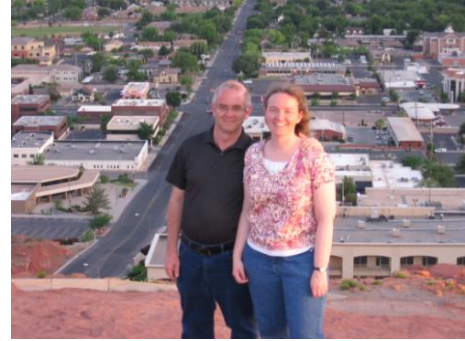


Kevin Jenkins

My name is Kevin Jenkins, and I've recently joined the Cotton Mission chapter of the Sons of Utah Pioneers. I'm a newspaper reporter for The Spectrum, working mostly with police and courtroom news although I get plenty of opportunities to report on general assignments as well.



Although I've been in St. George since 1996 and in the news industry since 1990, reporting is still a fairly new trade for me — I've spent most of my career in the office working as an editor and page layout employee, but I had the opportunity to work with The Spectrum's Spanish-language newspaper from 2006 to 2008 and began to spend more time out of the office thanks to that, and I find I prefer it. (No one else in my family speaks Spanish. I came by it through a church mission to northern Ecuador.)

I was laid off last December when El Sol was shut down and The Spectrum had to let a number of its employees go, but fortunately I was offered the opportunity to return a month and a half later. I was able to put the down time to good use — while searching for full-time employment I was able to work part-time at Dixie State College and as a teacher in the adult extension program's English as a Second Language classes, but best of all I met Adrienne Walker, a local pediatrician, and we've now been married six months. It's the first marriage for both of us, and people tell us the honeymoon's almost over, but we hope it isn't so. Adrienne tends to prefer privacy when it comes to sharing information about herself, but I can tell you that she is from the Salt Lake Valley, is a University of Utah medical school graduate and has been working here in St. George for a couple of years now.

I was born in the Magic Valley area of Southern Idaho, where most of my surviving relatives still live. My father's ancestors were Latter-day Saint pioneers who settled in northern Utah, and my mother's ancestors were Southern Utah settlers. My great-grandparents took their respective families to Idaho in the early 1900s.

Like a lot of people, I grew up with only the vaguest awareness of my own family history. We used to say we were pretty sure we had pioneer ancestors, but I never knew for certain, even though my parents dabbled in genealogy and maintained some family biographies produced by other relatives.

Shortly before my mother died in 2000, she had begun to renew her interest in family genealogy and I decided to pick up where she'd left off after she passed away. To be honest, I was in large measure motivated by the many times I'd heard other members of the LDS church say that their faith was pushed on them a little bit because they grew up in the church instead of receiving their faith as converts. I decided I wanted my family to know who the people were who had received their faith as converts and to understand how they had come to inherit the things they had inherited.

In the process, I discovered anew that my grandmother, who is still living, was born in Cannonville and raised there and in Pahreah, having traveled regularly back and forth between the two homes along the Paria River. I found that one of my friends here in St. George is descended from one of my Pahreah ancestors, and that my grandmother has a few living relatives in Garfield County and other acquaintances who still remember my great-grandfather, who died shortly before my mother was born.

I've had the opportunity to "renew" acquaintances with people I'd never met before, and to visit the cemeteries throughout the Long Valley area and elsewhere, where my ancestors are buried.

The Pahreah ancestor I mentioned was Thomas Washington Smith, who may be familiar to some of you because he was also in one of the pioneering companies that came into Washington City during its first year. His parents, James and Margaret Smith, are buried in the Washington Cemetery.

After gathering what information I could find on my ancestors, thanks largely to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers and my own research, I put together a book in 2004 and another in 2006 that give capsule information on each family line from 1800 down to the present. These were presented to my nieces for Christmas, and then to other relatives as they requested them for their families.

My Southern Utah ancestors include Smiths, Twitchells, Asays, Duttons and Fletchers. From 2002 until this year I was heavily involved with the local Hispanic community through the LDS church's congregations and then through El Sol, and I had accomplished most of what I intended to do in regard to genealogy. But being acquainted with Roland Lee through the Hispanic affairs events in the community and through church, I learned he was involved with the Sons of Utah Pioneers and decided to join up as well. Because my wife and I are still working, we may not be able to participate in all of the organization's events, but we hope to enjoy the association and play a productive part.