

## Biography of Earl and Della Crockett, Their Lives and the Lives of their Ancestors



Earl and Della Crockett

**Earl** and **Della** met in Pocatello at summer school in 1922. The first two things Della learned about **Earl** was that he was smart and ethical. He wouldn't take a test for the girl she knew. **Della** asked him on their first date (a picnic), and their romance bloomed mostly by mail after that summer. They married in August 1925, he was 23, and she was 24. They began their life together teaching school in a two-room schoolhouse. She taught the first four grades, and he taught the upper four. They lived in a log cabin, which had a dirt floor, until he fixed that. In June of 1926 **Marian Joy** was born in **Della's** parent's home in Franklin, ID. **Earl** had been born in Preston, ID about seven miles away. They had a very fulfilling and gracious life together but it required a lot of hard work to get him through school. Della managed an apartment house in Berkeley, they did janitorial work at night with Joy in a basket.

He received a Ph.D. in Economics from UC Berkeley in 1928. **Robert Comish Crockett** was born in North Dakota in 1932. Most of **Earl's** career he taught at the University of Colorado in Boulder, advising three Governors of Colorado, two CU Presidents, and one Dean. Today (2013) there are several books and talks available for sale on Amazon and Google Books that he wrote. Why after all these years? **Earl** did pioneering work in taxation, property tax, pensions, etc. Many states are patterned after the work he did at Colorado. **Earl David** (1936) and **Margaret Ruth** (1945) were born in Boulder, CO.

But when Earl was in his early 50's he was contacted by Brigham Young University, the university was looking for an Academic Vice President. One of the years at BYU, he was Acting President, while Earnest L. Wilkinson ran for a position in the U.S. Senate. He was known for fairness and his striving for intellectual freedom. The couple traveled to Europe several times, twice Earl taught for the University of Maryland Overseas Division (teaching servicemen) in Germany, Italy, Spain and England. They were a strong team. They agreed to never argue in front of the children; she managed family issues, and he made the money and had

a rewarding professional career. They worked together on improving and maintaining the homes in which they lived. Decisions were presumably made together. He almost never complained about work related problems to the rest of the family, only to Della. She might reveal some of this to her children. Some documents show Della's official name as Della Biggs Comish Crockett. This is incorrect, for she was heard to opine that her name was not that, for her middle name was only an initial, though she knew it stood for Biggs.

## The Crockett Ancestors



Ozro Ozias & Ruth Clarkson Crockett

**Earl's** parents were poor much of their married lives. **Ozro Ozias**, was born in 1856 in Payson, UT. At age 17 he worked for Brigham Young, Jr. doing odd jobs and gardening. While white washing the fence he got lime in his eyes which affected his eyesight for the rest of his life. So, he farmed and did other things but it was a hard life making enough money for eleven children. **Ruth Clarkson Crockett** kept a journal for all of her married life. She gave completed books to her descendants. Many of these volumes are online at <http://www.crockettfamily.org/ruth1.html>. The couple and **Ozro's** sister Lydia and her husband, Archie Lamoreaux, were married in a double wedding ceremony on December 26, 1878, (**Ruth** met **Ozro** through Lydia). One poignant story about the two couples, who remained close over the years, is that when food was scarce Archie urged **O.O.** (as **Ruth** called him) to go out hunting for a few days with him. At first he said yes, but he was worried about leaving his new wife with a young baby, so declined. Archie went alone, got lost, and hobbled into town a few days later with frostbite so bad he had to have some of his toes cut off.

**Ozro Ozias** suffered much of his life in poor health. He suffered a lot in the 1918 flu pandemic that followed W.W. I, and complications thereof afterwards. He underwent radium treatments when his eyesight began to fail in 1924. He also was diagnosed with Erysipelas, an infection of the skin, which caused a red hot rash. He died in 1930 after three strokes.

**Ruth Clarkson** was born in 1857 in New York City, while her parents **Robert Clarkson** and **Ann Clegg** were saving money for their trip west. She and her parents were Mormon Pioneers and settled in Preston, ID. **Ruth** bore eleven children; Earl was born when his mother was 48. She had a child born when she was 54, which died the same day. Every year she mourned that child. She lived to be 89, dying in Preston, ID in 1947.



