

HISTORY OF BENJAMIN HEPWORTH

Benjamin Hepworth was born 2 June 1886, in Bountiful, Utah, the ninth child and fifth son in a family of twelve. He was born to Joseph Hepworth Jr. and Mary Ann Green. In his own words he tells us:

"About the first thing I can remember is my first pair of pants. All children wore skirts when little. When I was about two or three years old I was given my first pair of short pants, and I can remember wearing them.

"Before I was four years old I had a long sick spell. I hadn't eaten anything for days and Mother was making a cake for someone's birthday. I asked for a piece and she felt she shouldn't give it to me but gave me a piece anyway. I ate it and asked for more. That started me eating again. Mother made cake after cake for me and that made me well. They were just plain cakes and not very sweet. I still like to have a piece of warm cake just out of the oven. On the day of my fourth birthday Mother bundled me up so I could sit out and watch Father plowing the orchard.

"We boys loved to go over to Neville's big barn and play in the hay loft. I remember falling out of the loft one day, and I landed in a manure pile. We had a pond, and I was on a raft out in the middle of it. Some kids on shore started to throw rocks at me and splashed water on me so I jumped off to keep from getting wet!

"When I was six, I started school in a little red school house near our home. Mother made me some pants out of Father's old pants to wear to school. Some relations came from Salt Lake, and Mother called me out to show me off with my first pants. There were only two grades in this first school, and I remember one experience--we had programs and Bill Harrison was going to play his fiddle on the program. He couldn't read a note of music but played by ear. He couldn't tune his own violin so I had to tune it for him.

"I worked in the field with Father and my brothers. We did truck farming and peddled our produce from house to house in Salt Lake City. We sold radishes at six bunches for a nickel. I went in to one house and the lady said she'd take five cents worth if she could have three now and three next trip. I went out and asked Father. He said that would be all right. I went back in and she said she'd pay me next trip. I went out and asked Father about it--he wouldn't let me go back in. I was about 13 years old when we quit truck farming. That was a happy day in our household.

"In October of 1906, we went to Brigham City, Utah, to the funeral of Jesse, the baby of my sister, Ida Hepworth Merrell. We left Woods Cross on the train at four o'clock in the afternoon on Friday. The funeral was on Saturday. We left Brigham City on Sunday, as Uncle Peter and I had girls to see Sunday night. We got to Ogden and had to transfer to the Denver and Rio Grande line from the Union Pacific because the east wind was so bad that the trains couldn't go on. We didn't get to Woods Cross until 11 pm Sunday night. The wind was so bad it even blew trains off the tracks. That east wind of 1906 was the worst I've ever seen. The West Bountiful meeting house had just been completed but after the wind there wasn't a wall over eight feet high left standing. The new pipe organ was ruined. We had about 8,000 cauliflower plants set out and an acre of head lettuce. It was worth approximately \$6,000 but we didn't take a dollar's worth of produce off it. The wind blew sand in and made it black. It blew the sand right through the leaves and into the cauliflower. Mother couldn't even get one head to use for our family. The seed had cost us \$150 and the crop was a total loss.

"We didn't garden any more, and I went into the butcher business when I was twenty-one, in January of 1907. My brother, Ted, and I started business together. Neither of us had any money, but I had a horse; Ted had the knowledge of the meat business; and another man, Alvin Hatch, had a set of harnesses. He was the silent partner. That is all we had to start with.

"When Mother and Father came across the ocean from England, Robert Sherwood was on the same ship and he was a butcher. He settled in Salt Lake and Ted went to work for him. Ted worked for \$40 a month and didn't get a nickel for three months.

"When Ted and I started business, our first day's receipts were \$1.50. We started in an old frame building that Ted's father-in-law had started a meat business and failed. We had six competitors. We peddled our meat.

We cut it up and went around from house to house hollering 'Beefoooo.' In two years we didn't have any competition.

"We had the horse trained so that when a lady said, 'Wait a minute,' the horse would stop. If she said, 'Not today,' the horse would go on. One lady said the meat wasn't good one day. I told her that her frying pay just wasn't clean. She never liked me after that! One woman bought a ham from me. She kept it around the house for a week or two until it was full of maggots. Later she told me about it, and said she knew it was full of maggots but she just put it in a big kettle and covered it with water. As the maggots came to the top, she just skimmed them off. She said it was good meat.

