

History of Mary Elizabeth Fretwell.

Utah Pioneer of

Written By Her

For the Cedar City, Camp, Cedar City Utah.

Poem written by her parents.

Sweet babe we cannot hope that thou be freed,
 From woes to all, since earliest time decreed,
 But mayest thou be with resignation blessed,
 To bear each evil, howsoever distressed.

May hope her anchor land amid the storm,
 And ere the tempest rear her angel form,
 May sweet benevolence, whose words are peace,
 To the rude whirlwind, softly whisper --cease.

And may religion, Heavens own darling child,
 Teach thee at human care and grief to smile,
 Teach thee to look beyond this world of woe,
 To Heavens high fount where mercies flow.

And when this vale of fear is safely passed,
 When deaths dark curtain shut the scene at last,
 May thy free spirit leave this earthly sod,
 And fly to seek the bosom of thy God.

Mary Elizabeth Fretwell was born in the city of London, England April 14th, 1843. The daughter of William Killingley Fretwell and Mary Ann Raby Fretwell, she was the oldest child of a family of five children. Her parents were what was called, well upto-people.

Her earliest recollections were of a beautiful home and the luxuries of life, But while still a very small girl reverses came, which she was too young to understand. She only remembers her mother crying and her father trying to comfort her. Then she remembers moving to a less comfortable home,

At the age of ten years she was baptised a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Her childhood days were very happy ones, untill she was fifteen years old. At that time the Angel of death entered their home and she was deprived of her mother. Her father grieved very much and refused to be comforted.

For years Mary struggled to help provide and care for the family. She first learned to make baby shoes, then mens clothing. She worked as a tailoress all day. Then come home and her home work in the evening, no matter how tired or at what hour her work was finished. She would always read one hour before retireing.

Each week she saved a small sum toward her imigration. On June the 4th. 18 63 she bade old England farewell. Oh the heart aches of leaving

her dear father, her sisters and brothers. and the dear old grandparents that had meant so much to her.

She sailed on the ship "Amazon". How sad and lonely she felt when she saw her beloved country fade from sight.

Before starting, as the ship lay in the London docks, Charles Dickens came on board. His eyes seemed to be on every one, and as he walked about the ship was writing. The material he gathered went into his book "Uncommercial Traveler".

Many of his best friends were on board the ship. Among them were Bro. James Athay's family.

They had some very perilous times on account of the bad storms at sea. But they also had some happy times.

On the 5th. of July the captain raised the "stars and Stripes", and they celebrated their first American holiday.

They arrived in New York harbor on the 18th. day of July. From there they rode for three days, shut in a cattle car, with no place to lie down and very little to eat.

They then rode on a flat boat down the Missouri river, for three days and nights. It was very uncomfortable and crowded. It was at the time of the Civil War, and the boat was often shrouded with bullets.

When they landed they were met by the men from Utah., with teams. They were then taken to Florwence. On Aug. the 6th. they started their long journey across the plains. For five hundred miles they traveled by the Platt river, crossing it on foot many times. At times the water was to their waists. Then they must build a fire and dry their clothes.

Their journey was not all trials however, for they had many happy evenings, singing and dancing. At last the mountains came in sight, and how beautiful they looked.

It was as they came down into Salt Lake Valley that she felt her loneliness most, and she shed bitter tears for her loved ones at home, and wondered if she would ever see them again.

As she was wondering where to go and what to do, a lady she had known in London, came to her and offered her a home until she could obtain work. This she gladly excepted..

On the 23rd. of April 1864 she was married to James Davis in the "Endowment House". They then went by ox team to Cedar City, Utah to make their home. They prospered financially and soon had a comfortable home and some luxuries.

About this time she recieved word of the death of her two sisters, with typhoid fever, and shortly after this word of her fathers. This left only her two small brothers, who came to make their home with her, but it wasn't for long. Father with others were called to settle the A Arizona country. It was thought at first, thst this was a misunderstanding as mothers health was very poor, and out of eight children she had lost four. Bishop C. J. Arthur blessed her, and promised her, that if she would go with her husband to fulfil this mission, her health would be restored, and she would never be called upon to loose another child. He also promised that they would be protected in all their undertakings.

They sold all their earthly possessions at a great sacrafice. They loaded a few necessities into their two wagons, and on April 13th. bade goodby to their many friends in Cedar City.

The party consisted of twenty- six men, two women and eight children. (Taken from the Tribune.)

They traveled for many long weary weeks, crossing over the same region that the Spanish did in 1540. (the first whites to visit Utah.) The Indians said this was the first colony of whites to pass over since that time.

The Spanish, like the Indians, carried water containers, but the missionaries were unprepared for this emergency. Numerous wells were dug

with great effort, under the rocks and in the sinks. Some of these yielded water and some did not. They suffered a great deal and one third of their cattle died.