Alvin & Mary Sophia Crockett

O.O.'s father, **Alvin Crockett**, was born 1831 in Vinal Haven, ME . His parents, David and Lydia were among the first converts to the LDS Church and were baptized by Wilford Woodruff. They eventually moved west with the Saints. While in Nauvoo, the whole winter he was 12, **Alvin** had the responsibility of caring for the whole family, as he was the only one not ill. When he was not aiding them directly, he was in the woods with an axe and wagon getting wood to keep them all warm. When his parents moved to Payson, **Alvin** went to California for the Gold Rush, but found little gold in two years, however it was enough for an engagement ring for his bride **Mary Sophia Reed** in 1852. She was Payson's first schoolteacher. She did a lot of weaving, spinning, and dying of cloth for the family's clothing. Their first home was not even complete when she gave birth to their first child. The bed was soaked, but no one got sick. **Alvin** was a mason and cooper (made barrels), but was also in the defensive militia and often on guard at night. But he was kind to the Indians and they did not attack when he was on duty. In 1860 they moved to Logan, UT. **Alvin** served as the first mayor of Logan, and the first Cache County Sherriff serving for 21 years. In 1866 he took **Annie Naomi Peel** as his second wife. In 1888 he was arrested for Polygamy and served his sentence, though some escaped, he felt he needed to face the difficulties that came his way. He worked as a contractor, and some of his buildings still stand. He and his father **David** both brought down stones from Logan Canyon for the Logan Temple. His first wife **Mary Sophia**, (our ancestor), had thirteen children, and they adopted a girl; his second wife had six children.



Delia Deliverance Byam Reed

**Mary Sophia Reed Crockett's** mother, **Delia Deliverance Byam Reed** also reached Logan, UT. Born 1789 in Chelmsford, MA, her father fought in the Revolutionary War and gave his six daughters the gold buttons from his coat to be made into beads, and the silver buckles from his

shoes to be made into spoons. **Deliverance** married **Tillison Reed** in December of 1810 and they joined the Mormon Church in Acworth, New Hampshire. They moved on to Ohio and then to Nauvoo but **Tillison** became ill and died at age 48 in Missouri. After his death it was extremely difficult for **Deliverance** to get along with 7 of her 11 children. She met **Nahum Curtis** who had 7 children of his own. They married and had a happy life together. **Nahum** and **Deliverance** colonized Payson. She lived the last years of her life with her daughter **Mary Sophia** in Logan where she died in 1871 at the age of 82.



David & Lydia Young Crockett

O.O.'s grandfather, **David Crockett** was born in Vinal Haven, ME in the Fox Islands. The Crocketts had lived there for generations and had descended from Thomas Crockett who arrived in Kittery, Maine by 1631 as an indentured servant but went on to have several places in the area named after him, that still bear the Crockett name.

**David** was born in 1806 and married **Lydia Young** (born 1812) in 1830. They joined the LDS Church and moved with the body of Saints to Nauvoo. They were there two years. They left with the Exodus in 1846 to Iowa. They arrived in Utah 19 Oct. 1849, which was their son Alvin's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. But along the way they often had trouble finding water. It got so bad that one day **Lydia** went off to pray for aid in finding water, following her prayer she was able to locate an underground spring that was used by succeeding pioneers who followed. They were called by Brigham Young to settle Payson, UT, where **David** later served as the first mayor. **Lydia** read everything she could about medicine and served as a mid-wife doing the labors of what we would expect of a doctor and a nurse. She delivered more than 1,000 babies and talked to the Indians and they were able to understand her. They had 13 children, and adopted another. **David** took a second wife in polygamy before the 1890 Manifesto: **Lincinda Ellsworth**. **David** and **Lydia** moved to Logan when their son Alvin moved there. **David** died in 1876 in Logan at the age of 70. **Lydia** died in 1888, at the age of 76 also in Logan.

