



Lafayette Holbrook doing "Chores"

Lafayette Holbrook was a bronco bustin', sharp shootin', entrepreneurial, civic minded, God fearing family man. Like his granddaughter Jennie Holbrook Groberg, he is an ancestor worth knowing and emulating. Here is your introduction.

The sixth of Chandler and Eunice Holbrook's seven children, Lafayette (Lafay to his parents and friends) was born in Salt Lake City on September 7, 1850. Chandler and Eunice, were veterans of Zions Camp and survivors of a brutal winter with the Ponca Indians in Nebraska.

When Lafay was two years old, Brigham Young sent the Holbrook family to help establish the city of Fillmore—the newly designated capital of the Utah territory. By the time Lafay was 5, his 3 older sisters were married and his 2 older brothers were out working in the fields with their father. This left Lafay alone as his mother's chief assistant in the running of the household. Those early years of close association with his mother shaped Lafay's character. Others noted how much he was like her in speed, action, disposition, and physical endurance.*

Lafay became an expert rider and marksman. He enjoyed entering and often winning bronco riding and target shooting contests. His son Lafayette Hinckley Holbrook (LHH) later remarked that he never saw his father thrown from a horse. LHH also noted, however, that his mother did not especially appreciate that particular talent. She ultimately admitted, "Your fa-

Lafayette Holbrook

ther's daredevil stunts with bucking horses worried me so much it may have marked you." LHH wrote that as a result "I am an inherent coward about bucking horses and never rode one knowingly, but have fallen a number of times from gentle ones."

Beneath Lafay's rugged frontier exterior beat the heart of a visionary businessman. As a child he figured out a way to capitalize on a nationwide craze for buckskin gloves. He used money he earned for errands to order cloth and other merchandise from the east coast. He then took the eastern goods to the local Native American settlements and bartered for buckskins (and pinenuts). Lafay then sold the buckskins to clothing manufacturers, ultimately turning a respectable profit. With his earnings he bought calves. By his late teens he had the beginnings of his own cattle business.

Shortly after his 23rd birthday, Lafay took all of his earnings and a \$3,000 bank loan to purchase a large herd of cattle in Belton, Texas. While driving the cattle to Utah, Lafay received word that he had been called to serve a mission in Great Britain and was to make all preparations and be ready to join a group of departing missionaries in just 2 weeks. Lafay had to speed off with his best saddle horse and leave the slow plodding cattle with his friend. His friend assured him that he would take care of Lafay's herd as if it were his own. Lafay made the deadline and departed for England on October 8, 1873.

A few months later he received a letter from his father informing him that true to his word his "friend" had sold Lafay's herd as if it were his own. The friend and all of the proceeds were gone. To Lafay, only the \$3,000 promissory note remained. The news shook the foundations of Lafay's ability to trust others. His good parents, however, advised him to focus on and complete his mission and assured him that they could work to pay down the debt until he got home.

Maintaining a trust in his parents and in his God, Lafay soon fought off his disappointment and sailed into his missionary work with renewed vigor. From the experience he developed a peace of mind philosophy that he later passed on to his son, LHH: "Don't waste valuable time and energy brooding over spilt milk. Conserve your strength to sail in again, determined

to avoid similar mistakes, and to make good in a bigger and a better way."

While Lafay was making good in a bigger and better way in England, bigger and better circumstances were developing back in Fillmore that would permanently eclipse any lingering disappointment associated with his former friend's betrayal.

The city hired a new teacher for its one-room schoolhouse. Emily Angelena "Jean" Hinckley was the oldest daughter of Angelene Noble and Ira N. Hinckley. She was immediately popular with her students, with a throng of hopeful suitors, and with Lafay's mother, Eunice. Aware of all the suitors, Eunice approached Jean and asked her to "wait until Lafay comes home from his mission before becoming engaged."

Though Jean had never met Lafay, she sensed something in Eunice's entreaty and obliged. When Lafay returned from England and the proper introductions were made, Jean and Lafay** immediately sensed something in each other. They were married in the Salt Lake Endowment House the following October.

