

NOTE: There are several grammar and misspelling errors; these are kept in the record for the use of preserving the originality of the manuscript.

I, James Roosevelt Starks, was born 20 Jan. 1901, in Detroit, Red River, Texas. My father's name is James Louis Starks. My mother's name is Sarah Jane Wallace. I was the youngest of six children, five boys and one girl: Elzie Lincoln Starks, born 5 Oct. 1883, Ellis Washington Starks, born 4 July, 1885, William Arthur Starks, born 19 Sept. 1887, John Logan Starks, born 13 May 1891, and Pearl May Starks, born 22 April, 1894. My father was a farmer by trade. My father and mother joined the Church of Jesus Christ 24th May 1905. I was only a small child. My father died when I was only five years old. I can't remember but very little about my father. One thing I remember was my father liked to read and I liked to stand between his knees and look on the paper while he was reading. After my father's death, my mother moved to Kelsey, Texas, where there was a branch of the church so she could be with the saints and be able to attend church. When I was only 15, my mother passed away, leaving me alone. I took what little money I got from my mother's estate and went to school as long as the money lasted, which wasn't very long. I lived with my sister, Pearl and her first husband, William H. Matthews, for a while and worked for him. Then I got a job working on the farm for a man by the name of Joe Hill, at Commerce, Texas. I worked there for two years. I got up in the morning fed the horses, ate my breakfast and was in the field before

good day light, sometimes I would have to wait for it to get light enough to see where to plow. About all I got for work was my food, clothing and a little spending money and I worked from before daylight until dark. I didn't weigh a hundred pounds until I was about 16 years old. I tried to join the Navy when I was about 18 or between 17 and 18. I was going to try to pass for 18, as you couldn't join until you were 18, but I didn't weigh enough, they wouldn't let me join. I worked some in the harvest fields when the wheat was being harvested. That was really work too. I always ate real slow, but I found out when I was working in the wheat harvest you had to eat fast or you didn't get very much to eat, so I changed my way of eating and I never was able to slow down, I still eat fast. I worked some in the woods, cutting timber, but I worked mostly on the farm until I was about 20, when I started to work at carpenter work. I worked first with a carpenter contractor by the name of Benjamin Burley Bowers, who became my Father-in-law. I married his daughter, Ida Marie Bowers. I worked at carpenter work for about 30 years. I was a finish carpenter and cabinet builder, then I had to quit on account of becoming allergic to wood dust. It gave me asthma. I have been a brick mason since quitting carpenter work, until I got my back hurt in 1962, then I retired. When I was a young boy, I started smoking, just to be with the boys, with no Father to teach me and my mother was in ill health for several years before she passed away, when I was 15. I was all on my own, you might say, with no one to guide me. My nature was not to do anything bad. I was never in any trouble with the law in my life. I attended church

whenever I was close enough to go to church, but was not too active in working in the church until I was about 31. My habit of smoking kept me from holding an office in the church. I wanted to quit but just couldn't seem to get a strong enough desire to. One Sunday after we got home from Sunday School, the Bishop, Nattie K. Bailey, came to see me and told me they needed a counselor to the Sunday School Supt. And asked if I would serve as counselor. I told him I didn't keep the Word of Wisdom that I smoked. He said "you can quit that can't you?" I said, "I guess I could". He said the Superintendent said you might say you would quit, but you wouldn't, but if you tell me you will quit, I know you will. And I will give you until 3 o'clock this afternoon to make up your mind." After that I went out to the barn thinking about it and praying about it in my heart that the Lord would help me overcome my habit. I smoked my last cigarette on my way back to the house. I took a draw or two and threw it down with my mind made up, that was the last and it was! That cigarette I threw down lay there for days so white and shiny. Every time I went by it, it just seemed to stand out in front of my eyes, trying to tempt me. But I kept my promise and never smoked again to this day. I have served in the church in several different offices, as counselor to Branch President, Assistant Mutual Superintendent, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Genealogy chairman, Priesthood Quorum Presidency, Sunday School Teacher, Ward Teacher Supervisor, and Branch President, and have served 2 missions. I lived in Texas from the time I was born until 1939, when we moved to Mesa, Arizona, and lived there

