

A R I A S G. B E L N A P

Arias G. Belnap is the son of Hyrum Belnap a Utah born pioneer and Anna Constantia Bluth, a Swedish immigrant. He was born September 6, 1893 in Hooper, Weber County, Utah at the home of ^{his} Grandfather Gilbert Belnap.

He received his education in the Ogden City Public Schools and the Weber Academy. The first school attended was the Emerson at about 821-23rd street, now the Ivandor apartments. Formerly it was a fire station. When the Dee School was built about 1904 he entered there and completed the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. His high school education began in the Weber Academy in the fall of 1908. Because of sinus trouble only one half of the freshman year was completed. This delayed graduation until the class of 1913. Later while engaged in the lumber business he took a course in mechanical drawing with the International Correspondence School of Scranton, Pa.

All during his life he has been active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He served as president of a Deacon's and a Teacher's quorum and secretary of the Priest quorum in the Ogden Fourth Ward. At the age of seventeen he was selected as second counselor in the 4th ward Young Men's Mutual Improvement association. While serving in this position he was the 4th ward representative in 1910 in meeting with others from the 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 7th wards in organizing the first M-men basket ball league in Weber County--one of the first if not the first in the church. He was captain and player of the 4th ward team which won the league championship.

He later played for two years on the Weber Academy basket ball team which won the State High School Championship in Provo, Utah in March of 1913. Records he set in the tournament play still stand for play previous to the change in the free foul rule---most points per game - 40, total points scored for three game tournament--108, and an enviable foul shooting performance of 65 of 76 tries. In the championship game with the L. D. S. of Salt Lake City he had one string of twenty four foul tries without a miss--making 28 in all of 33 tries for the game. The performances won him unanimous selection as forward on the all state team. He also participated in track and baseball for the Weber Academy. The school did not participate in football but he played on independent teams against the high school and other teams. He was a good tennis player as of that time.

On November 18, 1913 he departed for missionary service in the Swiss-German mission with headquarters in Basel, Switzerland. Here he arrived on his mother's birthday December seventh and was assigned to the Köln (Cologne) Conference to labor in Barmen and Elberfeld--adjoining cities of approximately 170,000 population each. It is now called the Wupper Thal. Prior to his arrival in Basel his brother Earl who had just returned from the mission, had written that Arias could play the organ consequently the assignment to Barmen where they had an organ but with no one to play. He had had some lessons and while at Barmen and later assignments learned to play well many of the gospel hymns and some preludes.

Because of the hostility toward the Mormons he was banished with all missionaries in the Köln conference in March of 1914. His new assignment had to be other ^{than} Prussia the place of banishment so this assignment was to Mannheim, in Baden-Baden on the Rhine river. World War one broke in August of 1914 and all missionaries in Europe were recalled. Boat

passage was finally secured on the Mauritania from Liverpool, England in October. Before sailing, Apostle Hyrum M. Smith in charge of the European Mission issued another call for him to serve in the Southern States Mission with headquarters in Chattanooga Tennessee.

When he reported to Pres. Charles A. Callis of the Southern States Mission he was assigned to teach a Latter-day Saint elementary school at Buchanan, Georgia. This school operated the year previous and for a year after before the hostility of the people of the area permitted the Mormon children to be taught in the district school. He had an enrollment of some forty pupils. When school ended in May he served in the mission office at Chattanooga until released January 15, 1916. He travelled on his way home via of New Orleans, Houston, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and arrived home February 15, 1916.

He took employment with his father in the Belnap Lumber Co, 229--24th.

September 20th will always be a happy day for it was on this day in 1916 the he married a former school mate, Mabel Harris, daughter of Nathan J. and Emma Okason Harris. They took up residence at 2235 Gramercy avenue in the 6th ward. He was a Sunday School teacher, in the Sunday School Superintendency and a ward teacher while living in the 6th ward. The home they lived in was later sold and they moved to 2055 Washington Blvd. but continued to go to the 6th ward until their next move in 1918.

The war began for the U. S. A. on April 6, 1917. Construction only of governmental or absolute necessity was permitted. Business became slow so he took a civil service examination which led to appointment in the Twelfth Naval Base, at San Francisco, California. In July of 1918 they moved to San Francisco at 1046 Haight Street. He commuted from here to his place of employment with the Naval Supply Accounts on Yerba Buena (Goat) Island. In May of 1919 they returned to Ogden and built a home at 1111--21st in the 13th ward, which they moved into in the fall of 1920, (Sept 19, 1920).

While living in the Thirteenth Ward he served as ward teacher, Sunday school teacher and as class leader in the Elder's quorum both on the same day. About 1921 he was counselor to Gilbert Stuart in the Elder's quorum serving until he was sustained as President of the quorum in September of 1923. He also coached the M-men basketball team three years or from the 1924 spring season to March 20, 1927. ..

