

David Stirling  
by his wife, Ethel I. Stirling

David Stirling was born in the family home in Leeds, Washington County, Utah, 23 July 1885 to William and Sarah Ann Leany Stirling. He was the twelfth child of a family of fourteen children: William Jr., Thomas, Hyrum, Ann Elizabeth, Adelbert, Helen May, Sarah Elinor, Jessie Ameilia, Alice, Ruth, David, Isabel and Joseph.

Elizabeth Leany Cox, a cousin, told me that before David was born, his mother was told she would have a son and his name was to be David and that he would be a great comfort to her and she would be proud of him, and he would honor her and be a leader. She was discouraged at the time because some of her family were wayward. In those days, people made Dixie wine and some of her family were drinking considerably. Vinnie Fuller told me she remembered when David was a small child, some of the women went to Kolob in the summer when it was so hot for the babies. One summer Sister Stirling went up with David. They would make butter and cheese for the winter. She remembered what a handsome child he was with his light silky hair.

When David was 12 or 13 years old, his father went to Scotland on a mission. He came from Scotland and as a young man he had joined the Church. He labored around his home people and gathered considerable genealogy and brought home with him.

When David was about 15 years old, in 1900, his mother died. Before she died, she asked David to promise her he would never tamper with the wine and would live a clean life. His playmates were Willard McMullin, William Sullivan, Charles Hansen, Al Hartley, Matt Hartley and others. In those days they had to make their own amusements.

David's schooling was very limited. He finished District school, then attended the school of experience. He was baptized 7 September 1894 in Corney Town Pond by David McMullin and confirmed by William Leatham.

When he was a young man, his father bought an old Catholic church at Silver Reef with some articles of furniture when the Silver Reef closed down. They moved it to Leeds and used it for an Amusement Hall, where they had dances, theatres, and all kinds of amusements. David was responsible for managing and taking care of the building. Libby Cox said David managed the dances and sometimes the young boys would get to drinking and he would not let them stay at the dance where they would disturb the dancers. The building stood on the lower corner of the lot, next to the sidewalk where Russell Peine lives now.

Before he was Bishop, he was ward clerk for several years to Bishop B.Y. McMullin. When David was between 27 and 38 years old, he was made Bishop of the Leeds Ward on June 14, 1913. Before he was made Bishop, Patriarch George Spilsbury gave him a blessing and one of the things he was told was to raise the standards of his community. Leeds suffered spiritually by being so close to the Silver Reef mines. He was ordained a High Priest by Pres. Edward H. Snow on 24 November 1912. He was set apart as Bishop by Joseph F. Smith. His counselors were Ira Edward McMullin and Henry A. Jolley. David was not married and they told him to find a wife.

In 1915 his father died and left David to be responsible for the family that was home: Elinor and children, Ruth, Isabel, and Joseph. They looked to David for some help. He spent his life on the farm raising cattle, fruit and was known for making good Dixie sorghum.

He was Bishop of the Ward for eight years before he married Annie Ethel Isom of Hurricane, Utah on 23 September 1920 in the St. George Temple. At that time when we went to President Edward H Snow to get our recommends signed, as we entered his office in his home, President Snow said, "Well, at last". At that time the St. George Stake was all of Washington County. He was Bishop for eight more years after he married - 16 years in all.

David was instrumental in helping to get the first water system in Leeds. It was not as it should be or as we have at the present, but seemed wonderful to us at that time. He was secretary of the Leeds Water Co. for a number of years. While he was secretary, he was instrumental and worked hard in building an over-night storage reservoir for the water company so their stream into town would be increased and they would not have to irrigate at night. Also, while he was secretary, they cemented the ditch that runs down the street in front of our homes which was an improvement to the town.

Dave and I have done considerable temple work in the past for the Stirling family.

Dave was a hard worker and a good farmer. He raised good fruit, hay, and Dixie sorghum. We did not have the luxuries people have now. He was honest, trustworthy and raised an honorable family. His church, family and home meant a great deal to him. He would be called rich, not in material things but in matters that counted most. His children, Charlene, Thomas Eldon, Florence, Katherine, Ilene and Elaine (twins), David Leslie, who met death at the age of 1 1/2 years, William Merrill, and Culbert Means. Dave was very proud of his family. The Stirling home was built in 1876 and has housed two big families. In those days they knew nothing of conveniences we have today, so there were bare necessities. Dave tried after he married to make the home more comfortable, but with a family, and farming was so uncertain, many years he was beat out of his crop by people that bought his fruit, or it was frozen, so the pay check was very slim. He spent his whole life on the small farm. During World WarII, he had a good crop of fruit and received a good price for his fruit. He said he had one good year in twenty. There was not much to buy that year, but he paid off some debts and for Christmas his children received mostly savings bonds.