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***Ruth Clarkson Crockett's Ancestors***



Robert Clarkson & Ann Clegg Clarkson, with Ruth

**Robert Clarkson** was born in 1834 in Beverly, Yorkshire, England. He was apprenticed to a cooper (barrel maker) at 14, and baptized into the LDS Church at 16. **Ann Clegg** born in 1832 in Hull, Yorkshire, England, married **Robert Clarkson** on Christmas Eve in 1854. Before they were married they sang in a choir to earn money for Saints to go to America. After their marriage, he became freed from his apprenticeship so they were free to go to America. It was their turn to go in 1855. They landed in New York City (where their daughter **Ruth** was born), where they lived for five years earning enough to continue west. **Ann** died in Salt Lake in 1862, six days after a son was born leaving **Robert** with four young children. She was not yet thirty years old. He married twice after that. The second marriage ended in divorce after just two months. The third marriage in 1863, ended in his death in 1868 when he was 38. He had suffered from coughing and hemorrhaging of the lungs caused by exposure to damp and cold and insufficient clothing. After they had moved to Logan, he had been unable to finish their log house and they had to live in it through the winter regardless, even though snow would drift all over the room through the cracks in the walls. After **Robert** died, **Ruth** and her sisters were raised by their stepmother.

**Ann Clegg Clarkson's** brother **William** is credited with a hymn in the LDS Hymnal, "Let Earth's Inhabitants Rejoice". In the family history and in previous versions of the hymnal in use in the 1960's he was also credited with "Know This That Every Soul is Free", now listed as Anonymous.

**Ann Leaf Clegg, Ann Clegg Clarkson's** mother was born in 1789 in Yorkshire, England. She joined the LDS church in 1850, along with her husband. **Nathaniel** was a stone mason. She died in 1862 while crossing the plains near Fort Laramie, WY. This was, however, seven months after her daughter had died.





## *The Comish Ancestors*



**George and Margaret Biggs Comish**

**George Francis Comish** born in 1873 in Franklin, ID. **George** worked on his father's farm from a young age. He was called on a mission to Georgia after marrying **Margaret Biggs**, when their oldest daughter Reata was still a baby. He spent two years there returning in December 1900, during which time **Margaret** ran the farm. In 1907 he built a house in Cove (about three miles from Franklin). In 1910, he purchased the land, and built a house where his father **Robert Nephi** had first lived in Franklin, so that the family could be closer to good schools, and the Church. All the while, his farm was three miles away. He and **Margaret** had not had much schooling, but they wished it for their children. He was elected one of the first trustees of Mountain Home School District. They were both very hard workers; he kept cattle and horses. He had one of the best teams in the county and always loved good horses. He once sold a good horse for enough to buy a new automobile. He was in the Mutual Presidency at Cove and the first Superintendent in the Sunday School. He was Chairman of the Boy Scouts. **George** donated weeks of work for roads. He was supervisor of Mountain Home Roads. He died in Salt Lake of pneumonia in 1955 at age 82.

**Margaret Wright Biggs Comish** was an industrious little girl and was awarded many prizes for her agility both in lessons and at work. **Margaret** kept a vegetable garden, and was known for her canning. As a young girl, Margaret sang in the choir and was always a lover of good music. At eighteen years of age, she married **George Comish**, who was 25. **Margaret** was thrifty, a good manager and an immaculate housekeeper. She always hurried to do her tasks so that she could help others with their duties. **Margaret's** hands were never idle--she pieced and quilted lovely quilts and she made beautiful hand braided rugs. She helped with many quilts for the Relief Society for the new brides. She left all her children examples of her fine handwork. Her special hobby was the canning of fruits and pickles. **Margaret** was a beautiful girl with clear grey eyes, dark brown curly hair and olive skin. Her hair was so long she could sit on it. She was 5 ft. 4 in. tall. (A quilt made by **Margaret Comish** and her daughter **Della Crockett** is now in the possession of David and Valerie Brereton.) She died Jan. 28, 1950 of a series of heart attacks which lasted over a period of two years.

The **Comishes** were originally from the Isle of Mann. It is a little known island between England and Ireland, these days known for motorcycle races and Manx cats. When my parents,

**Earl** and **Della**, her sister **Geneve**, and I visited in 1969 it was so lush they were cutting down trees on the sides of the roads so you could see the sky, and there was a bicycle race in the rain.



