her. The boys died at an early age. Hannah lived till she was 25, and was engaged to be married. During the first epidemic of the flu, the temple was closed, and so after, she took small pox and died. Sarah is still living, but one little sister, Emily, died at birth in Murray. Sarah has 2 sons. Her daughter died, but she has four grandchildren.

My new Mother and I started to live together in our little home on Union Ave., Salt Lake City. She was a dear sweet mother to me and tried to make me as happy as she could. Our lot was about three hundred feet long, running north and south, surrounded by a six foot board fence. Across the front was a red picket fence and a gate. Mother watched me very carefully to see that I didn't get out on the road to get hurt. I used to stand on the gate and say "Hello Mister" to all who passed by. I remember when Uncle John came along and I said "Hello Johnny." Well mother and father, both being raised on a farm, decided to get out of the city. Father came out here in Granger and looked at the place that now belongs to Asel Wallace, but for some reason or other he decided not to get it. So they met an old land swindler by the name of Mortensen. He had a big forty acre farm out in Granite, East of Union, up next to the mountains. "Come" said he to Father, "let's go out and see it", about the time of the year when there was snow all over the ground. So when they got out there he says "look what a nice level piece of land with not a rock in it." So father made a trade with him paid to boot on the trade, and in the spring, Grandpa Andersen hauled little Alford A. and his mother and dad, and what we had in the way of furniture out on that big farm. Oh boy, was we big farmers! We got a cow and a pig and chickens. Mother drove a stake. I have heard her tell, as many as twenty times before she could get a stake deep enough to hold a cow staked, and there were millions of rocks on the old dry farm. Rocks piled up in different places on that big rock farm. Father didn't know he had to water the land to raise a crop. He thought he was still living in New Zealand, part of the land north to the cottonwood creek. The house had no trees around it because we were living on a dry farm. The Lester fork canal was running by the house on the north, and just below father had a garden fenced. He had woven willow sticks between the wires to protect the garden, and he used to get up early and water the garden before he went to work. When the canal Superintendent came along he would stop and give mother the dickens for using his water to water our garden. She said our garden needed it. We didn't own even one share of water in the canal, but there is plenty of water running down the creek for all and we are entitled to some, for the Lord has provided enough for both you and us. So he went on peddling his papers, and one day he tackled dad and really told him off.

Well, Dad drove a horse and buggy to work down on State Street working in a carpenter shop for a man by the name of Neils Jensen. I had a big Newfoundland dog who stood as tall as me. I called him Heckter. We played together and mother used to send me with two buckets down to the creek to get water as we had no well. Heckter used to carry one bucket in his mouth and I the other. Mother used to get lonesome and would take me by the hand and we would go to visit the neighbors. A family west of us by the name of Buliger were Germans and had a big flock of geese. When we got inside the gate the darn old gander got poor little Alford A. by the shoulder and did he go to town on me! He pounded me with his big wings. I just really got a tuning up. Mrs.

Buliger grabbed him by the neck and threw him into the granary and left him there till we left. We would go east up the creek to Beesingers, and upon the hill by the mountains lived a family by the name of Hansen. They had a family of girls that herded cows in the hills and up the canyon. The girls used to take me with them to herd cows, and I would pick wild flowers, butter cups, lady slippers, and sweet williams. South of Buliger's was another family by the name of Henry, who had rabbits. I sure liked to visit him because he liked to show me his rabbits and they had a big farm.

Mother used to teach me how to pray. I knelt down in front of her old wooden trunk, it's now down in the fruit room, to pray for Pres. Wilford Woodruff, his counselors, the Apostles, Missionaries, my Grandma, and Grandpa, Uncles, and Aunts, and all my cousins; Father and Mother.

Father harvested his own hay all his self, and did his own butchering of pigs and beef, and salt brined his own meat. He used to drive to Salt Lake City to the old tithing office, up State Street to the Eagle Gate, west to Brigham Young's Lion House, north past the Lion house to the office, paid meat, butter and eggs. While he was doing that I used to look up on the Temple, and watch the men working on the towers. They all had scaffles on them. Then came time to go home. Sometimes we would call to see grandma and all the folks. On Sunday's we would all go up to Granite to church. Grandma and Grandpa and all the folks came out in two wagons to surprise me on my birthday. It happened to be a nice mild winter that year. As time went on, father met a man who had some boys that wanted a big farm. They had an old lean house and a fine barn, and ten acres of land. Father said he had a big farm and he would trade him. Their name was Wingreen. So we traded, and was I glad to get off that dry farm! This place is south of Murray, between the acres on the west, a field of 4 acres with a pasture of 2 acres and another 2 acres running east and west, where the garden and house are. We hadn't lived there long when Mother's father died and the farm was sold in Denmark. Mother got \$500.00 at her father's death, so father built a new home on the place. After Aunt Sine's mother died, she was left alone with her little girl Hannah. So poor Aunt Sine came out crying and begged father to bring her out to live in the old house which he did, and I was sure glad for now I had a sister to play with.

