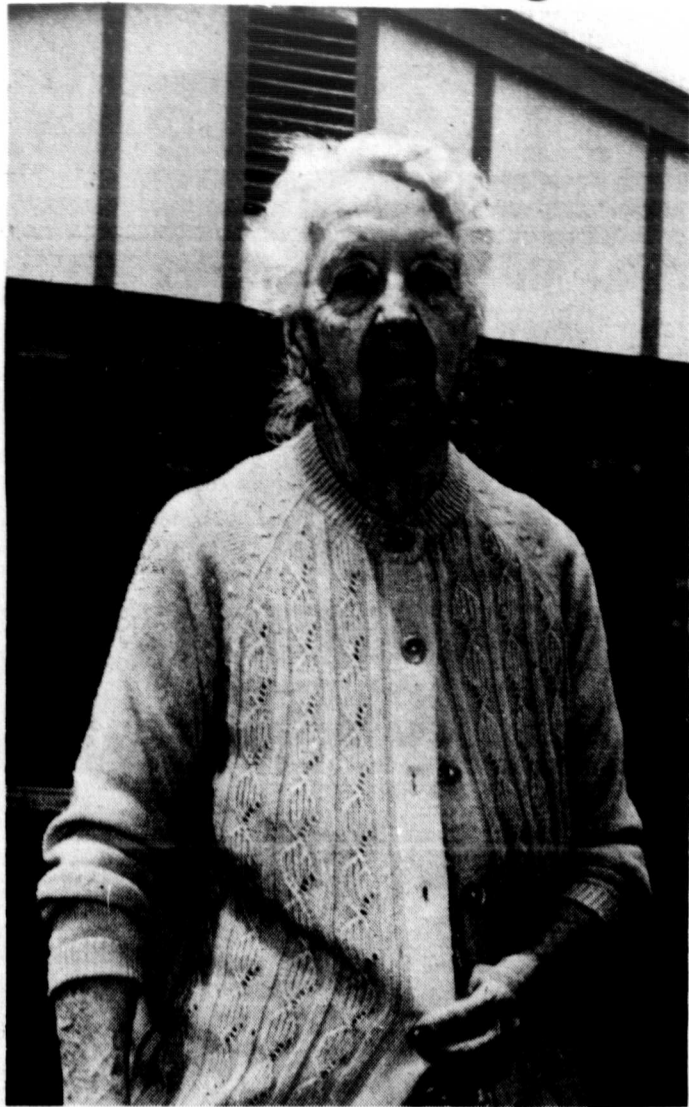


# Mrs. Ella B. Leigh reminisces on memories over past 97 years



**AN ACTIVE LIFE.** Mrs. Ella B. Leigh, who will celebrate her 97th birthday on June 13 in front of her home at 98 South 100 West where she continues to do her own housework and maintain her yard.

The biggest event, the one with the most widespread significance to Cedar City and southern Utah over the past 97 years was the establishment of the Branch Normal College -- now Southern Utah State College -- in Cedar City.

With all the changes that have taken place, with all the advancements in technology, with

all modernization that has transpired over that nearly 100 years of history, Mrs. Ella Berry Leigh, believes, that the establishment of the college, was the most significant.

Mrs. Leigh, who was born in Kanarraville on June 13, 1879, will celebrate her 97th birthday a week from today--June 13.

Mrs. Leigh has been involved

in a number of commemorative activities in the history of this area. She was a member of the first graduating class from BNS, and because of her name--at that time Berry--her's was the first name to be called from that class and she was the first person to receive a certificate of graduation from that institution. The presentation was made by Dr. Bennion Nilton, who at that time served as director of the institution.

Mrs. Leigh went on to receive further education and to participate in the education system as a teacher. She received teaching certificates from SUSC, from the University of Utah and holds a lifetime teaching certificate.

She comments that when she first taught she received \$35 per month--which was considered good, she indicated.

Another significant event in her life was the establishment of a railroad spur into Cedar City by Union Pacific Railroad.

Still very much active Mrs. Leigh keeps a daily diary, she takes care of her own housekeeping and her yard. She is very fond of flowers. She crochets almost constantly and has produced a special bicentennial afghan.

She is noted for her sense of humor and is a tease, according to one of her close friends.

She married William H. (Harry) Leigh of Cedar City on April 23, 1903. They had 10 children, with seven still living and Mrs. Leigh has 10 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

"I'd hate to be raising children in this day and age," she commented. "When we were raising a family the children stayed at home, provided their own entertainment--but all that has been changed," she observed.

Things are just not the same. "When we went to school it was formal and you were taught to obey and to learn -- now days the youth attend school for pleasure. Dress standards are different. If we had two good dresses we felt fortunate. Today the young ladies have dozens of dresses and different outfits and still feel that they need more." Mrs. Leigh did concede, however, "that times changes, styles change and our needs change."

Her husband Harry was busy establishing a business in Cedar City. He owned and operated the Leigh Hotel and Leigh Furniture Company. "My time was spent at home where my responsibilities were educating and raising our ten children. I spent very little of my time in the business," she commented.

Mrs. Leigh has, through the cooperation of Gwen Sherratt, published a booklet entitled "Garnered Memories," and in that publication she recalls, her youth and noted the many changes that have taken place in the past 97 years.

Excerpts from her book follow:

"...I was born the 7th child of a family of 8 children..I was rather pampered by my older sisters and was given many secrets. Because of my



**HANDIWORK.** Mrs. Leigh has an outstanding collection of crocheted materials including this red, white and blue afghan.

responsibility my older sisters often confided their love secrets in me.

"In school I was just an average student, yet I did excell to some extent in spelling and multiplication tables which we memorized..."

"I was a real tomboy in my childhood days. Nothing pleased me more than climbing the tallest trees or scaling the tops of the highest barns..."

"In those early days in our family we all had to lend a helping hand to make a livelihood. We had a farm and ranch stocked with horses, cows, a few sheep, pigs and chickens which father had left us..."

Mrs. Leigh relates many personal expressions of joy and happiness in her book and comments, "Where have the years gone? It seems such a short time since Harry and I were married and we started to build our first new house and the furniture store and hotel. His life was a very busy and successful one. He loved adventure and developed a large and successful farm in the Escalante Valley. He was the first person to prove that deep wells were successful there."

Commenting on her 85th birthday--some 12 years ago--she said: "If I named the blessings I have at this 85th year of my life I would list them as good health, sweet memories, joy in labor, faith in God and his goodness, an unselfish desire to serve others, friends and loved ones." She also recounts that "in childhood and even throughout the gay years of my youth the Eighties seemed far in the future, and weary and feeble seemed those who had reached such an advanced age. Years may make one older but they make friendship dearer and life fuller and richer."

Mrs. Leigh has been active in the LDS Church serving as a Relief Society President in the Second Ward. She has held other church positions.

How does she feel about the many technological advances?-- "The word advancement has been good and is a benefit. Look at what we can do now with electricity and all that it offers. I've enjoyed the advances, I think they are great, but they have also brought about changes in the home, changes in the community and taken away

some of the responsibility of parents. By and large, I like what has been accomplished," she commented.

To you Mrs. Leigh, thanks for your contributions and may we publicly express our sincere congratulations to you on your upcoming 97th birthday celebration.

Klien Rollo, editor