

THE MONT & AMELIA JOHNSON

LEGACY GARDEN





Why a Legacy Garden?

The chickens, coops, cows, and barns are gone and Mont's awardwinning sugar beet farm has been turned into lawn and gardens. But these aren't the legacy. Only two families have lived here: Mont and Amelia with their seven daughters and a son, and Jim and Joyce Whiting with their five daughters and four sons - but don't forget the dozens of friends, extended family, neighbors, students, and renters who have been welcomed by both families for a season or a year or three.

When Grandpa Harold (Mont and Amelia's grandson) handed over the deed to the Whitings, he commented, "This home has always been a place of refuge, hospitality, and tranquility. I know you'll keep it that way." It doesn't matter how "busy" the yard is, that "tranquility" is still here and palpable for those who are perceptive. And that's the legacy we hope you'll enjoy as you walk through the garden.



Mont and Amelia Johnson Legacy Garden

Garden Map

- 1. Legacy Garden Entrance
- 2. Garden Train
- 3. Book Nook
- 4. Heritage Honey Locust Tree
- 5. Fireplace and Fire pit
- 6. Outdoor kitchen
- 7. Play Structure
- 8. Outdoor Games and Play Area
- 9. Gazebo
- 10. Vegetable Garden

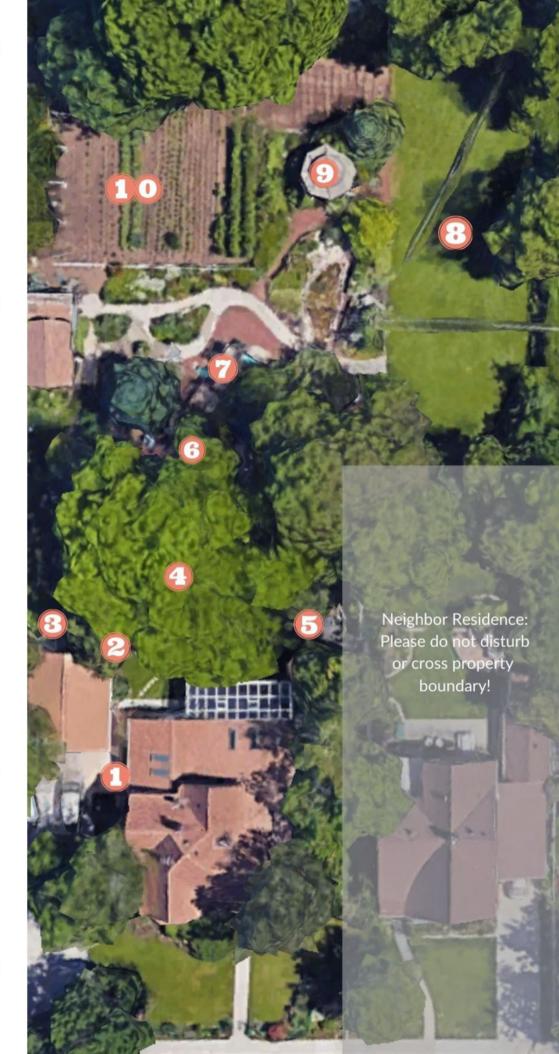
This property was originally developed by Mont and Amelia Johnson. In 1901, they turned a sugar beet farm into a home where they raised eight children,

In 1978, the home was sold to their great-grandson. His family maintain the home and property today.

Walk gently, breathe deeply, enjoy, and leave the garden as you found it.

You are welcome to sit and think, bring a lunch, take a family photo, and stay awhile. The weeds are free. Feel free to take a few home!

Please enjoy but DO NOT cross into neighboring properties or disturb our neighbors in any way.