For the next 64 years, Jean and Lafay worked side by side in a number of ventures that built their relationship and blessed the lives of countless others. Jean continued to teach when they were first married, but resigned when it was evident that their first child was on the way. Lafay then took over Jean's contract and taught her class to the end of the semester. By that

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Emily Angelena (Jean) Hinckley Holbrook

Dee Groberg

Dee was back in Utah in March to do, among other things, some planning with Dick and Ronda on the upcoming Sibling Reunion scheduled for September 9-11. Dee also spent time with Julia and the Blairs reflecting on the powerful influence Bob had on so many lives, including Dee's.

Although he was not able to attend the funeral, Margaret and others had done such an amazing job of using Facebook and other such technologies to keep family and friends up-to-date. When Dee was finally able to listen to the recording of the funeral with Julia, it felt to him that through Margaret and others' detailed and thoughtful "reporting," that he had gotten most of the message already.

Upon returning to Cambodia in time for the scheduled rebroadcast of the April General Conference there, during the Saturday afternoon session, 62 new Area Seventies were called and sustained. Two of the 62 were former missionaries who had served with Dee in the Japan Tokyo South Mission almost half a life time ago: Elder Todd S. Larkin, and Elder Brian R. Rawson. Elder Larkin had previously served as mission president of the Washington Mission. Judging from their lives so far, they seem to be such good choices, and will be credits to their callings.

About a thousand years ago, Cambodia was much larger than it is now, and its level of development must have made it one of ten or so most advanced civilizations on the earth at that time. Now it is



Buddhist Monks at Angkor Wat

one of the poorest, least advanced countries. The Khmer Rouge, (Cambodian Communists), under Pol Pot did unspeakable damage, killing two million of his own people, especially the educated, cultured, progressive ones. Perhaps the most serious casualty, though, was education itself. Having been indoctrinated that education was of no value, the survivors began to believe it. And tragically continue to pass it on to their children.

Now, today, millions of Cambodians do not value education, and hundreds of thousands if not millions of school aged Cambodians do not go to school. Many people from all over the world try to help

by setting up schools, donating money, or giving their time. But corruption is so rampant in Cambodia that the intended help is greatly diluted. Being a lover of learning myself, it hurt me to see adults who could not read or write in any language, and it hurt even more to see children who were going to miss all schooling and end up the same way.

I don't remember ever making a conscious decision to try to take on such an impossible problem. I just found myself facing situations of one kind or another where I could help one or two children, so I did. I never realized at the time that once started down such a path, it would be difficult to abandon it.

I quickly learned that if I wanted to have any success at all, I would have to be as invisible as possible. I concluded that I had to disappear almost entirely, create an unknown imaginary group as the humanitarians, and play the role of their representative. I had to give up any recognition or appreciation I might otherwise receive, which wasn't hard, as that was not my purpose

Although I talked with almost every school in Phnom Penh, I have never been directly affiliated with any of them, but they have been sources of important information, both of what TO do and of what NOT to do. The kids I do get into school go to the best existing schools that can be found in their areas.

I use referrals from parents, guardians, or even existing students to find the "right" new students, those who really WANT to learn and to have that special ABILITY to push ahead in school.

But they always seem to have something that's preventing them from going to school. Often it is money, but money is not the main barrier. The primary barrier is a mental one, either in the prospective student and/or their family. They have been conditioned for so long that education is of no value, that they have come to believe it. I used to try to replace that mind set with a picture of the GREAT value education is, but it is almost impossible to do. And even in those rare cases where the mind set begins to soften and they accept some value in education, the ones with that bit of softening seldom see it for themselves. "I'm too old." "I didn't go to school when I was six, so it's too late for me now." "I can't learn. It's just the way I am."

So I look for and find children who somehow have broken that mind set by themselves, or never had it. I'd love to break the mind set if I could, but it is so difficult to do, that I've learned I'm far



Dee with Tamil refugees, David Raj and his 2 boys, Sovann and Visna.

more helpful and productive to find ones already without it.