Every morning mother would arrange the childrens safely in the bottom of the wagon, then climb to her high seat and drive a wagon all day. There were only Indian trails to mark the trail, so driving was a hard job. At night they would fortify with their wagons as a protection against the Indians.

In crossing the Bukskin mountains they cut notches in the sand stone for a footing for their horses. Then they must hitch eight teams to one wagon and with all men holding the rope they would let the wagon down the mountain in safety.

About the middle of May they crossed the Colorado river at Lees Ferry and stopped at Moencopy, a small village settled by some Moquech, Oriba and Navago Indians, and a few white people.

John W. Young (son of President Brigham Young) was there building woolen mill to take care of the great amount of wool produced by the Indians. Brother Wilford woodruff was also there, on a vacation. They thought it best that mother, on account of her health, remain there with her family, while the rest go find a home. This they did, and notwithstanding the wind blew the sand continually, they enjoyed their stay at Moancopy very much.

On the first day of July the scouts returned, and on the second day they started again on their journey. They traveled peacefully until they camped the third day, then they were in the territory of some very hostile Indians. The Indians came in camp and caused a great deal of trouble. They drew their knives across their throats to show mother what they would do to her when they returned with more help.

These Indians were sun worshipers, and believed that the sun could see and tell the great spirit all they do, but if the son does not see the great spirit does not know. So when daylight came and the sun came up the Indians had not returned. The little company began to feel much better.

They had about decided to cook breakfast when an old Indian came and told them to hitch their horses up as quickly as possible, and travel. They did so but was a little doubtful as to the Indians plans. They feared he may be leading them into a trap. The roads were bad and the sand deep, and the horses had to stop often. When they would stop the Indians would stand on the front seat and look far and near. Then he would ask them to hurry. This continued for a number of miles.

Then he told them they could stop and rest and afterward they could travel as slowly as they wished. He then asked them if they if they did not know him, and when they told him no, he seemed very much hurt. He knew mother and father and knew where they came from. He told them that he had been to their place many times and they had treated him very kindly and always gave him food to eat. He had watched them ever since they had left home. He said the Indians were planing to rob and kill them as soon as they could get enough volenteers, and that is why he wanted them to hurry and get in another tribes territory.

In two more weeks travel they arrived at the San Jaun river, and named the place Montzuma. They were just over the Utah line in the extreme southeast corner of the state. It was a very beautiful place, but mother felt very lonesome and down hearted.

The scouts built houses for them, then returned to their homes. Only two small families remained. In two weeks after their arrival mother gave birth to a baby girl. The first white child born on the San Jaun. Through all these hardships, mother was steadily regaining her health.

Some weeks after they had been left alone a friendly Navajo came and told them that the White-river Utes were on the war path, had killed the Weekes family just over the Arizona line and would be there to kill

them about nightfall. The Navajo wanted them to come to his tribe where they would be safe, but they had been promised that no harm would come to them if they would fulfill their mission faithfully.

They fortified themselves as best they could in one room. The children were put to bed with many a tear and kiss. The two mothers took their watch by the beds of their children. The two men and a small boy stood with their guns loaded. They first made holes in the walls through which to shoot. About midnight the dogs began to bark and run up the river. Who knows the suffering of these mothers as they tried to quiet the fears and cries of the children. After a while the dogs came back, but were very restless for a long time. Their keen ears could still hear the Indians. Next morning it was found that they had crossed the river above and were making for the strongholds of the Renegade Indians.

Once more the promises made to this little colony of missionaries, thru the servants of God, were fulfilled. A short time after this, word was received in Salt Lake City that the missionaries had been killed by the Indians. Brother Erastus Snow sent Thales Haskel a missionary interpreter and also a great friend of mothers, to see if this were true, and if it was to bury them, and if it was not, to stay with them until another company, which had been sent to join them arrived.

When Bro. Haskel came in sight of the two small cabins and saw smoke coming from the chimneys, he felt very thankful.

He found them all alive and well, but they had very little to eat. They ground wheat in a coffee mill to make their bread, and when it became necessary they would kill a milk cow, and because they became very tired of meat they would roast it over an open fire until it had lost the flavor of meat.

Months went by and the company did not come, they were out of wheat and were living on wheat cakes.

At this time Lewellyn Harris, another missionary interpreter, came and asked if he could stay with them for a few days. He was very weak and hungry. Mother told him he was welcome, but she was at a loss to know what to give him to eat. He told her to be of good cheer for her worst days were over. They suffered a great deal of anxiety over the company of old friends that were to join them months before. Where were they and what had been their fate?

It was not until April 6th. 1880, that the company arrived. They had spent six months on the road and four months had been spent in a hole in-the-rocks. No lives were lost but they had suffered many hardships and were without food.

Most of the company settled twenty miles down the river at a place they called Bluff, because of the high bluffs of rocks near their city. A few people came to make their home at Montzuma. Mother was overjoyed at this as they were old friends of hers. They organized a ward and at times enjoyed themselves very much.