until May of 1973, when we moved to Hyde Park, Utah. In 1975, we moved to Salem, Utah, where we reside at present, 1976. My talents and interests are mostly in building. I have built 5 new homes for my family while living in Mesa, Arizona. I have seen the sick healed and prayers answered. We came to the Arizona Temple in a Model T Ford car in 1933. It made us think of when the saints crossed the plains pushing a hand cart. We had to push a T model Ford instead of a hand cart. Anyway, we were as thrilled to get to Mesa as the pioneers were to get to Salt Lake. We were happy to go through the Temple and be sealed, and to have our children sealed to us, and to be sealed our parents. It was a time we'll never forget. We had many trials of sickness and car trouble, but the Lord blessed us and we are very thankful. We have been through the Temple many times since and done work for others who didn't have a chance to do for themselves. I have seen seven Presidents of the Church. President Joseph F. Smith, President Heber J. Grant, President George Albert Smith and President David O. McKay, President Joseph Fielding Smith, President Harold B. Lee, President Spencer W. Kimball. James Roosevelt Starks was ordained a high priest June 23, 1949, by Lucius L. Gardner Sr. Lucius L. Gardner Sr. was ordained a high priest, March 27, 1938, at the Mazona, Mesa, Arizona, by Orlando C. Williams Orlando C. Williams was ordained by Orson F. Whitney, who was ordained by Joseph F. Smith, who was ordained by Brigham Young, who was ordained by Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses, who was ordained by Peter, James and John, who was ordained by the Lord, Jesus Christ.

[END OF JOURNAL ENTRY]

I, Ida Marie Bowers Starks, was born on the 4th day of March, 1905, close to Elkmont, Limestone County, Alabama, at a little place called Hill School. My mother, (Octava Viola Peables Bowers), her sister, (Sarah Emmalene Peables) and their parents (George Washington Phelps Peables and Mary Martha Thornton Peables) had joined the Church of Jesus Christ or Mormon Church, as it was called, a few years before I was born. They had a big desire to go to a place where they could be with the Saints and attend church as there were very few members there and no church and the people there were quite bitter against the church. My father, Benjamin Burley Bowers, was not a member of the church at the time I was born, but was investigating the gospel. My family heard of a place in Arkansas where there were a few members of the church gathered and were having meetings in some of the member's homes, so my parents (Benjamin B. and Octava Viola Peables Bowers), my grandparents (George W.P. and Mary Martha Thornton Peables), my mother's only sister, Emma, and my brother Roy, who is just older than I, were all ready to move as soon as I was born and my mother was able to travel. So, the day I was a month old we arrived in Pocahontas, Arkansas and some Elders met us there and I was blessed in one of the stores in Pocahontas on the 4th day of April, 1905. Not long after my parents arrived there, they

found it to be very sickly and they were told there would never be a set apart gathering place there, for the Saints, because some of the Elders had been killed not far from there. So, they decided to move to West Texas around Merkel and Abilene, but before leaving Arkansas, on 11 June 1905, my father was baptized into the church. My parents and grandparents were not satisfied in Merkel either and only stayed there for about two years. I had a sister, Mariam Elizabeth born while we lived there in Merkel, Taylor County, Texas, on the 2nd of August, 1907. In the fall of 1907 my family decided to move to a branch of the church called Kelsey, Texas, near Gilmer, where they could attend church and be with the Saints. This was where I grew up, in Kelsey. Times were hard and very little work was to be found. My father worked for one dollar a day and walked six miles - three miles there and three back. On the 17th of April, 1910 my second brother, Hyrum Bennion, was born in Gilmer, Upshur, Texas. The year after he was born (I was six at this time) my mother and my older brother, Roy, farmed some truck patches and a little cotton while my father worked at carpenter work. My mother would leave me to take care of the baby while she worked in the field. I was quite large for my age and more mature than most children at that age. My sister Viola Echo was born on the 21st of May, 1912, in Caney Creek, Gilmer, Upshur County, Texas. In the fall of 1912, I started to school in Kelsey at a big red brick school house up on a high hill. I remember I wore my hair in long curls around my shoulders and the children at school would twist my curls and play with my hair until it would be so tangled that

