

## John Francis and Laurretta Hepworth Astle Family:

From the Memories of Grace Emily Astle Frank

*Compiled by her daughter, Charlene Frank Knighton*

On a beautiful Sunday morning, as was the custom, all the people in the Star Valley area were going to Church. The Astle family had just tied their team to the old hitching post when another team of horses drove up. Someone said, "There's Brother Hepworth and his other family." The family consisted of himself, his wife Hannah and two lovely young daughters, Eliza and Laurretta.

As usual young men were interested in the young ladies. One of the Astle boys made the passing remark, "I'm going to marry that young one." It wasn't long after this statement that a courtship really began between the two, John Francis and Laurretta, the younger Hepworth girl. Their courting consisted of much horseback riding, sleigh riding, dancing and candy pulls along with other things. All during the courtship, plans were being made for a wedding in the near future. John Francis worked hard on the farm and spent many long hours hauling logs from the canyon to build a new house for his future bride. Laurretta helped her mother with the cooking, washing and all things she could, to help with the work. She also watched the building of the house and was pleased with the progress being made.

Now was the time for Laurretta and her young man to be married. They left early one morning in a covered wagon, taking her mother along for the trip to Logan, Utah. It took three days to make the trip. They were married in the Logan Temple the ninth of September 1891, with President Marriner W. Merrill officiating.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1892, John Francis Jr., was born. Laurretta was not yet seventeen and her husband was twenty-two.

**John Francis Jr.**, lived in Grover, Wyoming most of his married life. He married Signe Katheryn Fosberg. She later left, leaving him with 4 children to raise. His sisters, Arstanie and Agnes helped with the children until he married Laura Carling in 1927. They became the parents of 5 children. John Francis Jr. died at the age of 59 of cancer.

**Klea Laurretta** was born on her parent's third wedding anniversary. She was a pretty baby with blonde hair and blue eyes. A few days later, a letter from the Church headquarters in Salt Lake City arrived at the home. John Francis was called on a mission to preach the Gospel to the people in the Southern states. When Klea's Dad arrived home in his Prince Albert suit and a Derby hat, she ran into the house to her mother as fast as her legs could carry her. Klea Laurretta Astle married a widower, Joseph Richard Baer. She was his second wife. She worked extremely hard on the fruit farm helping to raise Joe's six children along with the seven children she and Joe had together.

**Vernon Lenox Astle** was born April 5, 1898. In the winter of 1918, influenza spread over

the Valley. Most of the family members were so ill they did not leave their beds. On December 23, 1918, Vernon, who was now 20 years old past away and the next day, Christmas Eve, his mother Lauretta died too.

**Arstanie Elvira Astle** was the fourth child in the Astle home. Arstanie was the patient child. She helped her mother with all the babies, helping keep the babies asleep on a pillow while her mother finished the washing. Arstanie married Frank Nye in 1929. He was twenty years older than Arstanie. She and Frank lived in Paris, Idaho. They did not have a lot of money, but owned their home in that Bear Lake town. They had one son together, Roy Astle Nye. After Frank's death, Arstanie moved with her son to Salt Lake City. She worked as a housekeeper in many homes, including Elder S. Dilworth Young's home. Arstanie lived until she was 96 years old, with most of her time being spent living in the Avenues in Salt Lake City.

**Clara Pearl Astle** was born in Grover, Wyoming on March 12, 1901. Pearl married George Isaac Carling in the Logan Temple. They lived their married life in Providence, Utah. George and Pearl had 9 children. Pearl raised a lot of beans and worked hard on the family farm to help supplement the family's income. Pearl made beautiful quilts and was a sought after seamstress. She died of cancer at the age of 73.

On August 12, 1902, **David Elmer Astle** joined the John Francis and Lauretta Hepworth Astle home. A boy was a welcome addition to the family. David married Gertude Anderson in 1929, but she died the following year in November 1930. David then went on a Church mission. He met his future wife Margarita Elfrieda Foerster on his Eastern States Mission. They had three sons. David lived up the road from his sister Pearl. He died a week or so after Pearl. David was a painter by trade, besides a farmer. He helped his father on the farm in Providence.

**Evelyn Vilate Astle** lived only a few years. She was born January 4, 1904. She died March 23, 1911 in Grover, Wyoming. Her father was serving another mission for the Church, but was released because of the hardship of his family. Evelyn was very sick and she died shortly after her father returned home.

