

The Politician and the Entrepreneur: The Lives of Annie Lois Malsby and Earley B Voyles

By James K. Voyles

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The reward of researching, writing, and reading the history of our ancestors is the opportunity to learn of their character, their doings, their comings and goings, their interests, and all the rich facets of their lives. The greater the availability of records, the more we can know about them. As we reflect on their lives, we can see them and their traits in our own lives and characters, and we can know to some degree from whence we came. Thankfully, Annie and Earley lived rich lives, leaving many memories among their progeny along with many references to their work, community, and religious activity in local newspapers.

Annie was a loved and loving mother and grandmother, and at the same time, she was a diligent and dynamic leader in Utah politics and her church. In addition to her own community service, she consistently supported Evelyn and her other children in their community service. Her husband Earley was a loved and loving father and grandfather and an energetic and highly successful entrepreneur. It has been said that you should not judge the quality of your parenting until you see how your grandchildren turn out. By that standard, Annie and Earley were excellent parents. Their grandchildren, despite their vastly varying interests and careers, are all solid, dedicated, and contributing members of society – the kind of grandchildren Annie and Earley can be proud of!

This history focuses on the lives of Annie and Earley, and only lightly touches on the lives of their children. The grandchildren can write the histories of their parents. It also contains much more information on Earley than on Annie because more records are available regarding his life. If readers wish to send additional memories of either, I would be pleased to include them in future editions of this history.

A key source for this history consisted of some handwritten notes compiled by their eldest child, Evelyn Knox Voyles, during a conversation they had before Earley's death. Some of the notes were not entirely clear, but I did my best to reconstruct them and bring them to life in this narrative. Even with their imperfections, the notes are invaluable.

Beginnings

Earley B Voyles was born on February 27, 1879. As we know from many sources, his mother was Mary ("Molly") Locke and his father was James Anderson Voyles. James and Molly had the following children, all born in Elkmont, Limestone County, Alabama as far as we know:

1. Dora, b. 29 January 1873, d. 25 August 1873 – Infant
2. J. W. Voyles, b. 6 May 1874, d. 11 August 1874 – Infant
3. Walter H., b. 1876, d. 20 March 1953
4. Lewis Earnest, b. 15 May 1877, d. 12 October 1928 – went by Earnest
5. Earley B., b. 27 February 1879, d. 15 October 1973
6. Ollie Mae, b. 30 July 1880, d. 13 Dec 1918
7. Dovie Lillian, b. 10 May 1883, d. unknown
8. John A., b. 1885, d. unknown

9. Cordia, b. 1887, d. unknown

Earley only mentioned six children in Evelyn's notes; he was probably not including those who died in infancy.

James Anderson Voyles was a farmer, as was his father, John B Voyles. Before the Civil War, John B Voyles moved from Anderson, South Carolina to Georgia. My speculation is that he moved to Georgia to get into the lucrative cotton business, but that is a point for further research. John died at home in Georgia on July 3, 1863 from either sickness or wounds suffered in the Georgia Infantry of the Confederate Army. His oldest son, James Anderson Voyles was thirteen at the time of his father's death, and we know that by his early 20's, he had moved from the Atlanta area to Elkmont, Alabama, a distance of 60 miles by air, but more than 200 miles by any passable roads. That is where he met and married Mary ("Mollie") Locke and where they started their family in 1873.

James and his family left Alabama in 1884, when Earley was around five years old. The move to Florida was a question of chance, according to Earley's recollections in articles in the Salt Lake City newspapers. A Salt Lake Tribune article of March 16, 1969 reported:

One day in 1884 when he was 5 years old his father [James] and the Athens [Alabama] druggist were talking.

"We've got to get out of here," the druggist said.

"Let's go to Denver," Mr. Voyles' father suggested.

"How about Florida instead," the druggist countered.

A coin was tossed and the two families went to Florida.

Evelyn's notes say the family travelled south by train to Tallahassee, Florida. (A Lakeland Ledger article says they went to Wildwood, much further south and only 64 miles from Polk County. All other sources say Tallahassee. Under the circumstances, Tallahassee seems to be more accurate because the first railroad was not completed through Polk County until 1884.¹) From Tallahassee, they went by covered wagon to Polk City, which is north and east of Lakeland, Florida. Earley estimated accurately that the wagon trip was 250 miles. We typically associate covered wagons with settlers heading to the western United States, but here we see them used for travel through Florida. So many things could make that trip miserable: poisonous snakes, alligators, malaria, heat, and oppressive humidity, to name just a few.

Although the move to Florida may have occurred by chance, it came at an opportune time economically. The citrus industry was beginning to boom in Florida, and from news interviews given by Earley in later life, we know that his father was a citrus farmer. According to the Florida Citrus Mutual, "Soon after the Civil War, Florida's annual commercial citrus production totaled one million boxes; it climbed to more than five million boxes by 1893. With the development of improved means of transportation, new markets were opened in the northeastern United States and demand for Florida citrus started to expand slowly."²

¹ Polk County Historical Society, "History of Polk County," <http://www.polkcountyhistory.org/history/>

² Florida Citrus Mutual, "Citrus Industry History," <http://flcitrusmutual.com/citrus-101/citrushistory.aspx>

James Anderson Voyles built a house on a homestead near Polk City on around fifteen acres. Evelyn's notes are difficult to understand, but they appear to say that six acres were planted in orange trees. The 1969 Tribune article indicated that there were perhaps six trees rather than acres. The article recounts that the family hoarded orange seeds and developed a four-acre orchard. Earley's quotes in a February 26, 1966 article in the Deseret Evening News give the impression that the Voyles citrus orchard may have been larger and more profitable than the 1969 article would indicate. James lived on the homestead and farmed until he died in his home on March 12, 1925 at the age of 74. Evelyn told me that he died from complications from a farming accident, having been hit in the groin or the midsection with a farm implement. According to his obituary in an unknown newspaper, "He was one of the pioneer settlers of this section and came here 41 years ago from South Carolina." The writer was apparently unaware of his sojourn in Alabama prior to moving to Florida. James, along with Mollie and Julia (his second wife), are buried in the Mt. Olive Cemetery adjacent to the Mt. Olive Baptist church in Polk City. The church and cemetery are visible from the interchange of I-4 and the Polk Parkway northeast of Lakeland.

The homestead house was still standing in around 2010. It was a small, white, nondescript, clapboard-style home and was built, as was the custom in the wet climate, a few feet off the ground. The house needed painting in 1989 when I first visited it, but the yard was trimmed and well kept.



*Mollie with daughters
Ollie Mae and Dovie
Lillian on the porch of the
Voyles Homestead*

Descendants of James still live in the area and appear to own most of the adjacent land. The homestead and other Voyles homes are located on what is now Voyles Loop in Polk City. The loop got its name from one of the sons of James' second marriage. George Coyne Voyles was a famous Baptist preacher in the area. I met him while there on business in 1989 when he was 92 years old. George had the same large, prominent nose that Earley had, and they otherwise resembled each other quite closely. (I saw a picture of James at some point in life and he had the same beak. I hope it passes no further in the genes.) George had mostly lost his mental capabilities and asked me several times who I was. When I told him that I was Earley's grandson, he responded each time: "Oh, Earley. He left for Utah years ago and never came back." On that first visit, the house was old but in decent shape.

Mollie died on July 14, 1892, leaving James Anderson Voyles with the five remaining children. Earley would have been around 13 years old. James married Julia A. Costine on 26 March 1893, after which Mollie's children moved out. It is not clear where the boys – Earley, Walter, and Earnest – went, but the contemporary census records show that Early's younger sisters, Ollie Mae and Dovie Lillian, lived with other families in Polk County during their late teens. (There must be a story there. The girls later married the same man: Ollie married Joseph Allen Jones, Jr., and after Ollie died in 1918, Dovie married him. Perhaps another interesting story there as well.)