when my mother would try to comb it, it would hurt so bad that I would almost faint. My hair was dark brown and my eyes also. I was on the chubby side and I was always quiet and a mama's girl. I liked to help my mother with the housework. In the spring of 1913, I was eight years old. I wanted so much to be baptized on my birthday. My school teacher was an Elder there on a mission and I liked him and wanted him to baptize me. After school on the fourth of March, which was my birthday, we went down from the school house to the foot of the hill where there was a pond of water. My parents met us there and a few others and I was baptized. The water was so cold it was almost ice, but I wanted to be baptized too badly for cold water to stop me. That night after I was baptized, Elder Rich, who baptized me, and another Elder came to our home and confirmed me a member of the church. That was a happy day in my life as I have always had a desire to keep the Lord's commandments. I cooked my first meal not long after my eighth birthday. My mother had the mumps and was real sick in bed. I can still remember two things I cooked: fresh peas from the garden and corn bread. When I was nine and ten years old I pieced two quilt tops. I was eleven years old on the 4th of March 1916 and on the 10th of March, my youngest sister, Vernice Otto, was born. I did all the cooking, most all the washing and all the house work while my mother was not able to do the work. In the year 1917, my parents moved about fourteen miles from Kelsey to a place called Lone Mountain. There was no LDS Church there and it was too far to travel in a wagon to church, so we had Sunday School at some of

the member's houses. It was at my grandfather's (George & Mary Martha Peables) house most of the time. I was 12 years old at this time and was made Secretary of the Sunday School. In the fall of 1917, my father decided to go back to Alabama to visit his parents (James Melville Bowers and Cyrena Victora Mumea Bowers) as it had been almost thirteen years since he had seen them or his brothers and sisters. (From oldest to youngest: Charles Henry; Fredrick Jay; Franklin Dorsey; Emma Almeda; Asa Gilbert; Nettie (Jessie-a twin) and Gracie (Bessie-a twin)). So my parents and six of us kids went back to visit my father's people. It was the first and last time to see my grandparents. My father was the only one of his family to join the Mormon Church, and his people were quite bitter against the church. My grandfather (James M. Bowers) was a minister of the Church of Christ, or Christian Church, as it was sometimes called. When grandfather Bowers was speaking one time, he said all his children were saved but one and he was lost (that was my father he was speaking of because he had joined the Mormon Church). My father and mother tried to tell grandpa a little about the church while they were there visiting, and after they came back he wrote my father a letter and told him he wanted to come to him so bad. That he studied about it all day and dreamed about it all night, but he had been in bad health and never was able to come. My father always thought grandpa wanted to come to him to join the church. On our way back home from visiting my father's folks we were exposed to the measles on the train. My father was the only one in the family who had had the measles, so a few days after we arrived