William & Elizabeth Keig Comish

**William Comish** born 1805, joined the LDS Church in 1841, but his wife, **Elizabeth Keig**, because of her parent's objections, didn't joined until 1848, when she was baptized by John Taylor. Elizabeth's brother John was Mayor or Governor of the Isle of Man. The couple wanted to join the Saints in the US but did not have the money. Therefore, in 1849 **William** and the oldest daughter, Jane, went ahead to earn money to bring **Elizabeth** and the other eight children. **William** got work in St. Louis, MO, and it took two years to earn the money for **Elizabeth** and her eight other children to join them. They stayed there two years then traveled west in John Hindley's Company. They settled in Kaysville, UT until called to settle Franklin, ID, and were among the first to settle it. They stayed the rest of their lives. **William** was a farmer and died in 1877. Even though **Elizabeth** did not have an opportunity to go to school and learn to read and write, one had to be quick to beat her at mental arithmetic. She spun yarn and knit clothing for her family. **Elizabeth** lived to be almost eighty dying in 1885.



Robert Nephi & Emma Jane Comish

Their son, **Robert Nephi Comish** was born in 1842 (notice the date with the Book of Mormon name, however it is assumed this was given him when he was baptized not when he was born). The family heading toward Idaho to settle, met with other Saints on the banks of the Cub River, near Franklin, ID and camped for a few days. The Comish wagon was the second wagon into the state behind Thomas Smart who was the leader. In 1864, when **Robert** was twenty-two he

and his brother drove an ox-team back to Winter Quarters to assist other emigrants in the move to Utah. This time the wagon train consisted of four hundred people and fifty wagons. He and his brother John, Porter Rockwell and others watched the Battle Creek Massacre of the Shoshoni Indians by Federal Troops, north of Preston, ID and remembered this terrible event until he died. Robert married **Emma Jane Howland** (born 1849 in Flagtown, IL) in 1865 in Salt Lake. **Robert** was active in local dramatics. The family moved to Coveville (now called Cove) in 1875 and farmed a hundred acres. He died at the age of 40 of a complication of tonsillitis in 1882.

**Emma Jane** was only three years old when she crossed the plains in 1852. **Emma's** widowed mother **Martha** taught school in Salt Lake City to support the little family when they arrived. In 1863 they moved to Franklin, ID. Only 13 families comprised the town which was the first settlement in ID. **Emma** and **Robert's** house was 100 feet east of the main travelled road and they grew roses, watercress, chokecherry, elderberry, and haws. Emma was an excellent seamstress. One time an Indian brave knocked on her door and demanded that she make him a shirt. She made the shirt with some turkey red calico left from quilt-making. She made fringe around the neck, sleeves, and bottom of the shirt. The brave was very proud of it and before the Indians would leave **Emma** had to make shirts like it for all the men in the band. Those Indians always protected her.

**Emma** remarried in 1887 John Larsen Sr. but the marriage was cancelled because it took place after the mandate against polygamy (and the marriage would have made him a polygamist). This union did have issue however, there was some controversy but Newel Howland Comish born 1888, was credited as Robert's son, though Robert died in 1882. **Della** told Margaret stories she had heard from her father (**George**) of inspectors coming to check for polygamists, and all the children, **George** included, knew it was their job to quickly hide little Newel far off on the property away from the house. All the young people of Cove and Franklin were welcome at **Emma Jane's** house. One day a neighbor remarked, "Emma, I don't see how you ever put up with the crowd of young people that you have at your place so often." She replied, "I would rather have them come to my place than for my children to go away. I love to have them come." **Emma** died in Franklin in 1917 at the age of 68.





Crossing the Missouri River, for Henry Howland who died  
and is buried on the west side of the Missouri.



Martha Diana Case Howland

Emma's father, **Henry Howland**, born 1812 in Vermont, was orphaned and raised by his uncle, but counted John Howland, who arrived on the Mayflower, as his ancestor. He met and married **Martha Diana Case**. He was a large well-built man who was a farmer and blacksmith. While they were living in Illinois, they became friends with an elderly lady named Sarah Leonard, who was a member of the LDS Church. She encouraged them to join, and then to head west with the body of Saints leaving in two weeks. **Henry** was unable to sell his property in that time, but did purchase two wagons filled with provisions and left his property in the hands of **Martha's** father. Grandma Leonard was going too. **Martha's** family thought she was crazy. They were not baptized before they left. Many of the company contracted cholera, including **Henry** who died June 13, 1852, twelve days after they began their journey. Thirty-two others in their company also died of cholera.