Earley liked to work, was proud of his work, and was very enterprising. Evelyn's notes focus on his work history from the time he left James' homestead when he was thirteen until he started his business

in Salt Lake City. His first job was working in a tomato field in Auburndale while finishing eighth grade. He then skipped ninth grade and went straight into tenth grade at Lakeland High School. While attending high school, he delivered meat on a bicycle for three years. (Great granddaughters Leah Kaitlyn Voyles Walker and Hailey Ann Voyles Solomon attended the Arts school connected to the new Lakeland High School in the 2010's.) The 1969 article confirms that he began work as a delivery boy in Florida. The notes seem to say that his employer's last name was Smith.



Lakeland High School Circa 1905

His third job was at a meat market on Franklin Street in Tampa. He worked there for one year “cutting meat,” by which I suppose he meant he became a butcher and began establishing himself in the meat business. His fourth job was also in Tampa working for a man with the last name Allen, who owned a grocery store. He worked there for one year, and the notes seem to reflect that he wanted to buy it. He did not explain why he did not. He now had worked in both the meat and the grocery businesses, giving him experience that would be valuable as he moved forward as an entrepreneur.



Franklin Street, Tampa, FL

Although Earley had established himself in the meat and grocery business, he seems to have retained his ties to his father's citrus business, at least for a time. In the 1966 article, Earley told the reporter that the orchard included lemon and grapefruit in addition to orange trees. He is also quoted as saying, “Once I was a millionaire one evening and broke the next morning.” This would indicate that he was still very involved in the family business despite leaving James' homestead. He also told the reporter that the Voyles family had a nursery and sold trees to a man “that put California into the citrus business.” In the 1969 article, Earley spoke again of the sale of trees to a Californian, who transplanted the trees to Southern California. Earley concluded:

“And that's how Southern California got their orange industry,” Mr. Voyles said. He added that once he was driving through Riverside, Calif., when he came across a tree from India, reportedly the first orange tree in the state. “But our trees came in about the same time,” he said.

He became “broke” because of a major freeze in Central Florida in 1895 or 1898, which wiped out much of the citrus industry. The Florida Citrus Mutual puts the freeze in 1895. In the 1966 article, Earley put the freeze in 1898. I was previously under the impression that the freeze precipitated Earley's entry into the meat and grocery business. It may have to some degree, but he had clearly established an independent path in the grocery business well before the freeze.

The next sequence of events in Earley's life is difficult to sketch out based upon Evelyn's notes, although certain facts may be verifiable over time. The fifth entry on the list was not a job. Rather, he



*A young Earley upon graduation from
Business School in Georgia*

went to Atlanta with money to attend business school for five or six months. His sixth job was in Lakeland selling meat in a grocery store. There is also a note about work in a brokerage firm but no explanation of what that meant. His seventh job was in Jacksonville, Florida, keeping books for an insurance company, although the notes also mention a furniture company. If I am interpreting the notes correctly, that takes us to 1900.

In 1900, Walter, who had apparently been working in Jacksonville as well, rode a bicycle to Athens, Georgia. This does not seem possible in that time period – the roads would have been inadequate. The trip of 340 miles today on a bicycle would not be easy with modern equipment and paved roads. Imagine the difficulties in 1900. But that's what the notes seem to say, so we will have to accept them at face value. Walter wrote to Earley that Athens, a city of about 10,000, had only one meat market. Earley took a train to look over the prospect and they started a market of their own on July 1, 1900. They pooled their funds – Early committed \$300 and Walter committed \$100 – and they rented a building. They then appear to have bought an old whiskey box and made it into a 5' x 12' ice box. Their first order of meat cost \$10 and they sold \$5 worth in three days. It looks like that was a consistent pattern because they lost money over the next six months. At that point, Earley had only \$10.00 in the bank.

Their fortunes improved thereafter. By November 25, 1900, they were doing well enough to place an advertisement in the Tampa Tribune for "a bookkeeper and stenographer by a strictly sober, honest and reliable young man. ... Address E. B. Voyles, 72 Marietta street, Atlanta, Georgia." The notes support the possibility that their business improved in Athens after they expanded into general groceries and because of the quality of meat they sold. The other butcher, who had been in town 20 years, cut prices to try to drive Walter and Early out of business, but he ended up destroying his own business and went broke. Walter and Earley were able to buy cattle and 40 acres of land in an adjoining city, where they put up a wire fence and slaughter house for both beef and hogs. They made money buying fifteen or twenty head of cattle at a time, butchering them, and selling the meat. They apparently decided to sell the business within about two and a half years. The sale left them with \$3000 in the bank. They later sold the land for \$2000. (The land sale seems to have occurred after they were already in Salt Lake City.) Earley did not say why they sold out an apparently prosperous business.

The brothers then went to St. Louis for an unknown reason and then back to Lakeland, where they once again opened a meat market and grocery store on Main Street next to the Post Office. After a

couple of years, a man walked by the store several times on a Saturday, and finally at 6:00 p.m. came in and asked if it was for sell. They sold the store for \$3500.

Walter and Earley next went west again. Earley revealed the reason for the trip west in the 1951 Lakeland Ledger article:

Asked why he went west, Voyles replied that it had been a life-long ambition of his father and he decided to make it come true. The family had been encouraged by a druggist friend to come to Florida. "My father wanted to go out west," he said, "but his partner wanted to come to Florida. They flipped a coin and the druggist won."

They went to San Francisco, Portland, and Pocatello in 1905. Earley said that he did not like those towns. He told the Salt Lake Tribune reporter in 1969, "We were in San Francisco in 1905 when my brother and I left. The next year they had their big earthquake. We'd have probably been buried a hundred feet down in one of the cracks."

The brothers continued to Salt Lake City to visit their brother Earnest, who sold insurance. From Salt Lake, Earley wired for money from Florida to complete the trip home. While waiting for the money to arrive, he was on the southwest corner of State and Second Streets in Salt Lake and saw on the opposite corner the State Street Market. He thought it looked dark and vacant and contemplated whether it would be a good place to open a store. When he approached the building, he saw that it was not vacant but rather a going concern. He asked the owners for a job. They said they had hired a clerk a week earlier. Earley asked if they knew of any stores for sale. The owners said their store might be for sale. They asked Early how much he was willing to pay. Earley and Walter paid \$2000 plus rental on the building, and the sale was closed in "about five minutes on July 1, 1905." Earley's concluding remark in the 1969 article says: "In those days I would make a fast decision and stick to it."



*Earley at work as a young entrepreneur –
Date and location unknown*

Upon establishing the business in Salt Lake, Earley headed back to Florida where Annie Lois Malsby was waiting for him. Annie was born in Perry, Houston County, Georgia on March 23, 1884 to Sarah Knox McMurray and Lott Walter Malsby. Lott Walter and Sarah were both born and raised in Georgia, where they married in Perry on October 15, 1874. Sarah worked in the home and Lott was a Railroad Supervisor. According to a July 9, 1951 article in the Lakeland Ledger, the Malsbys moved to Florida before 1888, saying that Lott Walter "was one of the early Polk County settlers, helping construct

the Atlantic Coast Line railroad and was roadmaster when he finally retired.” An article in the Tampa Weekly Tribune of November 12, 1896 identifies Lott Walter as the Supervisor of the Second Division of the Plant System – presumably referring to Plant City, Florida, which is next to Lakeland. They were in Lakeland until at least 1920, and likely moved to Utah in 1922 or early 1923 when Lott Walter retired from the railroad. Lott Walter passed away in May 7, 1923, from complications after surgery for a stomach ulcer. Sarah lived in Utah with Earley and Annie until she passed on February 13, 1935 of chronic myocarditis.