home, my mother and six of us kids had taken the measles and at the same time my grandfather (my mother's father, George WP Peables) took pneumonia and my grandmother (Mary Martha Thornton Peables) got down sick, so my father had to take care of all of us, doing all the cooking, taking care of the stock and everything. All the neighbors around were sick with measles and pneumonia, so he had but very little help, but of course there was no need of much cooking; we were all too sick to eat. My mother was expecting a baby at this time and she took double pneumonia along with the measles. The doctors said there was no chance for her to live, she was unconscious for weeks and for several hours lay as if dead. She couldn't even swallow. My father had lots of faith. He would sit by her and keep her mouth wet with a swab and twisted the phlegm from her throat to keep her from choking to death. My father had the Elders administer to her and we know it was through the faith and prayers that she lived. The doctors also told her she would never be able to carry her baby. At Easter time I remember my mother was still sick in bed and was just beginning to gain consciousness. I was 13 years old at that time and I was making Easter dresses for myself and my sisters. I had helped my mother sew some before then, but that was the first time to make a dress all by myself and we had to cut our own patterns. On the 4th of July, 1918, my mother had the baby the doctor said she would never live to have. He was a perfect baby boy. His name was Ernest Nathan. He is now 48 years old and has eight children and two grandchildren. When I was 14 years old we moved to a branch of the church called Enoch. It was about four

miles from Kelsey. Just after we moved there I was made assistant Secretary of the Sunday School. Then later I was made Secretary. I served in these offices for several years. I also served as Assistant Secretary in Relief Society, Visiting Teacher in Relief Society and Counselor in Mutual before I was 17 years old. I married James Roosevelt Starks on the 24th of November, 1921. I had just turned 16, eight months before. Jim was the youngest child in a family of six - five boys and one girl (from oldest to youngest – Elzie Lincoln; Ellis Washington; William Arthur; John Logan; Pearl May; and last was James R. Starks). We had very little money to start out with, as times were hard and work was scarce and pay was low. We bought a little wood stove, our dishes and cooking ware. Our families gave us a bed, some pillows, and a safe as it was called. It was a small cabinet with screen over the doors to put dishes and food in. My husband, Jim, made us a lamp stand to put our kerosene lamp on. We lived in a small apartment with no conveniences as we have today, but we were as happy as if we had a million dollars. The first meal I cooked I remember I made buttermilk biscuits. Jim took one out of the dish and said “this has been about something that wasn’t fit to eat.” For a minute I was about to get mad. I thought he was making fun of my bread. He meant it had been about fire. So we had a good laugh about it. We had to heat our water on the stove to wash dishes and take baths and all. We had to go out to a well in the yard to get the water and draw it up with a rope and bucket. We had to heat our water outside to wash clothes and then rub the dirt out on a rub board. I have gone into the woods lots of times and brought up

wood to make a fire under a pot to heat water to wash, then draw the water out of a well and stand and rub clothes on a board all or most all day. We made our own bread, churned our own butter, and made our clothes. On the 13th of November, 1922 our first baby was born in Gilmer, Upshur County, Texas. She was a nine-pound girl and we named her Eva. It was a cold, bad day that day; it was raining and freezing. Eva had big blue eyes and auburn red hair. Then on the 9th of July, 1924, we had another girl. She weighed ten pounds and we named her Vernice. She didn't have but very little hair at first, then when she was about two years old she had blonde hair and blue eyes, then a little later, her hair turned auburn red like Eva's. I used to dress them like twins. In 1927, on March 23, our first boy was born. We named him James Delton. He weighed ten pounds and had dark hair and light brown eyes. On June 1, 1930, a Sunday morning, just about daylight, our fourth child was born. She weighed 8 ½ pounds and we named her Mavis. When she was about a year and a half old she got sick with what we thought to be the croup. She didn't seem sick, just coughed croupy, then she began to have choking spells, so we rushed her to the doctor and he told us she had diphtheria or membranous croup and was too near dead to do anything to help her. The doctor finally turned to her Dad and said for him to go the drugstore and get some serum and he would give her the shot but didn't think she would live long enough for the shot to take effect. The doctor wouldn't let us leave her in the hospital because it was contagious, but told us to take her home and he doubted if she would live until we got home. We lived about three

