

SARAH SMITH GRIFFIN

Sarah Smith began her mortal journey on October 2nd, 1837, the sixth and last child born to Hyrum Smith and Jerusha Barden. She was born in Kirtland, Ohio and at the time of her birth her father Hyrum was serving a mission for the Church in Far West, Missouri. Her mother, Jerusha died eleven days after giving life to Sarah.

Many a heartache came to Sarah in her young life. During her childhood her family was driven from their home many times by angry mobs and her father arrested and incarcerated on false charges. After Governor Boggs' extermination order Sarah's family was again forced to move this time from Missouri to Nauvoo which provided a short-lived respite from persecution.

At the tender age of nearly seven years, Sarah lost her father Hyrum as a result of his martyrdom at Carthage Jail when he and Uncle Joseph sealed their testimonies of the latter-day Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with their innocent life's blood. She remembered being taken to the Nauvoo Temple as her father and Joseph were being prepared for burial and the people showing her the bullet hole in the side of her father's nose which had been filled with cotton. She also remembered that she had sore eyes at the time and that she had to hold her eyelids open with her fingers to see him.

After this immense loss for Sarah, she and her family hastily loaded up their belongings to escape the increasing threat of more harmful violence and crossed the Mississippi River shortly before the "Battle of Nauvoo" in the chilling winter of February 1846. This escape journey then took Sarah to Winter Quarters where she resided for two years while the family made preparations for the arduous trek across the plains and mountains to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Sarah, now almost eleven arrived with her family in the valley of the Great Salt Lake in September 1848. One of their neighbors in the Valley was the Albert Bailey Griffin family whose only living child was a son by the name of Charles Emerson. Charles herded cows for three or four summers with Sarah's brother and the two families became more acquainted. As a result of this acquaintance Sarah, at the age of sixteen years, and Charles, who was just a few months short of eighteen years of age, were married in Salt Lake City by President Heber C. Kimball in January, 1854.

Sarah and her new husband moved to Sugarhouse where a year later their first child, a son, was born but died the same day. Three more children were born while they continued to live here but only two survived to adulthood, Alice Lovina and Joseph Emerson. Also that year President Heber C. Kimball asked Sarah and Charles to go settle an area along the Weber River which later became known as Coalville with their log home the first to be built there. During the next four years Sarah and her two children were alone much of the time as a result of the various employment duties Charles performed.

In the fall of 1862, Sarah and Charles with their two children moved back to Sugarhouse. During the following winter another son Ernest Adelbert was born to them. The First Presidency of the Church extended a call to Charles to go back to the Missouri River and assist in bringing the "Emigration Companies" across the plains and to the Great Salt Lake valley. As a result of this call, Sarah and her three children stayed in Sugarhouse for another year before returning to Coalville. Another baby girl, Hannah, was born to them and shortly thereafter President Kimball called Charles and Sarah to move south to Long Valley, the area which presently encompasses Orderville and Circleville.

Sarah and Charles had moved often during their married life and had a great desire to stay in Long Valley and raise their family of four children. Due to hostile Indians in this area they moved to the more settled area of Kannarra. During a trip to Salt Lake City to conduct some business and obtain supplies they prepared to return to their home when they received word from President Kimball that they should not go back to Long Valley. Charles was then asked by the Bishop of the Coalville ward to teach school. Sarah and Charles again set up their home in Coalville.

In 1873 the family moved from Coalville to Farmington and later to Ogden. Sarah was called upon to make yet another sacrifice as her husband was called to go on a mission to England. Charles accepted this call not knowing how his family would be cared for during his absence. The Lord provided a way when Joseph and Ernest both obtained jobs to support the family and also a man who owed them money paid his debt. Charles then departed on his mission, returning six months later because of ill health.

A year after his return a baby girl, Helen Jerusha, was born to them on October 16, 1876. Sarah never fully recovered from the birth and in a short time she became very ill and then began to hemorrhage which resulted in her death on November 6, 1876. Her newborn baby then died in her father's arms a couple of months later.

Sarah's thirty-nine years of mortal life entailed much loss and hardship--the loss of her mother Jerusha shortly after her birth, the martyrdom of her father Hyrum during her childhood, moving from home to home throughout her life, giving birth to eleven children but losing seven of those to death in early infancy, a husband whose duties and church callings often took him away from home and yet she was never known to be angry, was very meek and gentle. In his journal Charles recorded his feelings at the passing of his beloved Sarah--he had lost a loving, tender, kind wife and mother. It is said by those who knew her that she, like her father, was very loving and gentle. Thank you Sarah for your example to us all.

Sherise G. Clayton
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