By that time, Alford A. had to start school at Lovendalls 24th District. Ella Bennion was my first teacher. She used to live on the hill just west of the river, coming west of the river, coming west up through Taylorsville, north side. I was in her room for two years, then I had a teacher by the name of Miss Spencer. She wasn't so good. And then I had a man teacher by the name of Carl E. Gaufin. After our new house was up, father finished the north room. The two rooms were running east and west not finished when I had another birthday. The folks came out to celebrate with us in the new house. They brought their fiddle and danced on the floor. I well remember when Sarah was born, May 26, 1898. Hannah and I played down in the back of the yard.

As I grew up, things did not seem so good. All the neighbors looked down on us because we were a polygamist family. Before father was married the first time he attended a special Priesthood meeting in the assembly hall. Pres. John Taylor was

then President of the Church, his counselor Joseph F. Smith. This was in the 80's when polygamy was still going on. Pres. Smith said, "Brethren, if you do not obey this Celestial Law of marriage, you will be damned", and he thought, gee I haven't even got one wife as yet. Such men as Pres. Brigham Young were able to live that law, because the Lord has blessed him so he could. He had the Lion house, home by the Eagle Gate, the Mission home, the great Liberty Park, that old home by the lake, Harriet Amelia Folsom's home, and I don't know what others. While poor Dad was paying for the little home he had bought on Union Ave., and had now lost his wife and baby boy. Mother had a nice place to live, because she was the house keeper for Harriet Amelia Folsom. She also had the chance to marry Ander Neilsen who she had known in Denmark. He had lost his wife and wanted mother to marry him and take care of his little boy and girl. He was a rich man, owned a 90 acre farm of land and lived where Aaron Smith now lives. He sold out to the Bawden's and moved to South Jordan, but never married again. But father married her and Aunt Sine. When the manifesto was given, polygamy was stopped and I have heard Pres. Joseph F. Smith say in the Granite Stake House, "There are men now who get tired of living with their wife and they want a new wife and marry in Polygamy, but just as fast as we find them we cut them off." Bro. Edward F. Durfee once told us over in the Second Ward one Sunday morning that while he was living down in Mexico, he knew a man who was paying a big tithing. He was a well to do man and his wife said, "Why don't you marry Miss So and So. There is no law against you here in Mexico." He did, and when the stork brought the first baby, he was as proud as any other father would be. The Bishop said, "Who is this baby?" He answered, "My baby." "Who is its Mother?", and he told him. The next day or so the Bishop came and cut him off the church. His new wife the Mexican government held a court with him. The judge said, "Is your first wife here?" He answered, "Yes." "Please come forward", the Judge said. And he said, "Did you give your husband the right to take another wife?" She answered, "Yes." "Okay", answered the judge, "let Mr. So and So be dismissed. We have nothing in our laws to prevent him." The Prophet Joseph Smith says, "According to the law, I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there never is but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said, "No man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise." (Oct. 5, 1845—D.H.C. 6:46)

There was trouble between the two families, poor mother in her new home. Aunt Sine could not get along with father because there wasn't enough for all of us. I learned to love my sisters, but father at times would not even let me play with them, and I just lost all love for home. So I quit school and started to work in the beets. In the Spring, I followed a man all day back of a hoe. As he would block the beets, I would thin them down to one. I then got a job at the Pioneer Nursery, \$.75 a day (10 hrs.) So I only got to see my sisters in the evening. I had the chores to do, get kindling wood for morning so mother could start a fire in the stove, and I could get up and do the chores and get off to work. So when our little Emily came, she was born dead and Father made a box to bury her in. I had to dig the grave one Sunday morning, July 19, 1902, and there she lies along the strawberry patch in Murray. She was a polygamist child and no one must know anything about such things.