*Sarah Knox McMurray and
Lott Walter Malsby*

Lott Walter’s father was Lott Malsby, born in North Carolina in 1808. He migrated to Georgia, where he married Mary Turner, born in Bibb County, Georgia in 1823. Lott was a wheelwright – a maker and repairer of wooden wheels. A manumitted female slave, age 65, lived in a slave house on their property in 1860. Sarah’s parents were James B. McMurray and Sarah K. Tomlinson. We know little about the McMurray line, but Sarah Tomlinson’s line includes Jeremiah Dupree and Aaron Tomlinson, both Revolutionary War soldiers. Lott Walter and Sarah had the following children, all born in Houston County, Georgia:

1. Mary Edna, b. September 23, 1875, d. September 1, 1879 – Child
2. James Walter, b. January 7, 1878, d. October 23, 1960 – Never married
3. John Lewis, b. March 9, 1881, d. April 23, 1893
4. Annie Lois, b. March 23, 1884, d. September 28, 1959
5. Scott Walker, b. October 5, 1887, d. October 10, 1918
6. Sarah Kendirk, b. January 11, 1890, d. October 23, 1890 – Infant
7. Edgar, b. October 9, 1891, d. November 22, 1892 – Child

Not much information exists on Annie’s early life. Her granddaughter Lois recalled that Annie said she was raised by an African-American nanny, whom she adored, in Lakeland. And exactly how Annie and Earley met is not clear from the notes. It appears, however, that they lived across the street from each other in Lakeland while Earley attended high school. He said when he first saw her she was a barefoot tomboy of nine or ten who liked to climb trees. He would have been around fourteen. Earley may have lived with the Malsby family for a week before high school started. He worked in an orange grove during that week. Like Earley, Annie graduated from Lakeland High School.

Newspaper accounts reflect that Annie knew Earley’s sisters as well. The Tampa Tribune ran an article dated August 3, 1901 that identified Annie as a guest at a masquerade party, which the reporter described as follows: “One of the most delightful social events which has occurred in Lakeland in many years was the masque party which was given by Miss Dora Bonacker to her young friends on the night of the 31st inst.” Guests included Annie, dressed as a Vestal (a Roman maiden), and Lillian Voyles, dressed as “The Lakeland Sun.” Lillian was about a year older than Annie.

Annie and Earley returned to Lakeland on vacation in 1951, and the Lakeland Ledger article provided an anecdote about their courtship. The reporter wrote:

“I remember that the old Adam’s Livery stable was on the southeast corner of the intersection [of Pine and Kentucky] the last time I saw Lakeland,” Voyles said.

“It wasn’t ‘old’,” Mrs. Voyles said. “It was a good-looking livery stable. The fellows used to rent a horse and buggy there to take me out riding around Lake Hollingsworth.”

“That’s right, I did,” her husband laughed. “As I recall, it was an all afternoon drive – if you drove slowly. We used to call the east side of the lake ‘Shady Lane’.”



Lake Hollingsworth, Lakeland, FL 1906

Earley’s courting of Annie was successful despite his many business ventures away from Lakeland.

On his way back to Florida from Utah, Earley stopped in St. Louis and bought a wedding ring. They married in Lakeland on October 18, 1905. Earley was 23 and Annie 18. The Malsby Family Bible records that they were married in the Malsby’s home. An article without a date, presumably in the Lakeland Ledger, described “Miss Malsby...as one of the loveliest and most amiable and attractive young ladies of which Lakeland every boasted, and while her friends will rejoice in her happiness, they will sadly miss her from among them.” The article described Earley as “a self-made young man, whose career

in this city is a credit to him, and we doubt not that in a new and enlarged field of labor he will win success by the same sterling qualities of mind and character that have gained him the respect and good will all in his boyhood’s home.”

After the wedding ceremony, they traveled by use of a hired a grey horse and buggy and participated in a foot washing ceremony in a Baptist church. (Foot washing is a custom in some Baptist churches, symbolic of humility and service among the members. It also emphasizes equality and the lack of hierarchy in some Baptist sects.) Thereafter, according to the newspaper article, “the lovely bride and happy groom boarded the north bound train and left for Salt Lake City, Utah, where Mr. Voyles is established in a prosperous business, and where they will make their future home.” Earley, with Annie at his side, returned to Salt Lake where they made their life together and raised their family.

In 23 short years, Earley proved to be an enterprising young man. He had worked since at least thirteen years of age and had become a butcher within the next few years. He and Walter started successful businesses in Athens, Georgia, and Lakeland, Florida, before beginning their new meat and grocery business in Salt Lake City, Utah, which would become another highly successful venture. Moreover, he had met and married the wonderful woman he would be with for 53 years.



*Wedding photo of Annie and Earley
October 18, 1905*

Homes and Children in Salt Lake City

Annie and Earley welcomed their first child, Evelyn, into their home on July 23, 1906, almost exactly nine months after they were married. She was born in the family home on 242 East 4th South. Evelyn never married but was a very devoted daughter to her mother and father until their respective deaths. She led a phenomenal life of service as an elementary school teacher and in women's church and literary organizations. (Her life will be the subject of a future history.) Soon after Earley's death, she moved to the white, high-rise apartment on 40 South 9th East. Eventually, she moved to an assisted-living apartment at Golden Living Center located in Taylorsville, where she lived for several years until her needs escalated. Her last months were spent at a nursing home in Holladay.

In the early 1980s, Evelyn and I drove to each location where the Voyles clan lived in Salt Lake. Their second home was at 319 11th East. They welcomed first son, Walter, on August 5, 1909.

In the second home, Earley and Annie also welcomed a new daughter, Lois, into their growing family on June 16, 1915. Lois was named after her mother, Annie Lois. We don't know Annie's feelings at the time, but we know she loved all of her children, and she would have felt the same about this new baby. Unfortunately, the joy turned into inconsolable grief by the end of the year. At some point in the fall, probably in November, baby Lois developed a "blister" in her groin. The blister developed a skin infection known as Erysipelas, which is caused by streptococcus bacteria. Although the infection is superficial, it can result in high fevers, shaking, chills, fatigue, headaches, vomiting, and general illness. The skin lesion swells rapidly, and the rash is red, swollen, warm, and painful. In modern times, it is treatable with antibiotics. Although antibiotics were under serious development by around 1907, they were not generally used until during and after World War II. According to the death register, she was under the care of R. W. Fisher, M.D. beginning December 1. (Fisher was the family doctor for the Voyles family for many years as evidenced by birth and death certificates.) After what must have been a terrible month of physical suffering for baby and emotional anguish for mother, father, and other family members and friends, Lois passed away at 9:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1915. I heard Evelyn say that from that day forward, Annie never liked Christmas for the rest of her life. Walter's oldest daughter, Annie and Earley's first grandchild, was named Lois in honor of the lost baby.



*Annie with Evelyn,
Walter, and Woody
Circa 1917*

Their third home was at 2nd South and 2nd East in what is now the parking lot of the Methodist Church – it could also be where the office building is at 225 South, 2nd East. Woody said it was in the parking lot; Evelyn had a different recollection. Woodrow was born there on October 8, 1917.

Their fourth home was at 1026 1st Avenue. Evelyn said it was previously yellow brick and had a porch. Mildred was born at this location on February 26, 1921. Mildred was premature and weighed only three pounds, so the family, minus Earley, took a trip to Florida so she could be in the warm weather. Evelyn frequently spoke about that trip. She told me several times that Woody crawled under the Malsby's home in Florida and was pecked on the top of the head by a bird, which she found hilarious. (I have seen an article in the past from a local Lakeland paper that mentioned Annie bringing the children back to

Florida for a visit, but I have not been able to find it again). While Annie and the children were in Florida, Earley moved into a new home, their fifth, at 565 1st Avenue. I could never imagine moving without my spouse's knowledge, consent, and approval! I asked Evelyn how Earley was able to do it.

She said their hired help knew how Annie would want things. Evelyn didn't seem to think it was a big deal. Evelyn also said Woody rode a tricycle or bike down the steps at that house, but she did not say (or I don't recall) if he suffered any serious consequences. When we drove by in the 1980s, it looked like it was being used as a boarding house.