The First Family

MONT & AMELIA JOHNSON FAMILY

Mont and Amelia's children, in birth order, are: Chester, Hattie, Margaret, Maria, Zina, Lucile, Lydia, and Clara. All of them married except Zina and Maria. All of the girls graduated from colleges and professional schools, including Yale and UCLA as well as Utah schools, in a day when few Americans had that opportunity. One in ten adults couldn't read or write and only 6% of all Americans graduated from high school - let alone universities. Mont's daughters became teachers, nurses, and professional administrators - as well as homemakers. Chet, on the other hand, couldn't quell his pioneering spirit and became one of the first settlers in Richfield, Idaho, and a principal participant in establishing a new and, in that day, robust community.

Zina, hammer and nails in hand, maintained the home after her parents' deaths and Maria returned to Springville after retiring as superintendent of nurses at L.D.S. Hospital, S.L.C., and again the hospitality that was a hallmark of the Johnson family surfaced. As soon as visitors entered the door, Zina and Maria offered their full attention. Children were greeted warmly and allowed to play with one of the menagerie of antique stuffed animals and dolls that rested on a child-sized chair just inside the door - most memorably, a Canadian Mountie. Puzzles and games awaited in an adjoining room.



The 4th North Home

The home on this property was built around 1901 when Mont was Springville's mayor. At the time, fourth north was the northernmost city street, unpaved, of course (motor cars were still in the future). Everyone drove their cattle down the street to the city pasture on the west side of town. Twice a day, Amelia called out, "Here come the cows, shut all the windows and transoms so the dust doesn't come in."

The Johnson home was part of one of the first housing "booms" in Springville. Other "heritage" homes of the same vintage still exist - many of them lovingly cared for - including others on 4th North. The railroad had arrived bringing Sears and Roebuck products to Springville witness the gingerbread trim on many.

The Johnsons tore down their existing home, adobe by adobe to use in the new home. They lived in tents in the apple orchard while the new home was built. Electricity, plumbing, indoor bathrooms, furnaces, air conditioning, and even running water hadn't made it to Springville, yet. Water was carried from the Artesian well on the southeast corner of the property. The Johnson home has been added to, remodeled, refurbished, updated - so many times, it is impossible to account for all the changes.



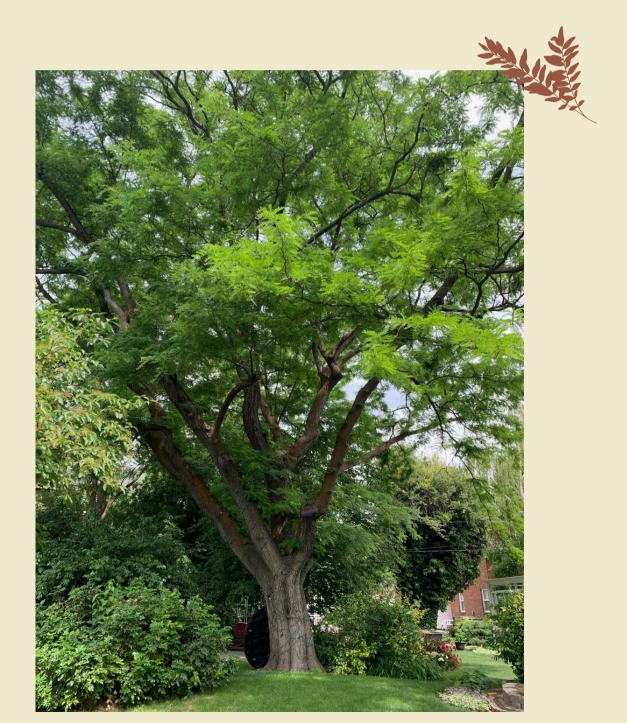
Mont didn't wait long after the family moved into the home to plant fruit trees, gardens, bushes and flowers. White peonies - that reportedly made their way to Springville with the pioneers via covered wagon - hollyhocks, lilacs, roses, along with gooseberry, currant, flowering quince, snowball bushes, flowering dogwood and other trees soon graced the yard, some of them preserved to this day. While he was not particularly interested in farming, ultimately turning the farming over to his son and brothers, Mont's interest in horticulture didn't wane. He and Chet leveled off the grounds and planted spacious lawns along with a hedge to enclose the yard on four sides, with a wooden fence along the front. Mont, who had never had a chance to raise flowers before, found time to satisfy his love for them and spent most of his leisure time planting, cultivating, and caring for the yard.

