

BIOGRAPHY OF ARABELL ANN CHANDLER PARKINSON

Arbell Ann Chandler Parkinson, the daughter of George Chandler and Esther Glover, was born February 27, 1824, at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England. Her parents were of the substantial middle class. While they may not be classed among the aristocracy, they were highly refined, well-educated, honest, industrious and thrifty.

They were the parents of thirteen children, seven of whom died in infancy. The other six on record are as follows: Caroline Matilda, Clarissa, Arbell Ann, Emily Sarah, Margaret Eliza and Frederick.

George Chandler was an unusual character, being high-minded, strict in his habits, exacting in his discipline, and immaculate in his dress and personal appearance. Everything about him, both in private and in public, must conform to his social ambition. He would not recognize his own children until they were up to his standard in personal appearance.

Her mother, Esther Glover, was of modest disposition, highly refined, naturally artistic, scrupulously clean, and possessed of unusual executive ability. Arbell Ann inherited these characteristics from her parents.

The education they received consisted of their home environment, along with the school advantages in their locality at that time.

She was naturally artistic and original, a student of literature, humorous and kept up with her social surroundings. As was the customary sport at that time, she indulged in horse-back riding and became quite expert.

Because of their industry and thrift, the family became prosperous and was considered among the well-to-do class. However, they were overtaken with misfortune and lost their property, part of which, if not all, went into chancery and was never recovered. The family was therefore forced to live by strict economy and industry. It was during this period that Arbell learned the art of dress-making and millinery, and by this means she rendered valuable assistance to the family.

The family were Christian people and associated with the Protestants of their time. They read the scriptures and believed in Jesus Christ.

Under this influence the subject of this sketch grew to womanhood.

In 1839 her father died. Soon after his death, her two sisters married. Caroline married a man by the name of Ghent and moved to London. Clarissa married John Alder.

We have no information as to what became of the other two sisters. We do know however that Arbell proved to be the main support of her widowed mother and her brother Frederick. It was during this experience that they became acquainted with the "Norman" missionaries. In 1842, she, her mother and her brother Frederick joined the church and became active members in spreading the tidings they so joyfully received.

In 1849 her mother died and her little brother Frederick was left to her sole care and protection. In the mean time, her sister Clarissa and her husband, John Alder, joined the Church and emigrated to St. Louis in 1850.

Arbell struggled on. Through her industry she was able to maintain herself and her brother and to save means so that in 1851, they were able to emigrate to St. Louis. They left Liverpool January 9, 1851, on the steamship "George W. Bourne". This company was in charge of William Gibson, Thomas Hargett and William Booth. They arrived in New Orleans and were taken by river-boat up to St. Louis. Here she engaged in her profession as dress-maker and milliner in an effort to acquire the necessary means to continue their journey to Utah.

It was here that she made the acquaintance of Samuel Rose Parkinson. After a brief courtship they were married on January 1, 1852. They remained in St. Louis until after the birth of their first child, Samuel C. Parkinson, who was born February 28, 1853.

They continued to accumulate means with which to pay their way across the plains, and, early in the spring of 1854, they joined the St. Louis company. His sister Lucy and her brother Frederick accompanied them on this journey. Most of the company had oxen, but he was among the few who had a mule team.

TRIP ACROSS THE PLAINS

Notwithstanding their effort and care in arranging for this journey, it required almost super-human courage and determination to face the enterprise; and, above all, it required faith in God. Each day brought forth new difficulties to be overcome, not only the desert and the wilderness but also the wild beasts and the savage Indians.

On their way, they encountered herds of wild buffalo, and at one time witnessed a stampede among them. Her husband went on several buffalo hunts. While riding on one occasion, he killed a buffalo and the meat was used for food. No doubt many of the children and grand children can remember her husband, in after years, taking them on his knee and telling them the story of the buffalo hunt and then singing to them the song, "We'll Chase the Buffalo".

She performed her full share of camp duties by caring for her child, then a year old, and her brother who was but a lad. We have no record of any sensational experiences.

The company traveled on from day to day until they reached Salt Lake City some time in October, 1854. Here the company was disorganized and each family determined on its own location. They chose to locate at Kayward, where a few of the Saints had settled. Here they began building a new home under pioneer circumstances. Her first home was a one-room log hut with a dirt floor and dirt roof. It was very hastily built because of the lateness of the season, with little or no regard for household conveniences.