It was while serving as President of the Elder's quorum and coaching the basket ball team that the 13th and 4th wards were divided (March 13, 1927) and the Twentieth Ward was organized. He became Bishop of the Twentieth Ward on the next Sunday March 20, 1927 (his wife's birthday) which position he held until December 26, 1943 or nearly seventeen years. The Twentieth ward meeting house was built during the early part of his administration. Recreation and youth activities were high lights of the ward. There was no difficulty in getting the adolescents and the adults to participate in social functions. The teen-age invitational dancing parties were outstanding. The youth chorus known as the "Liederkrantz" were from 1938 until disbanded some eight years later the envy of the County. They sang at least twice monthly in the ward, stake conference, and wards from Malad, Idaho to some miles south of Salt Lake City. They were one of seventeen choruses invited to an M.I.A. music festival in Salt Lake City at June conference where they received a superior rating.

The Aaronic Priesthood work and the Welfare work brought prominent recognition to the ward. His correspondence with one hundred sixty service men called during the time he was Bishop was regular and profitable. Many of their letters were read in the Sacrament service on Fast Day which added much to the meetings and brought an excellent outpouring of the spirit. The boys wrote many faith promoting incidents.

When the Ogden Stake was divided November 21, 1943 he was sustained as Second Counselor in the Stake Presidency--serving in this capacity under President Samuel G. Dye until April 21, 1946 and thereafter under President Laurence S. Burton until October 27, 1957. The youth correlation program of the church which took in the Primary, the Young Men and the Young Women was some of his stake responsibilities. This also included the program of the Aaronic Priesthood and any other activity of the youth. His other specific assignments included Stake and ward records and auditing, Ward Teaching, publishing of the Stake Directory, headed the Melchizedek Priesthood committee on Fact Finding and Statistical and was Stake Welfare Director. He handled the finance work on the Stake Welfare Budget and the collection of the same from the wards. He handled the finance and details in the Stake securing a four hundred and seventy acre ranch in Huntsville--formerly known as the John Hall ranch. Cattle was the main objective in order to secure beef for the welfare plan.

At the Stake Quarterly Conference in June of 1957 he was awarded on honorary Master M-Men's award by Marvin Ashton of the YMMIA presidency.

On August 23, 1957 he and his wife Mabel moved to Salt Lake City where they had purchased a home at 1462 E 3150 S. He continued his work in the Ogden Stake at the direction of Pres. David O. McKay until the next quarterly conference October 27, 1957 when he was released from the Presidency.

The home they purchased in Salt Lake City, was in the Wilford Ward of the Wilford Stake--organized about 1900. His first assignment was to work with some very inactive families who refused to allow ward teachers or any other visitors of the Latter-day Saints in their homes. He and his companion got into every home within a month or two and they have enjoyed many pleasant evenings with them. He and his partner have completed their assigned visits from the fall of 1957 to this September of 1962 without missing a single family during any month.

He was also assigned class instructor of the Wilford Ward High Priest's group serving in this capacity for a year and a half. He was then assigned to the Senior Aaronic Priesthood Committee of the ward and as class instructor, a work which he is still doing. He taught the Married Mutual group last year and will do so again this year.

He has been active in community life. Before moving to Salt Lake City he was enrolled with the Son's of the Utah Pioneers in the Ogden-Weber Chapter and the Ogden Pioneer Luncheon Club and is currently a member at large of that organization. Served as executive board member of the Lake Bonneville Council of the Boy Scouts. Former member and treasurer of the Ogden Lion's Club. During the years of 1954, 1955, 1956 and 1957 he served as business manager of "All Faces West" produced by Ogden Pioneer Days a Utah non-profit corporation. Most of the sound equipment, much scenery and many costumes were procured during this period. Was twice in charge of Liberty Bond sales, during the war, at the bond house 25th & Washington Blvd.

After returning from San Francisco he became associated with the Belnap Lumber Company from May of 1919 until March of 1923. Then for a few months he was employed with the Boyd Lumber Company. He then purchased an equity in the Belnap Lumber Company above what he already held. On July 21, 1931 while on a vacation in Alberta, Canada the Belnap Lumber Co. and the adjoining Smoot Lumber Company was destroyed by fire except for the main office building and about one hundred feet of shed on the east side of the main office building and a one ton truck which was out on delivery when the fire started.

Between the time of the fire July 21 and October 1 was a difficult time. The depression was on and banks were failing in large number every day. One in Ogden--the Ogden State Bank closed its doors August 31 and did not open. Many of the customers of the Lumber company had their deposits in this bank. Up until then they were striving to pay off their indebtedness to the company--but the closing of the bank had a bad effect on them and the community. However by October 1st the company was able to collect sufficient which with the insurance paid the creditors ninety cents on the dollars--accepted in full by them. Because of the fire and the depression all stockholders except myself and my brother Volney preferred to liquidate the business. They lacked a thousand dollars of holding control of the business so were compelled to carry on a liquidation program. He and Volney kept the business going mostly for collection purposes during the fall and winter.