The Astle family was blessed with a baby girl, **Doretta Alta**, born 17 March 1906. She was the eighth child and the fifth daughter. The family now lived in a large house in town. They had larger acreage. Their house was across the street from the school. When the next baby was born, Doretta was just a baby of 15 months. She was a little jealous of the new baby (Agnes), but Arstanie said she soon got over it. Doretta married Donald Smith. He worked for the railroads. He contracted pneumonia and died leaving Doretta to raise her son Don Junior. Doretta moved back home and lived at David's house. She went to a dance and met her future husband, Wells Hoskins. They lived in Wellsville, then moved to Filer, Idaho and farmed. Doretta had four sons with Wells. She died at the age of 95 at her home in Filer, Idaho.

On July 3, 1907, a rather dark stormy day, much thunder and lightning surrounded the

Astle farm house. In the early evening Grandma Hepworth came from the bedroom where Lauretta was and said, "You have a new baby girl in there". **Agnes Lenora** was that new baby girl. Agnes grew up healthy and strong. She married Jess Cook and they worked on many cattle ranches during their marriage. Agnes and Jess lived in Brigham City, Utah, later moving to Avon, Utah.

**Elva May Astle** made her appearance on May 23, 1909. As with all of the girls in the family, their mother taught each of the girls how to work. All of the girls became good seamstresses. Elva used her talents and worked many years at the Mode O'Day. She married NeVear Jones Kendrick and they raised two sons and two daughters.

February 19, 1912, another girl joined the family, **Grace Emily**. One day in May 1916, when Grace was 4 years old, the farm house caught on fire. The fire burnt everything except the clothes they were wearing. The members of the Ward and surrounding neighbors came with bedding, food and supplies, helping with what they could. The family lived in a tent until a new house was built.

In 1918, when Grace Emily was 6 years old her mother died on Christmas Eve. There was so much sickness and so much snow that no funerals were held. The family had to look out the window and watch the grave being dedicated.

When Grace was 8 years old, the family sold the family farm and moved to Providence, Utah. Agnes and Doretta lived in the Providence home for about a month before the family arrived. The family worked on the farm in Providence. Grace went to school in Providence. Her favorite teacher was Mr. David Fuhrman. He was her teacher in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Grace and her sisters rode the Bamberger Train to South Cache. When her father remarried most of the Astle children were grown and married. However, the children did not get along with the new Mrs. Astle (Clara Steen). After Grace graduated from South Cache, she moved out of the house and lived with David and Doretta. Grace Emily married Seth Clinton Frank in 1932. They are the parents to 7 children: 2 boys and 5 girls. Seth died in 1966 and Grace worked at a dress shop in Logan and then as a school cook at Providence Elementary. Grace Emily Astle Frank is the last surviving member of the original John Francis and Lauretta Hepworth Astle Family.

**Jane Hepworth Astle** was born January 16, 1914. She died shortly after in the month of March 1914.

The thirteenth child of John Francis and Lauretta Hepworth, **Isaac Astle** was born and died on July 14, 1915.

## Reminiscing with Grace Emily Astle Frank

“I was baptized on my birthday in the Salt River in Star Valley by Brother Martin Thompson. He was the one assigned to do all the baptizing of the kids. Dad confirmed me the next Sunday.”

“I saw coal for the first time when we moved to Providence. We'd always used wood in Star Valley. What a treat it was being able to turn on a light switch and to have mattresses not made out of straw ticking.”

“Doretta (14 years old) and Agnes (13 years old) were left at the new house in Providence by themselves while Dad came back to Star Valley to move the family down.”

“We had to wear long cotton stockings to school, with garters to hold them up.”

“When Dad went on his missions, it was hard keeping the family going. But Dad always made us ‘toe-the-mark’ when he was around.”

“Agnes and I would pull each others hair because she thought she was always right. Then in a few days she'd confess she wasn't.”

“Pearl always wore black shoes with a little heel. I don't know why. One time Doretta gave her money to buy a new pair.”

“Aunt Pearl was sure glad she didn't go by Aunt Clara, since her Dad married Clara Steen.”

“Doretta was a member of the first graduating class at South Cache High School.”

“Arstanie said Dad would play with the kids. He'd stand and straddle us on an old pump swing, and pump us up high.”

“Arstanie would play with her boy, Roy, for hours on end. He was spoiled. Roy just idealized his mom.”

“You need to have Arstanie or Doretta here to tell things...I was just a kid when they were experiencing life.”

“When we got old, we just liked to visit with one another. We didn't talk about anything special, just ‘visited’”.

*Information gleaned from the History of Lauretta Hepworth Astle by Arstanie Nye and the memories of Grace Emily Astle Frank. This document was originally produced for an Astle Family Reunion when Grace was the last living child of John Francis and Lauretta Astle.*