

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ARTA MCLAIN SEELY
Written in 1936

In a small red house on Brigham Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, on November 3, 1874, I was born, the son of Isaac Joseph Seely and Elizabeth Jane Fisher. Father's parents were William Seely and Lucy Ann Decker. My father was born August 25, 1837 in Chicago, Illinois. He died 1902, at his home in East Mill Creek, Salt Lake County, Utah. My mother, a daughter of Joseph Fisher and Evaline McLain, was born February 9, 1839, in , Illinois, died 16 Oct., 1885 at East Mill Creek. My Grandfather, William Seely, was born 27 Jan. 1816, in Ohio, and died 20 May, 1851. My Grandmother, Lucy Ann Decker, was born May 17, 1822 in Phelps, Ontario Co., N.Y.; died January 24, 1890, at Salt Lake City. My father and mother were married in the old Endowment House at Salt Lake City on

When the gospel message was brought to my grandparents, William and Lucy Seely, it caused a separation between them. Grandmother accepted it but Grandfather did not. On June 15, 1842, Grandmother Seely was married and sealed to Brigham Young by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the Nauvoo Temple. My father and his only sister, Harriet, came west to Salt Lake City with their Mother, Lucy, in 1848. My father was raised by his mother and step-father, President Brigham Young, from the age of five years to manhood.

I moved with my parents while still a child to East Mill Creek, Salt Lake County, Utah, where we lived on a farm. At the age of seven years, while gathering stones near the house to flip in an elastic flipper, I came across a very pretty and peculiar stone about an inch and one half thick at one end, and tapering for about two and one half inches to almost a point. It was of dark crystal or glass on two sides with a sort of limestone formation on the other sides. This stone proved to be a seer stone with which I was permitted to see many things, including articles that had been lost or stolen. I saw relatives in other cities, strange things and places, located many lost or stolen articles for people from all over the nation.

For five years this wonderful gift was allowed me. I was taken out of school many times to my home to look into my stone for some lost article, or for information on various subjects and things. This was very detrimental to my school work, as I was taken out as many as three times a day by different anxious persons. My mother would never allow any charge to be made for my information, as she said my gift was not for the purpose of making money, and the Lord would withhold it if a charge were made. Many came back with gifts, after finding their lost property.

This stone was placed in the hands of Apostle James E. Talmage by Patriarch John Smith, for analysis. Brother Talmage's report showed that it was neither rock nor glass, but he could not determine exactly its composition.

My mother took charge of the stone at all times until her death, which occurred when I was eleven years of age. About one year after Mother's death, the stone was lost.

After completing two years of seminary work, I was called on a mission to the Southern states, June 15, 1897. In company with sixteen other elders, including C.O. Christensen of Brigham City, I boarded the train for Chatanooga, Tenn. I was now twenty-two years old. My labors in the South Alabama Conference were under President Elias S. Kimball. I baptized five persons into the Church, including twin boys. After eleven months, I was honorably released to return home because of illness.

On the third day of May, 1899, I married Alfaretta Neff, daughter of Franklin Neff, in the Salt Lake temple, John R. Winder officiating. Five children were born to bless our home. They are: Arta Elwyn, Francis Leland, Verna May, Leola, and Grant McLain.

For eight years I was clerk of the 122nd quorum of Seventy in East Mill Creek. I was appointed administrator of Mother's estate in 1903. The fruit business was my occupation until June 1, 1905, on which date the U.S. Government appointed me RFD mail carrier on the first rural route out of Salt Lake City, the first also in Utah. I held this position until February 28, 1910, when I resigned to return to the fruit business.

On August 13, 1912, I bought a 480 acre cattle ranch in western Box Elder County. On the first day of October, 1912, I moved my family and a car of machinery from East Mill Creek to the ranch in Rosette, in the Park Valley district, in western Box Elder County.

I was made ward clerk of Rosette Ward soon after arriving. Jacob Kunzler was Bishop. Francis M. Lyman ordained me a High priest and Bishop of the Rosette Ward

August 31, 1913, with Fred J. Hirschi and Loiver Atherly as counselors. I held the office of Bishop of the Rosette Ward, Box Elder Stake, later the Curlew Stake, for fourteen years. Fred Hirschi remained first counselor for the entire period. During this time, we built a new meeting house.

I was elected a member of the Board of Education of Box Elder County school district in December of 1913, for a four year term; was reelected for two terms, making twelve years of service on the board.

I served as secretary-treasurer of the Park Valley National Farm Loan Association from 1914 to 1928, during which time I loaned through the association \$92,000 to the members of the Park Valley District. When I had carried on the business for five years, an auditor came from New York to audit my books. They balanced to the cent, and the auditor was generous in his praise.

I was secretary and treasurer of the Park Valley Telephone company and for the Rosen Valley Irrigation Company, as for the Park Valley Livestock company while living in the Park Valley District.

We moved to Brigham City in Box Elder County on the fourth day of March, 1928. We purchased a home from Roslin A. Lee. From 1928 to 1932 I was manager of the Utah Hatchery Company of Brigham City. I operated a fruit and produce store in Blackfoot, Idaho, for the year 1933, and during 1935 I operated a fruit store at Cold Springs, twelve miles south of Brigham.

I was called as a member of the Box Elder Stake High Council in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, for whom I write this brief sketch of my activities to this date.

(This office with the high council was held until his death on
May 17, 1945.)