Captain Tidwell sought to separate the well from the dead bodies, but Grandma Leonard would not leave **Henry's** body. **Martha Diana Case Howland** and her three young daughters took the other wagon. In the excitement, the team pulling **Henry's** wagon was not harnessed properly and ran away for two miles before it was caught. During the wild ride, Grandma Leonard was killed. Imagine the trauma for **Martha** to have both **Henry** and Grandma Leonard buried on the West side of the Missouri River. She had grown up wealthy and upon hearing of the death of **Henry**, her father put \$50,000 in a bank in Rock Island, IL, if she would renounce Mormonism and return home to Pennsylvania. But she believed in what she was doing and continued on to Utah.

**Martha** taught school and did fancy needlework. She married twice on the advise of Church authorities but neither was entirely successful. In 1863 she moved with her daughter Helen and husband to Franklin. She was perhaps best known for her generous disposition. She was always ready to share with the poor and needy. She took in a poor old blind woman and kept her for a year. During the grasshopper war of 1854, she shared her last loaf of bread with a beggar woman and did not know where the next mouthful would come from. But she was blessed for her generosity; before the night was through, a gentleman named Turner brought her 200 pounds of flour, which carried her through until harvest. She died in Franklin in 1872 at the age of 49.



## *Margaret Wright Biggs Comish's Ancestors*



John & Jane Theodora Biggs

**John Biggs**, from Kimpton, Herefordshire, England was born in 1831. He married in England, but he could not convince his wife to join the Church, so left her for America. He left Nauvoo in August 1861. He arrived in Franklin in 1862, He had met a woman onboard the ship and married her in Salt Lake as he was now divorced, however this marriage also ended in divorce. In Franklin he met **Jane Theodora Wright** from Busby, Scotland and married her in 1869, they had twelve children. A year later he married another woman (**Jane Ramsbottom**) and they had seven children. In 1871 Brigham Young shipped the machinery for a steam saw mill brought to Franklin. **John** ran the mill for many years. It sawed 300,000 feet of lumber for the ZCMI store in Salt Lake and for the Union Pacific Railroad ties when the railroad came to Franklin. The steam engine is now in the Franklin Relic Hall. **John** lived to be 93 dying in 1924.

**Jane Theodora Wright** was born in Busby Scotland in 1852. She and her sisters were servants to Queen Victoria, who occasionally gave them gloves, and dresses she had worn only once. **Jane** and her family emigrated in 1868, and traveled to Franklin, ID, where her stepbrother William lived. She married **John Biggs** in 1869 when she was 17; he was twenty years her senior. One of their children was **Della Wright Biggs** born in 1881. She married in April 1901, and died in July of 1901 while trying to light a stove. **Margaret Wright Biggs Comish**, in December 1901 named her second daughter **Della B. Comish** after her sister Della.

**Jane Theodora Wright Biggs** was known to keep a lovely garden down the road but within walking distance of the Comish farm. Della & Geneve (the grand-daughters) would remember seeing Jane's sons home to visit picking up their small mother and carrying her on their shoulders. **Jane Theodora** and **Emma Jane Howland Comish** were close in age and co-workers in Church. Friends one assumes too. **Jane Theodora** lived to be almost eighty dying in June 1931.



Deborah Ann Hazley Wright

**Jane's** family history was interesting. Her father, **George Wright** born in 1807 in Ireland married **Ellen Tweedy** but she died in 1835 leaving him with four children. **George** married **Rebecca Ann Hazley** while in Ireland and they had four children but after they moved to Scotland, she was on her deathbed in 1844 and called her sister **Deborah Ann** (born 1818) to marry her husband and care for her children. **Deborah** did care for the children, and a year later married **George** too, and also joined the LDS Church. The family moved to Busby and the couple had four children, but **George** died of cholera in 1854. A fifth child was born three months later. The oldest stepson, William, married a year later and moved to America to earn money to help the others come too. He was one of the first to settle Franklin. After working in the textile industry and for the Queen, the children and **Deborah** had raised enough money to leave Scotland in 1868, and went to join William and his family in Franklin after years apart. Deborah died in 1881 at the age of 63 of sunstroke.

Summarized by Margaret R. Crockett in 2013 for the Crockett Reunion