

Chapter One - Childhood Days

*Oh happy, carefree, childhood days, Joyous laughter and baby ways, Fleeing by on wings of song,
You're not a child for very long.*



The "Magnificent Six" - Dad with sisters & spouses.



Murl and Alfred married May 16, 1906

I was born on May 24, 1909, the second child and second son of Alfred H. Johnson and Murl Holdaway, my older brother Harold being born on December 14, 1906. I first saw the light of day at the old home in Lake View. I think I weighed in at about eight and one half pounds.

I believe my mother was a bit disappointed at my being a boy, for already she was hoping for a girl. I grew very fast from babyhood, and it was not long until I was a child running about the house and getting into all kinds of mischief. About the first thing I can remember of my childhood was my mother teaching my older brother and me to pray. At the end of each day my mother would sit in the little old rocking chair in the kitchen near the stove. Harold and I would kneel on the floor, place our hands together in each of hers, and repeat after her the words as they fell from the lips of the most wonderful and beautiful woman in all the world. This lesson of being taught to pray has been the greatest strength and power and comfort to me than any other one thing in my life.

I soon found that the world was much larger than just the two or three rooms of our house. I remember it seemed to drape and nestle about the summit of Mt. Timpanogos. The view to the west was just as breath taking.



Harold, three years. Dean about 9 months. Dean with Uncle August's Dog "Snap"

Here was Utah Lake with its many miles of marsh lands and swamps and vast numbers of birds and other types of wildlife that play up and down the valley near the shores of the lake. Those first scenes of my childhood have remained with me through the years. They have had a life-long influence upon me. I still get a great deal of joy and happiness just gazing at the beauty and wonders of wonderful Utah Valley.

I also found at a very early age, that my world consisted of a great many people other than just our small family of four. There were hundreds of relatives, some of whom were to have a great deal of influence on me and upon the events of my life. Father and mother used to attend most all of the dances that were held around the neighborhood, and even as far as American Fork, Saratoga, Vivian Park and Castella Resort in Spanish Fork Canyon. When they were away at night, Harold and I were sent over to Grandma Johnson's. Some of the happiest times of my childhood were spent with her and Grandpa. She would unfold the big high bed with the long mirror in the front, which extended down to the floor. There under big, warm quilts we would snuggle down. Big cast iron flat irons, which had been warmed on the top of the kitchen stove, were placed at our cold feet. Grandma would tell us bed-time stories until the sand man came to close our eyes. We often dreamed of horses from the stores which Harold always insisted that she tell.

Grandma and Grandpa were grand indeed to me in my childhood days. They made me really happy by their interest in me and the things that later happened in my life. About this time there came another addition to our family with the arrival of a third brother, Nathan, born December 14, 1914 on Harold's birthday. I remember the day very well. My father and mother had spent a rather sleepless night and early in the morning I was taken over to Aunt Teen's, Dad's sister. There I played with my cousins and stayed out of the way while the events of my brother's birth were taking place. Sometime in the afternoon I was told by my Aunt that I had a new baby brother. I could hardly wait until I could get home

to see him. Mother was again somewhat disappointed at the baby not being a girl. But said many times she was very happy about him because he had black eyes. Dad never quit bragging even to this day, that his third son had “eyes like his mother.” This baby was named Nathan after Grandfather Holdaway, whose name was Andrew Nathan Holdaway.

My folks were quite poor as far as money was concerned during the time of my childhood. Therefore, we had very few presents at Christmas time. One Christmas when I was about five years old, Grandpa Johnson told me to come over, that he had a present for me. I couldn't wait till after breakfast but went right back with him. We entered the old north porch and there to my great amazement stood three newly made and freshly painted sleds. They were painted a bright green, and on each sleigh printed in red letters appeared the names: “Dean, Weldon and Morris, one sled for me and one for each of my cousins, Morris Clinger and Weldon Taylor. That was the happiest Christmas of my childhood and one I shall always remember. About this time, I became aware of another grand person who was to become very important in my life.



August and Ruth



John Johnson with Alfred and August

Uncle August came home from his mission to the Eastern States and after a short time he married and brought his young bride, Ruth Taylor, to father's home. They occupied the big front room as their kitchen and living quarters and had their bedroom upstairs. Uncle August and Aunt Ruth were very kind to me and always treated me as their own son, more so than just a nephew. Father and Uncle August worked together running the big farm that was owned by my Grandfather. They used the big barn west of the road over by Uncle August's house to milk their cows and care for the horses. They worked as partners for many years.