Their sixth home was 78 S Street. The house was standing when we did the tour and looked to be in good condition. In August 2018, one of the grandchildren had pictures of the home, and it appeared to have been substantially remodeled. Evelyn said it was yellow when the Voyles lived there. This is the house that most of the children would have considered as their childhood home. They moved there before May 1923, before the death of Lott Walter Malsby. Robert was born there on October 17, 1923. Evelyn recalled that while they lived there, "when we were all kids," the roof caught on fire from sparks from the neighbor's house. The neighbors were the Pollei family, and Evelyn maintained relationships with them throughout her life. Earley and Evelyn moved out of this house after Annie died.



*Photo in Salt Lake City in approximately 1924
Back L to R: Mother Annie, Evelyn, Walter, Grandmother Sarah; Front L to R: Mildred, Robert, Woodrow*

Their seventh home was 60 T Street. I don't recall the apartment number, but I could walk to it – first door on the right after a short stairway. Most of the grandchildren will remember this home because it is where the Voyles held Thanksgiving annually, as discussed in more detail below. Earley died while they resided in this home. Thereafter, Evelyn moved into the high rise on 9th East, as mentioned above.

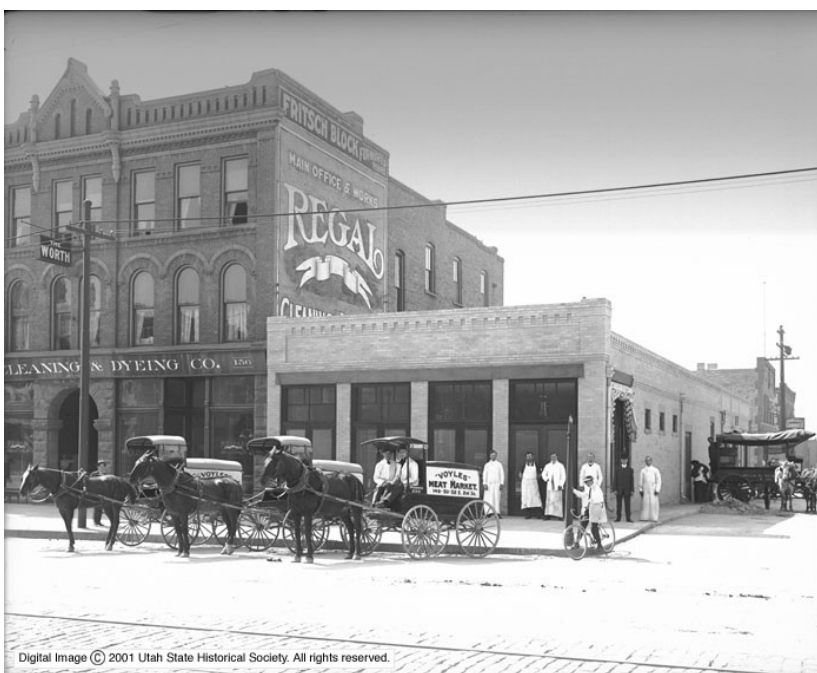
A Successful Business

By all accounts, Earley and Walter established a very successful business in Salt Lake City. Nevertheless, all might not have gone so well in the beginning, particularly during a general economic downturn in 1907. A Notice of Sheriff's Sale Under Chattel Mortgage appeared in a newspaper on July 10, 1907. A man named Wallace F. Vail was the mortgagor on personal property owned by Earley and Walter and mortgagors doing business under the name of State Street Market in Salt Lake City. The amount due for store fixtures appears to be \$593.73. The fixtures were set for sale at public auction on July 18, 1907. There is no record of the final disposition of the property.

If the foreclosure was a setback for the brothers, it was short lived. By November 13, 1907, Walter was buying another property in Salt Lake City, and Earley bought a property in January 1908. They continued to do business at the State Street Market, but on August 21, 1909, the Salt Lake Herald-Republican reported that Earley and Walter had purchased the property on Second South and Franklin for an amount that is not clearly legible but appears to be \$20,750. The paper reported that the brothers would raze the Chinese laundry that occupied the property and build a retail meat market. The article concludes: "The new owners are the proprietors of the State street market, and their greatly increased business has made it imperative that they have larger quarters. They were not prepared to say last night just how soon construction would begin, but it is understood that it will be in the near future."

The quintessential picture of The Voyles Market appeared in the Salt Lake Tribune on 22 May 1910. The article is entitled, “Salt Lake’s Largest and Most Sanitary Market.” The picture shows The Voyles Market with three, one-horse delivery wagons and seven or eight employees, including what appears to be a boy on a bicycle, all in white coats. (Earley’s sons would later say that when they were old enough, they delivered meat on their bicycle.) Earley is on the far right in the dark suit and hat. Walter is probably standing to the right of Earley, although he has not been positively identified. Further to the right of Earley is another delivery wagon but with two horses, although it is not clear whether it is a Voyles wagon or a supplier making a delivery at the back door.

The article describes Voyles Market as “the largest, most up-to-date and best equipped meat market in the city of Salt Lake and is extremely popular with the most particular and exacting class of patrons in the city.” The market stood “as a monument to the energy and enterprise of its two young men who are its proprietors.” E.B. and W.H. Voyles had built the business from small beginnings in only five years. The article recounts their history of starting at the State Street Market, which was purchased by a Mr. Holmes for the construction of a hotel. Earley and Walter then moved the business to 116 to 118 East Second South, where it continued



“Salt Lake’s Largest and Most Sanitary Market”

to grow. They finally settled at their final location at 150 East Second South. By 1910, the author concluded that the market stood “without rival in the entire intermountain region.” In addition to a discussion of the various quality meats that the brothers sold, the author noted that they had “the most modern and complete refrigerating system possible to install,” which cost practically \$5000.”

Growing up with the father in the grocery business made meal time interesting for Annie and the children. Woody said that Annie never knew what she would be cooking, and the children never knew what they would be eating, until Earley arrived home with whatever meat remained at the end of the day. Meals were predictably meat and potatoes. Earley and Annie’s oldest granddaughter, Lois Voyles Johnson, recounted that frequently the chickens Earley brought home in a burlap bag were still alive. She recalls Annie slitting their throats and plucking them in the kitchen, and then preparing them. She recalled Annie being an excellent cook, and grandson Kevin Voyles said that she made extraordinary fried chicken. I cannot speak for all of children of Annie and Early, the but tradition of meat and potatoes nearly every night prevailed in Woody’s home during his life. Woody also said that although the market suffered during the Great Depression and perhaps was not consistently open for business, they always had food.

The children – or at least the boys – worked at Voyles market while growing up. I assume Walter did; I know Woody did to some extent. After returning from World War II, Bob went back to work in the store with his father and continued to run the business after Earley died in 1973. Mildred and her husband Al shopped there their whole lives. Mildred called Al with a list on Saturday, and Al bought the groceries on his way home from work.

Despite his legendary work schedule, Earley actually closed the store on March 30, 1915 for a sporting event. A March 28, 1915 newspaper article reported that the city was very excited for the Salt Lake Bees to host the Venice/Vernon Tigers (Los Angeles) in the AA Pacific Coast League season opener. “If all goes well, there is no doubt that Tuesday’s opening of the Coast league will be the greatest occasion in the record of sports in this city.” The reporter interviewed business owners to see if they would close the afternoon of the game, giving their employees a half holiday. “Yesterday a representative of the Voyles’s market, 148-152 East Second South, announced that his store would be closing.” Earley was in good company, with most of his competitors also stating that they would be closed.

In its heyday as a meat market, Voyles Market delivered meat by horse-drawn wagon to Holy Cross Hospital, Hotel Utah, Newhouse Hotel, and other customers in Salt Lake. However, in 1917, Earley “quit delivering meat and turned his enterprise into a combination meat and grocery store.” That was a good economic choice. Earley told a reporter years later: “Advertising that the move would help us cut prices, business doubled that year.”

Despite being 39 years old, the government required Earley to register for the draft on September 12, 1918. The information on the registration card confirms what we already know. The family lived at 217 South 2nd East. Earley’s occupation was “meat & grocery” and his employer was “Voyles Meat Market” at 152 East 2nd South. Annie M. Voyles was his nearest relative. He was medium height and medium build with light blue eyes and light brown hair.

