

James Henry Ellsworth (Father of William Ellsworth)

James was born January 12, 1832 (some say 1835) at Oswego County, New York. He died 31 March 1911 at Safford, Arizona. He was the son of David Ellsworth, who was born 8 October 1809 at Pittsford, Vermont, and of Diana Livingston, concerning whom very little is known. David had a brother, German, who was born January 15, 1815 at Pittsford, Vermont, and who was married to Experience Brown.

David had three wives, the first being Diana Livingston, to whom were born James Henry Ellsworth and Lucinda Sophrana (Crocket). Lucinda died at Logan, Utah, 11 December 1915, of a cerebral hemorrhage. It is interesting to note that Diana Livingston refused to come west with David when the pioneers began their trek westward. David seldom spoke of her and no record has been found of her birth, death or whereabouts. His second wife was Catherine Lancaster, a widow who was born 31 January 1803. She bore him two children, Ephraim William and Ann (Potter). His third wife was Nancy Jane McFerren McCleve, who was born 3 May 1815. She bore him two children, Diana Jane and Devisal, both of whom were born in Payson, Utah, the former in 1858 and the latter in 1860.

Concerning Nancy Jane McFerren McCleve, she was the wife of John McCleve, who died 24 September 1856, near Greenriver, Wyoming, approximately 100 miles out of Salt Lake City. He and Nancy Jane were members of a handcart company, pushing all their earthly belongings in handcarts. The story is that while pushing his handcart up a steep hill the handcart overturns onto John causing him injuries. He continued to push the handcart the rest of the day. That night he complained of not being well and his wife made a bed for him on the ground. He looked at the ground and said, "It looks so hard," whereupon Nancy Jane borrowed a pillow from a neighboring handcart couple and he went to sleep. He died during the night. Nancy Jane continued on with their ten children, all of who had been born in Ireland. One of their ten children was Eliza Roxy McCleve who later on became the wife of James Henry



Ellsworth. Nancy Jane came on into the Salt lake City Valley and on the 27 March 1857 she was married, for time only, to David Ellsworth. She, however, had herself sealed for time and eternity to John McCleve on 5 April 1869.

James Henry Ellsworth married his first wife, Evaline Ellsworth, a first cousin, who was born 7 September 1842 at Payson, Utah. She bore him two children, Henry, who died as a child about 1920, and Esther, who later married John Barnett and died 15 April 1938 at Payson, Utah.

Later on when certain men in the Church were called to enter polygamy, James Henry chose as his second wife, Eliza R. McCleve. Evaline gave her consent to the marriage and accompanied the couple to Salt lake City where they were married in the Endowment House on 17 October 1868.

Eliza had been born 3 May 1845 in Belfast, County Down, Ireland. She died August 1912 at Safford, Arizona. It will be observed that although she was reared in the David Ellsworth family along with James Henry, they were not blood relatives.

James Henry, with his parents, was in Nauvoo, Illinois, at the time 2 Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred. At the age of 12 he recalled attending the general conferences following the martyrdom when it was to be decided who should lead the Church. He has related that he sat on the wagon tongue and personally saw the mantel of Joseph fall on Brigham Young, and also has said that Brigham's face took on the appearance of Joseph's at that time. He and his family left Nauvoo when he was 14 years old and crossed the plains. James drove a team across the plains. After David, his father, and German, his uncle, settled in Payson, James was called to turn across the plains twice to help other companies across. One of these was the Edmund Ellsworth Handcart Company; the other was that of the Browning brothers, the famous gunsmith family. It will be recalled that it was the Browning Automatic rifle manufactured in Ogden, Utah during the First World War that was credited with much of the success of winning the First World War. When the Browning brothers settled in Payson, James Henry worked



with them and learned to be a good gunsmith. He always was handy with his tools, being an exceptionally good blacksmith and carpenter. He did a lot of work with guns belonging to Indians and thus became acquainted with their language, During the Black Hawk Indian War he says he served in the war by holding a spur-horse team while the other men fought.

James Henry became best known as "Jim Ellsworth." The Government appointed him as official interpreter with the Indians and he was given the assignment of passing out Government allotted flour to the Indians in accordance with the treaties with the Indians. In 1862 his father, David, moved to Leeds, Washington County, Utah. James Henry followed some years later. However, his first wife Evaline refused to leave Payson and several years later she married \_\_\_\_\_ Green. Sarah Ann was born in Payson, Utah, 5 July 1870. She married Edward M. Allen.

In Leeds, Jim lived in a big two-story rock house which is still standing in the middle of town on the main street. It was in Leeds that William was born 17 August 1872. Mary Wansley became his wife.

