

# George W. Perkins

**Born:** 22 January 1879; Cedar City, Utah

**Died:** 21 May 1937; Salt Lake City, Utah

**Married:** Mary Ann (“Annie”) Bayles; April 1903

**Mother:** Rachel Corey

**Father:** Hyrum Perkins

## Pioneer Heritage

George William Perkins was born in Cedar City, Utah, on January 22, 1879, to Hyrum and Rachel Corey Perkins. Both Hyrum and Rachel Perkins were Latter-day Saint pioneers to Utah. Hyrum’s parents were originally from Wales, and brought their family west to Utah when Hyrum was young. Similarly, Rachel’s family emigrated from Scotland and settled in the Cedar City area. Hyrum and Rachel came to Bluff as travelers in the original company of colonists in the Hole-in-the-Rock expedition, during which time they celebrated little George’s first birthday. It was a bit of a trial for his young mother, Rachel, to keep him safely in her arms as they journeyed to Bluff. George was eagerly learning to crawl and then to walk during the trek, and naturally wanted to test the boundaries of his independence. But Rachel held him in her arms as best she could while the wagons crept along over the rocky terrain. Finally they reached San Juan County and established a home in Bluff. In time, the family began raising livestock and became prominent members of the community.

## Life in San Juan County

George Perkins, the first of eight children eventually born to Hyrum and Rachel, was raised and educated in Bluff. From a young age he worked on his father’s ranch and “literally grew up in the cattle business.”<sup>i</sup> George was always very committed to the Latter-day Saint religion, and as a young man left Bluff to serve a mission in the South. When he returned, George married Mary Ann Bayles, known as “Annie.” After his marriage, George made livestock his career, working alongside his brothers and father. During their early years of marriage, George and Annie had their first two children: Louven and Earl.<sup>ii</sup> Then, in 1906, George was called to serve a mission in Portland, Oregon. However, rumors of local Indian uprisings in Bluff necessitated George’s return home after only a few months.

Life in Bluff was good for George and Annie. Annie was a talented vocalist and gave voice lessons to young women in Bluff. She was known for her stirring performances and enjoyed singing for church services and community events. Local residents remembered George as a “very good-looking man . . . [who] always wore a good looking hat.”<sup>iii</sup> George liked to wear his hat crooked, and this became his trademark. Everyone enjoyed George’s optimism and good sense of humor. Eventually, three more children were born to the couple in Bluff: Anna Marie, Clarence and Ray.

The Perkins family lived in Bluff until 1916, when George moved his family to Blanding. George went to work building a nice home, a large barn and a granary. In Blanding, three more children were born: Carl, Emma and Don, who passed away in infancy.

Although George and Annie had to care for a large family, they always opened their home to people in need. Since there were few accommodations in Blanding, travelers were often directed to the Perkins place. George and Annie were known for their hospitality. They were also well known among the Indians for their kindness. It was common to see Indians eating home-cooked meals on their front porch. It is also said that the Indian Jess Posey, son of Chief Posey (the Indian often blamed for uprisings in 1916 and 1923), always brought his family to the Perkins's property to spend the winter.

By the early 1920's George's health began to decline. He sold his stock in the family ranch operations to his brothers and got out of the cattle business. Because he was unable to work like he used to, George threw his energy into supporting his community and church. He served for several years as a county commissioner, worked as the town marshal, and was a part of the Blanding Stake High Council. Local histories recorded that "Mr. Perkins [had] been a citizen of marked progressiveness and [had] given loyal support to measures and enterprises projected for the general communal good."<sup>iv</sup>

George and Annie spent their final years serving and caring for others. Annie was known for her kind service and hard work ethic. In May of 1937, George traveled to Salt Lake City to have his appendix removed and passed away during surgery. After George died, Annie continued her involvement in the community and as the matriarch of a large family. George Perkins was a devoted member of the Bluff and Blanding communities. His enterprising spirit and charitable attitude helped the communities of the San Juan succeed.

*Researched and written for the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation by:  
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## Bibliography

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i Cecil J. Alter, Utah: *The Storied Domain. A Documentary History of Utah's Eventful Career*, vol. 3 (New York: The American Historical Society, 1932), 219.

ii Three different spellings for their oldest child are given in local records – Louven, Louvine, and Levine.

iii *Blanding City Centennial Family Histories. Volume III. 1905-2005* (Yorba Linda, CA: Shumway Family Publishing, 2005), 1160.

iv Alter, 220.