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History of Phebe Forster Benson

Utah Pioneer of 1850

Written by her Granddaughter, Mrs. Neta Dalton

For Camp Elizabeth, Parowan, Utah

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Phebe Forster Benson, my Grandmother, was born in Grofrigs, Staolton, Cumberland, England, in the Corlile Branch, August 25, 1820, daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Forster.

Her father and mother died while she was a young girl, she and her sister Ann, started themselves in business of dressmaking, and milinery as means of support.

In 1840 Richard Benson was sent to this part of England to preach the Gospel. She and her sister became interested and in 1841 she was baptized by grandfather, Richard A. Benson. Their acquaintance ripened into love and they were married in a little church in England, in June, 1844, the 30 day. Soon after their marriage they set sail for America.

On arriving in New York they learned of the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith and they went to Nauvoo, where they Saints were at this time, while they lived in Nauvoo they had a baby boy who only lived a month. Grandfather helped work on the Temple while they were there. From here they moved to St. Louis. He they had another baby boy and lost him, then they went to Alton, Illinois, and this is where Uncle Heber Benson was born, July 17, 1849, then they came on to Salt Lake in 1850 and in December of the same year they were called to come down and help settle Iron County. Grandfather came here with the first company, but left his wife and baby on account of weather conditions at this time.

of the year but went back in May and brought them.

When they were back in the states they took one of the six children whose parents both died of Cholera the same day. Her name was Elizabeth Parker, mother of Melvin and Parker Ward. She became the stepdaughter of Grandmother and lived with them until she married Edward Ward. Grandmother and the family always thought a lot of her and she of them.

Grandmother was a mother of many, she gave a home to several girls in those days. She did lots of sewing and hat making. She always needed some one to help with her work and she raised an Indian girl. She traded a fancy quilt for her. They named her Sarah. She lived with Grandmother until she married a man by the name of Harris. She was a faithful servant and they all loved her. She would fight for the children if needs be.

Grandmother would never let any of them mistreat her, she helped with outside chores as well as inside. Grandmother never let her mix the bread, but she always baked it.

Grandmother and her sisters did sewing for the dead in St. Louis so being handy with sewing and having a machine a thing very scarce in those days, she took charge of all the sewing for the dead and preparing bodies for burial. She did this work all her life and her daughters, Aunt Madora and Libbie followed her in this Noble calling doing it all their life also. Grandmother took up her girlhood trade as dressmaking and milliner. A book could be written on the work she did in this community along this line. In those days (Early) her loving service was extended to all who needed it. She went into all the homes and cared for the sick and lay away the dead. In this noble calling she never tired.

she also went by the day to see and if they could not pay her cash she took anything she could use in the home. And many times turned work into the hands of those less fortunate than she. When there was anything in theatres of entertainment that needed costumes they always went to Grandmother for help. Another way she served the community was helping to make the first flag for the 24th of July, just two months after arriving here, and furnished all the material to make it. It was made all by hand. There were not any machines in the town then.

Grandmother and her sister, Ann Forster, who Grandfather also baptized were the only ones of her family who came to this country. Her sister stayed in St. Louis and Grandmother went to see her when the World's Fair was in St. Louis.

Grandfather was in Salt Lake on business in 1866 when my father four years old, and while he was there he was called to go to England on a Mission. He wrote to tell Grandmother about it, and to say he thought he had better go without coming home. The family have the letter Grandfather wrote to him at this time, which shows her noble character. She tells him she thinks it would be best for him to go from there, as in those days it was quite a trip to Salt Lake City and she says in her letter for him not to worry about them. They would be blessed by sacrificing and thanks him that they have plenty and that she is proud of him being worthy to fill a mission, and says some of the children felt badly to think of him not coming home and says that he will have to write to them and console them.

Grandmother Phebe Forster Bensen served many years as First president of the Relief Society, and then when the

next president, Emma Smith moved away, she went back in and took this position again for a while.

So many time we wait until it is to late to thew the flowers, but before Grandmother passed on, this community honored her with a celebration to show their appreciation for her life's service.

She died June 25th, 1904. Had she lived until Agust 25th, she would have been eighty-four years of age.