Winter was soon upon them. As there had been no time in which to provide food for the animals, they had great difficulty in securing feed for the winter. Her husband would often take the grass from under the snow on the side hills, bring it home in sacks and feed it to the animals, thus saving their lives.

With her usual tact, Arbell fixed up her little home with conveniences available. Thus they spent the winter.

In August, 1855, she gave birth to twin babies. She named them William and Charlotte after her husband's father and mother. While she was in bed with these babies, they experienced one of those terrific east winds which blew the roof partially off immediately above her bed, allowing the rain and wind to come in on her. Not only her life but the lives of her children were endangered, but by the providence of God, they were saved.

Her husband, became a leader in the development of the ward and its surroundings. The chief means of support was derived from gardening, farming and stock-raising. She did the sewing for her own family and for others, besides taking care of her household duties. Thus they managed to live for the next five years, during which time two more children were born; George in 1857 and Frank in 1858.

Her husband was one of the minute men during the Johnson's Army experience in 1857, and was also one of the rescue party of the Salmon River missionaries, which of course took him away from home a great deal of the time.

Her brother Frederick, now about 20 years of age, became dissatisfied with his future prospects, and, because of the gold excitement in California decided to go there and seek his fortune. For some time he kept in touch with her by letter, but finally ceased to write and was never heard from again. Every effort was made to discover his whereabouts, but without avail. This was one of the greatest sorrows that ever came into her life, which sorrow lingered with her as long as she lived.

MOVE TO FRANKLIN

In 1859 there was considerable speculation as to advantages in Cache Valley. Her husband decided to make a trip to investigate. He was impressed with the locality and decided to locate at a place afterward known as Franklin. He made some slight improvements to establish a "squatter's" claim and then returned to Kayward (Kayville) and spent the winter.

In the early spring of 1860, they gathered together all of their belongings and made their way to Cache Valley, and they with twelve other families, located where Franklin now stands, on April 15, 1860. This was then supposed to be in Utah, but was afterward known to be the first white settlement in the State of Idaho.

ARABELL AND CHAMBERLAIN (continued)

These thirteen families lived in their wagon boxes for several months, and meanwhile built their log houses in formation to protect themselves against the Indians.

They immediately began their gardening and farming in preparation for the coming winter. During the summer they built the school house which they used for public worship as well as for school. This was the first school house built in Idaho.

While her husband was engaged in the outside responsibilities, she was busily engaged in the care of her children, for she did all of their sewing by hand and often used horse man's hair for thread. Her meals were prepared with the most primitive utensils and bare necessities of food. She manufactured the soap, mended the saddles and cured the meat.

Because of additional immigration the settlement made rapid progress and was soon organized into a ward.

In the year 1862, her daughter Esther was born, and, in the meantime, her husband began the operation of a small store. He handled such commodities as the community needed, using part of their home for the store. She, with her many other duties, assisted in caring for the store.

On one occasion, while thus engaged, an Indian entered the store and demanded some liquor, threatening her life if she refused to give it to him. With a calm presence of mind and great courage she ordered him from the store thus averting what might have been a tragedy.

WAR AT BATTLE CREEK

In 1863, the government troops made war upon the Indians at Battle Creek, on Bear river, 12 miles north of Franklin. Most of the adult Indians were killed in the battle, leaving a great many children alive. These Indian children were distributed among the white settlers. An Indian boy whom Arbell took to raise, they named Sam. He was of a savage, suspicious nature and was very difficult to manage. This added much to her responsibility.

During this year her son Albert was born. He lived only nine months. This caused her great sorrow. However, there were so many responsibilities crowding on her that she was forced to dismiss her sorrow as much as possible in order to carry on her duties.

In 1865 her daughter Clara was born. In 1866 her ninth child, Caroline, was born. This made a family of five boys and four girls, and one Indian boy they raised from childhood. This of course meant great industry and good management.

PLURAL MARRIAGE

We approach this phase of her life with a desire to do full justice to all concerned. Plural marriage was a tenet of her faith and then all worthy men were required to accept and obey this law. Her husband, also a firm believer, felt it his duty to obey this law. In 1866 he married Charlotte Smart and in 1867 he married her sister Maria Smart.

It required supreme faith and confidence in God to undergo this experience. She knew by the revelation from God that her domestic life for time and all eternity was involved in this order of the priesthood, or the celestial order of marriage, and upon this conviction she stepped forth and gave to her husband these two wives to become the mothers of his children.