In 1946, Charlene left for a mission to the Northwestern States. In 1955, Merrill went to the Spanish American mission, a 2 1/2 year mission and came home in 1958. Then in 1958, Culbert left for the Australian Mission. While Culbert was away, Dave suffered with Arthritis in his hip. When he was a small boy, he was riding on the wagon with his father, he went to sleep and fell off the wagon and the wheel ran over his leg and broke it. It healed and he never had any trouble with it until he was about 75 years old, and arthritis set in. In 1960, he had two operations; one for hernia, and one on his hip, where they put a pin in. He went on crutches for a year, then used a cane the rest of his life.

In February 1969, he had a stroke. The day before he spent at the St. George Temple. He came home very tired, but happy. During the night he had a light stroke and during the next day he had some more strokes. From then on, he was in and out of the hospital or had to be cared for at home. We took him to Las Vegas where we stayed with Florence and Dave for several months. He was then brought home where he wanted to be and was cared for by me.

He had some more strokes that put him in the hospital and from there to a rest haven where he was very unhappy. I could not care for him alone at home and could not find anyone to help me. He passed away on the morning of July 27, 1970, a few days after his eight-fifth birthday, of uremic poisoning. His services were on 30 July 1970. He had many friends and people loved him.

Some of My Thoughts of Dad  
by Katherine S. Christensen

My father, David Stirling, wasn't a big man, of medium height and slim build, had red hair and it was always neat. He was a gentle and patient person, always whistling while he worked. I never recall of him raising his voice or using bad language. He was always busy and a hard worker.

I can remember that many times hearing the tinkling of pans early in the morning. He would often start a pot of cereal for breakfast before he would go out to milk the cow, and you could hear him whistling as he came back to the house.

Dad always took pride in his crops and would always try to sell quality products. He raised lots of peaches, some apricots, pears, a few grapes, sugar beet seed, hay and grain, and always sorghum cane to make sorghum. He was known for the good sorghum he made. Many times during the peach harvest he would take a load of peaches and try to peddle them and often he would take flour, sugar and honey as trade and probably other things that I don't remember about.

Dad used to go to Lund and Modena, which are along the railroad, and would haul freight for the store his parents had. He told me that one time in December just before Christmas (he had to be about fourteen years of age because his mother died when he was fifteen) he went to Lund after a load of freight and it was bitter cold. An older man, Oscar McMullin had gone earlier and when he returned home my grandmother asked Oscar if he had seen Dave on his travels. He said "Yes, but I doubt that he will ever make it back; he will probably freeze to death". My dad said it was about 20 degrees below zero. His mother worried about him until he returned home. I remember once when I was quite young and were going to Cedar City, Dad showed me the narrow winding road that you can see down in the canyon going up the black ridge north of Pintura that they traveled on.

I remember what we called "the Old Jail House". It was an old jail that Dad had bought. It had been up at Silver Reef during the mining era. It was down the lane on the southeast corner of the lot. I remember Dad storing ice in it. One winter he went to Anderson's Junction and cut 20 inch thick blocks of ice from a pond there. Mother said that they would put water in the pond and keep adding water and letting it freeze. He would store the ice in sawdust and it would keep for quite a while that way. He would have ice to sell and for our own use. We would have ice to make homemade ice cream.

I also remember the pickled grapes that he used to make. He would use the California grapes in the fall. He would put them in a wooden barrel and put a special brine on them. I'm not sure

what it consisted of, but I am sure it had sorghum in it. During the winter we would eat those tangy cold, crisp grapes as a treat.

My Thoughts of Dad  
by Eldon Stirling

When I was a small boy, I would walk to the field with Dad quite often and he was a fast walker. I had to run to keep up with him. Dad liked to dance; when we had dances here they would always play the Berlin Polka for him and most of the time he would dance it with Lula Sullivan. He was always honest in his dealings with people. He was a good farmer and always had good crops. He was a good neighbor, always helping those in need.

My Thoughts of Dad  
by Florence Adams

I remember in the winter after we had supper we used to play some wild games of Pit and Rook, and sometimes table tennis. Dad would get laughing so hard he would lose his teeth. I remember how we girls would argue about whose turn it was to wash dishes. Dad would go in the kitchen and start washing dishes.

One year my Christmas present from my husband Dave was a plane ticket to come home for Christmas. Mom and Dad weren't going to have a Christmas tree, but when I came Dad and I went out by Anderson's Ranch and found a pretty cedar tree, brought it home and decorated it.

Dad did not like profanity and if he heard kids swearing he would send them home. All that knew him, knew him to be honest in all he did. Dad did not talk about anyone. If he couldn't say something good, he didn't say anything.

My Thoughts of Dad  
by Merrill Stirling

As we worked in the cane making sorghum in the fall, I always got hay fever. Sometimes my eyes would swell shut. Mom had a solution we would bathe them in. One night she had to go to a meeting and asked Dad to do it. When she got home, the solution was still there on the cupboard. She got after Dad for not bathing my eyes. He said he had done it and showed her what he had used. It happened to be spinach juice from supper.