

Autobiography of Leone Moses Jorgensen

I was born January 27, 1921 in Lost River, Idaho to Jesse Tilton Moses Jr. and Lavina Harper Moses. I was the youngest of nine children. We lived on a farm that Dad inherited from a family member on the Harper side.

My earliest memories were happy. I remember the buggy rides to Relief Society meetings. Mom wrapped me in a warm blanket and set me beside her. We rode together with Sister Ikley who lived on the same street. I remember Uncle William Harper coming over to eat breakfast every morning. One day he left town on a train, probably for Utah, and didn't come over to eat with us after that. I remember gas lamps for lights in our home. Dad studied his scriptures often. He sat in the middle of the room—because that was where the best light was—and read his scriptures. I remember attending church together as a family. Dad was a counselor in the bishopric, and also taught gospel doctrine class. He was a returned missionary and had a strong testimony. Our parents were good examples and taught us the gospel—and we were a happy family.

In 1925 we moved to Blackfoot Idaho. Dad farmed out at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Mom was a talented homemaker. I remember that I wanted to sew like mom. My earliest attempt at sewing was when I was five or six. I found some material and cut out a doll dress. I carefully cut out arms and a neck and shaped it like a dress. I wanted the sides to be sewn. My mom was sewing a sheet and stood up and left for a moment. While she was gone I tucked my newly cut out dress underneath the presser foot along with mom's sheet. When she returned she continued sewing her sheet and my dress was sewn onto the back of the sheet. I began sewing for the first time on my own when one day I saw my mom sewing quilt blocks. I asked her if I could sew some of the blocks and she gave me my first lesson. After that, I found myself wanting to sew other things.

About the time I was in the second grade I had an unforgettable experience that taught me that a kind Heavenly Father was watching over me. We were picked up for school each day in a wagon. The wagon had walls and a roof with a stove in the middle to keep us warm. Sleigh runners were attached during the winter snow season. One dark snowy morning I was sitting close to the red hot stove in order to keep warm.



Jesse & Lavina Moses Family, abt. 1918



Leone (left), & Fern

It was very cold outside. Suddenly, the wagon heaved up and tipped on its side. After all the commotion I found myself looking up at the glowing hot stove above me. Soon, the wagon was turned upright again. I overheard the driver say that it was a good thing he bolted the stove to the floor day before. It would have been a serious injury for me if he hadn't.

Another close call happened one day when Dad put the bull in the corral with the cows. I was standing close to the house next to mom when the bull knocked down the fence and came after us. Mom took a willow in her hand and whipped the bull on the nose. He stopped short of hitting us and we jumped in a car that was close by.

When I was in third or fourth grade my friend Loa Cammick asked me to sew a dress for her celluloid¹ doll. I made an apple green coat and a tam² out of a felt-like material. I cut out the individual sections on the tam and sewed them together. My confidence in sewing grew stronger.

When I was age seven we moved about 15 miles southwest to Pingree. Dad farmed there and had a small herd of cows. I was doing well in school and loved spelling. In March of that year I won the Bingham County Spelling Bee contest with 100% correct.

In 1929 I turned eight and was baptized in Blackfoot at the stake center. Later, I was confirmed at our ward sacrament meeting in Pingree. I remember that when I walked to the front of the chapel to be confirmed, my Dad asked me to take off my hat. I had on a beautiful green velvet hat my mom had bought for me.

Two years later we moved about 10 miles southwest to Sterling Idaho. There we lived on a farm for about a year. My parents were concerned about the schools, and a year later, in 1932, we moved to a farm in Riverside, which is about 5 miles west of Blackfoot. Riverside is where I lived from age 11 until I was married. Our first home in Riverside was a basement house. It was cozy and warm and we called it home.

One Sunday morning, sometime after we moved to Riverside, my appendix burst. This was life threatening, especially since antibiotics were not available in 1932. At



Leone at the basement house in Riverside, ID



8th grade graduation, Leone (front center)

¹ Celluloid was one of the first synthetic plastics created.

² A tam is a Scottish style hat.

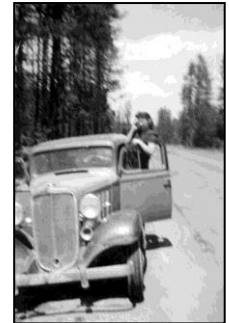
first it was not understood what was wrong. My arms went numb with the pain and infection in my body. Mom gave me a drink of something she thought would help. Dad went to priesthood meeting and brought back Brother Gooch and gave me a blessing. After the blessing the infection in my body gathered. The doctor came to the house to check on me and discovered it was appendicitis. The doctor said I should be taken immediately to the hospital. He told my parents to be careful about going over any bumps. In the operation the doctor found a pus-filled abscess next to my appendix. He removed my appendix and the abscess and then kept me in the hospital for four weeks. This experience strengthened my faith in the healing power of the priesthood.

