

# Family Group Record - 247

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|                                              |             |                           |                           |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Husband</b> William Washington DEWITT-644 |             |                           |                           |                                                       |
| Born                                         | 10 Jan 1879 | Place                     | Kanab., Kane, Ut          | LDS ordinance dates                                   |
| Christened                                   |             | Place                     |                           | Baptized                                              |
| Died                                         | 1 Dec 1907  | Place                     | Woodruff, Arizona         | Endowed                                               |
| Buried                                       |             | Place                     |                           | Sealed to parents                                     |
| Married                                      | 17 Dec 1900 | Place                     | Woodruff, Navajo, Arizona | Sealed to spouse                                      |
| Husband's father                             |             | Abel Alexander DEWITT-24  |                           | MRIN: 19 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deceased |
| Husband's mother                             |             | Margaret Miller WATSON-25 |                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deceased          |

|                                    |             |             |  |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Wife</b> Elsie Vilate OWENS-645 |             |             |  |                                   |
| Born                               | 9 Sep 1883  | Place       |  | LDS ordinance dates               |
| Christened                         |             | Place       |  | Baptized                          |
| Died                               | 20 Jul 1952 | Place       |  | Endowed                           |
| Buried                             |             | Place       |  | Sealed to parents                 |
| Wife's father                      |             | Last name   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased |
| Given name(s)                      |             | Maiden name |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased |
| Wife's mother                      |             |             |  |                                   |
| Given name(s)                      |             |             |  |                                   |

|                                                                             |                     |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| <b>Children</b> List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth. | LDS ordinance dates | Temple |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|

|            |             |                           |                           |                   |
|------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1          | Sex<br>M    | Irvin William DEWITT-1653 |                           |                   |
| Born       | 27 Nov 1901 | Place                     | Woodruff, Navajo, Arizona | Baptized          |
| Christened |             | Place                     |                           | Endowed           |
| Died       | 29 Sep 1912 | Place                     | Show Low, Arizona         | Sealed to parents |
| Buried     |             | Place                     |                           |                   |
| Spouse     |             |                           |                           |                   |
| Married    |             | Place                     |                           | Sealed to spouse  |

|            |            |                 |                           |                   |
|------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 2          | Sex<br>M   | Ora DEWITT-1654 |                           |                   |
| Born       | 4 Jul 1904 | Place           | Woodruff, Navajo, Arizona | Baptized          |
| Christened |            | Place           |                           | Endowed           |
| Died       | 5 Apr 1921 | Place           | Airpine, Arizona          | Sealed to parents |
| Buried     |            | Place           |                           |                   |
| Spouse     |            |                 |                           |                   |
| Married    |            | Place           |                           | Sealed to spouse  |

|            |             |                         |                           |                   |
|------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 3          | Sex<br>M    | Leroy Owens DEWITT-1655 |                           |                   |
| Born       | 22 Mar 1906 | Place                   | Show Low, Navajo, Arizona | Baptized          |
| Christened |             | Place                   |                           | Endowed           |
| Died       | 19 May 1981 | Place                   | Show Low, Arizona         | Sealed to parents |
| Buried     |             | Place                   |                           |                   |
| Spouse     |             | Lucille CLAWSON-1656    |                           |                   |
| Married    | 23 Dec 1936 | Place                   | Mesa, Maricopa, Arizona   | MRIN: 579         |
|            |             | Sealed to spouse        |                           |                   |

Select **only one** of the following options. The option you select applies to all names on this form.

- ☐ **Option 1 -- Family File** Send all names to my family file at the \_\_\_\_\_ Temple.  
I will provide proxies for: ☐ Baptism ☐ Endowment ☐ Sealing  
The temple will assign proxies for ordinances not checked.
- ☐ **Option 2 -- Temple File** Send all names to any temple and assign proxies for all approved ordinances.
- ☐ **Option 3 -- Ancestral File** Send all names to the computerized Ancestral File for research purposes only, not for ordinances. I am including the required pedigree chart.

|                                                        |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Your Name                                              |               |
| George D. & Gwenevere D. Hulse                         |               |
| Address                                                |               |
| 1622 W. Argon                                          |               |
| Mesa, Arizona 85201                                    |               |
| Phone                                                  | Date prepared |
| (602)964-3817                                          | 18 Aug 1996   |
| Your relationship to the husband and wife on this form |               |
| Husband                                                | Wife          |



**WILLIAM WASHINGTON DEWITT**

10 Jan 1879 - 1 Dec 1907

**ELSIE VILATE OWENS**

9 Sept 1883 - 20 July 1952

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**WILLIAM WASHINGTON DEWITT - written by Ora Winmill in August 1967 from information given to her by Uncle John DeWitt, Aunt Maude DeWitt and from family records)**

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William Washington DeWitt was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 1879, in Kanab, Utah, to Able Alexander DeWitt and Margaret Miller Watson. His mother said that William could hum a tune when he was eleven months old, long before he could talk. In November 1879, the DeWitts moved from Kanab to Arizona. They arrived at Sunset (now Winslow) in January 1880. There they lived under the United Order for a while. They moved to St. Johns and then to Springerville where they arrived shortly before 1881.

When Willie was about eleven years old, they began spending their summers on a ranch above Springerville that they called "The Boneyard." There they milked cows and made cheese and butter. Jess, Willie's younger brother, claimed that he, Jesse, was the "orneriest" boy his mother had, and that Willie was next to him. The boys would go after cows barefoot since none of them had shoes. They often had to stop and get slivers out of the cracks in their feet. When the younger boys would get tired, John would carry them on his back. Will was baptized by his brother Abel Alexander DeWitt, II, in the year 1887, and was confirmed by Pete Skousen.

Their father spent several winters in Thatcher because it was warm there. He was gone so much that it was rather tough on their mother to raise the three boys, John, Willie and Jesse. Once he brought home some wine and the three boys got some straws from the straw stack and sucked the wine through the cracks in the keg. They then danced and sang and had a gay time. One year their father spent with his daughter, Sara Christofferson, in Old Mexico. He wrote to his wife in Springerville to come and join him. She sold everything and left about the first of August 1891. In the meantime, he had written her another letter telling her not to come, but she did not get that letter. On the way down she had to tie logs onto the wheels to hold back the wagon as they went down steep hills. They had to camp out all but one night when they found a deserted house. Some people from the Colonies saw them in Demming, New Mexico, and told Able (the father) that his family was waiting for him in there, so he went and signed papers so they could get into Mexico. Then he told Margaret that he was not expecting her and it nearly killed her after all she had gone through to get there. The oldest of the boys who went with her was only 14. They got back to Springerville in November of 1891.

The three boys often spent evenings playing tricks on the kids. After John was married and became the health officer, the boys used to take the atomizer, fill it with formaldehyde and scare the town folks with it. The people thought it was an animal with poisonous breath.

The boys worked in sheep camps, shearing sheep, hauling wool or on the dams that were being built near Joe City and Woodruff. Fourteen different dams were built on that muddy little Colorado River. The silt in the muddy water was so thick and heavy that it would force the dam out. The boys always stood by each other no matter what came along, and if one of them was away the others looked out for his affairs.

In February of 1892 they moved to Woodruff. That was where Elsie Owens lived. She was nine years old at that time and Willie was 13. Willie had dark skin and wavy hair. He had a Roman nose which made him look different than the other DeWitt boys. It was in Woodruff that Willie and Elsie started dating. When Willie was 20 years old he lived in tents with Elsie's folks. He and Elsie and her brother Clark were going to the Thatcher Academy. Those who knew Willie all respected and loved him deeply. They all stood close by him and treated him as a brother or a son.

When the boys played for dances, Willie played the violin and the accordion. He was very talented musically — the very best cellist — bass viol of the group. He could play any kind of instrument. Once Jesse got a piccolo and tried to play it without any success. Willie had not seen one before, but he picked it up and in no time he was playing tunes on it.