"Once Reuben was working for us. We had a wooden club to poke the meat in the grinder when we made hamburger. I cautioned him to use the club and not his hand. He got mad and said, 'Don't you think I have sense enough to keep my fingers out?' The first day he tried it, he cut the end of his finger off!

"In the wintertime we had some leisure so the fellows used to sit around and loaf in the backroom of the butchershop where we had a stove. There was no heat in the front room. We sent Reuben out to wait on an old English lady who came in one day. She said, 'Ov you any cawves rennet?' Reuben turned to me and said in the same accent, 'Ov we any cawves rennet?' All the fellows in the back room got a big laugh out of it.

"We made bologna, link sausage, and nearly everything connected with the meat business. I tied link sausage fast and never broke a gut. We pressed corned beef, made head cheese, and ground bones for chicken feed. We also sold the hides. We made ice in 100-pound cakes and sold it. We delivered it to the housees in 50-pound cakes usually. In the hottest part of the summer we had to haul ice from Salt Lake, too, as fast as we couldn't make it fast enough. I would have to get up about 3 am and go to Salt Lake for the ice, deliver it, and get home to have breakfast, and then be to work by 7:30 am.

"I took flute lessons after I was 18 years old. I practiced from 5 to 8 hours a day. I learned to play well enough

so I got a job playing with the orchestra at Saltair every night for dancing. We also played a concert on Sunday afternoon. It was all sight reading, and one afternoon there was a cadenza in the flute part and I was scared to try it. The clarinetist said, 'Just sit still,' and he played it for me. No one but the conductor knew it. I played in an orchestra in Bountiful, too, and we played for dances all through the county.

"When I was about 20 there was an International Irrigation Conference held at Boise, Idaho. The organizers sent to Salt Lake for 8 players for an orchestra--I was asked to go. They couldn't find an oboe player, so I had to play that part on the flute. There were two orchestra leaders--Mose Christensen in Boise, and Pete Christensen in Salt Lake City. When we got to Boise, I sat in the first flute chair. I was scared. I had a chance to show off and was afraid to do it!

"I took voice lessons from Hugh Dougal and flute lessons from Ebenezer Beesley and also from Willard Flashman. I also played a guitar and after I was married, I played the base saxophone in a saxophone quartette. I used to sing in church. I was playing my flute at a dance in Centerville the night I met your mother, Lillie May Rampton. I played a flute solo on a special program during the dance and as soon as I was through playing, a girl we both knew, Billy McDonald, wanted to go up and see me. She was nuts about me, and she took Lillie up with her to meet me. Lillie thought I was a stinker and didn't like me.

"I used to go up to see Billy at Farmington. I would take another fellow with me to see Lillie--then the four of us would go out together. We had to date in pairs or gangs, or we would get beaten up by other guys as we went from one town to the next. I had the best horse and buggy in the county. My horse was called 'Orphelia.'

"Once I rented a horse and buggy to go see my best girl, Lizzy Smith. When I arrived, here she comes out with a girl friend. I didn't like that so I wouldn't take them for a ride. When they went in the house, I followed them in. We sat around and pretty soon they went out. First thing I saw out the window was a horse and buggy going by without a driver. I checked on my horse and buggy but they were gone. The girls had turned the horse loose. I telephoned the owner, and he got out with a lantern and slowed the horse down so it didn't get a scratch. I thought surely I was going to get hooked for \$250.

"One night coming home from Lagoon at midnight, a couple of girls from Farmington were on the train. We dared them to stay on the train when it pulled out of Farmington. They stayed on, so we had to walk about 3 miles to get a horse and buggy to bring them home. I never dared anyone again. I got back home in time to go to work the next morning.

"Lillie Rampton and I started going together in the spring of 1909. That summer we went to Lagoon every Saturday night to dance. On holidays we usually took a lunch and went to Saltair for the day. Always a group went together. On July 24 three couples went up Weber Canyon and stayed all night. We got dressed up and went over to Petersen's to a 24th celebration. It was a public dance, but it was in a little building so small that we called it the 'Two by Twice.'

"Lillie and I became engaged in September and set the wedding date for November. Three days before we were married, we went to Farmington to the courthouse to get our license. It also happened to be election day too. All who worked at the courthouse knew Lillie. They sent us to every room in the courthouse to get our license, and the farther we went, the madder I got. I wanted to go to Salt Lake City to get it. We finally got in the recorder's office, and they told us there that they had a 'good second-hand license, cheap,' and then I did get mad. They kept us until after closing hours, but we finally got the license. We were married on November 3, 1909 in the Salt Lake Temple--with a reception for just the families and a few friends at the Rampton home in Farmington.