When I was in the eighth grade I played basketball. I was a guard, and did very well. I also played church softball and a little tennis.

When I was about 14 my dad bought a brand new Chevrolet. We already had a Model T but the Chevrolet was the first real car we owned. We drove down a long country road and went as far as we wanted to go. When we turned around to go home, I asked if I could drive home and my dad let me. That day I drove a car for the first time and have been driving ever since. In those days you didn't need a driver's license. It wasn't mandatory to have a license until long after I was married.

I graduated eighth grade³ from Bingham County Riverside Grade School when I was 14 years-old, and began high school the next fall at Moorland. Money was always tight in these growing up years. We lived within our means and that sometimes meant going without. During my high school years, when I wanted a candy bar and had no money, I would take an egg to the store and trade it for the candy. On hot summer days we went swimming at a canal not far from home. It was a popular place. I walked to the canal to go swimming about once a week.

After I graduated⁴ from Moorland High School I wanted to go to beauty school. My sister Fern had a tuition certificate she earned selling newspapers. Having a certificate meant you didn't have to pay tuition. But Fern didn't want the certificate after she got married and she gave it to me. I jumped at the opportunity. The bishop's daughter said that if I was going to beauty school, she wanted to go too. We both went to Wright's Beauty School in Pocatello. I really enjoyed beauty school. Highlighting that year were rewarding



Leone and car



Swimming with Fern



Age 16



Age 17



Age 18

³ May 16, 1935

⁴ May 15, 1939

opportunities such as giving a facial to a lady who came in with a bad headache—watching her relax and fall asleep and wake up with the headache gone. I had a weekly schedule with three or four bald headed men who came, in despair, for an ultra treatment in order to try and restore their charm. The most memorable beauty school customer was someone we all called “Old Lady Gordon.”

Nobody could please her. One day she was given to me and I was determined to help her have a good experience. We got along just fine. We did Marcel waves on the older women’s hair. We earned tips by doing ultra violet rays on balding heads in order to restore hair. One day I bought two pieces of material with a fifty-cent tip that I received from a patron. A fifty-cent tip in those days was a big tip. I made two beautiful dresses with the material.



Marcel wave

When we completed beauty school the next spring we had to drive to Boise to take the final exam. It was the first time I had seen Boise. On April 6, 1940 I earned my certificate as a registered cosmetologist. Soon after that I had a job back at home at a local beauty salon.

I was acquainted with Everett a whole year before I started dating him. He lived with Bert Cutforth and helped him farm land that was some distance from Blackfoot. Bessie Cutforth was Bert’s wife and Everett’s cousin. Bert was in the bishopric in our ward. While Everett was living with Bert and Bessie, he went to church with them. Everett was called to be the Sunday School Superintendent. I thought he was a pretty good guy.

We began dating in June of 1940 and our courtship was spent most often at Saturday night dances and church socials. Sometimes we went to a movie and we spent most Sunday afternoons together. I loved to dance with Everett. He was a very good dancer and we both enjoyed it so much. I remember switching dance partners with a friend. She also said that Everett was a good dancer. We had wonderful memories of dancing together.



Leone & Everett

Next door to the beauty salon where I worked was a jewelry store. Occasionally I would stop and look through the window at the rings. I think the owner had seen me looking at a certain ring and helped Everett pick the right one. Everett and I had talked a little about marriage, and one day Everett said he wanted to show me the ring he wanted to buy me. We went down and looked in the window of the jewelry store. When he pointed it out, I told him it was just what I wanted!

Everett and I were married November 15, 1940 for time and all eternity in the Logan



Wedding pictures

Temple. The following spring we moved about 60 miles northwest to the Lost River area in order to farm. We had loads of fun fishing, especially at the Mackey Dam. We lived in the Lost River area for eleven years and bought eighty acres of farm ground.

On November 13, 1941 our first child was born, Rodney Everett Jorgensen, in Blackfoot, Idaho. The delivery went on for hours. I asked Everett to call my dad to help give me a blessing, which he did, and the delivery went well. The way I remember my age is that I am 20 years older than Rodney, almost to the day.