On December 17, 1900, Willie and Elsie were married in Woodruff. Willie was 21 and Elsie was 17 at the time. They did not make connections with their ride to the temple in St. George, Utah, and so they were married by Apostle Abraham C. Woodruff. After Elsie's father came home from his mission, they were sealed in the St. George, Temple on 9 October 1901. Their first child, Irvin William, was born 27 November 1901. Their daughter, Ora, was born on 4 July 1904, and Leroy Owens came along on 22 March 1906. Willie had a cancer taken out of his lower lip, leaving a small dent. Elsie kept the cancer in a bottle of alcohol for a long time.

Elsie said that Willie had a gift of healing. She said that once he waited to anoint and bless one of their babies who had the croup until she thought the baby would choke to death, but when Willie administered to the baby, he was healed instantly.

When Elsie's father was called to be bishop in Show Low, Willie and Elsie moved to Show Low so that Elsie could take care of her mother who had been an invalid ever since Elsie was two years old. They moved about 1905 or 1906. Elsie's mother died on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1907. That spring, Elsie went to Woodruff and stayed with her mother-in-law while the men hauled wool. Finally, on August 1<sup>st</sup>, they moved to Woodruff again. That July, Willie got a beautiful matched team of horses and asked Jesse to break them for him. As boys, John, Willie and Jesse had gentled wild horses for the fun they got out of it, not for pay.

In September, Maude, Jesse's wife and five other people in Woodruff, came down with typhoid fever. Two or three weeks later, she was so sick that Willie administered to her at about 5:00 in the afternoon and then set off to ride the 25 miles to get Jesse, who was out with the sheep. When he got there, he told Jesse that he had come to work for him while Jesse went home to his wife. Jesse asked how he got there, and Willie said that he had ridden "old Fan." Jesse asked where old Fan was and Willie said he had turned her loose on a grassy patch. Jesse thought this was a rather fishy story, and so he rode over to where the horses were and found old Fan without a dry hair on her body. Jesse sped on home and got there about 10 p.m. the same evening.

One Sunday as Maude was recovering, Willie invited her and Jesse to dinner. Maude said that she could not walk that far, and so Jess and Willie picked her up — rocking chair and all — and carried her over to Willie's place for dinner. While they were there, Willie was playing with his daughter.

He told her not to do something, and she looked at Willie so sweetly that he could not make her mind. Willie pleaded with his wife, "Elsie, make her mind." He was so soft-hearted that when he had to correct a child it broke his heart and tears would come to his eyes.

In November 1907, Willie went to Show Low to dig potatoes. About a week later, Elsie and Maude were down at the river getting some water when they heard a wagon coming. Elsie said, "That's Willie, and something is wrong." It was Willie, and they found out that he was sick with typhoid fever. Willie said that he had typhoid as a child and remembered then that it was said that few people recovered from a second case of typhoid.

During this sickness, Willie's father-in-law took care of him a lot. Since James Clark Owens had raised sheep and was so good in caring for him, Willie called him his "Good Shepherd." Willie was so thin and sickly that Elsie wouldn't let them shave him because she couldn't stand to see his bones poking through his face. Willie did get better and started craving pickles. One kind, unknowing lady brought him some pickles - one of the worst things for a person with typhoid fever to have. When the lady came over, Willie was dressed and Elsie was not home. The lady left the pickles and Willie ate them. Soon after that he had a hemorrhage and died on 1 December 1907. He was buried in Woodruff.

#### **Uncle John DeWitt told about Willie (His Cancer) by Leroy Owens DeWitt**

On February 3, 1962 Lucille and I went down to Eugene and Lilly Flake's to visit with Uncle John DeWitt, who had come up from Mesa for a short visit. (Lilly is Uncle John's oldest child.) He was quite ready to return home — said he didn't like our snow and fog. While we were there he told us a story about my Father — William Washington DeWitt.

Uncle John and my Father were really close as some brothers get. They were constantly together when they were just boys. Uncle John would carry my Dad when he would get slivers in his bare feet. They worked together when they grew older, such as caring for sheep for big sheep men.

My Dad acquired a sore on his lip, and it stayed— seemed to get worse instead of better. On one of their trips to the Valley my Dad went to a doctor in Mesa for he was afraid of the sore turning to cancer. The doctor was quite concerned about it and advised him to take special care of it, and if it continued to get worse, for him to come to him again.

My Dad and Uncle John were lambing (taking care of ewes while they were having their lambs) two or three herds of ewes for George Scott east of Mesa. In the night my Dad woke Uncle John and told him he was sure the sore on his lip was a cancer because it had begun to feel as the doctor said it would if it did turn to cancer. They went to Mr. Scott's tent and woke him up. Uncle John explained to him about his brother Will, and told him that they would have to go to the doctor. Mr. Scott was quite upset and concerned about the situation. He said that he would fix up their accounts while they packed their suitcases (about 1895).

After they had walked about five miles they stopped at a windmill for a drink. The lady at the

ranch asked them if they were hoofing it to town. They informed her that they were. She told them to leave their packs, and she would bring them to Mesa and leave them at the livery stable.

John and Will went to see the doctor as soon as they got to Mesa. The doctor told them the sore would have to be taken care of right away. He asked Will if he knew of a specialist he could go to. Will told the doctor that he had a clipping from a paper he had carried for two months about a Dr. Chalmers in San Francisco, who claimed to cure most any trouble a person might have. The doctor in Mesa told Will that he was going to suggest Dr. Chalmers if he hadn't brought out that clipping. Uncle John and my Dad pooled their cash and my Dad headed for San Francisco.

After three days, Uncle John received a card from my Dad saying the sore on his lip was sure enough a cancer; Dr. Chalmers told him he would not have to operate — he was treating it with a special medicine. Two weeks later Dad's folks received a letter telling them the doctor had just taken the bandage off his sore and that the cancer had all come out with the bandage. My Dad went to see the nurse before leaving for home. She changed the bandage for him and asked him if he had money enough to get home. He said he had one dollar and seventy-five cents, but that he would make it some way. The nurse fixed a nice box lunch for him to take with him. He started for home which was in Woodruff, Arizona.

As he crossed the railroad siding, a man came up to him, a total stranger, and asked him if his name was DeWitt. He informed the man that was his name. Then the stranger asked him if he was Will DeWitt and he said that he was. The man said that he had something for him, and handed him a small package. He thanked the man and started on; he had only gone a few steps when he turned to look at the man; but the man was no place to be seen. My Dad opened the package and found that it contained twelve and a half dollars.

When he opened the lunch box to see what the nurse had fixed for him, he found three dollars she had placed on top of the lunch. He went to the depot and asked what the cheapest fair to Holbrook, Arizona would cost. After he bought his ticket he had seventy-five cents left.

Before my Dad left for San Francisco he went to Patriarch Hatch and received a blessing. He was told that he was a chosen spirit and the Lord would not forsake him; he would go and come in peace, and return in good health.

My Dad was known during his stay on earth for his cheerfulness, friendliness, and for his great faith. He was a member of the "Seventy" in the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Elsie told us how Willie was given the power of healing through administration with the Melchizedek Priesthood which he held and honored. One time when he administered to Elsie's Mother Cecelia Cluff Owens, Willie just sat there and waited. He did not enter into the conversation—just sat still. Soon Cecelia started moving around or sat up and then he knew his prayer had been answered and he was ready to go.

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**ELSIE VILATE OWEN - Wife of William Washington DeWitt and 2<sup>nd</sup> Wife of Joel White Flake, By her Son, Robert Kenneth Flake**

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Elsie was born in Woodruff, a new town in northern Arizona to James Clark Owens, III and Jane Cecelia Cluff, on September 9, 1883. She joined James Clark IV, a two-year-old brother, who she grew to admire very much. Her father was a cheerful man noted for his big smile and hearty laugh. Her mother enjoyed dancing and other activities. Elsie was a healthy child.

When she was two years old, her mother fell while skating on the ice and injured her back very seriously. Her back was never strong after that. She spent much of her life lying down. That did not keep her from being a good mother and serving as a teacher for the church at her home. The family was still cheerful and had big smiles and hearty laughter. It was necessary to have help come in for a time, but as soon as little Clark and Elsie were big enough, they took over the household duties with the help of their father when he was at home.