"Our wedding was to have been a week later, but I was called to serve on the Grand Jury in Salt Lake City, so we had to put it ahead a week. We had planned to go to California for our honeymoon, but we decided to build a house instead. I was on the Grand Jury for six weeks starting November 10th. I came home every night, except once, on the midnight train. I had to be back in Salt Lake City at 10 am each day. It took an hour to ride in on the Bamberger line--a steam engine train then.

"We started our home in Bountiful on November 1, and expected to be in it by the first of the year. We got the shingles on the

roof and started to plaster, but it froze up, so it was April before they could finish. So we lived with in-laws for six months. We lived a few days at Farmington, then a few days at Bountiful. I guess we lived in a suitcase.

"When I went to the old tailor to get my wedding suit made, he said, 'Going to get married?' I said, 'Yes.' Then he wanted to know to who? I told him a girl from Farmington. 'What the hell's the matter with you? Why don't you patronize home trade,' he said.

"I kept on peddling meat after we were married and Lillie went with me lots of the time. Our first baby, Edna May, was born on March 2, 1911. Even when she was right tiny, we used to take her with us in the wagon when we peddled meat. One day Dr. Stringham met us, and he told us we were certainly going to have a healthy baby there.

"We lost our second baby, Bertha, on April 26, 1914. She was born November 1, 1913. The baby wasn't formed right and wasn't expected to live long, but it was a hard blow for us.

"Lucile, our third child, came along on November 7, 1915, and she went riding in the meat wagon, too.

"I was choir leader of the East Bountiful choir for four years. At that time all the choirs in Davis County held a music contest each year. Under my leadership the choir won the contest one year. Our male quartette also won twice.

"In the spring of 1914, I wanted to go to Burley, Idaho, to dry farm. I went up to look it over, but got to thinking about Lillie and daughters. Edna and little Bertha. We didn't know how long she would live. I just packed up and came home again, and I decided I wouldn't take them out there.

"Ted and I didn't get along too well. We were visiting Grandpa and Grandma Rampton in Farmington one Sunday afternoon, and Grandpa said he was getting tired of the drugstore and was going to sell it. Just in fun I said, 'I'll buy it,'--not thinking he would sell. But he took me up on it. A week later we took over the store--April 5, 1919. We had to sell our share in the butcher shop, but that wasn't hard--Fred Garrett and Alvin Hatch took it.

"We thought for a while that I could travel back and forth from Bountiful to Farmington to work, but it made it so late at night when I got home, and I

had to get up early in the morning to go back. It was just too hard. So in a few weeks we moved to Farmington and lived with the Ramptons while looking for a home to rent or buy. We couldn't find one to rent, so bought one the latter part of July. It was a red brick house 2 blocks east of Main Street on the south side of First North. Bob was born there on September 12, 1919, our first and only son. He was named Walter Robert, but we called him Bob.

"Grandpa Rampton stayed on and worked in the drugstore. For a while I hired a pharmacist. Then I decided to take pharmaceutical training and studied under Ralph Neldon in Salt Lake City. About six others and I were taught at night school in Mr. Neldon's home. He worked for Smith-Faus Drug Company and later became manager of that company. After I had been studying for several months, Mr. Neldon talked me into taking the state examination for pharmacists, even though I wasn't through with the course. I passed the exam and was glad I had taken it. When our group finished, we took the State Examination again. This was the last group the State of Utah let pass under private tutoring. After that, four years of study were required. I was registered as a pharmacist on November 2, 1921.

"Another baby girl was born to us on March 17, 1924. We named her Afton. From the time she would talk though, she was called Mickie. I would call her that, and she would try to call me Mickie, but it came out 'Minnie.' Because of that I started calling her Minnie, but no one else did.

"In the spring of 1925 we started to build a new home across the street north of where we lived. We moved into it on August 5, 1925.

"We used to go fishing a lot for recreation. We went to Yellowstone and to Fish Lake and to the canyons around closer. We went on lots of picnics. In the evenings we often went for rides up the mountain road toward Weber Canyon to watch the sunsets."

Note by Edna H. Wood--Daddy enjoyed sports of all kinds. He never mentioned playing any games himself. Perhaps he didn't have the opportunity. During the 1920's, Davis County had a very active baseball league. Daddy managed

the Farmington team. I remember watching the team play on their home diamond just north of the Miller Floraland hoping someone would hit a home run. This meant that a glass window would be broken in the green-houses, and the lucky batter would get a free malt at the drugstore.