While Voyles Market had one of best refrigeration systems available in its day, it was not flawless. On August 1, 1921, Andrew Jones, age 18, was overcome by ammonia fumes at the Voyles Market. An ammonia tank associated with the icehouse burst, and Jones donned a firefighter’s mask and entered the tank to make repairs. He inhaled ammonia at some point during the repair, and he felt the effects as he started out on his delivery route. Fellow employees took him to the emergency room, but we have no record of how the employee fared. (Salt Lake Telegram, August 1, 1921).

Earnest, Walter, and Other Business Interests

Earley and Walter started Voyles Market together, but their other brother, Earnest, also lived and worked in Salt Lake City. A 1920 Directory continues to list Earley and Walter as partners in Voyles Meat and Grocery, with Earley’s residence at 1026 1st Ave. and Walter’s at 854 E. 5th S. Their brother Earnest is listed as an agent for New York Life with an office at 301 Walker Bank Building with his residence at 1239 Alameda Ave. Newspapers occasionally note Earley’s brothers and give us a brief glimpse into their lives.

Earnest married Mary Alice Cotton in Salt Lake City on February 3, 1915. Earnest had a friend by the name of Joseph C. Wilson in Salt Lake. Mrs. Wilson and Mary had been friends in school in Georgia. The Wilsons thought Earnest and Mary “were exactly suited to each other” and insisted that Mary visit Salt Lake from Le Grange, Georgia. The visit resulted in the marriage of Earnest and Mary on February 3, 1915 at the Immanuel Baptist Church on the corner of Fourth East and Second South. (Salt Lake Telegram, 4 February 1915). On July 25, 1915, Mary was identified as the Leader of the Christian Endeavor Society, which was holding a meeting with the topic “Christ in Me” that evening. (Salt Lake

Telegram, 25 July 1915). At some point, Earnest and Mary returned to Georgia, where Earnest died on October 28, 1928, and Mary died on March 11, 1962.

Walter married Sadie Walters on September 17, 1907. (Sadie's maiden name on her marriage and death records are different. She may have been Sadie Cowen of New York.) Several references in Salt Lake newspapers report that Walter, in addition to his other ventures, was an accomplished poultry farmer, and the 1930 census shows that he and his wife lived in Salt Lake City and had four boarders. His heart, however, was in mining, and for several years, Earley was his partner. The first reference to their mining adventures was a news article on May 9, 1920, announcing a new corporation known as Sunshine Silver Mining Company with capitalization of \$100,000 and Walter H. Voyles as President, H. J. Woodard as Vice President, and E. B. Voyles as Secretary-Treasurer. The Salt Lake Mining Review reported on February 28, 1921, as follows:

The bonanza deposit recently opened up in the Sunshine Silver Mining Company's property, situated in the Clark mountain district, about 25 miles from Cima, Calif., on the Salt Lake Route railroad, is not only becoming richer with depth, according to reports received by E. B. Voyles, secretary-treasurer of the company, but more extensive as well.

Work was begun by sinking a shaft upon an eight-inch streak, which assayed \$175 in gold, silver, and copper. At a depth of eight feet an average sample taken of the streak assayed, according to Mr. Voyles, \$11 in gold, 375 ounces in silver, and 29.15 per cent in copper.

The latest report from W. H. Voyles, president and manager of the company, who is in charge of operations at the mine, shows an average value at a depth of only twelve feet of \$17.20 in gold, 403 ounces of silver and 22 per cent copper, a value of \$462.50.

The Sunshine Silver Mining property is owned mostly by Salt Lake men.

The next reference to Walter's mining endeavors was in the Salt Lake Mining Review on June 30, 1927. It was a paid advertisement with the headline: "Help Wanted to Develop a Worth-while Mine." In short, Walter was looking for investors to join him "in opening this mine as it should be opened." Walter and his associates, presumably one of which was Earley, owned a group of fourteen claims in the Clark Mountain mining district in San Bernardino County, California. The claims were near what appear to have been established mines owned by the same group, although that is not entirely clear from the wording in the advertisement. None of Walter's associates were mentioned.

In 1933, the Salt Lake Tribune reported that two mining companies filed articles of incorporation, one of which was Yucca Metals Company, with Walter H. Voyles as president. Earley is not mentioned in the articles, and others held the offices of vice president and secretary-treasurer. In fact, Earley told a Deseret News reporter in an article dated October 8, 1971, that he bought out Walter's interest in the grocery business in 1932. Earley may have withdrawn from mining investments in that same year. The Mining Journal for July 15, 1937, reported the following:

A small amount of ore is now ready for shipment at the property of the Yucca Metal Company, located in the Clark Mountain district, 20 miles east of Nipton, California, according to Walter H. Voyles, president, Valley Wells, via Nipton. The lower working tunnel encountered a productive fissure at a depth of 325 feet. Present plans call for a raise from the lower tunnel to the old shaft for ventilation purposes.

On a recent road trip from Las Vegas to Bakersfield, I noticed that the name of one of a Rest Area on I-15 in California south of Las Vegas is named Valley Wells. Looking at the location of Nipton and Clark

Mountain, it is possible that Walter's mine was near that Rest Area. Another city in California is named Valley Wells, but it is nowhere near Nipton. The Rest Area has descriptions of activities that occurred historically in the area, including mining.

Mining did not pan out for Walter. By 1940, Sadie and he had moved to Kelso, California, and in 1942, Walter shows up in voter registration records in Riverside and Los Angeles, with his occupation noted in various years as a mechanic or carpenter. Walter died on March 20, 1953. Sadie applied to have Walter receive a military tombstone for his service in the Spanish American War, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, Florida Infantry. He enlisted on June 23, 1898 and was discharged on January 27, 1899. He started as Private and was promoted to Corporal on December 8, 1898. His battalion marched from Florida to Huntsville, Alabama and then went by rail back to Tampa over the course of seven months. Sadie wished for Walter to have a military tombstone at the Evergreen Cemetery in Riverside, California. Sadie died five years later on April 1, 1958, in Riverside and is buried next to Walter.

Earley in Court

Earley was no stranger to the court system. He was involved in a few lawsuits over his lifetime. The first record of a suit appeared in January 1907. The Salt Lake Herald noted that a case pending before Judge Lewis was Earley B Voyles et al vs. Lyon G. Skliris et al. The notation does not include any detail about the suit, only the procedural notation "Demurrer submitted," which is essentially an answer by the defendants.

Earley was engaged in a strange series of lawsuits beginning in 1923 that ended up in the Utah Supreme Court in 1927 and again in 1930. Records show that Earley invested in real estate well beyond the location of the store. He also rented part of the store building from time to time. At some point, he had a tenant on one of his properties named Joseph Straka. Straka apparently did not pay the rent, and Earley brought an action on June 15, 1923 to recover \$160. Later, Earley sued to recover possession of the premises. The issue that reached the Supreme Court was whether he could bring separate actions to recover rent and possession rather than bringing them together in one suit. The Supreme Court held that he could sue separately. *Straka v. Voyles*, 77 Utah 171 (1930).

At some point during the property dispute, Earley swore out a complaint that Straka "was insane and a fit subject for care and treatment in the State Mental Hospital." Earley testified that he started "the insanity proceeding because he was afraid that [Straka] might do him ... bodily harm or cause him injury by setting the building on fire." Earley also proved at the trial that he was informed by others he trusted that Straka was insane and should be committed to the state hospital. Based on Earley's complaint, Straka was arrested and held in the Salt Lake County jail for three days. A trial was held and Straka was adjudged sane and released from custody.