Shortly after marriage

Rodney had a lot of energy and wanted to run away from me one day when he was only about 17 months old. He took off running as fast as he could across a field. I had to run pretty fast to catch up to him. I was very pregnant with Bryce at the time. But I still caught him.

I began sewing clothes for my first child. When Rodney was old enough to go to school I remember him asking me if he could please have store bought pants.

Our second child was born, Bryce Waite Jorgensen, in Arco, Idaho on March 19, 1943. Rodney and Bryce enjoyed doing things together. When Rodney was about four years old, I remember he and Bryce pulled open one of the lower drawers in the kitchen and tipped over a big gallon jug of honey. They both soon learned that mom wasn't too happy with the mess they made on the kitchen floor.

Bryce had about as much energy as Rodney. While riding in the car one day Bryce decided he wanted to open the door and get out. Of course we didn't use seatbelts in those days. The one thing that saved him from falling out was Everett grabbing him by the suspenders and holding him until he could stop the car.

On August 21, 1944 our third child was born, Linda Jorgensen, in Arco, Idaho. When Linda was born I was happy about having a girl. But she sure had to learn to stick up for herself. When she was probably about five years-old, the boys locked her in the newly built outhouse. She quickly figured out how to climb through the hole and dig her way out with a stick. She came into the house very upset. I would have gone looking for her if she had been gone for long.



Bryce, Linda, and Rodney

June 16, 1949, our fourth child was born, Lolanne Jorgensen, in Moore, Idaho. Lolanne was the only child born at home. It was quicker for the doctor to make a house call than for us to go to the hospital. I remember being very happy when she was born, knowing that Linda would now have a sister. When Lolanne was born the rest of the children were with Aunt Arabel. I heard that Aunt Arabel said to the children, "You have something new at your home. Do you know what it is?" Linda said, "Yes, it's a new refrigerator."

Two years later, July 23, 1951, another daughter was born, Jolene Jorgensen, in Blackfoot, Idaho. When Jolene was born she spent time in a bassinet with a vaporizer to help her with breathing. Everett and I were very grateful for another girl, and we were both satisfied at this point with the number of children in our family.

During the winter of 1951 we had so much snow that we decided to find a warmer climate. I was grateful for the move. In the spring of 1952 we bought a farm near Parma, Idaho in Apple Valley next to my brother Jesse Harper Moses and his wife Mary. Everett began working at the sugar beet factory in Nyssa, Oregon in order to help our farming income. About the only thing I liked about the job at the sugar beet factory was the paycheck.

After we had lived there about four years, one spring morning I walked out the back door with Everett. He was getting ready to go to the field. As I stood there thinking about the day ahead of us, I suddenly received a clear and unmistakable impression that we did not have our whole family here. There were more children to be born. I shared this with Everett as he was leaving.

On September 24, 1957 our sixth child was born, Jesse Deloy Jorgensen, in Nyssa, Oregon. While Jesse was coming into this world, the rest of the family was sitting in the waiting room deciding what his name was going to be. As Jesse grew older he became very curious about how things work. When he was around five or six, he asked "How is that calf going to get out of the cow?" I said, "You ask your dad to tell you when that cow is going to have her calf so you can watch." I never heard another word out of him about how a calf is born.

When Jesse was born, I had three teenagers. Linda was 13 years-old. About that time I began serving in the Young Women's organization and continued in that calling for several years. Everett was working with the young men. I remember him studying his lesson for the young men that he taught. On one combined youth activity we worked together as dance instructors. We really enjoyed that experience. I enjoyed my time as Young Women's president and Everett seemed to enjoy keeping the young men organized too. Years later I was a church softball coach for the Parma ward, while Linda was the coach for her team in Nyssa. Our teams played each other. It seems like most of the games we played, my team won. That's the way I



Jolene, Rodney, Linda, Jesse, Bryce



Jolene, Gay Nel, and Lolanne

remember it anyway.

At one point I was called to serve as a counselor in the ward Relief Society presidency. I enjoyed that calling as well.

Our last child, Gay Nel Jorgensen, was born on March 25, 1959, in Caldwell, Idaho. When Gay Nel was born everyone adored her. At Rodney's reception Everett and I danced with Gay Nel in our arms. Of course Everett was always the first one on the dance floor when we had an opportunity to dance. So Gay Nel had her first dance with her mother and father.

When Jesse got a little wagon for Christmas he would put Gay Nel in the wagon and pull her around. He one time picked her up with his arm around her neck. When we saw it we all jumped up at once to her rescue. We all loved Gay Nel.