Daddy followed the big league baseball scores and knew which teams were leading all during the summers. The day he died I was with him in the hospital and we were watching TV. They announced that Yogi Berra was going to manage the New York Yankees and Daddy was so interested. We discussed Yogi at some length.

He also liked football. Mama didn't care too much for sports, so he could take me with him. Many times we sat in a rain storm or snow storm to watch a game. When I was about twelve, he got two season tickets to the High School basketball tournament, which was held in the old Deseret gym. We sat through four games--then had a supper break--then saw four more games. It made a long, long day, but we both loved it.

"Things went along well until the depression hit about 1929. We just about lost our home and business. If it hadn't been for the FHA, we would have lost them. They gave extended loans that helped us out. When things started looking better after the depression, I bought my first ice cream-making machine and made ice cream to sell in the drugstore.

"Our children married: Edna married Merrill Wood on September 5, 1934; Lucile married Merrell Henry on October 4, 1939; Bob married Harriet Price on November 21, 1946; and Mickie married James Edwin Hobbs on September 10, 1946. We have enjoyed trips to see them--Mickie in Maryland, Lucile in Denver, Bob in Tacoma, and Edna close to us in Kaysville.

"We have always enjoyed playing cards with friends--bridge, rummy or knock-knock, Canasta and New Yorker. We had played with Hal and Hazel Robinson every Saturday night for years. We trade off going to each other's homes for the evening.

"On December 13, 1956, I was operated on for a varicose vein in my left leg. I got along fine. I have had very little sickness in my life. Some day I hope to sell the drugstore and retire." (The end of autobiography--compiled by Lucile Henry for the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Benjamin and Lillie Hepworth, 1959. The following portion was finished by his children, Edna, Lucile, Bob and Mickie.)

On November 3, 1959, Ben and Lillie celebrated their Golden Wedding with an open house. Many of their friends and relatives came, and it was a very happy occasion. They both enjoyed it very much and often talked of those who came that day.

Christmas of 1960 they spent with their daughter, Mickie, in Salisbury, Maryland. They went by plane--the first time they had flown. It was a very happy time for them and for Mickie and her family.

On June 29, 1961, Lillie took sick. She was operated on July 11, 1961, and it was found that she had a malignant growth. The operation helped for a time, but the cancer returned and on May 14, 1962, Ben lost his wife. He was lost without her. He had no hobbies--she had been his hobby. Edna's daughter, Susan, who was a senior in high school, moved to Farmington to live with him and take care of him. This worked out very well but he was still lonely.

During the fall of 1961 he visited with each of his children. He went to Bob's in Tacoma, Washington, in October. He spent Thanksgiving with Lucile in Denver. Christmas was spent at Mickie's in Maryland, and in between these visits he spend much time with Edna in Kaysville.

During this time he planned a surprise for his grandchildren and great grandchildren. As each one's birthday came along, he sent a small package with instructions that it was not to be opened until Thanksgiving. By Thanksgiving all of them had received their packages. When the packages were opened, we discovered that he had started bank accounts for each child with \$100 deposits. Of course, everyone was thrilled, and he received telephone calls at Luciles in Denver that Thanksgiving day to thank him. At that time he had 17 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. They were all so happy and surprised with their gifts. He got more pleasure out of giving these gifts than anything else he did after he lost his wife.

In August of 1963 he had a sick spell. The doctor thought it was an inner-ear infection, but Ben thought he had had a slight stroke. Lucile was visiting him at the time, and she stayed

until the first of September. Then she went home, and Susan left to go to school at Brigham Young University, so he moved to Kaysville to stay with Edna. He had been having a little prostate gland trouble and on October 3, 1963, he entered the Bountiful Community Hospital for an operation. He was so sure that is was a minor thing that he wasn't even going to let his brothers and sisters know about it. He seemed to get along quite well, and on October 14 we broght him home to Kaysville, During the night he suddenly got a bad pain in his chest, and early on the 15th we took him back to the hospital. The doctor said he had a blood clot go to his lungs.

He seemed to know that his time was short. He started putting his affairs in order and giving instructions as to what to do when he was gone. On October 21 he had a heart attack, but seemed to bounce back. Then on October 24 he had another coronary and died very peacefully. He is buried in the Bountiful City Cemetery beside his beloved wife.