Straka then sued Earley for malicious prosecution based upon false accusations and asked for \$5000 in damages. The case went to trial, and the jury awarded Straka \$300 in actual damages and \$200 in punitive damages, for a total verdict of \$500. Earley appealed the verdict to the Utah Supreme Court. The Court said that although on its face Earley's complaint was sufficient, the jury was justified in concluding that Earley did not charge Straka with insanity in good faith. For example, although Earley believed Straka was insane, he sued Straka in the rent dispute and even attached Straka's bank account. The jury could reasonably believe that Earley would not have sued for the rent if he truly thought Straka was insane. Also, when Straka was tried for insanity, Earley appeared but did not testify or offer any explanation as to why he said Straka was insane. Further, Earley did not appeal Straka's release from jail; Earley seemed to be happy to have Straka out in the world again once he had attached Straka's bank account. Strangely enough, Earley urged Straka to remain a tenant in the building once he had secured

the rent money. The Court ruled that the jury was justified in determining that Earley did not have probable cause to believe Straka was insane and that the prosecution of Straka for insanity was malicious. The court upheld the \$500 verdict. *Straka v. Voyles*, 69 Utah 123 (1927).

The court cases and the news articles do not seem to capture what was really going on between Straka and Earley. In my experience, Earley seemed to me to be fairly calm and unflappable. Whatever happened between the two caused Earley to take the unusual action of alleging that Straka was insane in order to get the rent paid.

While the Straka cases were working their way through the courts, Mrs. Sofia Southam sued Voyles Market for damages in the amount of \$6000. She alleged that her two minor sons were injured on January 7, 1924, when one of the store's meat trucks hit the sled on which the boys were coasting on F Street. I found no subsequent articles on how the case was resolved. Presumably, Voyles Market had insurance on the trucks, and the insurance company settled with the Mrs. Southam and her sons.

The Salt Lake Telegram reported on April 16, 1931 a new suit: "E. B. Voyles v. Voyles Meat and Grocery Company et al., for \$1187.50 on rent." Was the report of the suit an error? Why would Earley sue his own company when he was the proprietor? The nature of the suit may be explained by a subsequent notice in the Salt Lake Tribune on May 24, 1931. Voyles Meat and Grocery Co. had been adjudicated bankrupt on May 5, 1931, presumably because of the Great Depression. Perhaps Earley was the property owner and a creditor of his own corporation. The bankruptcy must have ended in a business reorganization because Voyles Market endured the Great Depression and prospered into the 1980s.

Early had another encounter with the courts in 1933 to 1934. The Salt Lake Telegram reported on December 6, 1933 that Earley was convicted in City Court of selling adulterated hamburger to Elia Streeper on November 3, 1933. He was fined \$100, with the alternative of serving five days in jail. Earley appealed to the District Court, where he was tried by a jury, which found him guilty. The Telegram reported on December 15 that in addition to the prior fine, which this article said was \$10 rather than \$100, the judge imposed an additional \$40. The final fine was \$50 or ten days in jail. The Salt Lake Tribune reported on January 10, 1934, that District Court Judge Herbert M. Schiller reversed the City Court and acquitted Earley of the charge. The reporter wrote: "Counsel for Voyles contended that the evidence in the case was faulty and that the state had not established that a sample of hamburger had been purchased at the Voyles market."

Earley and Voyles Market as Targets for Criminals

The Salt Lake Telegram reported on July 12, 1932, that burglars broke into the back door of Voyles Market and stole \$30 worth of goods, a Masonic emblem, and \$3 in pennies. No records indicate whether Earley was a Mason. His sons Woodrow and Robert were, and Evelyn was in the women's Masonic organization, the Order of the Eastern Star.

Earley "propounded a maxim" when speaking with a reporter in August 1933. The maxim: "Beware of inebriates." The prior Friday, while Earley was attempting to evict an intoxicated man from his store, the man's companion "stole a pen and pencil set valued at \$11 and a white gold watch valued at \$30." (Salt Lake Telegram, August 4, 1933).

On Saturday, January 27, 1934, Earley was robbed while closing the store. Earley told the police that a man entered the store and said he was broke and needed money. The bandit then pulled out a .45 caliber pistol, robbed Earley of \$8.10, and fled. (Salt Lake Tribune, January 28, 1934). On October 21,

1935, the Salt Lake Telegram reported that over the prior weekend, a burglar broke the glass on the side door to the market with a tire iron and stole \$20.95.

In addition to robbery, others tried to take advantage of Earley through forgery. The January 5, 1937 edition of the Salt Lake Telegram reported that a man of around 22 years, 5'8" tall attempted to pass checks from the Jorgensen Motor Company to Voyles Market and another local business in the amount of \$22.50. The suspect fled from both locations. It would be interesting to know how Earley or others identified the checks as fraudulent and what happened during the attempted fraud.

The Salt Lake Telegram reported on January 13, 1938 that Earley was held up at gun point in his driveway. Earley speculated that the robber was trying to rob the market's receipts for the day. Instead, the robber walked away with \$7.50 and Earley's watch. He and his daughter – it doesn't say whether it was Evelyn or Mildred – pulled into the driveway at around 9:30 p.m. After the daughter went into the house, the robber approached Earley with a "shiny revolver" and said "Stick-em up," before walking away with the money, the watch, and a notebook. The robberies continued throughout the history of Voyles Market. In a potentially life-threatening robbery, "a tall, slender man entered the market and asked E. B. Voyles for a package of lunch meat." Earley, then 88, entered the walk-in refrigerator. As soon as he entered, the apparent customer "flipped the latch," locking Earley in the refrigerator. The robber took \$5 in cash from the register, although for unknown reasons did not take another \$7.75. A few minutes later, a man by the name of William Leemaster, heard Earley pounding on the refrigerator door and let him out. (Salt Lake Tribune, January 15, 1967). Being seven years old, I recall my parents and aunts and uncles discussing this robbery, grateful that Earley had been found and not left in the refrigerator, which could have caused him hypothermia or even death.

The next year, Earley was robbed again. The Salt Lake Tribune reported on October 7, 1968 that Earley "sold the robber a soda and turned his back to watch the World Series telecast." The robber then struck Earley on the shoulder with the bottle. Earley turned around and said, "What is this?" The robber said, "I've got a gun." Earley responded, "Show it to me." The robber put his hand in his pocket and Earley saw the outline of what looked to be a "small caliber pistol in the man's pocket." Earley gave the man some cash out of the cash register. The robber, seeing more currency, reached across the counter and scooped it into his hand. Earley estimated the bandit escaped with \$25.

Earley's Optimism in during the Depression

In the depths of the Depression, on July 12, 1934, the Salt Lake Telegram interviewed Earley about his perception of the economy. The article does not give the context or the reason why it was written, but it gives some insight into Earley's general optimism as well as some indication of his political views and feelings about the New Deal. It is entitled: "Predicts Trade Upturn – Business Improving, Says Pioneer Butcher; Many Opportunities for Young Men." It quotes him as saying:

Business in general has greatly improved over a year ago. Statistics prove that, and no one will argue that conditions now are not much better than the latter part of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, there are indications that this improvement is not spasmodic, but that the future will bring happiness and prosperity to Salt Lake City.

There is every chance in the world for young men to become successful in almost any vocation. Competition may be more severe than in the early days, but opportunities are almost unlimited. In the mining and real estate businesses, for instance, prices were never lower, and, in my opinion, will not go lower, but will gradually advance on a foundation of sound business principles.

Earley noted that Salt Lake had faced similar downturns in the past but had always come back stronger. He noted that a “scrip system” was used during a downturn in 1908. Earley is referring to an economic panic in 1907 when bank clearinghouses issued scrip in lieu of federal legal tender in response to bank runs and currency hoarding. A clearinghouse in New York issued \$85.4 million and clearinghouses in the rest of the country issued \$238 million of the paper. Scrip was used only temporarily, for around 22 weeks. But Earley attributes the quick acceleration of the economy in 1908 to use of the scrip because people did not want to get caught with worthless paper, so they spent it as quickly as possible, “increasing consumption to a point where business was on a natural level.” Earley did not believe scrip would work in 1934 to solve the Great Depression “since there can be no medium to back the scrip.” (I have no idea what that means.) In any event, Earley next discussed the state of an important New Deal program:

The federal government has done good work with the NRA [National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933]. Failure of this movement has not been the fault of the administration. Many small business men have been greatly benefited by it, having been given an equal buying power with the big man. But codes and other details of the NRA have been carried so far that the good has been overcome by detriment.