About the time Jesse was one or two years old, Everett, for some reason, got up to check on him in the middle of the night. Jesse was gone. We woke up everyone in the house and began looking for him. He was found on the hay stack. A day earlier he learned how to climb the ladder, so Bryce taught him how far from the edge he could stand and stay safe. That was how we found him on top of the haystack. He was not able to climb down the ladder and stood there crying. The whole family had come to his rescue.

With the goodness of the Lord we managed to keep our farming and finances on the up while we raised our seven children. We always did the farm work ourselves instead of hiring out, or else we would have run out of money to operate. When something good happened to help us financially I always felt the Lord was blessing us.

Everett was a hard worker and a good provider. On the farm we grew corn, wheat, barley, sugar beets, alfalfa, and potatoes. I was very grateful the day Everett bought a potato harvester. It made life a lot easier during harvest time. I think it even paid for itself the first year. We had a wonderful crop of number one potatoes.

When Bryce went on a mission, I felt like I needed to find work to help pay the cost. I worked at Simplot, standing in front of a conveyor belt trimming potatoes. I also put the boxes together. When Bryce came home I quit.

There were years that we worked cleaning the College of Idaho Library. Everett felt we needed a job through the winter so we could afford to farm the next



Leone, (right) & family



Bryce, Rodney, Jolene, Linda, Lolanne, Jesse, Gay Nel, Leone, and Everett



Everett & Leone

year. We hadn't bought cows yet and this extra income was needed. We had the job of cleaning the main floor and sometimes another. We were given compliments on how well we did. This job lasted a few years.

In 1974 the World's Fair was in Spokane Washington. One of the most hilarious trips we went on was when Everett and I, Gay Nel, Jesse, Jolene and her husband Kent, my sister Lavina and her new husband, whom we had never before met—all got in our new station wagon and went to the World's Fair in Spokane. We were laughing and having fun the whole time.

We have also certainly had our challenges along the way, similar to what most families face. I am grateful to say that my children were all married in the temple, and that I have grandchildren who are striving for and obtaining the same goal.



Recording Everett's voice at a family reunion

Perhaps my greatest challenge in life happened toward the end of 1984 when Everett came down with Lou Gehrig's disease or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). The doctors gave him no hope of recovery. Everett was at first determined he was going to beat the disease. But people do not recover from ALS. Their muscles continue to weaken until they are taken. Everett was put in the Elks Rehabilitation Center, in Boise, Idaho, for a time, to help him get over pneumonia.

By the end of 1987 Everett's disease had been long and difficult and getting much worse. I think he was concerned about me having to milk the cows. We were trying to sell the cows because we knew we had reached the point where we could no longer take care of them. One person came to negotiate buying the cows and complained he would have to build a fence. Just then another person pulled into the driveway. I jumped up and said, "There's someone else who wants to look at the cows." I went out to meet him and he ended up buying the cows. This was something Everett wanted resolved before he died. Everett was eventually in the hospital again and the doctor this time was telling us Everett had only a few days to live. Moments before he died, Everett asked that I hold his hands. He passed away on February 27, 1988, only a few days away from his 74th birthday. He left me with an out-of-debt home and 120 acre farm. He was a hard-working husband. There aren't words to write the tribute I would pay to him. It comes from the language of the heart. In conclusion I will say that, in cherished thought and memory, loved ones never really part.

Not long after Everett passed away I went to a high school reunion in Blackfoot. It was a comfort seeing old friends again. I also found comfort in going to the Boise Temple two or three times a week. The temple president called me into his office one day and asked if I would be a temple worker. He asked if I could take two shifts a week. I said that I could do it if the shifts were back to back, so that I didn't

have to go home between them. I stayed at John and Linda Blaylock's house overnight and completed my second shift the next day. Later I stayed with Jim and Ginger Hanson, my grandson, who lived close to the temple. I worked Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Always being the first one there earned me the nickname "Early Bird." I worked at the Boise Temple for 14 years and enjoyed it very much. I had some very sacred experiences and learned for myself that it is truly the Lord's house and we are doing the Lord's work there.



Served in the Boise Temple

My health has been exceptional throughout the years. I haven't felt pain or indigestion for a long time. I had cancer on my face, but the doctor was able to take care of it. In addition to good health I have been blessed with 40 grandchildren and more than 100 great-grandchildren. As I look back on my life, the majority of it has been filled with good health, happy memories, and the joy of family.