Not all that do go to school stay in school. For some it may be just one year. For others it may be five years. Others may drop out after only a few months. And that's O. K. with me. I feel that some education, no matter how little, is better than none, and more is better than less.

I have not kept exact records, but starting slowly, I have helped a total of about 350 Cambodian children go to some school. Their average stay in school is about two years, some being much longer and others much shorter. A high percent of those who stay in longer quickly rise to the top of their classes and stay there. Skipping one or more grades is not uncommon among this group.

I don't know what the future will reveal to these students. I am quite certain that without my finding them and removing the barriers that were stopping them from getting an education, few if any of them would have. I'm quite certain that for some it will dramatically improve their lives in almost every way. And I hope that some of "my students" will work themselves into situations where they will have a positive influence for good on the whole nation of Cambodia.

What I am doing is such a small drop in the bucket considering the magnitude of the problem, that I would describe it as "not much at all." But to these young students, who other-wise would probably not get ANY education, to them it's EVERYTHING, and probably all they will ever get.

Dee wrote a very nice essay on Robert Blair that we were not able to include here for lack of space. For a copy of that, please email him at: dgroberg@aol.com



Sharon, Angie, Lucy, Eira, Amanda and Jennifer at Epcot.

Angie Groberg

I am turning 49 in October and am still single because it has been very hard to find true love in this lifetime. Everytime I have gotten involved with someone, they are not loyal to me. They always want to “see other women.” It is not right, I deserve better than this. Same story everytime.

I am working for Delta and live in Lutz, Florida in a lakefront apartment. I am on good terms with my dad. God is blessing me very much in my finances and good health and other areas. I am a serious Christian, very much living by the Holy Spirit. I believe this is how I can always detect scammers. I can feel when something isn't right with someone trying to lie to me.

I still believe I will find love one day with God's help. I deserve someone that appreciates me for who I am and is grateful for my presence in their life. I would appreciate you keeping me in your prayers.

I have a concert piano piece on YouTube that I would love for you all to watch. You can google “Angela Groberg plays Chopin” and the video will come right up.

Tanya and Eric Beard

Dear family, things are going well for us. Taylor got married last summer and is living with her husband in Provo. He just got accepted to the Masters program for Electrical Engineering at BYU and she is finishing her undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering. Kyle is a sophomore at Westminster and is studying hard and socializing more than ever (with his friends, not with Eric and me...let's get real. :) Eric and I are empty nesters but are happy together and so glad that our children are close by. We love to do all the things that make living in Utah awesome: hik-



Eric, Taylor Scott, Taylor Jane, Tanya and Kyle

ing, biking, skiing and enjoying the beauty of this area. Luckily for me, I get to spend a lot of time with my mom, who is always so fun to be with. We send you all good wishes and hope you are healthy and happy. XOXO



Geoff, Eira, Lucy, Amanda in North Carolina

Geoff and Jennifer Groberg

We're living in Pfafftown, North Carolina. It's beautiful and we love it, but also miss the West. Geoff will finish a Master's degree in documentary film in 2017. Jennifer is working with special needs children and infants at a public school. Amanda (14) keeps reminding us that she is almost old enough to start learning to drive. Lucy (12) is in show choir, learning to play the harp, and loving her pet parakeet, Sky. Eira (8) is learning the violin and is obsessed with Minecraft, along with her sisters. Our life consists mostly of waking up way too early for school, going to school, then coming home and complaining about school. :-). We're all in school, one way or another. Recent fun events included a visit from Uncle Lew, a Thanksgiving with Sharon and Angie in Florida, and a summer vacation to Washington DC.



Lucy and Eira at Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.

Erik Groberg

I'm working for a medical device company, and oversee operations for 27 states in the Midwest and Eastern U.S. I am based out of our company's home office in Midvale, Utah, but usually end up having to travel for work about four or five days out of the month. Traveling for work is definitely one of the least enjoyable aspects of my job, and it's hard to be away from my kids and away from home, even if it's just for the few days out of the month that I'm gone. One thing I've realized since becoming a father is just how fast your kids grow up and how quickly they change...you can never go back in time and replace lost memories.