Elsie and little Clark enjoyed the schooling and other activities in the small town of Woodruff. All was centered around the church. As in all Mormon settlements, good wholesome activities were enjoyed by all. In the spring, after Elsie turned eight, she was baptized. She was ever a very devout member of the church and she received the fulfillment that results from a dedicated life. She served others and was especially devoted to the care of her mother. She brought cheer and happiness wherever she was.

When Elsie was nine years old, another brother, Almon David joined the family. They felt this son was a special blessing from the Lord, considering the health of the mother. At times, her condition was so bad that those attending her would pray to the Lord that she would have the strength to sit in a chair while the bed was being changed. One time, when she was very weak their ward had a special fast for her and the wife of the Bishop. I quote from the journal of Bishop Levi M. Savage. "Thursday, May 7, 1896, I rebaptized Adeline Savage and Cecelia Owens seven times for health."

Cecelia had to be carried into the water but after the baptizing and blessing, she walked out and was able to attend testimony meeting and to stand and bear her testimony. Then she walked across the street to her home. She was never so weak again until the time of her death.

With the improved health of her mother, the family was able to do more things together. During one summer, with Cecelia's bed in the wagon, they went to the mountains to be with their father where he had his sheep. Cecelia used the opportunity to teach appreciation for nature and enjoyment of God's creations.

Elsie's father was called on a mission to teach the gospel in the Eastern States. It was a sacrifice, but they were devoted to church service and so he went. While he was gone, the family went to the Gila Valley so Elsie and little Clark could go to school there. William DeWitt was with them some of the time there. When school was out, they went back to Woodruff. Again, they joined the activities with the young people. Elsie enjoyed singing and William DeWitt was a talented musician.

Their relationship developed and they were married by Joseph F. Smith on December 17, 1900, in Woodruff. The next year they went to St. George, Utah, and were sealed on October 9, 1901.

Back in Woodruff, the couple were blessed with a son, Irvin William DeWitt, on November 17, 1901. When Elsie's father came home from his mission, he wanted to move to the mountains. In 1903, he found that Mr. Huning would sell a ranch where Show Low is now located. James Clark Owens, John Henry Willis, Niels Hanson and William J. Flake bought the ranch. Later, the Ellsworth brothers bought in. Other land was purchased, other people came, and the town of Show Low was born. Elsie's father was happy in the mountains.

Elsie and Willie remained in Woodruff where their first daughter, Ora, was born on July 4, 1904. She brought much joy to their lives. In 1905, they went to Show Low to help Elsie's parents. Cecelia was president of the Ward's Relief Society and her health was failing. Elsie was a big help to her mother in the home as well as serving as Secretary in the Relief Society. In Show Low, LeRoy Owens DeWitt was born on March 22, 1906. He also added much joy to the young family. Elsie's mother's health continued to worsen until she died on February 21, 1907. Tenderly, she was laid to rest, the first in the new Show Low Cemetery.

Elsie and Willie went back to Woodruff where they could help Willie's mother. Typhoid fever broke out in the area. Willie enjoyed the gift of healing and was called to administer to the sick. He also came down with the fever and as he had been sick with it before, he was hit hard and died, December 1, 1907. This was a hard thing for Elsie. In a period of just over nine months, she lost her mother, for whom she had cared for so long and loved so much, then, lost her husband who she loved with all her heart. Now 24 years old, a widow with three little children, she went back to Show Low to be with her father. She clerked in the store and did whatever she could find to help with expenses. Early in 1909, her father married Adah Porter.

Elsie had the opportunity to take nursing training from a nurse brought in from Utah to train in the area. This training served her well in her life. She was called to deliver many babies and to care for mothers and babies and others in need. In the fall of 1912, while helping in Snowflake, Elsie felt impressed that she needed to be with her children in Show Low the next Sunday. She saddled her horse and went home. On Sunday, her son Irvin, who was nearly 11, went with a friend to water horses for his grandfather. The horse they were riding stumbled. The other boy was thrown clear, but Irvin hit his head on the horn of the saddle and crushed his skull killing him. Elsie then knew why she was impressed to go home. Irvin was placed near his grandmother in the Show Low Cemetery.

Soon after this time, another death occurred that was to bring about a big change in Elsie's life and the lives of her two living children. Joel White Flake's wife Lucy Whipple, died leaving him with four young children. He prayed to the Lord to guide him to a mother to raise those children. He found Elsie, and his prayers were answered. They were married January 29, 1914, in the Salt Lake Temple, and started life together with six small children. His four (Rowena age 9, Lawrence age 6, John age 4, and Dennis age 2) and Elsie's two (Ora age 9-1/2, and Leroy nearly 8). To add to the challenge was the different way they had lived. Elsie had been part of a closely knit, loving family, while Joel had spent much of his life riding the range and he was a rustic cattleman. His family life lacked the

warmth and ability to express tender feelings that had been so much a part of Elsie's life. They moved to a ranch in the area known as Aripine, the nearest neighbor a half mile away and others several miles away.

Elsie adapted herself to the new tasks, dedicating her efforts to making a pleasant and united family of her children, his children and, their children as they came along. Six of their seven children were born on the ranch - Clark Owens on December 9, 1914, Robert Kenneth on June 4, 1916, Eva on February 26, 1918, Velma (who was born in Snowflake on December 27, 1919, Lorenzo Lyman on November 26, 1921, Almon J on August 13, 1923, and Lucelia on August 15, 1925. This made a large family, but they grew to be a unified family and enjoyed each other. Joel was away much of the time, so it was up to Elsie to guide and help each of the children.

At first, schools were a problem. The only school nearby was a one-room school where all the grades were together. Later, when high school was needed, the family moved to Snowflake in the winter for school and went back to the ranch for the summer. At the ranch, there was plenty for the children to do, and Elsie taught them to work and do it cheerfully. She did things with the children and life was pleasant. Their father, Joel, also taught them things of value. He taught them to be honest and dependable. When he was gone, he always left work to be done. Life was busy, but enjoyable. Toys were invented and initiative was developed.

Elsie had only a little help at the birth of her children, but with her skill she did very well. She delivered babies for other mothers and attended to mothers and babies after their birth here in the mountains. Her skill was appreciated and the cheerfulness she brought was appreciated as well. She was like a ray of sunshine in their homes. They all loved her. One mother recalled how Elsie stopped on the way to her home, and picked some wild roses and brought them to her. For many years, this woman wrote letters of thanks for her care and the delivery of her babies.

When the war came to a close in 1918, Joel sold the cattle and became a traveling salesman. He bought Bill Gibson's 80 acres adjoining the ranch, section 33. He also bought a Model T Ford and started building a home on the 80 acres he owned west of Snowflake. This home was used in the winters during school time.

In the fall of 1920, the family moved to the house, but as the well had not been finished and closed in, it was not used for culinary water. Drinking water was carried from town. Dennis made the mistake of drinking some of the well water and came down with typhoid fever. The disease spread to others in the family, with eight being sick at one time. The sickness lasted clear through the winter, LeRoy, Clark, and Rowena were hardest hit and were sick for months. The nearest doctor who was in Winslow (60 miles away) came very seldom. He didn't think LeRoy would live. The elders from town came and administered many times to the sickest ones, which was greatly appreciated. The faith and prayers of the family and the townspeople, united to bring about the miracle of healing and sustained the family through the long winter, and all were returned to health. We all felt gratitude to our kind Father in Heaven and His Holy Son for their care.

That long struggle was draining on Elsie's health and she was ready to go back to the ranch to rest.

Measles and whooping cough had come to Snowflake and everyone hoped that going to the ranch would help them avoid those diseases. But it was not to be. They took them with them. It then became another battle, with two illnesses at the same time. Ora had a difficult case of the measles. When she felt she was over them, she insisted on doing the washing (which she did with a washboard) to spare her exhausted mother. Ora, who was almost 16, had a backset of the measles, and after much suffering, she died. What an angel she was! Like her mother, she brought joy to all and was loved by everyone who knew her. Losing her was hard for all the family, but more so to her mother whose pride and joy she was. Ora's beautiful body was taken to Show Low and she was buried nearby her brother Irvin and their grandmother.

