

DUP AF Book 1 page 121

Biographical Sketch

of

Leonard Elsworth Harrington

by Ida Harrington

Pioneer Year 1847

Captain A. O. Smoot's Hundred

Born: 27 Jan 1816, New Lisbon, Otsego, New York

Died: 21 Jun 1883, American Fork, Utah

I, Leonard Elsworth Harrington, was born the 27th day of January 1816, in the town of New Lisbon, Otsego County, New York. My father's name was Spencer Harrington and my mother's maiden name was Polly Evans. I have four brothers and one sister. In the fall of 1829 my father removed from Otsego to Erie Co. N. Y. After several removals in the course of the year he finally settled in a little village, afterwards called Akron, Erie Co. N. Y. My father engaged in the Tavern keeping business, and also in a small degree in farming and lumbering, so that my business was a mixture of assisting about the Tavern, farming, lumbering, attending school, etc.

My parents were not members of any church and made not definite professions of Religion. I was there fore trained to no particular creed, but taught to believe the Bible and the general principles of Christianity. About the year 1832 protracted meetings became very frequent in our vicinity. Generally under the control of the Methodists or Baptists, their meetings being attended with a great deal of apparent devotion, and many of my associates becoming converted, it become me to investigate the ground on which I stood, which I accordingly did. I examined the subject as far as I had the ability and opportunity to do so and came to the conclusion that their views and operations were defective and in several respects erroneous. About this time I had the opportunity of hearing a Universalist Preacher, preach several times and being connected with several who believed and advocated that doctrine, and turning my attention to the scriptures, I became a believer in Universal Salvation. I did not, however, join the Society, but attended their meetings and fully believed the doctrine. Nothing important occurred for the four or five years following I spent my time principally acting as clerk in stores, school teaching, working on a farm, etc.

In the winter of 1839-40 I first heard Mormonism preached. When I first heard it, I had no idea of becoming a believer in the doctrine. I was prejudiced against it and it was some time before I could sufficiently dispose my mind of preconceived opinions to give the subject a fair investigation. I eventually, however, investigated it sufficiently to become satisfied, that it was my duty to make a trial of its truth. The result was I became fully satisfied of the truth of the

Gospel as taught and practiced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (commonly called Mormons) and was baptized into the church by Elder Charles Thompson in the spring of 1840. In the summer of 1842 some four or five families of us removed to the place gathering, Nauvoo, Hancock Co. Ills. I was ordained a Priest soon after I joined the church and was ordained an Elder in Nauvoo.

One circumstance occurred while I was living near Nauvoo, Vis, I was elected a Justice of the Peace for Appanore precinct, Hancock , Co., at the August Election of 1843 and received a commission from Gov. Ford soon after. In June 1846 I resigned my office in consequence of having to leave the State on account of my religious faith. I started from near Nauvoo for the wilderness on the first of June with three in family, one span of horses, two yoke of oxen, two wagons, two cows, a year and a half provisions, clothing etc. came on to Council Bluffs where the first emigrants had stopped and where we finally stopped for the winter, after preparing for winter, I commenced teaming to and from the State of Missouri and from the last of December until summer I made seven trips to and from there.

Continued our journey on June 13th. I traveled in the 2nd fifty of the 4th Hundred and in Lorren Roundy's ten. A. O. Smoot was Captain of the Hundred and Samuel Russell Captain of the fifty. I was appointed clerk of the fifth. We pursued our journey and arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley the 25th of September, 1847, with gladdened hearts to be relieved from our arduous journeys.

We built a house of split logs and on the 3rd day of December plowed about four acres of ground and sowed it with fall wheat.

In the fall of 1850 we moved to American Fork, Utah, lived in a tent until we could build a house. In May, 1851, our ward, American Fork, was organized and I was chosen Bishop with Arza Adams and Hames Guyman Councilors. At the August election 1851, I was elected Justice of the Peace for American Fork Precinct. At the August election 1852 I was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the Territory of Utah. I attended the session of the Legislature in Great Salt Lake City the winter of 1852-53 also in June when I succeeded in obtaining a Charter for our settlement which was

incorporated into a city (American Fork) June 3rd, 1853. And at the first election held in July I was elected Mayor which office I held for 29 years.

Leonard Elsworth Harrington died at his home American Fork, Utah, June 21, 1883. He had three wives and was the father of eighteen children. He died as he lived a faithful latter Day Saint, a kind and loving father both to his family and the ward of which he was Bishop for 32 years. His offices included: Mayor of American Fork City, 29 consecutive years; Member of the State Legislature for about 30 years; Postmaster 29 years; Chairman of the State Judiciary Committee, a very important office; One of the Trustees of the Brigham Young Academy and Timpanogos University; President of the American Fork Cooperative Mercantile Institution 14 years; Orderly Sergeant in Captain Clark's company of infantry; Director in Stock association for 20 years and many other offices which he held with honor.

Through his efforts the first free school system was adopted.