miles from there. You can imagine how we felt, leaving the hospital not knowing but that by the time we got home she might be dead. I know we must have prayed most of the night. We could hear her breathing all over the house. The doctor told us he gave her such a strong shot that it might affect her heart if she did live over the disease, and if she was living he wanted to see her the next morning. By the next morning she seemed well and was down playing and talking, so we took her to the doctor and we couldn't hardly make him believe she was the same child. He called the nurse to come and look at her. He said he didn't believe that she would live to get home and here she seems to be well. He said he never saw anything like it. A few days later our son Delton got sick and we were afraid he had what our little daughter Mavis had so we took him to the same doctor and while he was examining him, he asked him if he was a Mormon. He was still so shocked at our little girl living, he seemed to know there was a greater power that had something to do with it. When this doctor was on his death bed he sent for the President of the Branch of the Church to come and asked him to pray for him and he told him he had known for a long time that there was something to Mormonism, but the people were so bitter against the church he didn't think he would dare join the church. He told some people around there you couldn't kill a Mormon. On November 11, 1932, our fourth girl was born. She had dark hair and real sky-blue eyes. Her name is Nevada. We call her Vada. When she was about ten months old we decided to try to go to the Temple. Our crops burned up that year and times were very hard. Work was

hard to get and we didn't know just how we would ever make it, but with the faith we had and the desire to come to the Temple, we started making preparations. My husband took the best parts of some old cars and made us a car to make the trip. My father and mother wanted to come too, so my father did some carpenter work to pay for him a truck to come in. We sold our furniture and whatever we had to get enough money to start out. We planned to get work along the way to finish getting money to make the trip, as all the crops where we lived had burned up for the want of rain. There was very little work to be found. My father and my husband were carpenters by trade. My father put all the bedding, cooking utensils, dishes and things we would need on his truck and fixed the mattresses so some of the children could ride in the back of the truck, as he had one son still at home and one of my sisters, (Mariam Elizabeth Bowers, had passed away on 24 December 1927 in Enoch, Upshur, Texas,) and left a little boy, Frank Friddle, to raise, One of my sister's (Viola Echo) husband (Luther Howard Bailey) had passed away (11 June 1933, in Enoch, Upshur, Texas) and left my sister and two children, so they lived with my father and mother. So that made seven in their family and seven in ours. The fourteen of us started out with the faith the saints had when they started to the Rocky Mountains. My husband, Jim, has said 'we didn't push a hand cart, but we pushed a Model T Ford', as we did a lot of times. We had eleven hundred miles to go from Gilmer, Texas to Mesa, Arizona. After we had traveled two or three hundred miles we got work and stopped for a while. While there my mother got real sick

with something like Flu or Pneumonia, and some of the rest of the family got sick. I had trouble with my teeth and had toothache for days. As soon as my mother got better, we moved on to another place and worked for a little while. My mother still wasn't well as her lungs had bothered her real bad; every time she got a cold it would go to her lungs since she had had double pneumonia and measles. The next move we made we stopped in Safford, Arizona. The night we arrived our baby was real sick. We didn't have but just a few dollars in money. I can't remember for sure but as well as I remember it was around ten dollars. We rented a cabin for the night and took our baby to the doctor. The next day we got a house to live in and a job. Just after we arrived in Safford, my father got down sick with the flu and almost died. There was cold weather and work was scarce. It looked at times like we would never be able to make it to the Temple. One of my father's brothers, hearing how sick my father was, wrote my parents a letter and told them if they would come back and not go any farther he would send them the money to come back. My youngest brother, Ernest, who was with my parents, was only fifteen years old at the time, and was small for his age. He said to my father, "You know what we started out to do and don't turn back until that is done, until we get our Temple work done." He said, "I will work and do all I can to help make money to live and to go on to the Temple." And he did. He worked and helped in every way he could. My father was administered to and through faith and prayer finally got able to travel again, so on Christmas Day we left Safford for Mesa. The first night we stayed on the Indian reservation