Elsie, with that strength born of great pioneer ancestry, bowed in prayer and went forward. She wrote a poem, "My Hand in God's", and placing her hand in His, she went on in her cheerful way, even though her heart ached. People continued to be cheered and blessed by their association with her.

My Hand in God's  
by Elsie DeWitt Flake

Each morning when I awake. I say,  
"I place my hand in God's today"  
With faith and trust that by my side  
He'll walk with me, my steps to guide.

He leads me with the tenderest care  
when paths are dark and I despair.  
No need for me to understand  
If I but hold fast to his hand.

My hand in His — no surer way  
To walk in safety through each day.  
By His great bounty I am fed;  
Warmed by his love and comforted.

When at day's end, I seek my rest  
And realize how much I am blessed.  
My thanks I pour out to Him, and then  
I place my hand in God's again.

As time went on, the older children went out on their own. When there were only seven at home, Clark said that was not enough to make a family. One summer Elsie and the seven youngest were at the ranch. Polio came to the area and Almon, about three years old, was hit with thecrippler. The neighbors, who lived a half mile away, were afraid to come near, so the fear isolated Elsie and the young ones. One night Almon was in a lot of pain. His head was drawn far back and one leg was drawn up very tight. Each of the children who could offered a prayer, and then Elsie talked with her

Heavenly Father. He responded and the tension in his body was released, and he fell asleep. Of all those in the area who had the disease, he is the only one I know of with no noticeable effect. The Lord answered Elsie's prayers.

The Lord was with Elsie in joy as well as in sorrow. There were many good times at the ranch. The folks from ranches around would get together for Sunday School meetings or for singing, and at times dancing.

In the fall of 1929, LeRoy was working in Phoenix, Elsie and the seven young ones went down and spent the school year with him. He and Clark supported the family. Lawrence came back to the family and he had smallpox. The rest of the family were spared, as they had been vaccinated. All went well and they enjoyed a good season. When summer came the family went back north.

After one more year of school in Snowflake, Joel traded the Snowflake property for some in Colonia Juarez, Mexico, and the family moved there. In the fall, Dennis and Clark went back to Snowflake to school and Elsie and Joel and the six younger children stayed in Mexico for two years. They were hard years, but they learned much and made and enjoyed many more friendships. At times the family lived on corn and beans, and had made-over clothing, but with their mother's cheerful spirit many happy memories lingered.

In May of 1933 they moved back to the ranch. It was not the only home the family owned. In the fall, they went to Snowflake for the school year and lived in a rented home while the children finished school. Eight of the children graduated from high school and Seminary.

Most of the children had now gone out on their own, Rowena had gone to Washington State in 1926 and married John Luther Dalton. LeRoy, Lawrence, and John were away working. Dennis went on a mission, Clark married Afton Hatch on February 28, 1936. LeRoy married Lucille Clawson on December 23, 1936, and Dennis, after returning from his mission, married Helen Carol Read on November 4, 1937. Robert went on a mission in May of 1938. He returned and married Mae Thoms on May 20, 1941. John married Mervie Young Gallagher on March 14, 1942. Eva married Leonard Hardy Winmill on November 12, 1942. Lorenzo and Almon went into the service. Lucelia married Emmitt Lorin Merkley on November 17, 1944. Lorenzo returned from the service in the Air Force and married Glenna Jeanene Hanks on May 26, 1948. When Almon was released from the service he went on a mission. He returned from his mission in the summer of 1984 and then married Lois Estelle Widdison on November 4, 1948.

Elsie and Joel bought a home in Mesa in the 1940's. Elsie found new friends and enriched their lives with her friendly cheerfulness. They also visited their married children scattered about the country, and were greatly enjoyed.

The fall of 1951 Joel was called on a mission to the Southern States.

Elsie continued to be like a ray of sunshine wherever she went. Her health was failing and in the fall of 1951 she became bedfast. Eva took her into her home and she was tenderly cared for by those

in the area. People who visited her even while she was bedridden went away boyed up. Elsie said she could not die and interrupt his mission for he had always wanted to go on a mission. There she lay completely helpless and determined not to die and interrupt her husband's mission. However Joel talked to President David O. McKay (who was an apostle at the time) who advised he go home to his wife. He was released in June 1952.

In July of 1952, Elsie's tired body released her beautiful spirit and let it go back to that God who gave her life and who she had loved and sought to obey all her life. Tenderly her worn body was cared for by loving hands, and tributes were given by friends and family. Her sons with devotion carried the beautiful casket carefully prepared by relatives and laid it next to her beloved Willie in the Woodruff Cemetery. She had gone on to her loved ones, and awaits loved ones yet to follow.

### **MY MOTHER by Lucelia Flake Merkley**

Mama was as much a part of my life as the air I breathed and the sun in the sky. I remember her always making do with what she had. We had church in our house at the Ranch. She put boards across boxes, logs, whatever, and covered them with quilts for benches for people to sit on--and they were made to feel welcome.

When my sister came to visit with her husband and five children, Mom had only flour--so we had baking powder biscuits and "cowboy pudding" as she named the flour and water gravy. And it was a feast--all were welcome. That was at the Ranch in Aripine. There was no store to go to, and no money either, of course.

While we lived in Phoenix and Dewy and Clark were supporting us, she got smallpox. (Lawrence got them and then she got them from taking care of him.) I had to stay away from her; I would gladly have had the smallpox!

I went with her to see Pa when he wanted to come back to us. (They were separated for nine months or such.) She wanted to free her sons to live their own lives, and Pa could be very nice. So we went back to Snowflake.

The house across the wash from Snowflake was the best Pa ever provided for her. Then he traded it for one in Old Mexico, and she had to leave her loved piano in Columbus, New Mexico and her new sewing machine. She wept over that piano but it was still hers. The sewing machine he traded for an old one in Mexico.

The years in Old Mexico were terrible, but even there she found relatives and made many new friends. She was "Aunt Elsie" to everyone, it seemed. I and my friends got under her coat on the way to Primary when it rained--held it out behind her. She made herself a swimming suit and went with us to swim in the river. I was much older when I realized how wise she was to take us instead of sending us. I know she could have been "too busy". She worked harder and did harder work than anyone else in my life. She washed those heavy home-made-quilts that were made from pants pieces and old blankets. She washed them on the board. When wet they were so heavy I couldn't lift them.

She took some pieces of leather and with an ice pick made a pair of shoes for me because she couldn't bear to send me to school bare footed when we had a freak snow fall in old Colonia Juarez. Once when we were caught in a hail storm at the river when we were swimming she stood over me and let the hail pound on her back. I remember thinking "she must really love me." I was six years old.

The Sabbath was sacred to Mamma. When the two of us were on the Ranch alone we'd take a quilt and go up in the trees. She would read scriptures while we played dominos. We played on all the doubles and I did all the adding. With double twelves it got up into the hundreds. So, as well as enjoying the peaceful day of rest, I learned to add.

So many of the things she taught were so natural I scarcely knew I was being taught. She taught me to find joy in a beautiful sunset--pictures in the clouds--to make do with what there is--cheerfully.

Once she complained that no one ever called her name: so she was "Elsie" to us for awhile. She would join in our water fights. I was thirteen the last time I sat on her lap to be comforted. It was after Almon, Velma and I were lost. I still go to her for comfort at times. She still helps me with her presence, and the things she taught me and the life she lived.

She taught us faith in God, respect for those in authority and gave us a real living testimony of the Church. Mamma starved for beautiful things. I hope Willie had a beautiful mansion waiting for her up there when she went to him. She surely did endure to the end. I wish that I had done more for her--all my life. She lamented the loss of her beauty, but she was never anything but beautiful to me. She was Mamma!

**(Written by Almon J. Flake, a son, while on his mission with Lois in 1985-86) Eva found a xeroxed copy of this original with some of Rowena's papers and so she typed it to make it easier to read.**

Today was a come and go day at the office. We went shopping, Lois's recreation — but most of the day was working.