Mother would put her small children on a donkey and walk miles to visit a neighbor.

Mrs. Thales Haskell made an American Flag and they celebrated the national holidays and had many enjoyable times.

About this time father built a small home about a quarter of a mile from the river in a perfect Garden of Eden so to speak. The trees were beautiful and flowers grew in abundance.

On August 15th. 1881, another baby girl came to bless their home. When it was only a few days old, the river overflowed its banks and came almost to their doors. The men watched night and day, thinking they may have to carry mother to safety. But the water gradually went down and no harm came to them at this time. However they could see the need of building on higher ground. A year later they built a home close to the Mesa, so they felt the danger of high water was passed. Always day and night

One morning they got up to find their milk cows had been taken. Their fourteen year old son begged permission to go after them, And they tried to persuade him not to go but he had no fear and still begged to go. Finally he was allowed to go. Night came, but not her boy, night passed and another day and still he did not come. All these dreary hours mother had walked the floor in agony, At ten o'clock the second night he came. He did not have the cows but imagine their joy at having their boy again.

On the 3rd. day of July 1883, they were blessed with a baby girl and one day, at dinner, before the baby was a month old it was noticed that the little two year child was missing. There was always a terrible fear of the Indians. She was not found until sundown that night. She was unharmed, but words fail to express a mothers suffering under these conditions.

The U. S. soldiers were sent down to protect the settlers, but they were more afraid of the Indians than were the settlers.

One evening an Indian came to say that one of their numbers had been killed by some whites, and their tribe were on the war path. He said they would kill some whites to make up for it. He also told them that the Indians were six miles up the river and would be there that night. The family sat around the open fireplace that night, and about nine o'clock mother heard the approach of the Indians. No one else heard them, so mother opened the door and walked thru a long dark bowery and welcomed them in. Although the family was expecting them, they were surprised when mother re-entered the room with fifteen or twenty Indians warriors. The Indians asked them why they were not afraid of them. They were told that as yet they had not been harmed by the Indians and they did not think they would be.

This remark pleased the Indians very much and they told the family to stay inside of their own fence and they would not be hurt. Mother feed them well and they left good friends to seek revenge elsewhere.

In June 1884, the river began to rise, creeping slowly and deadly toward their homes, soon the banks of the river gave away and the homes of the little colony were destroyed, with the exception of two homes, mothers and Haskells, who had built on high ground. In the midst of the flood could be seen small houses, furniture and almost anything that goes to make a home., even dogs and cats were trying to climb to their own homes.

In one weeks time all their beautiful crops and gardens were reduced to sand bars. In the distance, almost covered with sand, was their old faithful waterwheel, which had done so much toward feeding them and beautifying their homes and farms.

They never set foot on their land again and after receiving an honorable release in Aug. 1884, they, with a few neighbors, turned their backs on the heart sickening sight.

Father owned a store, and this, along with their home, must be abandoned for whoever might come and take possession. They were able to dispose of most of their store goods, but they could only take from their homes what they could load on a wagon and a buggy.

Again they took their journey over some very rough country. Notwithstanding they had lost their all, mother was happier than she had been for some time. She had regained her health and strength thru faithfulness, and was now leaving all the horrors of the past five or six years.

They left thru Recapture Wash, up over the present sight of Blanding and Monticello. They traveled upon the Blue Mts. then were compelled to lower their wagons down with ropes to the little settlement of Moab. They next came to the Grand river. There was only a row boat to take six or eight wagons over. The river was wide and swift, so the task was not only tedious but also very dangerous. It required one week to cross, as the wagons had to be taken apart and across a few pieces at a time.

They then crossed a fifty mile desert and came to Emery County where the company left them. They continued their journey alone. They came thru Salt Lake and Cache Valley and up thru Logan canyon. When they reached the summit they found themselves looking down on the beautiful Bear Lake. But mother was filled with fear. She had learned to have a great dread of water. However, on coming down into the valley, she felt better, for she could see that the water was perfectly calm and safe.

It was sometime in October 1884, that they reached Paris. Their first homewas a hundred and sixty acre farm, two and one half miles north of Paris. After the required time of the law to prove up on the land, they left the farm and bought a three acre lot on the hill in Paris. After several years of hard work they established a comfortable home.

Mother took an active part in the Relief Society and was called to act as councilor to Sister James Athay in the Primary. Sister James was the same dear friend that she had come from England with, and was a life time friend.

The remainder of her life was very happy and peaceful. She had the satisfaction of knowing that she had answered the calls made upon her. She had been promised by Patriarch Levi W. Hancock that if she would do these things she would live until she was satisfied with life.

She lived to see the fulfilling of all the promises that had been made to her. She was loved and respected by all her family.

On November the 20th. she spent a very pleasant afternoon with Sister Chrisie Price, talking of the many happy times they had had together, and on November 21st. 1923, she passed peacefully on her way to a still more beautiful and happy home, and to the glory that awaits the faithful.

1928.