west of Thatcher, as it was late when we got everything loaded and ready to go. We rented some cabins and stopped for the night as it was Christmas. The Indians were drinking and riding horses screaming and carrying on all night. As we didn't know much about Indians, I was so scared I couldn't sleep very much. The next morning we started on our way and that night we stayed in Globe. We began to hear how bad the mountains were between Globe and Mesa and we were kinda worried. My father had a Model T truck loaded heavily and as he started coming down the mountain, along where the tunnel used to be, his brake bands burned out and had to be replaced twice. At that time the roads were so narrow it was impossible to pass in some places. I know the Lord was really with us or we would have never made it. We went from Globe to about sixteen miles east of Mesa. We stayed there that night and came on to Mesa the next day. We found out when we got to Mesa that the Temple would only be open the next day and then it would be closed for several days. We went to see about renting clothes to go through the Temple and found we couldn't rent clothes for our girls. It being winter, we couldn't get white dresses, so we bought white material and sat up that night and made white dresses for our girls on our fingers, my mother, my sister and I. Our little girl, Mavis, had the earache and cried most of the night. It looked like we were going to be kept from going to the Temple up to almost daylight before our little girl quit crying with the earache. We got ready and finally made it to the Temple on the 29th day of December, 1933. My mother was sealed to her parents. My father and mother were

sealed, and they had all their children who were with them, sealed to them, which were: my sister Echo and I, Ida Marie, my brother Ernest and my sister Mariam, who had passed away. My husband, Jim, was sealed to his parents. My husband and I were sealed and our children were sealed to us. My sister, Echo was sealed to her husband who had passed away and had her children sealed to them. My nephew, Frank Friddle, whose mother had passed away and was being raised by my parents, was the only one of the 14 of us who was not sealed that day. We all felt so sorry for him. His parents had been divorced before his mother passed away. He wanted to know that day why he couldn't be sealed to someone. If young people could only understand, what it means to find a girl or boy who is active in the church, and who is worthy of a Temple marriage. Then if they would live the Gospel after their marriage, there would not be so much sorrow in the world today. After we had finished our Temple work that day, we were all happy and thankful to the Lord that we had finally accomplished what we had set out to do. But we had other worries. We were about out of money with no job and no place to live. I think we had \$10.00. We heard there was work over around Buckeye, Arizona, so we all drove over there and we got a place to live and a job. Some of our children got sick and we couldn't hardly make enough to get by as they didn't pay very much for work in those days. We sold our car and we all started back home in my father's old Model T Ford. It was in January of 1934; the weather was cold and work was scarce, but the Lord did provide. My husband got a job just after we arrived back in Enoch, Texas and

in a few days after we arrived in Enoch, our children all got the measles. They were real sick for days. We would have to sit up and be up and down at night with them and then have to get up early and my husband, Jim, would have to go miles to work and work all day in the cold, bad weather. Vada, our baby at that time, got bronchial trouble after the measles and it looked at times like she wouldn't live. We rented a farm and farmed that year. Our oldest children often speak now of that year; that it brought the happiest times of their lives, when they were all working with their Dad in the field and all came in hungry and able to all sit down and eat together. In 1935, on April 17, we had another girl born to us. Her name is Arlene. This made us five girls and one boy. In the spring of 1936 we bought some land and my husband, Jim, built us a house. About this time I was put in as Primary President. I would take all my five children and we would walk for about a mile to the church where we had Primary. Some of the older children would help carry the smaller ones. This same spring our children all got the mumps and Jim, my husband got them too and almost died. In the fall of 1936 we decided to go back to Arizona, but we only stayed for a short time. Our little girl Mavis, who had diphtheria and came so near dying, fainted and fell on the floor one morning. We were real worried about her as the doctor had told us she might have a bad heart from the shot he gave her for diphtheria. So we decided to go back to Texas, but before leaving we wanted to get our Patriarchal Blessings. My husband and I and our 3 oldest children were the ones who went for our blessings. But when we got there the patriarch said

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