Sunday 12 Jan 1986 — warm clear day 38 Degrees. We could sleep in, but out of force of habit we awakened early — had a big, long philosophical discussion — kicked off about life when we were kids and engulfing a wide spread of happenings in our yesteryear. Perhaps Eva's write up on Mom's life got us started. Eve wrote a letter expressing her homesickness. She is at the Ranch. People come once in a while — Eddie and Lanny were there for 3 days, but for the most part she is all alone. Her situation could be depressing. Her health is so much better at the ranch away from noise and the hustle of the city, but being alone, as I remember it in my childhood, can be tough.

Her paper on Mom emphasizing the — a title "Trials and Tribulations of Elsie Vilate Owens DeWitt Flake" would seem to express our observations. We would hope instead for the "The Genius of a Daughter of God", who lived in pioneer times and pioneer conditions at their most trying (best or worst)-- bore ten children, raised fifteen children and produced twelve families, eleven of which married in the Temple of God and lived as God would have them — bringing to the earth a noble

posterity now numbering in the hundreds and each one endowed with the Love of God — self worth — and a dedication to the service of their fellow beings as they endeavor to assist God in the establishment and going forth of His kingdom on this earth. — each endowed with the Divine characteristics which were the heart and soul and sustaining power of this Christ-like woman, this daughter of God, who was my Mother.

She, in spite of personal tribulations, trials, or weaknesses, always surfaced at the top, and her great genius was, she brought those who were her charge in life and her fellow associates to the surface with her. I never knew life was so tough with my Mom. We gloried in the blessings of our God and loved Him with our heart, might, mind, and soul. We lived life full and rich. Now I see more clearly— we lived it as full and rich as the then circumstances permitted, but some way, it was the top for me. Life was good. Now I know it was truly a daughter of God — my Mom — who made it so. She is the cause — or largely so— of my salvation, if I gain a degree of exaltation. One of her greatest triumphs was the contribution she made in the growth, progress, and exaltation of a rough, tough fellow — her husband and my Dad. No one is more aware of that influence than was he, as my personal observation. The greatest desire of Dad's life was and is to merit the celestial kingdom with the companionship of this daughter of God — Elsie Vilate Owens DeWitt Flake. She was and is, I believe, the greatest love of his life, and the greatest influence.

Even though his youthful environment and upbringing blessed or cursed him with a low self image and an inability to express his love and admiration to those who were the closest to his heart, the most valued possession of his life. He, too, came out at the top — a celestial being — Thanks for and bless the day our Heavenly Father consigned us to this earthly station with this Celestial soul --Our Mother and his wife, Amen.

I wish I could write a book from this prospective that would do even in a small measure justice to the genius of this daughter of God sent to earth to work out her salvation and enhance and save -- exalt — us all.

About 1966 Alice Smith Hansen, a neighbor to Nellie and Virgil Bushman, in Joseph City, Arizona, found this article in an old Snowflake Herald.

#### **“A GIRL'S LOVE FOR HER MOTHER**

The following was written by Miss Ora DeWitt, on Jan 12, 1921, about three months before she died:

'The days pass into years, The years bring many changes. As time hurries on, old friends have scattered; new ones take their places; only One Friend remains true through the years; that friend is my Mother.

“Though far from her. I see her kind face as it reflects the glory of God; I feel her holy presence; I hear her sweet words of truth — her guiding hand is upon my head.

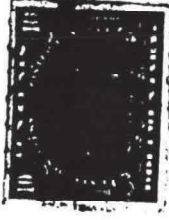
"I may pass through trouble, sorrow may be my constant companion, disgrace may bow my head in shame and the world may crucify me on a cross of fire; but the one I call Mother will never forsake me. Her ears will never be deaf to my cries of pain; her hands will never be too tired to minister to my wants. She will go with me through the dark days, and stand beside me as I pass through the Valley of Death.

"She is the uncrowned queen of the nation; she is the unpaid servant of the world; she is the unseen martyr of love — is the most faithful of the faithful, she hopes when hope is gone, she gives her life that we might live; is a slave that we may be free, and happy, only when we are happy, and our grief is her grief, and our victories are her victories.

"As she passes through this life may her happiness increase; may her sorrows cease to be.

"May we stop for a moment in our mad rush through life and pay her a tribute of love and gratitude. May we lay at her feet a garland of roses; may we place on her head a crown of love, and tell her that we love her and always will love her the same as we did when we were children."

# Marriage Certificate.



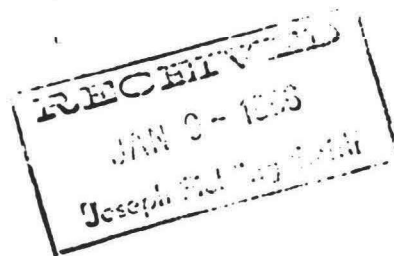
This Certifies, That on the Seventeenth day of December A. D. 1891  
Wm. H. Dewitt and Elsie Owens

were united in marriage at Woodruff, Arizona according to the laws of Arizona Territory, and by authority of the foregoing License, by Elder Joseph F Smith in the presence of Abraham O. Woodruff, Seymour B. Young and Levi M. Savage, who have hereto attached their signatures as witnesses to said marriage ceremony.

In witness whereof, The said contracting parties, the said witnesses, and the said Jos. F. Smith, who solemnized such marriage ceremony, have hereunto set their hands, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of Dec. A. D. 1891

Abraham O. Woodruff - Wm. H. Dewitt  
Witness. Contracting Party.  
Seymour B. Young  
Witness.  
Levi M. Savage  
Witness.  
Elsie Owens  
Contracting Party.  
Jos. F. Smith  
Officer, Minister or Person Performing Ceremony.

NOTE.—Persons filling out above Certificate must be careful and get full names of all parties, and see that they sign their full names.



Rt. 3, Box 50

Yuma, Arizona

January 7, 1956

President Joseph Fielding Smith  
L. D. S. Church Historians Office  
47 East South Temple  
Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Brother Smith,

I have a problem. I do not know whether I am supposed to follow my sealing line or my blood line in searching out my genealogy. My mother was sealed to her first husband, and I was the seventh child born to her after she married her second husband. Will you please help me and tell me what I am supposed to do?

I have a testimony of this gospel, and I know the Lord directs the leaders of this Church. I am thankful to have this leadership to turn to with my problems. I wish to thank you for your consideration.

*Dear Sister: Follow your line in which you are sealed. You did not give sufficient information. Did your mother's first husband die, or was your mother divorced? If she is sealed to her first husband then that is your line. If divorced and her first sealing was cancelled, then you belong to your natural father. As I do not know I cannot give a proper answer.*  
*Joseph Fielding Smith*

Sincerely yours,

Lucelia F. Merkley

# Family Group Record - 1413

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|                                      |             |       |                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Husband</b> Joel White FLAKE-3690 |             |       |                      |                                   |
| Born                                 | 21 Jul 1880 | Place | Snowflake, Arizona   | LDS ordinance dates               |
| Christened                           |             | Place |                      | Baptized                          |
| Died                                 | 2 Jul 1977  | Place | Mesa, Arizona        | Endowed                           |
| Buried                               |             | Place |                      | Sealed to parents                 |
| Married                              | 29 Jan 1914 | Place | Salt Lake City, Utah | Sealed to spouse                  |
| Husband's father<br>Given name(s)    |             |       | Last name            | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased |
| Husband's mother<br>Given name(s)    |             |       | Maiden name          | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased |

|                                    |             |       |             |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Wife</b> Elsie Vilate OWENS-645 |             |       |             |                                   |
| Born                               | 9 Sep 1883  | Place |             | LDS ordinance dates               |
| Christened                         |             | Place |             | Baptized                          |
| Died                               | 20 Jul 1952 | Place |             | Endowed                           |
| Buried                             |             | Place |             | Sealed to parents                 |
| Wife's father<br>Given name(s)     |             |       | Last name   | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased |
| Wife's mother<br>Given name(s)     |             |       | Maiden name | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased |

|                                                                             |                     |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| <b>Children</b> List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth. | LDS ordinance dates | Temple |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|