When I was just a little boy, I had promised mother I would buy her a nice black silk dress, so I gave her \$30.00 for a silk dress, and twenty dollars a month from my earnings. Poor Aunt Sine used to come and cry, saying that she would also like a new home to live in, which I don't blame her for. So dad and I built her a new home below the Rio Grande tracks on the two acres, dug her a well, and built her a coal house. So we lived happy again for a while. We had a little bay horse that was sure easy to ride, and I used to make two or three trips to Murray each week to get the mail and bring groceries in a flour sack on my back. Mother used to sew all my clothes so when I made my own money, I used to buy just what I wanted to. I bought me a new bicycle and I used to ride it to work and to town to see all my folks. On decoration day, I used to go to town and where the State Capitol now stands there was a tower we used to call Capitol Hill. Cousin Sam and I used to climb up there and then up the side of the canyon, gathering a large arm full of wild flowers. There were a lot of pretty flowers called cat eyes. Grandma and the girls would make up a lot of bouquets and in the afternoon, grandpa would take us all up to the grave yard in his surrey, to decorate the graves and then we would go down to Liberty Park to spend the evening. Mother and I used to grow a lot of strawberries, raspberries, also gooseberries, and I used to deliver them to the neighbors who had ordered them. We used to raise chickens called brown leghorns and they could sure lay eggs. On Washington's birthday, I used to ask mother, father being at work, if I could spend the day with the Jacobsen boys. They were called Abe, and Alma. It was fine weather at that time of the year. We traveled through the fields and down to the river. The different trees, and bushes had different colors of bark, so we used to see just how many colors of specimens and rocks. We really had our pockets filled with such junk. Coming back on the same road as we called Turpins hill road, called at the Meyer's home. That family was what we would call a well to do family. They were sugar beet farmers. And then there was the Hansen's, Proctors, and Stephenson's. By the time we got back to the Jacobsen's home, it was time for Alford A. to be making tracks towards home. Mother used to be glad to see me back before dad came home, because that saved us both a lot of troubles.

All of Murray and south two miles or more was all South Cottonwood, so we had branch Sunday Schools. One was down by the Old Germania Smelter, the other one was out at the place I attended school. When I reached eighteen, I was making \$1.25 per day, ten hours, doing a mans work at twenty. So I told father I did not want to work at the mill, smelter, or railroad and I suggested we get a farm. So we moved to Granger on what was called the Neave farm. Mother and I live on the farm for five years with father, and Aunt Sine lived in the new home. We sold Aunt Sine's home for \$800.00 and bought the twenty acre farm. I farmed for five years in Granger; twenty acres, 40 acres dry farm, and the place we left in Murray. I had to do most of the work and watering and I had nothing to show for it only living on promises. He said this farm, meaning the Neave farm, and the dry farm will be yours when I get through with it. I got a call to go on a mission in 1910 to the Eastern States Mission, and after twenty months, I had to come home to a poor sick mother. Mother told me just before I left, I won't cry when you leave, but when I stepped in to kiss her goodbye, she had her back turned to the door. But she told me just a few days before I left to shirk the women like I would the gates of hell, obey those who are to preside over you, and when you return,

the Lord will bless you with a dear sweet girl, who will be your wife. And believe you me, I was sure blessed with one of the sweetest little girls in Granger, Ann Laurel Smith. We sure spent many happy days together. One evening when I came to see her and she was getting ready to go, her mother said, "Alford, don't you know that when a young man is out with his young lady he should be her protector against all temptations and evil. And as well, his young lady should be his protector against all temptation and evil?" "Yes", I said, "That is sure right. If that was always carried out we would not have so much sin in the world today as we have."

The five years I spent in Granger was mostly all work and no play. I had the farm to water as well as the place in Murray for Aunt Sine. I watered the hay field, and when it was ready, I cut, raked, piled and helped haul the hay into the barn. It all had to be pitched in by hand. Beside, I had the hay to water, cut, rake, and pile, ready to be put into the barn or put into a stack in the yard on the farm. Then there was twenty acres of dry farm land to plow and keep clean from weeds during the summer, besides the grain to water and the grain sheaves to stack when the grain was ripe and ready. Besides that I had my nursery of trees to water, cultivate, weed, and take care of a patch of potatoes to give the same treatment. And what spare time I had left I used to help the neighbors, to furnish me with a little spending money for my own use. Then there was hay to deliver to our hay customers on the west line. First field the water had washed a big hole in the ground large enough to bury 2 wagons and teams. Well, with father's help we plowed into the hole, and so during the summer I hauled rocks from the dry farm and lined that ditch. "My", says Uncle Jim, "You have sure done a good job. He said to dad, "Say that boy of yours has sure worked hard to do a good job for both you and me."

In the old school house we used to hold S.S. called the Taylorsville West Side S.S. We had dances there at times in the evenings and had the Todd Brothers to play for us. That is when I learned to dance, but believe me, I was sure a dumbbell to learn to dance. I used to step on the girls toes till Mary McLaughlin said, "Alford, let me teach you how to dance." Well, I was sure thankful to her, for that really helped me out a great deal. And so when I thought I could master the dancing pretty well I used to go down to Granger in the evenings to the Friday evening dances and I stepped up to Ivy Bennion and asked her for a dance. She looked at me and answered that she didn't know me. So I well remember asking that little Ann Laurel Smith girl. She answered, "sure", with a nice big smile Will Bawden noticed that I didn't progress very well with getting partners, so he made me acquainted with his sister Alice, who was also very nice with me. I just don't remember who else I danced with. So after the dance I lit out for home, as I didn't dare take time out to take the little Smith girl home, because I wasn't sure how it would turn out at home. When I reached home, as the dance let out at 11:30 p.m., that would be altogether too late for me to be out according to Dad.