This article reveals Earley’s thinking about business, the Depression, and a key program of the Roosevelt administration. More importantly, it shows his native optimism about the future. He passed this optimism on to his children, who also, in my observation, tended to remain positive and optimistic regardless of what challenges they faced. Finally, the article mentioned that Earley also had “other businesses as sidelines, including mining and real estate.”

World War II and Draft Registration

Although he was 63 years old, Earley was required to register for the draft on April 27, 1942. As noted, the Voyles lived at 78 S Street. His description on the draft registration is more detailed than in 1918. He was 5’8”, 142 lbs., blue eyes, gray hair, with a light complexion. He also wore glasses by then. We do not have any records of how Annie and Earley felt about the war and sending two sons to serve in the Army. Walter was exempt because of the industry he worked in, but both Woody and Robert served. For at least part of the time, they served together in Galveston, Texas. Thankfully, they were both safe and sound throughout the war and they came home to lead full lives.

Annie Bitten by the Family Cat – 1944

In 1944, the family cat bit Annie. Because of the bite, the authorities suspected it had rabies. Consequently, the cat “joined the laboratory colony of rats and guinea pigs at the state health department in the capitol for observation.” (Salt Lake Telegram, June 27, 1944). Unfortunately, we have no record of how it turned out for the cat or whether Annie was treated for possible rabies. We are certain, however, that Annie never developed rabies because she lived for fifteen more years.

Annie’s Public Service

Annie was active in community and church throughout her life. Fortunately, newspapers frequently reported on her activities. In 1940, she was President of the Women’s Missionary Society at the First Presbyterian Church. (Salt Lake Tribune, October 13, 1940). The theme of an upcoming



*Annie Lois Malsby Voyles
date unknown*

meeting was a costume dramatization called "From Boise to Legaspi." Legaspi is a city in the Philippines. Perhaps the presenter was a Presbyterian missionary from Boise who went to Legaspi.

In February 1942, Annie took part in the Salt Lake Presbyterian woman's social and education action conference. She participated on a panel with the topic of "Peace." Annie spoke on "Citizens in the Kingdom of God." (Salt Lake Tribune, February 15, 1942). How amazing it would be to have a copy of her remarks to learn how she felt about her religion and its role in establishing peace in the world through the kingdom of God.

Annie was elected Second Vice President of the Salt Lake Women's Democratic Club in April 1944, First Vice President in May 1945, and as President in April 1947 and again in 1948. (Salt Lake Telegram, May 22, 1945 and April 16, 1947). On around March 17, 1948, the club hosted the State Engineer to discuss "What's Doing on Reclamation." Annie would preside. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 14, 1948).

The Salt Lake Tribune reported on December 11, 1948 that Annie would also preside over the farewell address of Judge Reva Beck Bosone at the Newhouse Hotel. Judge Roald A. Hogenson, Utah Third District and later a Federal Claims Court Judge, was also slated as a speaker. Judge Bosone had a particularly noteworthy career. She

began as a teacher and then became a lawyer, eventually setting up practice in Salt Lake City. She gained notoriety through her legal work and was elected to the Utah House of Representatives in 1932 with a wave of progressive Democratic Representatives. Based upon the timing, the farewell speech would have been for her departure for Washington, D.C. to take her seat in the House. Annie rubbed shoulders with the "movers and shakers" of her time.

At some point during her tenure as President, Annie worked with Mrs. C. L. Jack, a legislator, and with Harold G. Miller of Deseret News to raise funds to buy a home for a "handicapped family" that apparently had been evicted from their home. Annie's picture appeared in the newspaper with the other two sponsors, but the date of the picture was not preserved.

In February 1949, Annie organized a major celebration for Jefferson-Jackson Day, a day still observed by the Democratic Party. The day before the event, Annie's picture appeared in the Salt Lake Telegram, February 24, 1949. The theme of the dinner was "Peace and Prosperity," which included the smoking of an Indian peace pipe throughout the evening. In fact, an "Indian chief and princess" would meet the guests as they entered the event, and no "war whoops" would be allowed. Will Rogers, Jr., a former California Congressman was the guest speaker. At 8:30 p.m., President Harry S. Truman's



*Annie organizes the 1949
Jefferson-Jackson Day
celebration*

Jefferson-Jackson Day speech would be broadcast to the gathered diners by radio.

Grandchildren

Grandchildren began arriving in 1940 when Lois, named after the baby that Annie lost, was born in 1940 to Walter and his spouse, Mona Davidsen. The grandchildren were able to share many memories of Annie and Earley as part of this history. Lois knew Annie the longest. She remembered that Annie always wore a dress, nylons, and high heels. Underneath, she wore the type of corset with stays that she had to be tied into. Lois recalls assisting on Saturday mornings after staying over on Friday nights. Lois and Mildred's daughter Pam had to put their feet on Annie's back to pull the corset strings tightly enough. Annie wore the same basic outfit even when she was killing and plucking chickens from Voyles Market in her kitchen in the evenings.

Lois recalled that it was a mystery how the house got cleaned because she never saw Annie clean anything. Lois speculated that either Evelyn or Mildred did the cleaning. I recall Woody telling me that in Utah, Annie hired African-American help around the house. Evelyn mentioned that the reason Earley could move the family residence when Annie was in Florida in 1921 was because the hired help knew how everything should be arranged in the new house.

Annie's cooking skills were legendary. As mentioned previously, she made amazing fried chicken. Lois had poignant memories of Thanksgiving when she was a young girl. She said:

Grandma cooked big turkey at Thanksgiving. She was an excellent cook. She had a huge stove, probably ten feet long or longer. It was a fired oven on one end and a gas stove on the other end. Grandpa and Evelyn always heaped their plates with food and then they would pass out on the couches after dinner. Grandma allowed the kids to run circles around the stairwell in the home on S Street. They stopped for tastes of the turkey while Grandma was carving it. [Pam also recalled chasing around the stairwell in circles.] She even let them bounce down the steep stairs on pillows. For a long time, it was only Lois and [her brother] Carl, but then other grandchildren started coming along. Evelyn played the piano and they sang. [I never knew Evelyn played the piano until Lois mentioned it.]

Lois also recalled that every Friday, Walt and Mona went to Annie and Earley's house to play canasta. Lois slept in Evelyn's room and the boys slept on the sleeping porch, which was an outdoor porch on the second story. The boys slept there all year around – summer and winter. The home at 78 S Street had modern plumbing. The bathroom was on the first floor, and the girls remembered it as huge and freezing cold, with a big tub. Notwithstanding the modern plumbing, Earley, Annie, and Evelyn used the "Thunder Mug" rather than walking down the hall to the toilet during the night. That grossed Pam out as she heard the noise when she slept in Evelyn's room. Pam also recalled the Evelyn didn't do hair well, but she always wanted to do the girls' hair; Pam was terrified.

Grandma and Evelyn also frequently took Lois on the bus downtown to hear the symphony, enjoy lunch at ZCMI, and shop. On these occasions, Grandma wore gloves in addition to the dress, nylons, and high heels combination.

Every Sunday, Grandma and Grandpa picked up Lois and sometimes Carl and went for a ride in Grandpa's car. When Mona saw Grandma and Grandpa coming, Mona would hide her cigarettes, so they would not know she smoked. Grandpa drove up Immigration Canyon and back down Parley's Canyon. Lois would sit on Evelyn's lap and get sick and throw up. That was a Sunday routine. Grandpa had a green Cadillac and later pink one. (I recall the Pink one parked in the alley next to the store when I was

young.) Lois also mentioned that occasionally they held picnics in the canyon. Carl recalled the car trips, saying that Earley drove one speed: fast, always fast, even when pulling into the garage. Both sides of Earley's cars were scrapped from pulling into the garage on S Street. Pam and Johnny, Mildred's oldest children, went on car rides with Earley after Annie's passing. Pam recalls hiding in fear on the floor of the back seat. A favorite stop was a pit BBQ for dinner at 45 South, 17 East. They had ribs, and then later stopped by the store for ice cream. (Woody frequently took his family for drives in evenings and on Sundays. Now I know where this tradition came from – he grew up doing the same).