|            |             |                               |                |                                |
|------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1          | Sex<br>M    | <b>Clark Owens FLAKE-3691</b> |                |                                |
| Born       | 9 Dec 1914  | Place                         | Joppa, Arizona | Baptized                       |
| Christened |             | Place                         |                | Endowed                        |
| Died       | 15 Jan 1969 | Place                         | Mesa, Arizona  | Sealed to parents              |
| Buried     |             | Place                         |                |                                |
| Spouse     |             | Afton HATCH-3699              |                |                                |
| Married    | 28 Feb 1936 | Place                         | Mesa, Arizona  | MRIN: 1415<br>Sealed to spouse |

|            |             |                                  |                      |                                |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2          | Sex<br>M    | <b>Robert Kenneth FLAKE-3692</b> |                      |                                |
| Born       | 4 Jun 1916  | Place                            | Aripine, Arizona     | Baptized                       |
| Christened |             | Place                            |                      | Endowed                        |
| Died       |             | Place                            |                      | Sealed to parents              |
| Buried     |             | Place                            |                      |                                |
| Spouse     |             | Mae THOMAS-3698                  |                      |                                |
| Married    | 20 May 1941 | Place                            | Salt Lake City, Utah | MRIN: 1414<br>Sealed to spouse |

|            |             |                            |                  |                                |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3          | Sex<br>F    | <b>Eva FLAKE-3693</b>      |                  |                                |
| Born       | 26 Feb 1918 | Place                      | Aripine, Arizona | Baptized                       |
| Christened |             | Place                      |                  | Endowed                        |
| Died       |             | Place                      |                  | Sealed to parents              |
| Buried     |             | Place                      |                  |                                |
| Spouse     |             | Leonard Hardy WINMILL-3700 |                  |                                |
| Married    | 12 Nov 1942 | Place                      | Mesa, Arizona    | MRIN: 1416<br>Sealed to spouse |

Select **only one** of the following options. The option you select applies to all names on this form.

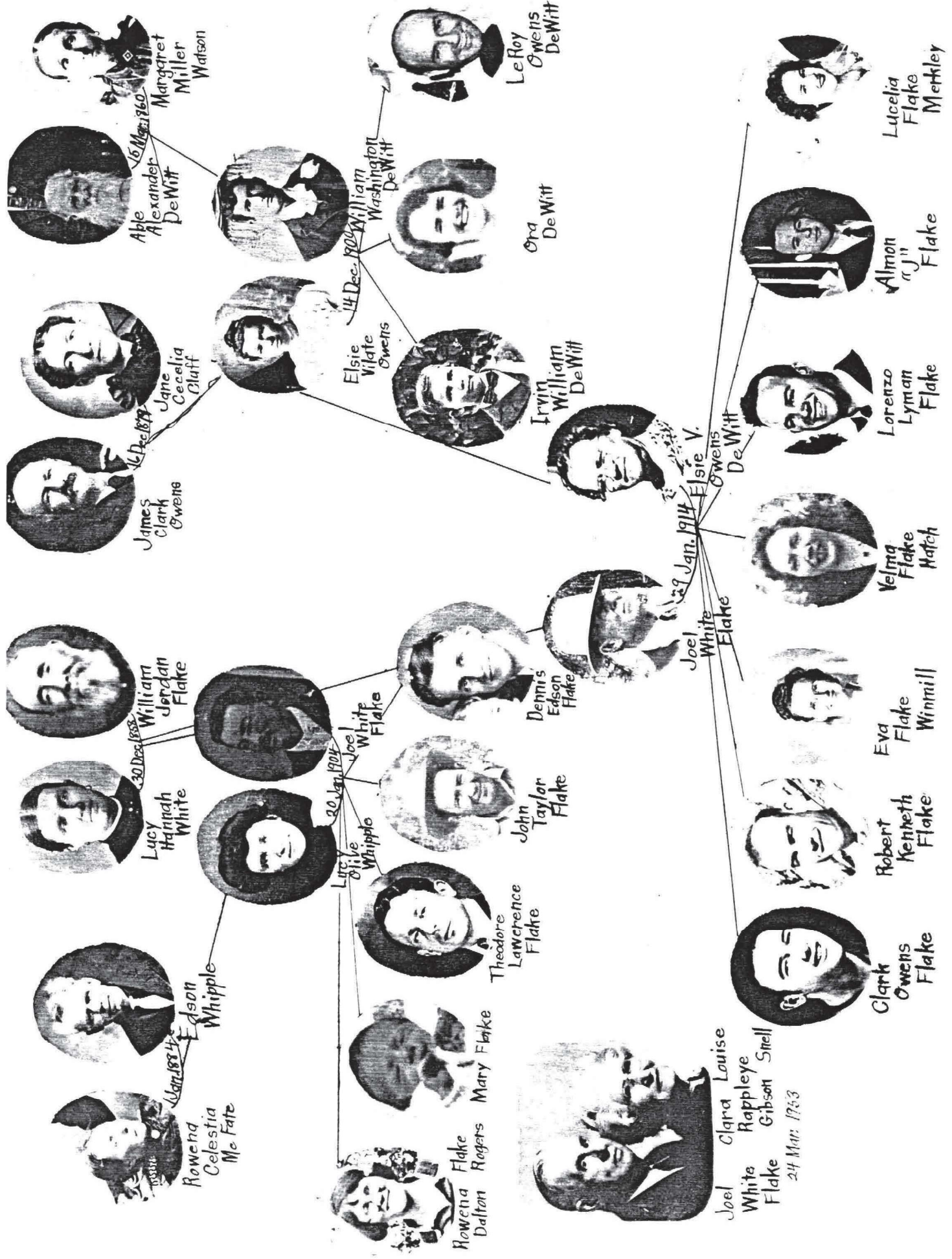
- ☐ **Option 1 -- Family File** Send all names to my family file at the \_\_\_\_\_ Temple.  
I will provide proxies for: ☐ Baptism ☐ Endowment ☐ Sealing  
The temple will assign proxies for ordinances not checked.
- ☐ **Option 2 -- Temple File** Send all names to any temple and assign proxies for all approved ordinances.
- ☐ **Option 3 -- Ancestral File** Send all names to the computerized Ancestral File for research purposes only, not for ordinances. I am including the required pedigree chart.

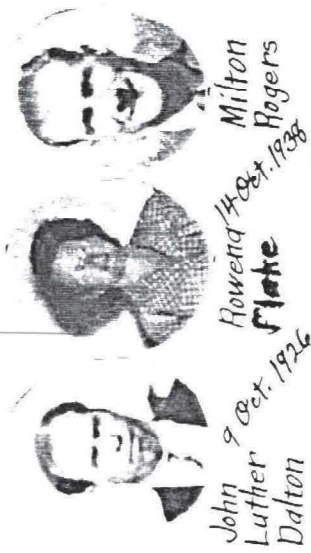
|                                                                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Your Name<br>George D. & Gwenevere D. Hulse                                        |                              |
| Address<br>1622 W. Argon                                                           |                              |
| Mesa, Arizona 85201                                                                |                              |
| Phone<br>(602)964-3817                                                             | Date prepared<br>01 Aug 1996 |
| Your relationship to the husband and wife on this form<br>Husband _____ Wife _____ |                              |