In the fall of 1909, and after attending S.S. down in Granger, Bishop Daniel McCrae stepped down off the stand and walked over to me, shook hands with me and asked how I would like to go on a mission. I answered that I have always looked forward to that time. He said, "Well, you talk with your folks about it and then report to

me this afternoon after meeting.” That I did with the answer that I would go, and of course that was suppose to happen that fall. But Dad had other plans, so I had to wait till the following spring. So Wm. Hudson was called and left, and I had to wait all winter. Wm. Hudson went to England. I left Salt Lake, April 20, 1910, for the Eastern States Mission. I remember so well that last Sunday, that so many wished me well and the Lord’s blessings. And when I got out on the outside, who should I meet but Sister Mary Ann Smith and her daughter, Laurel. Well, they also offered me a parting hand and the Lord’s blessings for my success. So I left in the evening on the Union Pacific R.R., north to Ogden, and in the morning it was snowing through Wyoming. Stopped off at Omaha for a short time, walked over the bridge of Missouri River to Council Bluffs, had lunch with some of the Elders there, and then we were off for Chicago. Stayed over night, and then we traveled east the rest of the distance till we reached Buffalo. We stepped off to visit Niagara Falls, which was sure wonderful to see. When we reached New York we stayed three days, rode the subway, and then on the ground and over the tops of the houses, walked over the Brooklyn Bridge, visited the Zoological Park, and the Hippodrome Theater, after which I got my appointment to labor in the North West Virginia Conference, with Elder Frank Ryan as District President. I took a boat from New York to Jersey City, passed the Statue of Liberty on the way, then traveled by train through Washington D.C. and landed in Fairmont, West Va. At midnight with the old address. No one seemed to know just where the Elders had moved to, so I had to take a hotel for the balance of the night, and out early in the morning to find the Elders.

After a little hunting around I found them, ha ha, I caught them in bed, it being Sunday. I went back with one of the Elders to get my baggage, and after breakfast we were off for S.S. It was testimony bearing, so after that was over we visited Saints. The next day I met my companion, Elder Walker. We were appointed to labor in Calhoun and Rone Counties without purse or scrip. After the summer was over we labored in the different towns, leading away from Fairmont towards the Ohio River. The next summer I labored out in the Allegheny Mts., and saw the Blue Ridge Mts of Virginia. During this time, my mother became very sick, so I was released and called home at twenty months because of her poor health. On my way home, I stopped off at Cleveland and went out to see the Kirkland Temple, Dec. 24, 1911, and believe me that is sure a wonderful building. Next day I was in Chicago, Christmas day stayed over night in Denver, and reached home the day before New Year’s.

I am reminded of the time when we were married, that was the ninth of October, 1912. Sister Smith and family sure gave us a fine big wedding. There was a large attendance and about the second day we went over to Aunt Susie’s home and started house keeping. Aunt Susie had rented two east rooms to us until the renter in her old home moved out. So we spent the winter with Aunt Susie, Uncle Bert and their family, and believe me we sure spent a most pleasant time together. Along in March Uncle Bert moved us down to their old home. It was located about straight east from where Aunt Susie now lives, and straight north of Andrew Schmidt’s home along the Bangerter East line. It was an old frame two room house with a small building moved up to the east side we used for a kitchen. A cellar under the house, a well, a stable for a cow and two horses, a pig pen, chicken coop for a small flock of chickens, and a chicken run.

We lived there until Dorothy and LaFay were born, then we moved up into our new home on the Neave farm. We lived there until Clair, Alelia, and Ruel were born. Then we moved our home down onto this bare five acres, moved our trees, plants, and all we had down here. We had a lean on the east side of our home. I moved down here first and then ordered a load of lumber that I used to add more room to live in for the summer, while I was getting our two rooms ready to move into. Then I had asked Ash Eldredge to dig us a place for a basement, and I built another two rooms on, and used the basement for our fruit room and other things that we had to store things in. After Dorothy came back from her mission we remodeled our home and fixed it up to a modern home, just to our liking. So mid struggles and strife, that we found in our will-be forty years of married life, we have a most comfortable home, and the beauty of it all is that we are still living happy, and enjoying our honeymoon.

Alford A. Rasmussen
(1952)