While living in Leeds, James Henry received a call from Brigham Young to go into the United Order at Orderville, Utah. This was not a great distance away and when William was three years old the family disposed of their properties and started out by wagon. They camped on the creek near the forks of the road three miles from Orderville. During the night James Henry had a dream that he looked in the creek and saw a wagon wheel complete in every detail. However, he noticed that the hub was rotten and was not holding the spokes. The next morning he said that John Young, connected with the United Order, was not competent and that the Order would fail. He, therefore, refused to go on to Orderville and instead took the other road to Kanab, Utah. William's uncle, Joseph McCleve, brother of Eliza McCleve, later told Will that many of the people in Orderville were lazy and would let the other men or the other woman do all the work and that this resulted in the Order failing.

David Ellsworth died at Kanab in 1872. It was in Kanab that Edith and Earnest were born 26 February 1875.



Edith married Paul Beebe and Earnest married (1) Inez Johnson who died 1 January 1901, Layton, Arizona. They had three children: Earnest, Julian and Benjamin, Earnest's second wife was Julia Virginia Curtis. The family stayed in Kanab until 1879 and then proceeded South to Taylor (near Snowflake) Arizona. Apparently all the Indians in the territory knew Jim Ellsworth very well. Years later Will was in Kanab and an old Indian stood in front of him and stared at him. Finally the Indian said "I know you. You son old Jim."

Once while building the railroad through Southern Utah a consignment of flour arrived for the Indians. Jim wanted to take it on to the end of the line so it would be nearer to the Indian tribe. However, the railroad agent refused to let the flour go on. The Government gave the Indians 20 years' exemption on the railroads; that is, they could ride free. Jim rode the railroad to the end of the line, got all the Indians put them on the railroad and took them back to where the flour was. The Indians got their flour and then rode the train to the end of the line. This had good results as the next time a consignment of flour came in; the railroad agent asked Jim where he wanted it delivered.

When the family left Kanab, Jim Henry traded the ten acres of land he had for fifty head of Durham cattle. He and Abe Windsor each had fifty yearling heifers. The land in Kanab had been cut up into ten-acre strips and each family could have just ten acres. All families helped put in a long row of poplar trees, which still stand along the line south of Kanab. Jim and Abe hired hands to drive the cattle south into Arizona and paid the men in advance. Then they went on ahead to prepare land and homes. The men drove the cattle across the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry and lost a few head in the river. On the other side the driver heard of a mine discovery near Moencopi. They left the cattle to run free and went on to the mines. Winter was near and during the cold weather most of the cattle died. Jim went back and was able to find only two cows out of the original fifty head. Will remembers that they milked Old Star, one of these two, for many years.



Jim built two houses in Taylor. He had the best hewed log house at one time in the whole district. The other house on the other side of the river was built of rock.

At Taylor, Arizona, Emma Diana was born 29 June 1879, and married Frank Layton; Eliza Hay was born here 15 May 1882. She married Adelbert Merrill. In 1883 James Henry decided to go into Luna Valley, Sonora County, New Mexico, where there was a new pioneering development. It was there that James Clarence was born 26 May 1885. He married Julia Eliza Claridge. In Luna Valley Jim built a new house consisting of two rooms and a lean-to. He also built a house for Parson Williams, a preacher, who had been converted by Dave Lee. He also built a barn for Hy Clark. In Luna Valley Jim had a blacksmith shop and did general work for the settlers in the area. In September 1885 the family moved to Safford, Graham County, Arizona, where James Henry and Eliza lived until their deaths.

James Henry was a man who had a keen sense of justice. While he was building the Johnson house, 12 miles east of Kanab, and living there, the 12 year old Johnson girl made the mush one morning and got it too salty. Old man Johnson said the girl had to eat all the mush for getting it so salty. She ate some of it, but was unable to eat any more. Johnson got very sharp with her and said he was going to whip her. He made as if to approach the girl and Jim stepped up to him. Johnson acted like he was going to hit Jim, so Jim whipped him all over the place. That night he was afraid that Johnson would try to get revenge and so got no sleep. The next morning he packed his things and started to leave when Johnson asked him where he was going. Jim said he was through. Johnson said to forget what happened last night and to go ahead and finish the house.

On another occasion James Henry and his half brother Ephraim were on a trip and they stayed overnight with some farmer. They slept out of doors and during the night they heard what appeared to be a fight in the house. They went to the windows and



looked in. They saw the man beating his wife. They entered the house and Ephraim held the man while Jim black snake-whipped him. The woman thought he had enough and ran Jim and Ephraim out of the place with a broom.