She did not court notoriety but was content to live a domestic life in her own home. She believed in doing right for the love of right and not through fear of punishment, and she instilled this principle into her children.

In her there was an atmosphere of goodness. She seldom gave a distinct order or made a rule. Her children learned from early infancy, from her attitude of mind, that if a thing were right it must be done and there ceased to be a question about it. By this course of life, she commanded the respect of the three families and of all who made her acquaintance. She was honest, just and charitable, and in the promotion of these characteristics it was truthfully said of her at her death, "She was the peace-maker", thus exemplifying the instructions of our Savior, "Blessed is the Peace-Maker".

As would be expected, when these new members were added to the family more house room became a necessity and these were provided as fast as circumstances would permit. The conveniences and house environments were kept abreast of the other families in the community.

ARABELL AND CHARLES (continued)

The children were taught to be industrious and self-supporting. They were believers and promoters of education and as they obtained all the education afforded locally the children were sent to more advanced schools for higher education. The four boys filled foreign missions and the girls became efficient as school teachers and home makers.

Arabell's husband was the leading merchant and was a successful business man. He was a member of the bishopric of the ward and in keeping with the growth of the settlement he built a spacious new home and here she entertained her many friends among whom were many of the general authorities. At the time the raid was being made on the polygamist families her husband was arrested and served six months in the Boise penitentiary for this offense and paid a three hundred dollar fine.

It was Arabell who conceived the idea of providing some social pleasure for the aged and unfortunate and to this end it was decided to have such a gathering in her new home. Invitations were sent out to all over sixty years of age and to the widows and the orphans. This was regardless of creed or color. She provided refreshments and a program was arranged. This gathering was a pronounced success and many expressed appreciation and good will. Because of the success it was decided to make it an annual occasion and was so continued for the rest of her life. It was out of this that the idea of family gatherings was introduced. She sponsored the idea and among her last requests was one that her home be kept as a family gathering place for the family reunions. A number of years before her death a family organization was effected and reunions of the three families were held once a year in her home. These reunions were very successfully carried out and were enjoyed by all. She was liberal with her contributions and when the Relief Society of the Church adopted the policy of storing wheat she became a strong advocate of the move and was very strict in paying her allotment. Here was a strenuous life. She is now approaching the end. Let us review in brief some of her rich experiences.

She had a family of nine children, thirty four grand children and one great grand child. From the time she joined the Church in England until the time of her death she has been a leading figure in the pioneer experiences of the Church. Without the least show of vanity we can truly say of her that her integrity was unimpeachable and that she was trustworthy in all her social and business transactions in life and has carefully trained her children in habits of industry, economy and strict morality. She has given to them the best facilities for education that the country in her day afforded.

After an illness of nine days duration she passed peacefully away on August 9, 1894. She was a true wife and a loving mother, a safe and wise counselor and lived to see the fruits of her paternal labors in that her children are all faithful Latter Day Saints and are respected members of society. She had a firm testimony of the gospel and the highest aim and ambition of her life was to observe its teachings and to establish an example that her children might emulate. Among her last admonitions to her family was to be united and to perpetuate the sentiments of love and family reunion in their homes. On April 6, 1935 there were eighty five of her descendants met in her honor at the 20th Ward Relief Society Hall in Salt Lake City. A suitable program was given and refreshments served. On this date her descendants numbered as follows: nine children, 66 grand children, 167 great grand children, 88 great great grandchildren and 87 in-laws.

DESCRIPTION AND OTHER DETAILS

Arabell was of slight build, medium height, fair complexion with brown curly hair and brown eyes. She was easy to become acquainted with and an interesting conversationalist. She was a splendid cook, a good economist and executive. She was not robust but wiry and active, could endure long hours and was extremely patient and kind. She rather shunned public notoriety. She was very sensitive to the care of her husband especially when he was suffering with severe headaches. When her husband was sentenced to prison at Boise, Idaho for his religious belief, she asked the officers if she might send a good bed with him. The answer was: "No. You may send one quilt and one pillow". She manifested her thoughtful devotion by providing an unusual quilt, having eight pounds of wool in it, also sent a nice soft pillow and would also send a box of fresh fruits, cake, candies, etc. occasionally. In his absence she looked to the care of his numerous family and guarded carefully his financial interests. She had good health up to the time of her death. The doctor said she had no disease but her vital organs had worn out.