# Family Group Record - 1413

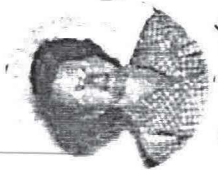
Page 2 of 2

|                                                                             |            |                                 |                                |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Husband</b> Joel White FLAKE-3690                                        |            |                                 |                                |                                |
| <b>Wife</b> Elsie Vilate OWENS-645                                          |            |                                 |                                |                                |
| <b>Children</b> List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth. |            |                                 | LDS ordinance dates            | Temple                         |
| 4                                                                           | Sex<br>F   | <b>Velma FLAKE-3694</b>         |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Born       | 27 Dec 1919                     | Place<br>Snowflake, Arizona    | Baptized                       |
|                                                                             | Christened |                                 | Place                          | Endowed                        |
|                                                                             | Died       | 24 Jun 1993                     | Place<br>Mesa, Arizona         | Sealed to parents              |
|                                                                             | Buried     |                                 | Place                          |                                |
|                                                                             | Spouse     | Kenneth HATCH-3701              |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Married    | 12 Nov 1942                     | Place<br>Fruitland, New Mexico | MRIN: 1417<br>Sealed to spouse |
| 5                                                                           | Sex<br>M   | <b>Lorenzo Lyman FLAKE-3695</b> |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Born       | 26 Nov 1921                     | Place<br>Arapine, Arizona      | Baptized                       |
|                                                                             | Christened |                                 | Place                          | Endowed                        |
|                                                                             | Died       |                                 | Place                          | Sealed to parents              |
|                                                                             | Buried     |                                 | Place                          |                                |
|                                                                             | Spouse     | Jeanene HANKS-3702              |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Married    | 26 May 1948                     | Place<br>Salt Lake City, Utah  | MRIN: 1418<br>Sealed to spouse |
| 6                                                                           | Sex<br>M   | <b>Almon 'J' FLAKE-3696</b>     |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Born       | 13 Aug 1923                     | Place<br>Arapine, Arizona      | Baptized                       |
|                                                                             | Christened |                                 | Place                          | Endowed                        |
|                                                                             | Died       |                                 | Place                          | Sealed to parents              |
|                                                                             | Buried     |                                 | Place                          |                                |
|                                                                             | Spouse     | Lois Estelle WIDDISON-3703      |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Married    | 4 Nov 1948                      | Place                          | MRIN: 1419<br>Sealed to spouse |
| 7                                                                           | Sex<br>F   | <b>Lucella FLAKE-3697</b>       |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Born       | 15 Aug 1925                     | Place<br>Arapine, Arizona      | Baptized                       |
|                                                                             | Christened |                                 | Place                          | Endowed                        |
|                                                                             | Died       |                                 | Place                          | Sealed to parents              |
|                                                                             | Buried     |                                 | Place                          |                                |
|                                                                             | Spouse     | Emmett Lorin MERKLEY-3704       |                                |                                |
|                                                                             | Married    | 17 Nov 1944                     | Place<br>Mesa, Arizona         | MRIN: 1420<br>Sealed to spouse |

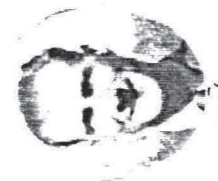




John 9 Oct. 1926  
Luther Dalton



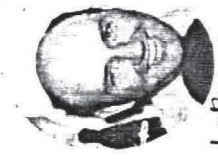
Howard 14 Oct. 1938  
Milton Rogers  
Flake



Clark 28 Feb. 1936  
Owens Flake



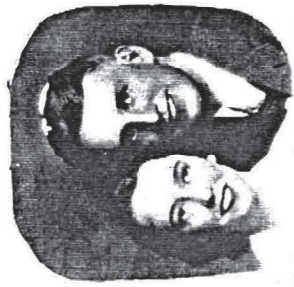
Affron Hatch



LeRoy Owens  
DeWitt



Lucille Clawson



Helen 4 Oct. 1937  
Carol Read  
Dennis Edson  
Flake



Robert Kenneth Flake



Mae Thomas  
20 May 1944



John Taylor  
Flake



Mervie Young  
14 Mar. 1942  
Gallagher



Eva Flake



Leonard Hardy 12 Nov. 1943  
Winnill  
Velma Hatch  
Kenneth Hatch



Theodore Lawrence  
Flake



Katherine



Glenn 26 May 1943  
Jeannette Hanks  
Lorenzo Lynian  
Flake



Almond 4 Nov. 1948  
Lois Estelle Widdison  
Flake



Lucelia 17 Nov. 1944  
Emmett Lorin Merkle

---

**JOEL WHITE FLAKE - 2<sup>nd</sup> Husband of Elsie Vilate Owens DeWitt - (Children sealed to William Washington DeWitt) by Velma Flake Hatch, a daughter**

---

On July 21, 1880, just two years to the day after the pioneers arrived at the Snowflake, Arizona valley, Joel White Flake was born to William Jordan and Luce Hannah White Flake. He was born in the old adobe house which was on the Stinson Ranch when his father bought it.

He pays a great tribute to his loving mother. From his early childhood, she taught him of God in Heaven, who hears and answers prayers, and if we ask, He will help us accomplish the tasks we are called to do. Her example, faith and diligent prayers were his guidelines all his life and kept him out of much trouble.

He was a healthy and strong boy and took to the rugged life of a cowboy. His father, being a cattleman and freighter, gave him much responsibility at an early age. His brothers were much older than he. One of his first memories, at the age of six, was his father sending him to take some horses to the pasture about a mile away. On the way back, his horse stepped into a prairie dog hole, throwing him off his horse, and knocking him unconscious. He was hurt badly, and when he came to, he stumbled on home, fainting at the door. His guardian angel was with him that day as it was many times in his life.

Joel had very little schooling but few surpassed him in arithmetic and his memory. Most of his learning was from the "school of hard knocks." At the age of eight, he was found in the cattle camps on the range, with men whose rough language and bad lives were not a good influence on him.

He became a teacher of horses. If the men had a horse that gave them trouble, they would say, "Give him to Jode!" and they did just that. Even at the age of 94, he still loved to work with horses. They responded, even then, to his "master's touch," and would follow, instead of having to be led. He was on a horse on his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Joel was popular with the girls, but Lucy Olive Whipple, a lovely quiet girl, caught his eye. They were married and five children were born to them. Four of them lived. Then Lucy was taken, leaving him with the young children. He was still a cowboy, away from home, most of the time.

Ten months later, Elsie V. Owens DeWitt, a young widow with two children (she had lost one to illness) became the new mother for his children. They moved to a ranch at Joppa, now Aripine, Arizona. She, being a happy, wonderful and deeply religious mother, made a home for their families. Seven more children were born to them — making 13 - eight boys and five girls at home. Yes, life on the ranch was hard, character-building and faith-promoting. Faith, love and a closeness abided even during the hardest times of raising this large family.

When the children were all married and had families of their own, Elsie died, leaving Joel a widower once again (July 1952). This time, Joel looked for a companion to go on a mission with

him. He married Clara L. Rappleye Snell and they filled a two-year mission to Florida. They were together for 14 years, and he devoted much of his time to temple work. The family loved and appreciated Clara for her big love and thoughtfulness. She had only three children of her own and had lost one of them. Her heart was big enough for the whole family. She died on March 30, 1967.

Left alone again, he chose to live by himself, close to the Arizona Temple, where he spent as much time as possible. One year he did the work for 900 names. His diligence in temple work kept his mind clear and his body active, plus being very rewarding in other ways. On February 4, 1974, when the Arizona Temple was closed for remodeling, he counted 17,269 temple ordinances that he had accomplished, either himself personally or facilitating them for others to perform. He then went to Utah and did more up there.

His children have watched him closely and helped him accomplish this work, and the temple workers were very kind and helpful to him, encouraging him all the time. The Lord has blessed him greatly.

The family numbers close to 300 now, with five generations. His descendants include leaders, doctors, educationist in all walks of life and carry the high ideals of their ancestors, and he is very proud of them.

Joel White Flake, died on July 1, 1977, in Mesa, Arizona. He spent the last few years of his life living at my home, visiting with his other children in Utah and elsewhere. A large number of his descendants attended the funeral to honor him.

Comments about Joel White Flake by Eva Flake Winmill (a daughter)

After Joel's third wife, Clara Louise Rappleye Gibson Snell Flake, died, Eva spent some time at the Ranch taking care of her Dad, Joel White Flake. He told her many additional things about his life. As a young kid out in the cow camps with different sorts of men, he set the goal that he wanted to be a "rooting, cussin', cursin', drinking' cowboy" and that he almost made it when he decided that he did not want to go that way. He spent much of his time breaking bronks (training horses) and with all sorts of degraded men. And he was only nineteen when his mother died. He was standing in by her coffin when his dad came in and told him,

"Jode, I can take care of John and the girls (four younger sisters) but you'll have to get out and make a home for yourself." So the cow camp was where he was comfortable. Then he married a lovely, sweet girl---he was extremely good at convincing people---and after they had five children, and he had changed and gone to the temple, she died leaving him with four motherless children. He tried one way and another to have them taken care of and he realized that they needed a mother. He did a great thing when he married Elsie Vilate Owens DeWitt, whose husband had died and she had tree children, and one had died.