Aunt Mary Ellsworth recalls the Ellsworth family when she was a girl in Taylor, Arizona. The Indians were particularly bad at that time. Her family lived at the Grist Mill, three miles north of Taylor. Frequently the people on the outskirts of town moved into town and stayed for three or four days while the Indians were on the warpath. Many of them stayed at the church and she remembers rows of beds in the church. Her first recollection of Grandmother Eliza Ellsworth was that she had gone into the house and inquired after the welfare of the children there.

James Henry Ellsworth was obedient to the callings of the Church. However, he was by nature a quiet man and would never accept an assignment to speak in church. Will recalls that in Taylor the meetinghouse was constructed in such a way that the entrance door was at the back and at one side. The aisle led from the entrance door up to the front and then one had to pass the pulpit and then back another aisle toward the back of the church to occupy seats on that side of the meeting house. Will recalls that one Sunday the family was sitting in the far corner of the church when the bishop stood up and said "Brother Ellsworth, will you come forward and speak to us for a while?" James Henry got up, walked up the aisle to the front, turned right and walked on past the pulpit and turned right again down the aisle and out the door. He never entered the church again.

In Safford, James Henry set up a blacksmith shop with Fred Thurstenson for a while on Thatcher Boulevard. He then built one for himself near the railroad tracks, which he maintained until his death. When the family first moved to Safford, Will traded a horse. "Old Doll, for the five-acre lot on which the family house was built and then traded a team of horses for the brick used in the construction of the home. Will brought in the lumber, etc. from Willcox



by wagon. James Henry put up a small adobe building first, which was later added to as construction materials were available.

James Henry was described as a good provider for his family. He always had plenty of work to do, being a very capable man with his hands. His wife Eliza was a frugal woman and always saved a portion of the monies coming to her. During bad times the family always found that she had a few dollars put away. She was also capable in preserving and storing foods. Will recalls as a child when they moved to Taylor she had brought along raisins which tasted very good in that new territory.

Once when food was very scarce, James Henry and others sent a wagon out for grain, and the only grain obtainable was barley. The wagon returned with a ton of it. James took his sack, and when passing the general store, the storekeeper named Blanchard asked him what he had. He said he had barley. Blanchard asked him what he was going to do with it. He said he was going to grind it and eat it. Blanchard called to one of his helpers who brought 100 pounds of dark, smelly flour, which Blanchard gave to Jim and told him to feed that to his family and feed the barley to his mares. The flour was good and held off starvation.

A little later Jim was in the store and saw an old cap and bar six-shooter on the shelf. He asked Blanchard to let him see it. It was approximately 15" long and had a cylinder, which was revolved by hand. Each chamber could be loaded with powder and ball and loaded in front of the barrel and exploded by cocking the hammer back and then pulling the hammer. Jim asked Blanchard to let him take it and fix it up. Blanchard said it was an old keepsake. Jim told him he would not hurt it. He took the gun home and cut off a portion of the barrel. He rifled the inside of the barrel so it would fire a regular cartridge. He attached a mechanism, which accurately turned the revolving chamber into a position in front of the barrel each time the hammer was cocked back. He also fixed the chamber so that it would carry a



rimmed fire cartridge. He then took half a nickel and made a front sight. Finally he glued the gun by holding it in sulfur flames and then took it to Blanchard who was delighted with the weapon. The next day Blanchard delivered a quarter of a beef to the Ellsworth's residence.

James Henry was known for his strict honesty. In Jacobson's store in Safford he was permitted to enter the store and take anything he wanted off the shelves and make his own entry in the debit book. Once a week he would come into the store, determine how much he owed, make change in the till and pay his bills, again making the necessary entry in the book. When Jacobson came to the blacksmith shop he would make his own notation in Ellsworth's book as to how much he owed him.

James was fussy about his eating. He had to have potatoes at every meal in some form. He was very fond of mincemeat pie. He would arrive home promptly at noon for his lunch and he wanted his lunch on the table. He would never eat away from home until in his later years when he ate a few meals at some of his children's homes. Even then he wanted to get back to his own home.

Jim was exact in all the things that he did. He would even cut the kindling wood to the proper stove lengths. He was also very particular about his tools and had to have them kept in a specific place in his shop.

James worked up until the day of his death. He came home from work, ate a big dinner and went to bed. When he did not arise the next morning his wife went to his bed and found that he had died during the night of 31 March 1911.

Copied by Gay K. Killian, 2 September 1960. "I do not know who wrote this life history. It was with the genealogy of William Ellsworth."