

Chauncey was born in poverty. His mother told him so. His father was well-to-do. Each month, he gave each of his five wives money for food and clothes to last the month. Mother Dorothy Jane had been used to luxuries, as a young lady back in England, such as clothing items of silk, fancy earrings, and such. She purchased those things first, and had little or no money left for food.

Chauncey was named after a church friend of his father; his middle name was the surname of his mother's mother. He was born in 1864, 21 days before Christmas. He had an older brother, Joe, who was four. His sister, Elizabeth, was six. Mother Dorothy Jane had to divide her attention between her two-year-old baby boy, Hyrum, and newborn Chauncey. Hyrum had caught a cold, and it worsened. He died a month after Chauncey was born. During Chauncey's second year, a little sister came to the family. They named her, Harriet.

There in Ogden, Chauncey was a happy little boy. Life was simple.

When Chauncey was three-and-a-half years old, whooping cough came through the town. Chauncey got a spell of it along with his brother and sisters. Father Charles got it, too. But grown-ups have a hard time with whooping cough. In one coughing spell, Charles couldn't get his breath, and died.

The children were sad at losing their loving father. And Mother Dorothy Jane didn't get the monthly money anymore. What to do? The bishop came by and offered church help. They would have to live that way from then on. Dorothy Jane missed buying fine things. She asked the bishop for money instead of food; that didn't work. She knew enough about the workings of the church; she knew the money was there, but the bishop wouldn't cooperate. Very soon, she got a small job, and she was able to buy small luxuries. But she was angry at the bishop. She refused to go to church. She became bitter. But still, a friend talked her into letting her son, Joseph, get baptized. He had turned eight.

So Chauncey and his brother and sisters grew up poor. Mother sent him to school, but he dropped out in fourth grade to get work and help his mother's finances. He got good at many things. Easiest, perhaps, was growing vegetables. He found ways to get things to grow fast and large.

As a teen, Chauncey had many friends. When he was past his twentieth birthday, there was a dance. (You held dances in wintertime, there was more spare time.) A friend had made a date for that dance. Chauncey had not thought of going, but the friend had a call to go on a trip. So Chauncey said he would fill that date for him. The date was attractive to Chauncey; he liked her. His courting resulted in marriage. The lucky girl was Mary Ellen Clark. She had the nickname, Nellie; she was two years younger than he.

They set up housekeeping in north Ogden on a section his father had left him. Then Chauncey got a tract of property on 17th St. He soon had a house built that they could live in, and plenty of ground for gardening. He became known as Ogden's "Market Gardener". He knew how to grow vegetables when it was cold (a primitive greenhouse was part of his garden) and supplied produce to local markets. It was a good living. He had money -- enough that he built three more homes on his 17th St. land. He could get rental income. Chauncey was an artist. He painted designs or pictures on the doors of his houses.

Chauncey liked delivering his produce around town. Some of the grocers liked beer, and invited him to rest a moment and have a beer with them. Chauncey discovered he had a taste for alcohol. All this doesn't happen overnight. In the years around 1900, Chauncey began having drunken bouts. They made him mean, and easily angered.

After the liquor wore off, Chauncey was sad, and apologized all he could.

He was like this for twenty years. Nellie was patient, but suffered greatly. Was there a solution? No amount of talking helped Chauncey. He liked what you said, but was soon tempted, and again got drunk.

The final solution? The U.S. government enacted "Prohibition". Beer and liquor were declared illegal as 1920 began. Chauncey had always tried to be law-abiding. You couldn't get liquor except from a criminal. Chauncey didn't want to try that. He and Nellie went to a doctor. The doctor told Chauncey that he had become "addicted", and that, after a while, his passion would drive him to do anything for a drink. The doctor advised Nellie to keep a close watch on him.

About that time, his eldest son was installed as bishop of his ward. Chauncey had never taken him to church; he had become a "Mormon" on his own. As a faithful father, Chauncey went to the meeting; an apostle gave a talk. Chauncey realized he had missed something in his life. Over the next two days, he became more and more despondent. He decided that his life wasn't worth much the way it was, and that it was impossible to change. Tuesday he locked himself in the bathroom with his rifle. He pointed the gun at his head and used a yardstick to work the trigger. Nellie heard a shot, a loud bang! Chauncey had taken his own life at age 53.