Car rides were not just a Sunday adventure. As noted above, Earley drove through Riverside, California where he saw citrus orchards. The 1971 Deseret News article mentioned that he "had taken time off to drive his car all over the United States." I believe, although I can't confirm, that the 1951 trip to Florida that he took with Annie and Evelyn was by car.

Lois remembered Annie's legendary activity in the Democratic party, including perhaps some work to provide cheese to poor people. "Grandma did nothing around the house but did a lot with the Democrats." Lois mentioned that her mother-in-law, Cornelia Burdick Johnson, may have been involved in some social causes with Annie.

Lois described the house on S Street. She said it was very large and the backyard slanted downward to the alley where the cars were parked. A long path went down the side of the house into the backyard. Woody and Lois were very close from the time Lois can remember. One time when Woody came home from the war, Lois was running down the path to see him. She fell and cut open her hand so badly that they had to take her to a clinic for stitches. She still can't move her little finger on that hand. Lois, Carl, and Pam found the basement on S Street with the old coal furnace to be very scary.



*50th Wedding Anniversary
October 18, 1955*

Despite being from the south, neither Annie nor Earley had a strong southern accent, only on some words. Lois summed up Annie as a "quiet person" and "wonderful cook."

The store was a central feature in the grandchildren's lives. Carl and all of Bob's children – Bobby, Sandy, Sharon, and Lisa – stocked shelves and worked in the store. Sandy recalled working with Earley and later with Bob on Sundays. I really remember seeing Earley only in two places, in the store and at his apartment on T Street. Whenever we went into the store, he offered us either ice cream or soda pop. I usually picked a fudgsicle. I recall a sign behind the register at the store that said, "This is a non-profit organization, although it wasn't intended to be."

We all saw him every Thanksgiving. The entire Voyles clan squeezed into very tight quarters in the T Street apartment. Earley sat at the head of the table in the dining room, and the younger children sat at the other end in the living room area. The adults brought the food and prepared it in the small kitchen. The television was always on with Thanksgiving football games. I also recall playing outside on warmer days. When they were about 8 or 10 years old, Lois' boys Aldi and Danny shoved Mildred's Jimmy

down the coal chute on T Street. The grown-ups had to pull him out by his feet. Another year, Lisa, Bob's daughter, locked herself in the bathroom, which had an old-fashioned lock that was difficult to open. We simply weren't getting her out without a key, which neither Earley nor Evelyn had. The window to the outside was open, and eventually, the uncles lifted Jimmy up the back of the apartment to the window where he took out the screen, climbed in, and unlocked the door. The Thanksgiving tradition was a fond memory but ended within a couple of years after 1969. Someone determined that we should no longer hold the event at Earley's home, so we attempted to hold it at the Beau Brummel restaurant in Salt Lake. We did that one time, but it just wasn't the same, and the event never occurred on the same scale again.

Mentioning the kitchen above reminded me of something Earley did when Evelyn was out of town. Rather than accumulate lots of dirty dishes, he would eat off a dish, rinse it off in the sink, and use it again the next meal. That way he did not have a lot of dishes to do. He was quite pleased with the speed and efficiency of his process. Pam recalled that during her sleepovers with Evelyn, she saw Earley perched on a metal stool pulled up to the small kitchen counter while he finished off a breakfast of cold cereal topped with the blackest, mushiest bananas imaginable that he had salvaged from the store.

As Earley approached the end of his life, Carl as a policeman was selected to tell Earley he could no longer drive his car. Carl went to the store and took Earley up to the office in the back, broke the bad news, and asked for Earley's license. In 2018, Carl was still teary relating the story.

Other family members have memories of Voyles Market. Pam's second husband Richard Anderson went into the store once at around age twelve with his father. Earley required him to either drink his coke right there or leave five cents for the bottle. Sharon's husband, David Butterfield recalled that his grandmother taught school with Evelyn. His grandfather had a barbershop and owned a beauty salon where the IHOP now stands south of Voyles Market. David had gone into the store on occasion with his grandfather.

Annie's Passing

In June or July 1959, Annie was diagnosed with cancer. Granddaughter Lois remembered it being kidney cancer and that, "It all came on kind of fast." The family moved Annie's bed into the front room, where Evelyn and Bob's wife, Ann, took care of her until she died on September 28, 1959. Her death certificate states the cause of death as "carcinoma of the bile duct." The bile duct removes bile from the gall bladder and deposits it in the small intestine. She was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery across from the University of Utah Stadium in Salt Lake City.

Earley in Later Life

Columnist Steve Hale ran a feature on Earley in 1966 when Earley was 86. In addition to discussing the Florida citrus business and the purchase of the store in Salt Lake City, the article discusses the business of Voyles Market. "Some of his customers have been trading with him 40 years. He writes their orders on little charge pads, keeps a carbon for his records, and they pay at the end of the month." The article also describes the large meat hooks in the window that in prior years had displayed beef, lamb, and pork. Earley spent the entire day on his feet chatting with customers. Hale wrote that the "customer who stays to chat often finds an empty apple box to sit on."

Hale recounts that Earley spoke of the time when he rented the building next door to boxer Jack Dempsey's father to open a café. He also rented the building to potential competitors. "'I've never been afraid of competition,' said Mr. Voyles. 'Once I rented it to a man who wanted to open another grocery

store. He lasted a month.” Earley also withstood competition from major grocery chains. ““When a supermarket opened just a half a block away,’ said Mr. Voyles, ‘it was one of the biggest business days we ever had.’”

Earley also mentioned to Hale his other business ventures. We may never know much about these because anyone with knowledge has long since passed away. Hale notes that Earley bought an interest in a marble company in hopes of selling marble to the state of Utah for the Capitol building. The state however, bought Georgia marble. Later, he and friends bought land in Wyoming for oil exploration. “Before they could get one hole bored, the government embargoed oil drilling. So they forgot the deal.” Another company later hit oil there. Hale concludes:

Mr. Voyles said he has no regrets. He’s happy in his store, and if he’d gotten rich on one of those deals he might have died years ago from an acute case of idleness.

He doesn’t even wince when he rings up a sale for California oranges.

The Salt Lake Tribune interviewed Earley shortly after his 90th birthday. The theme of the March 16, 1969 article was that when Earley and his brother bought the store, the seller said, “I’ll give those boys six months before they’re broke.” (Earley provided the same quote in the column “Steve Hales’s People” on February 26, 1966). Earley was still in business in the same location 64 years later. The picture in the article shows him how I remember him: balding, glasses in front of intense eyes, white shirt and tie, long white apron, and butcher’s jacket. He worked every day of the year except Christmas, but he only worked a half day on Thanksgiving.



Earley's Passing

Earley was spry and healthy until near the end. He was still going to the store every day when he was 93, and perhaps when he was 94. Eventually, his health gave way, and he passed on Monday, October 15, 1973 at Bonneville Convalescent Home. The acute cause of death was pneumonia and complications from a stroke. His funeral was held the following Friday, October 19, 1973 at Evans & Early Funeral Home and he was interred at Mt. Olivet Cemetery next to Annie and her parents.



*Annie and Earley's 50th Wedding Anniversary
October 18, 1955*

Back L to R: Walter Malsby Voyles; Walter's spouse Mona Anita Davidsen; Walter's daughter Lois and son Carl; Mildred's spouse Johan Alver Thelin; Mildred Voyles; Woodrow B Voyles; Woodrow's spouse Leah Fern Peterson; Evelyn Knox Voyles; Robert's spouse Ann Novak; Robert Earley Voyles. Front L to R: Woodrow's son Michael Kevin; Earley B Voyles, Annie Lois Malsby; Robert's daughter Sandra (on Annie's lap); Mildred's daughter Pamela and son John; Robert's son Robert.