

## **Mayor Isaac W. Fox 25th Mayor of Lehi 1931-33; 1936-1937**

Following the January 23, 1931 death of Mayor Sydney Gilchrist, Isaac William Fox, mayor pro-tem, automatically assumed the mayorship. During a February 10, meeting of the city council, Fox was declared “the duly elected Mayor of Lehi City by right and power of the city council to serve until the first Monday in January, 1932.

Mayor Fox was born in Lehi on march 17, 1877, son of Alfred H. and Mary Southwick Fox. He and his wife, Frances Winn, whom he had married in 1900, were parents of nine children. Fox was a successful farmer, poultry and dairy rancher. His grandson Kaye today still owns and operates the old Fox farmstead which borders the Jordan River near the Point of the Mountain.

During Mayor Fox’s first two terms, he served with council members George S. Peterson, Edward J. Larsen, LeRoy E. Lott, Glen R. Adamson, Robert Gilchrist, and Joseph E. Smith; recorder Thomas F. Kirkham, treasurer Martha Ball, justice G. A. Wall, marshal Alex D. Christofferson, and attorney A.J. Evans.

Fox’s third term (1936-38) was shared by council members Virgil H. Peterson, J.E. Johnson, Alvah H. Wing, Fred Peterson, and James W. Holden; recorder F.L. Evans; treasurer Inez Peterson, marshal Niron Fowler; justice George S. Peterson, and attorney O. DeVere Wooten.

One of the earliest events of the Fox’s first term was the inauguration of Utah Beet Sugar Days, which eventually evolved into the now-famous Lehi Roundup. Despite the festive atmosphere of Sugar Days, the mood in Lehi and everywhere during the Great Depression was generally one of fear and anxiety. Republican President Herbert Hoover, believing in limiting the power of the federal government, enacted few measures to deal with the floundering economy. Near the end of his administration, Congress approved Hoover’s most successful

anti-Depression measure, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC).

Most Americans, however, felt that Hoover was not doing enough to bolster the economy and elected Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. Roosevelt, convinced that it was the government's obligation to end the Depression, called Congress into a special session to enact laws to reach this goal. The program which evolved from these efforts were called the "New Deal".

Laws established under New Deal legislation had three main purposes: to provide relief for the needy, to create jobs and encourage business expansion, and to reform business and government practices to prevent further depressions. The New Deal's "alphabet agencies" supervised the government's efforts to these areas. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established in 1933, employed thousands of young men in conservation projects. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), also founded in 1933, funded state welfare programs. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in 1935, provided construction jobs on public projects such as highways and parks.

Several New Deal agencies in 1933 established and managed recovery programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), helped regulate farm production. The National Recovery Administration (NRA), established and enforced rules of fair practice in business and industry. The Public Works Administration (PWA) provided jobs in constructing bridges, dams, and schools.

Congress created several agencies to oversee banking and labor reforms. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), founded in 1933, insured bank deposits. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), created in 1934, attempted to protect investors from buying unsafe stocks and bonds. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), established in 1935, worked to prevent unfair labor practices and aided the development of labor unions. In 1935 Congress also passed the Social Security act to provide funds for retired and unemployed people.

The Depression affected Lehi citizens in a multitude of ways. Those with money found the low prices put them in a better financial position than they had

been in the 1920's. Corn flakes sold at Peterson's Square Deal Grocery for 10 cents a box, and Broadbent's advertised coffee at 20 cents per pound. Van's Cash and Carry advertised 12.5 cents per pound hamburger, and sirloin steak for just 18 cents per pound. Gasoline prices hovered around 18 cents per gallon.

A popular song of the day was "Begin the Beguine." On Sunday evenings, Jack Benny wise cracked over the radio to his wife, Mary Livingstone, and the popular comedian, Rochester. Another radio favorite of the times was Eddie Cantor, who ended his program by singing, "It was nice to spend Sunday with you. I'll be sorry when we're through."

Political news came in on the radio from abroad. Mussolini was invading Ethiopia. Announcements told of the British acclaim for King Edward VIII, who was not yet entangled in gossip over his romantic involvement with America's adventurous Wallis Simpson. There was also alarming news of terrible dust storms originating in parched fields of the midwest.

On the bright side, tickets to movies at the Royal Theatre, where "talkies" were now commonplace, were just 10 cents, one thin dime, one tenth of a dollar. Occasionally both the Royal and the Cozy theatres gave away tickets to keep patrons spirits up. Most businesses struggled to stay afloat.

The December 17, 1931 "Lehi Sun announced a "Hard Time Ball" in the LaVeda Ballroom (former Smuin Dancing Academy). The 50 cent ticket for men could be purchased with vegetables, fruits, grain or other foodstuff. Women were encouraged to bring preserved for their 10 cent entrance fee. LDS Church donations also returned to an "in kind" contribution when the Lehi Stake Presidency announced that farm and garden produce would be accepted as tithing.

A Community Welfare Committee under the direction of George S. Peterson was formed to help families in need. Woodcutting teams laid in stockpiles of fuel for winter, and the Lehi Community Cannery was opened in a People's Co-op building to allow people to preserve fruits and vegetables.

Some people helped themselves by robbing local businesses, rustling cattle

and stealing hogs or helping themselves to others corn or potatoes, but most honest men just wanted work. Even when jobs were available, however the hours were reduced in order to spread the work among the greatest number of families.

Lehi's first RPC grant, for \$617.55 was announced in the October 13, 1932 "Lehi Free Press". The paper noted that the money would be given to those who are "in need and are willing to work for it." November 3, the paper carried the announcement that RFC funds would henceforth be administered through county rather than community organizations. Under this new system, food, clothing and fuel vouchers were issued instead of cash, though recipients were still required to work for the supplies.

One hundred sixty-eight RFC-funded men, making from \$3 to \$20 a month, worked on crews cleaning the cemetery, streets, sidewalks, ditches, the Memorial Building and Wines Park. In February 1933, an RFC crew relocated the large bleachers, judging stands, and corrals from the rodeo grounds on the Evan's Ranch to the former site of the city ball Park.

In interesting aspect of Mayor Fox's third term was the fact that he was also serving as bishop of the Lehi Third Ward, a dual role that had only been seen once in Lehi's history, during the earlier administration of Mayor/Bishop David Evans.

On February 25, 1949, long after the Depression had been resolved by World War II, former Mayor Fox was doing his chores when stricken with a fatal heart attack. The former mayor was buried in the Lehi Cemetery.