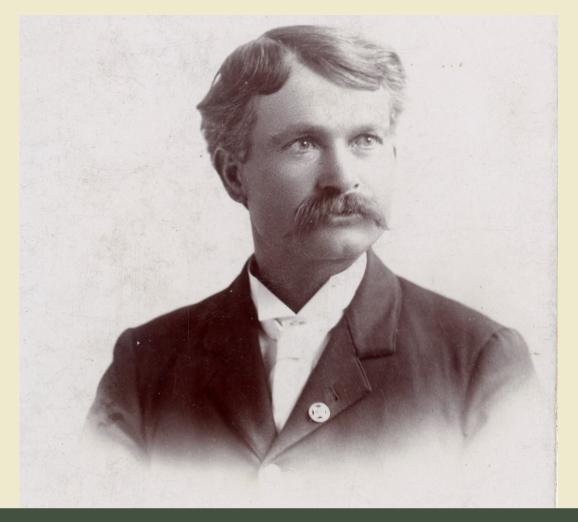
Pictured Above: Civic Leaders of Springville, Utah. Mont Johnson, who was mayor at the time, is standing, fourth from the left.

THE HONEY LOCUST TREE

One later addition also deserves mention as it is the centerpiece of the current backyard - the huge honey locust tree. According to Orin Mead (Lucile's son), his father, Tom, had picked up some beans - "Screw Bean Mesquite" - while the family was living in Denver.

Apparently, Tom held onto the beans and planted them in a pot. In 1943, they brought the plant to Springville and planted it in the center of the backyard. Mesquite is a small, fairly low-growing bush with very fine leaves and little bitty sharp thorns. But what the plant turned into was the honey locust with great, long sharp thorns (and seed pods by the truckload).





Mont Johnson The adventurer



According to his biographers, Mont disliked pretense, was independent in thought and action, and not afraid to break a precedent. His hazel brown eyes twinkled in merriment when he was amused. He had a keen sense of humor and a quick, alert mind. He was positive in his ideas and quick in his decisions.

He always had something of the daredevil in him and many are the stories of harrowing experiences and narrow escapes. At one time while hauling logs in the mountains, he cut his foot badly with an ax. He and his companions were a long way from camp, but they spread pitch pine on the wound, set Mont in a frying pan, gave him a stick to guide himself with, and sent him sliding down the snowy log trail to the camp below.

You could never have made a common man out of Mont. He liked mechanics and had considerable inventive ability. An early entrepreneur, he spent hours in a local blacksmith shop making improvements in his farming equipment. He was always interested in new machinery for the home and bought one of the first electric washing machines in town, and also one of the first flat irons.

THE CIVIL SERVANT

From his early manhood, Mont took an active part in civic affairs. When he was 44, he was elected Springville mayor and remained active in local committees to the end of this life.

He was also county treasurer for three consecutive terms. In the winter when it was cold, he'd walk the mile down to the Denver and Rio Grande station, ride the six miles to Provo and then walk the mile from the station up to the courthouse. All the walking inspired him to buy a bicycle which he rode in the Spring, Summer, and Fall from Springville to Provo on dirt roads - and they weren't leveled off well either.

THE FRIEND



Mont was a real conversationalist. He could visit with anybody anytime. His keen interest in all current problems of the city, state, and nation and his thorough knowledge of them were revealed in the lively discussions that frequently went on at the family table. Young and old who visited his home were drawn into conversations on affairs of the day. Positive in his views, he was tolerant of those of others and was called on, many times, to arbitrate community disputes.

Mont loved children and could instantly make friends with any child. A great reader himself, he encouraged his children not only to read, but to discuss what they read. There were always newspapers, magazines, and reference books in the home. In civil government, history, and current affairs, there were few persons in town better informed than he.

