

Ray Lester and Hannah Pearl Southwick Alston

Ray was born September 22, 1895 in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory to Thomas and Mary Ellen Holt Alston. Graduated high school in Salt Lake and attended the University of Utah for two years. In 1917 he volunteered for the Aviation branch of the Army and was sent for training to Waco, Texas for two months, Gerstner Field, Louisiana for 5 months then to radio school in Austin, Texas for two months where in October 1918 he contracted influenza and was sent to the hospital. He developed pneumonia and had two surgeries and remained in the hospital until the first part of March when he was finally released and discharged. He then graduated from Utah State University.

In 1925 he moved to Highland and served as a Sunday School teacher for six years beginning that year. He married Pearl May 24, 1928 in the Salt Lake Temple and continued to live in Highland (#58). Pearl was born April 29, 1901 in Lehi, Utah to Edward and Rachel Ann Webb Southwick. Pearl attended schools in Lehi, served a mission to the Eastern States in 1926-27, attended BYU and graduated from Utah State University. She taught school in Lehi.

In September, 1930 Ray was called as 2nd Counselor in the Bishopric to Harry Jerling. In June, 1931 he was called to first counselor to replace Brother Groesbeck who had passed away.

They moved to Salt Lake City within a couple of years and remained there. They had four children: Joan, Gayle, Harold Ray and Celia. In 1942 he registered for the WWII draft and was working at the American Red Cross in Salt Lake City.

Ray was a long-time member of the Sons of Utah Pioneers and participated in the 1947 one hundred year anniversary reenactment of the Pioneer trek from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. In January, 1961, the SUP was invited to President Kennedy's inauguration. They also did a tour of Church History sites as well as other points of interest, including Niagara Falls.

Ray and Pearl served a mission together in Texas. Pearl died at 93 on May 26, 1994. Ray's early health problems had no serious consequences, as he lived past his 103rd birthday and died January 20, 1999.