So Joel with his four, and Elsie with her two, moved out to the Ranch to a two room lumber house. Elsie soon learned the attitude that Joel's family had of him when she was at a quilting at his

sister's Wilmerth Flake Willis's home. Some one made the remark that

"Jode was not responsible for what he did."

Elsie immediately asked why? They told her that he had been knocked unconscious so many times and been out for 2-1/2 days at a time so that he was not all there. Elsie could see that she had a challenge to help this man realize that he was a responsible and capable person.

When Dennis and Clark graduated from high school and Clark was the president of the student body and also the valedictorian, Joel said to his wife, Elsie, "All that smartness couldn't have come from only one side of the family, could it?" He still in his fifties or sixties did not know that he was of normal intelligence. What a heavy burden! And Elsie had tried from the first to help him gain confidence and faith in himself.

In 1944-45 Eva was in Mesa where Joel and Elsie lived for she could not be active when she was pregnant with her babies. So Elsie and Joel were helping her take care of her "little Wylma". At that time Joel was a night-watchman for Toverea's cattle yard. He was buying a brick home on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Mesa, and had set the goal of paying for it in seven or ten years. When he set a goal it was set! So he moved his wife out into a dirty shack in the back where the former owners had killed the chickens they raised and sold. Later John and Clark had moved their families from California and Idaho and built that place into a nice house, even put a bathroom under the stairway to the top screen porch that they made into two bedrooms.

So, to achieve this goal of paying for this home in his set time, he was working as night-watchman, renting their home as a duplex, and going to the Temple. At that time they were given 50 cents for each endowment. He would bring the little yellow slips of paper with the name of the person he went through the Temple for, and he very carefully kept the record. Oh, for working for the Railroad guarding a bridge east of Holbrook during II World War, he got \$92.00 a month for the rest of his life.

In 1949, when Eva and Leonard Winmill moved to Mesa, Joel had his home paid for and did not have a job earning money. He became a determined, dedicated Temple worker. So, off to the Temple he would go and stay for as many sessions as he could.

Elsie's health got worse and worse. A few times she fell and had a hard time dragging herself to a chair or to the bed to get up off the floor. Their children worried about her. John and Mervie lived in Chandler, Clark and Afton, Velma and Kenneth Hatch, Lucelia and Emmett Merkley, and Eva and Leonard Winmill lived in Mesa. Each one would come as often as possible, with their families, to care for and work, too it was difficult. Joel would justify himself saying, "Well, I fed her and everything was right there for her, and so I went to the Temple." His goal was to go to every session possible.

In the fall of 1951, Joel was called on a full time mission to the Southern States. They, then moved Elsie over to Eva's home, and the family hired a lady to come while Eva had to be in school

teaching. Elsie was determined that she would not die and interrupt Joel's mission. The last of May he got released and came home, but he was in the mission field from the Fall of 1951, until the last of May 1952.

John and Clark were trying to buy Fred Turley's place at the Ranch and so they were able to move Elsie to the Ranch where she loved it so much. After Elsie died, 20 of July 1952, Joel spent some time in Idaho visiting his children and grandchildren. Then he came back to Eva's home in Mesa and just sat around. He wanted fried meat and hot biscuits for breakfast, beans and bread for dinner, and bread and milk for supper. Eva thought this through.

"How old did the Flakes live to be?" in their nineties. "How old was her Dad?" seventy-one. WELL???

One day she talked this over with her Dad, and he insisted that he was a sick, worn-out, old man. She told him, he would probably live another twenty-five or twenty-six years, and what would she do if she were sick?

He said, "Well, I have taken all that medicine and pills I bought for your mother, and I am taking Carter's Little Liver pills. What else can I do?"

Eva's response was, "Go to the doctor." And he did, and he changed his attitude. He started irrigating orchards in the day time and going to dances and parties in the evenings. The first time he took Clara Louise Rappleye Gibson Snell to a dance, he was not sure where she lived--in this block or the next. When he came crippling back to the car Eva asked him. "How can you go to a dance when your feet are so miserable?" His comment was, "Oh, when you get the blood to circulating they don't hurt any more." So Eva would take him and his girl friend to the dance, or the party, and then he would get one of their friends to bring them home. Was she surprised, when one Wednesday he said, he and Clara and a couple of their friends were getting married on Friday.

"You had better tell your kids!"

"Why, no! They are not going to tell their kids."

"BUT your kids are different and you had better tell them."

So, that day Eva made telephone calls and mailed carbon copy letters. That Friday, 24 March 1953 Joel and Clara were married in the Temple. Eva got out of teaching and attended their wedding.

Grandma Clara was a loving and dedicated grandmother to all of Joel's 78 grand kids. She had only 2 or 3 of her own. Soon, they were called on a mission--again to the Southern States Mission.

After their mission, Joel was more determined than ever to do Temple work. He gave \$1,000—year a thousand dollars to the Temple. He counted that for 2,000 names for as he said, 50 cents

would pay for an endowment. After Grandma Clara died — 30 March 1967 — he spent his time in the Temple doing three and four sessions a day — and, he kept a record.

In the summers when the Temple was closed for cleaning, Eva some times took care of him at the Ranch in his little cabin. He told her a lot about his Temple work— how the people would save a seat for him for the next session, etc. One day when he got back the door was closed and the man did not want to let him go in for the session had started. He told Joel that the man he was going through for needed to know about the first part of the session too. Joel said he told him,

“I’ll tell him when I get up there; for I know the session.”

Another time Joel shocked his daughter when he said, “I did not call Brother Brown a damn so-of-bitch! I did not do that. It just came out!”

“What are you talking about? And who is Brother Brown?”

“Well, I did not call him that. It just came out.” As he told me about the situation Joel had come to the bottom of the stairs and Brother Brown, who was Jesse Smith’s councilor, was standing there and would not let him go up to the session.

“But I did not call him that. It just came out.”

“What happened then?”

“He just kept his arms out and would not let me go. He just stammered and he could not talk, but he still would not let me go. Jesse Smith (the Temple President) came along. When Jesse found out he just put his arms around Brother Brown and me and he said Brother Brown to not worry about Brother Flake. He would take care of him.

“Jesse remembered when he was a kid and a team of horses ran away with him, and I was close by and stopped them. I saved his life.”

As time went on they soon convinced Joel that he was needed more in his children’s homes helping them teach and raise his grand children than he was needed in every session of the Temple. Joel gave another \$1,000 to the Temple and counted that as another 2,000 endowments. Yes, he kept a record all right for he was and had been for years a dedicated, determined temple worker. One day he told Eva he was just making work for him to do in the next world.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, President David O. McKay said that a third of the people we do temple work for would accept it, a third would have to be converted and a third would never accept it. So I am just making work for myself to do.”

Another day he said, "Will Father (meaning his father William Jordan Flake) accept me now?" There he was, about 94 years old, and still in doubt that his earthly father would approve of him. Joel had spent at least 23 years devoted to church work — two missions and hundreds and hundreds of temple sessions.

Once while he was living alone on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, he stumbled at the curb and fell, cutting his head. Someone came along and took him, (to the hospital, I believe) and they had to sew his head up. He insisted on going back to his apartment. Soon, very soon, that night I believe he was back to the Temple.

When Dennis and Clark graduated from high school and Clark was the president of the student body and also, the valedictorian, Joel had said to his wife Elsie,

"All that smartness could not come from one side of the family, could it?" He still when in his fifties or sixties did not know that he was of normal intelligence. What a heavy burden, AND Elsie had tried from the first to help him gain confidence and faith in himself.

Yes, we all have trials and tribulations. I just hope and pray, and I am sure that Joel White Flake hopes and prays for each of us to overcome and conquer these challenges that come into our lives, that we can go ack and be comfortable with our Savior.

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**10. RHODA ELLEN DEWITT, b. 27 March 1881 Springerville, Arizona, d. 24 October 1888 of Diphtheria**

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