Then Grandpa divided his land between them, and they were each on their own. Grandpa and Grandma decided to live in the city and so moved to Provo. Uncle August and Aunt Ruth moved into their home. Uncle August lives there to this day. After remodeling the house, Grandpa's old homestead has become one of the most beautiful homes on the lower Geneva Road.

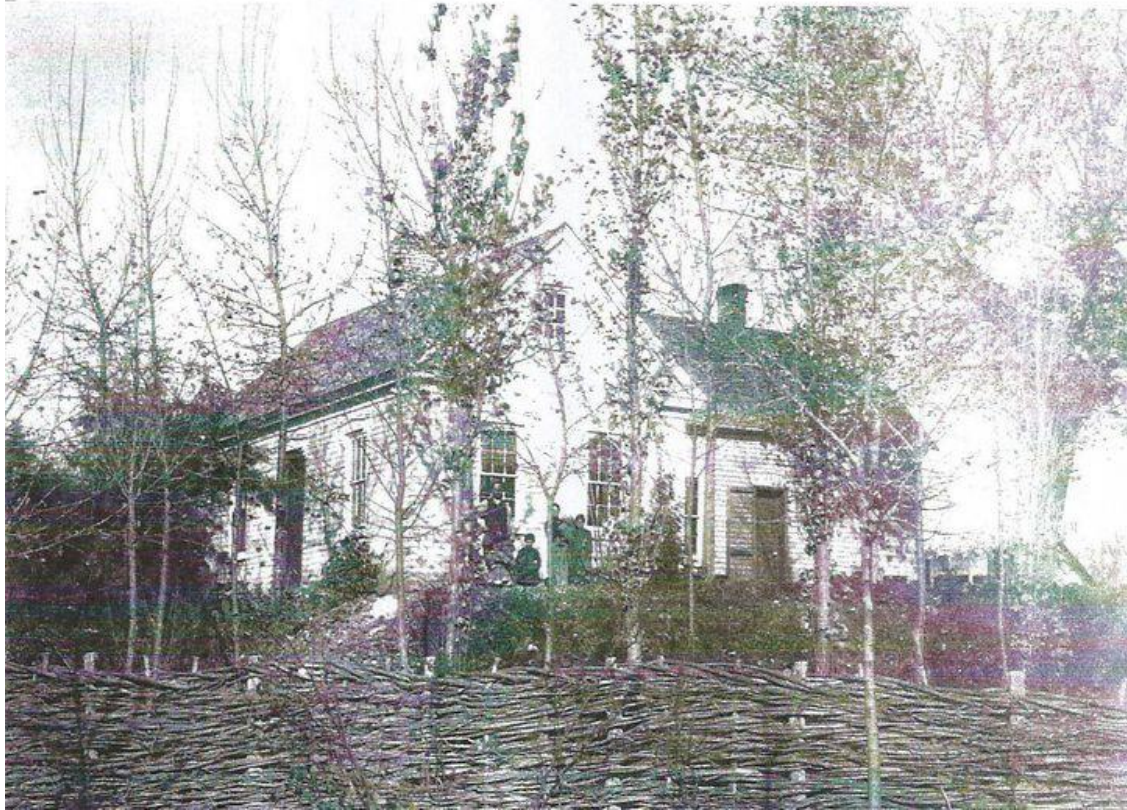
Many happy experiences of my childhood days were the trips to Provo with mother in a buggy, driven by our faithful horse "Old Queen." Dad always had fine horses, both work horses as well as buggy horses. We would visit all the relatives including Aunt Julia Hatton, Aunt Rhoda Anderberg, Grandma Holdaway, Uncle Wilford Holdaway, Aunt Josephine Goodridge and many others. We would usually conclude our visits at Grandma Johnson's, at the kitchen stove, where we always found a great big kettle of sweet soup awaiting us.

Alfred and Murl Johnson's home

Grandma Inger Sward Johnson



It was John, with an eye to the future, that purchased a house for Alfred and Murl moved into after the original owner went bankrupt. August and Ruth moved in with them after they married. John, knowing his sons would needed their own home, gave his house in Lakeview to August & Ruth when he divided the farm, retired from farming, and moved to Provo.



Johnson home in 1889 with wattle fence - photo taken just before John left for a mission to Norway