As Mont matured, he became attracted to and then married Harriet Amelia Thorn, the only daughter of one of the most prosperous and highly respected families in Springville.

Harriet Amelia Thorn Johnson A LIFE OF SERVICE



Margaret, a daughter, said of Amelia, "she was the kindest, gentlest person I ever knew. Her life was an example of self-sacrifice and toil, but her one desire was to serve those whom she loved."

Zina, another daughter, commented that "she was very retiring in her nature, and unlike Mont, took little part in public affairs. It was to her home and family that Amelia devoted most of her time and energy. She found her greatest happiness in quietly and unassumingly serving others. She was liberal, benevolent, and selfsacrificing."

DOMESTIC GIFTS

Amelia's life was not one of ease. The sewing for her seven girls was all done at home -every stitch by hand. Her children were grown when the first electric lights came to Springville, when the telephone was first installed, when the first automobile came to town, when the toilets moved indoors.



All the family's food was raised on their farm - grocery stores were non-existent. There was butter to churn, bread to bake, washing, ironing, and sewing to be done. They had bushels of apples, plums, and peaches to cut and spread out to dry. Glass jars for canning were not available until the family was grown.

NO ALIBIS

Although she was a quiet, unassuming person, right was right and wrong was wrong, and her children were taught which was which: there were no alibis. Her children don't remember being scolded and she never raised her voice, but she had piercing dark eyes and disciplined with those eyes. If you were doing something you weren't supposed to do, she just looked at you, and you straightened up – right now!



FAMILY TRAGEDY

One of the great tragedies of Amelia's life was the death of Hattie, her oldest daughter after giving birth to a son, Harold. Zina explains: "The joy in our home seemed to leave with Hattie's passing. There was no more cheerful singing or whistling as we went about our work and no outburst of mirthful play. Mother appeared for years only in somber black. It was years before she smiled again. She begged Jim to leave the baby with us and Harold became a part of our family from then on, living in our home until his marriage."

Pictured at Left: Harriet Anna "Hattie" Johnson. Hattie's son, Harold built the home to the east of the garden.

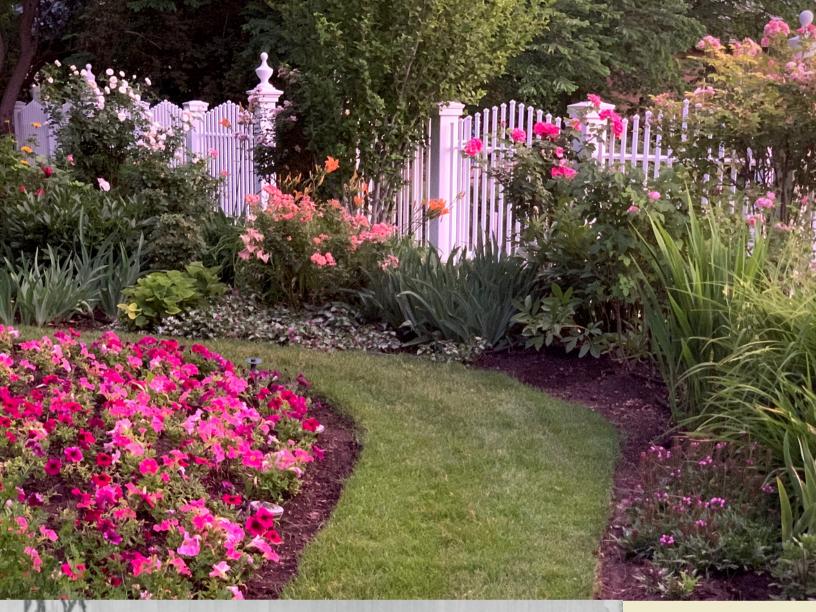
YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

Even with this personal burden, Amelia was still concerned chiefly with the welfare and happiness of others. She did not repress the youthful activities of the younger girls who were just reaching high school age, but welcomed their friends making them feel free and at ease. Her home again became a favorite place for school parties given by the various classes to which the Johnson girls belonged and as Lydia writes, "I don't think she ever missed anything her youngsters were in."