In the spring of 1932 he borrowed on his life insurance policy all that he could in order to purchase materials in order for the small partnership to continue. This partnership with Volney lasted until December 31, 1934, when he took office as Weber County Treasurer.

As the result of a jest to a supporter of one for the office of County Clerk which in jest he said, he could not support the named person because that was the office which he (Arias) was going to seek---he was influenced to become a candidate for the office of County Treasurer. He was elected and served from January 7, 1935 until March 31, 1957 when he resigned to accept the invitation of Gov. George D. Clyde to become a member of the Utah State Tax Commission. His present term of office continues until February 28, 1965.

His specific assignment on the Tax Commission is Commissioner of the Motor Vehicle Department and the six branch offices. Under his direction legislation was prepared for the 1959 legislature. This was passed and provides among other things for a Mirror Reciprocity statute (we treat you like you treat us), discretion over the mileage fee registration basis and the ninety-six hour permit. These changes have made it possible for the State of Utah to enter into advantageous reciprocity agreements with several of the other neighboring states. Fees to be charged to non-resident truckers have resulted from this legislation in bringing into the state's revenue of over one hundred thousand dollars, recurring annually. For his work in obtaining reciprocity agreements thereby cutting down the fees Utah truckers had to pay other states he has been held in high esteem by the motor vehicle industry. In order to obtain these agreements he has travelled extensively to some of the states and to motor vehicle conventions.

Soon after the adjournment of the 1957 legislature the Utah State Public Employees Association was organized. He was selected in 1958 to head a committee representative of this organization, the counties and of the cities to prepare and submit legislation for a Public Employees Retirement system to the 1959 Legislature. This was done but failed of passage. Strengthened by the now growing State Organization he was again asked to continue. From the experience gained this committee gathered much information for the legislature such as, an actuarial study of the proposed system, the cost to the state, cities and counties as well as a matching contribution by the employee; a summary of all other state retirement systems; and reviewed many private company systems in order to show to the legislature that the proposal was sound. The committee also waited upon the Governor and received his support and recommendation in his message to the legislature. The bill was presented and was passed and signed by the Governor. So well was his work done that the Utah State Public Employees Association in their annual meeting in Salt Lake City on July 10, 1961 presented him with a plaque citation of commendation.

His efforts toward employees retirement had its beginning back in 1947 when he was vice-president of the county official association. In 1948 he toured, with their officers, the state in advocating amendments to the then State System so that city and county employees could participate. In December of 1948 he went to Chicago and met with A. A. Winberg, a noted actuary, presented the proposed bill for suggestions. The 1949 Legislature passed this bill which was in effect until Governor Lee recommended its repeal so employees might get on social Security. Repeal took effect June 30, 1952. From July 1949 until the present system took effect July 1, 1962 he served on the State Retirement Board and the Board of Trustees between the date of repeal of the old system and the effective date of the present system July 1, 1962. The board was selected by the employees through an election. There are over thirteen thousand covered under the present system.

As a County Official he was active in the Utah State Association of County Officials. He was a member of their executive board, vice-president, and president in 1948. Since 1947 he has been chairman of their legislative committee. At their convention in January 23, 1953 he received the first "Mark Tuttle" award given by the association--which award is in recognition for outstanding service as a County Official to the County, the State Association and to the community. As County Treasurer he was instrumental in setting up a unit accounting system acknowledged as one of the best then known. It has since been installed in several of the other counties of the State. He helped to rewrite the legislation later adopted on tax, (property) procedure, tax sale ledger forms, the index of properties, the use of abbreviations in property descriptions, etc.

He and his good wife are the parents of five children. The eldest son has been a Bishop, twice a Bishops Counselor and is now president of the Elgin Branch of the Chicago Stake. The second son has been Bishop's Counselor and is now Bishop of the Bakersfield Fourth Ward in California. The youngest son was active in California in Aaronic Priesthood work and Mutual, Bishop's counselor in a Washington Terrace Ward and is now the Sunday School Stake Superintendent of the Ben Lomond So. Stake. The two girls have been and are extremely active in Primary, M. I. A., Cub Scouts, Relief Society, chorus work.

Their husbands are likewise active. Both have been Bishop's Counselors. One has served on a High Council and stake missionary; The other has been active in Scouts, Aaronic Priesthood work and President of the Pleasant View Town Board. All have been married in the Temple. There are twenty one living grandchildren--and three deceased. All the five men have graduated from college. Lois graduated from Weber College.

Sept--24, 1962

Archie Bellap

My dear ...
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