

JERUSHA SMITH PEIRCE  
13 January 1836 - 27 June 1912  
by Pamela Peirce Alligood- 3rd great granddaughter

I have been asked to share information about Jerusha Smith. I will do so through the eyes of her granddaughter Helen Jerusha Peirce.

I was standing at the foot of grandma's bed the day she died. Everyone said Uncle John had come to get her because they had heard her talking to him earlier in the afternoon. I also believe Uncle John came to get her.

Grandma and Uncle John, who was her brother and Patriarch to the Church, loved each other very much. During their entire lives they never said a harsh word to each other. As a matter of fact grandma never had an unkind word for anyone at anytime. It was such a virtue with her that President Joseph F. Smith remarked about that when he spoke at her funeral.

Grandma's mother, Jerusha Barden Smith, died in Kirtland before grandma was quite two years of age. Her father, Hyrum Smith, remarried a lovely woman named Mary Fielding. Grandma would tell you, "Mary was a kind, loving, gentle mother to us all." Even so, her tender young life was filled with mobs, persecutions, moving from place to place, culminating finally in the long arduous journey West. The consequence of this trauma was for grandma to spend the entire rest of her life plagued with terrible dreams.

One night I awakened her from one of these dreams hoping to calm her. When she was awake she told me the story of the martyrdom. They had brought the bodies of her father and her Uncle Joseph back from Carthage. Grandma said, "The family was so worried because we knew the mob was coming to get the head of the Prophet and burn Nauvoo." So she told me the family had lookouts who were to beat on drums if they saw the mob coming. And surely enough, the drums began to beat, people were crying, "the mob is coming, the mob is coming." Everything seemed to be in chaos with dogs barking, wild-eyed cattle looking in every direction, and thunder and lightning filling the air. The family was afraid, not knowing what to do when, as grandma said, "We saw a cloud forming over our heads. It was just a small one but it started to grow and grow until it filled the sky. It moved over the river seeming to take water out of it as it did. When it was over the heads of the mob down poured a torrent of rain soaking them to the bone and destroying their ammunition. Despite their best efforts they were forced to turn back."

Grandma bore her testimony to me of that experience. She told me that she had, "seen the power of the hand of the Lord in that cloud that day, doing for us what we could not do for ourselves." She told me that of all the experiences she had ever had this was the most powerful, and humbling and one that would be with her forever.

Grandma was a quiet person. She spoke only when she had something of value to say. You can be sure when she said something we listened.

I'll always remember her in the big black gathered skirts she liked so well, with the white pocketed apron and black slippers that had the elastic in the sides. Oh what a privilege it was just for me to have known such a noble woman as grandmother Jerusha.

After crossing the plains Jerusha lived with Mary Fielding until Mary's death. Jerusha was 16 years of age at that time. Her beloved brother John assumed guardianship of the family. At age 18 she married William Peirce. She and William moved four miles north of Brigham City to a place we now call Harper. William and Jerusha had 9 children, 5 of whom survived her at her death. Her husband William had passed away four years earlier.

We have gathered here to celebrate Hyrum's birthday. I would just like to say a simple thing. I believe Hyrum Smith is a man the Lord loves and trusts. Hyrum is a man I have grown to love and trust.

I say these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.