I'm still working on finishing my PhD in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Utah. I've completed all my coursework and passed my qualifying exams, but I'm still working on my research and dissertation, which has taken a lot longer than anticipated. I

also received my MS degree in Mechanical Engineering last year as a milestone towards my PhD.

Easton turns five in June, and attends Preschool at Challenger School. He likes keeping his teachers on their toes, and ensuring they earn the highly coveted salaries teachers are well known to receive. He had some hearing issues when he was younger caused by excess fluid buildup behind his eardrums, and had surgery to put tubes in his ears when he was two. He recently started having hearing issues caused by the same issue, and is scheduled to have the surgery to reinsert the tubes again in a few weeks. We are hoping this surgery will be a permanent resolution to his hearing problems.

Haylee turns two in June, and goes to great lengths to ensure that she remains the center of attention at all times. She enjoys playing with whatever her brother is playing with, and using whatever her brother is using. She also makes sure she has the opportunity to “snuggle with daddy” each night before giving the green light on being put to bed. While past aspirations of a once promising career in boxing may have long since been laid to rest, I am already considering coming out of retirement once Haylee is old enough to start dating.



Erik with Haylee and Easton

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time, Lafay “felt he must be an employer and not an employee.”*

Lafay reentered the cattle business, added sheep, and eventually moved into the mining industry. He ultimately had ownership interests and management duties in profitable gold and silver mining operations in Utah, Colorado, Nevada, and California. Along the way he also ran an equipment company, a casket company, a general store, and two hotels.

As a two term mayor of Provo, Lafay refused a salary and directed the city to use that amount to operate and maintain the city’s street lights. He also convinced a number of local land owners to donate their water shares to maintain the grass at the cemetery. When the shares were secured, Lafay personally worked in the trenches with the city workers to extend the irrigation ditches. Though not affiliated to a political party as mayor, Lafay later made a run as the Republican candidate for the US Congress. In that era, however, Utahans (even in Utah County) almost exclusively voted Democratic.

Lafay’s lifelong church service included 38 years on the BYU Board of Trustees and 10 years in the Utah Stake presidency. LHH noted that in his church capacities, his father was not the most dynamic public speaker, but no one was ever more effective in getting things done. This was most apparent when he oversaw the remodeling and redecorating of the Provo Tabernacle (which included gathering pledges and donating \$1,000 of his own to purchase a new organ).

Finally, it was as a husband, father of 10, and our progenitor that Lafayette Holbrook left his most lasting legacy. His daughter Clara summed up that legacy best: “Father’s and Mother’s ability to laugh at and with each other at the right times, giving each other first place in both their hearts and minds, contributed to a happy home life and atmosphere. I cannot think of Father without Mother or vice-versa. They were such complements to each other; they were as one—a perfect unit. Their homes radiated contentment and joy of living.”

Now that we have all been reintroduced to Lafayette, let us all learn more and carry on that legacy.

Editors Note

We invite you to make tax-deductible contributions to the Groberg-Holbrook Genealogy Association.

If each child of Delbert and Jennie gave \$100 or more and each grandchild \$50 or more, it would go a long way. Many of you can give more, some perhaps less, but it would be wonderful if everyone contributed something.

Please send your contributions to:

Groberg-Holbrook Genealogy Organization
(or GHGO)
1605 S. Woodruff Ave.
Idaho Falls, ID 83404

We know many of the family have blogs. If you would like to share your blog with the rest of the family, please email them to me and we will share in the next newsletter and on the family website.

*Much of the information in this sketch is drawn from a 159 page personal history compiled by Louine Berry Hunter Skankey (one of Lafay’s great-granddaughters and a remarkable family historian). In addition, the history includes excerpts from shorter histories or tributes written by Jean, LHH, and other family and friends. It also includes several letters that Lafay and Jean exchanged throughout their many years together. A digital copy of Louine’s complete compilation is available on the dv-groberg.com website or upon request at tomgroberg@gmail.com.]

**[Unlike Lafay’s immediate family and friends, Jean and the Hinckley clan always called him Holbrook]

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