The Johnson kitchen was a favorite spot and frequently the gathering place for young crowds; she just expected we would indulge only in good wholesome fun. Slander, vulgarity, or nosey gossip were never tolerated.

According to Zina, "To do credit to mother's life and character is impossible. There was something so fine, so intangible in her nature that it evades analysis. To the outside world she was not well known, but to her children there will always be the consciousness of an influence that is constantly shaping our thoughts, our actions, and our ideals."

Although they were opposite in nature, Mont and Amelia had much in common in ideals, tastes, and interests. They both spoke their minds freely and frankly, but worked together always to give their children the best possible start in life.





The Johnson children: Front Left to Right: Lydia, Clara, Margaret, Maria

Back: Harold Johnson Whiting (grandson), Lucile, Zina, Chet



The Second Family

CONTINUING A LEGACY OF HOSPITALITY

To a great extent, the Johnson legacy lived on as the Whiting childrens' friends who were often here to play games in the yard were welcomed (volleyball was everyone's favorite and touch football a favorite with the boys; the basketball hoop never rested); water fights with water from the open irrigation ditch, and sing-a longs around the piano on a Sunday evening were other favorites. One of Joyce's favorite stories is returning from work one evening to find 5 teenagers making cookies in the kitchen - none of them her daughters.



THE CONTINUING LEGACY

And the gardening lives on! It's expanded a bit now, having taken over much of the land initially devoted to chicken coops and sheds. Raised garden boxes have modernized gardening.

Part of the backyard has been converted from garden to lawn and many garden features have been added (garden swing, children's play station, outdoor kitchen, fireplace and patio, gazebo, pond, and sunken firepit); all materialized with help from the Whiting family - the newest addition, a train station.

Over the last twenty or so years in particular, thousands of wedding guests have enjoyed the garden, often commenting about the "peace" and "hospitality" they found here (the first wedding was celebrated here on a New Years Eve in 1906 when Hattie and Jim Whiting celebrated theirs; it was unusually warm that evening and guests danced on the front lawn).

Considered a "nuisance" by the city, the weddings have ended, but we hope you will experience peace and serenity as you walk through the garden - the hospitalitythat we hope will always be "A Legacy."

> EARTH'S CRAMMED WITH HEAVEN AND EVERY COMMON BUSH AFIRE WITH GOD; BUT ONLY HE WHO SEES, TAKES OFF HIS SHOES. THE REST SIT 'ROUND IT AND PLUCK BLACKBERRIES.

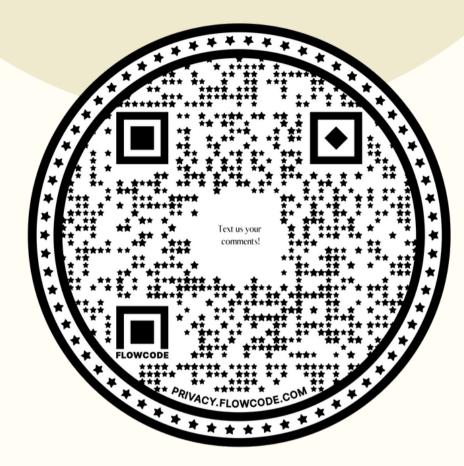
> > ~ ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Take off your shoes and enjoy! And feel free to pluck the blackberries as well!

Note: Much of the information in this file is an abbreviated version of biographies written by Margaret Johnson Miner, Zina Johnson, and others. For unedited versions, see Family Search.org: <u>https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/KWZM-1H9</u>

The garden and grounds are available for you to enjoy.

Please do not disturb our neighbors.



CONTACT US

Joyce Whiting - owner

Per Springville City, the gardens are no longer available for events, but you may bring your family back during garden hours for a visit.

Scan the QR code above to send us your questions and comments.

Visit TableForFifty.com for Joyce's Family Legacy Garden Recipes.