

BIOGRAPHY OF HARRIET ELLEN LE SUEUR



My Grandmother, Harriet Ellen LeSueur was born 18 June 1850, at St. Heliers Isle of Jersey, the first child of John LeSueur and Caroline LeGresley. They were both of French ancestry. I can find very little of her childhood. Her parents accepted the teachings of the missionaries, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day. Immigrated to America when Grandma was about five years old.

I remember Grandma telling me that while they were in a hotel in New York City, waiting to come west to Utah, she wandered away and was lost. The police took her to the police station, where her parents nearly frantic found her later, eating Ice cream, and enjoying it because that was the first she had ever had. Then they took the train to the Mississippi River, then took the boat and sailed up the river. Early one morning the boat sailed ashore for a few supplies. There was a store close by and her mother, Caroline wanted some soap, so went ashore to get It, her father got uneasy for fear she would not get back In time, so went after her. When they were coming back the boat started before they could reach it. Her mother got so excited seeing the boat leave with her children aboard, she lost all their money she had with her. Her father was glad he went after her. As neither spoke English, they had a bad time, but finally got another boat and overtook the other one in two days. They landed at the same place where the Saints were to take the wagons to cross the plains. There was a Mormon Elder returning home that died there, he had three orphaned children, taking them to his wife. Before he died he gave them to her father to take to Salt Lake where some one would care for them.

They arrived in Salt Lake, City in October 1855. They lived at Bountiful, ten miles north of Salt Lake. They had a hard time to get along, as the grasshoppers had taken the crops. They lived there until 1858, then moved south with the Saints that were called to move on account of Johnson's army coming to drive them out. A year later they moved back to Bountiful and bought a farm there. Here they lived until her father died, age 49 on November 24, 1862. His mother was Marguerite Levoine. He did not have any near relatives that we know of, except a half-brother Thomas John Mallet, born 1815.

Harriet Ellen's father died when she was nine years of age. After her father died the family moved to Montpelier, Idaho in 1864.

One day she was wading in a creek near her home. She saw a man coming toward the creek. In those days, women wore long dresses down to their ankles. Harriet Ellen was very modest, very self-conscious about her feet. When the man approached, she squatted enough for her dress to cover and hide her feet.

Grandma said this about her mother. "My mother, Caroline LeGresley was a very smart industrious woman, she could do most any kind of work. She would knit such pretty lace and window curtains and pillow slips. She could knit a spool of thread in one day. She loved to read the newspapers and sermons and would talk of the time when the Savior would come. And that she knew she would be with her husband again. She was very religious, a true Latter-day Saint. She always attended her Sunday meetings and Relief Society. Always jovial and happy and would sing us French songs. She died Oct. 1898.

In 1866, 28 August, Harriet Ellen and Charles A. Warner were married. Charles was the man she met at the creek. Harriet was 17 years old. After they married they moved to Hooker, Utah, then back to Idaho. The next year 18 July 1867 they made a trip to Salt Lake and were sealed In the Temple.

Their first four children, three boys and one girl, died in their first year, except the second child a boy, died three and a half years. In the year 1878, they moved to Arizona, where they lived awhile They moved to Mesa, Arizona in 1878. On January 17, 1879 they moved to St. Johns, Arizona and were there for three years. In 1883 they moved to Safford, Arizona.

You can imagine with what fear and anxiety Harriet Ellen must have felt In this new adventure, as she was also waiting the birth of her eighth child, not knowing if she would have the help of another woman when her time came. I remember Grandma telling how after camping in a clearing Grandpa made, they saw smoke not far away. Grandpa fearing it might be Indians went on his horse to see. But found another white family - Hyrum Tippits - also members of the Church. How glad the two women were to find each other, because Sister Tippets was also expecting a baby soon. They agreed to care for each other, hoping it would not be the same time. Well, Grandmother was first by about two weeks. That was my mother, Sylvia, as far as they knew the first white child born in the Gila Valley. She had two other children after that.

Harriet Ellen was midwife to bring 42 babies into the world. She was a great comfort to those who were ill in the early settlements of Arizona Territory, especially when the savage Indians were uncontrollable in the county.

In 1877 her sister Caroline LeSueur Mallory died, leaving two children, Warren and Emma. Grandma took them and cared for them until they were grown. Grandma was a tailor by trade, for many years she made men's suits, and was especially skilful with a needle. She wove carpets, rugs. She was expert in making hair pieces and switches from hair. I saw some of them, and they could compare with the wigs we have today. She was constantly in demand to sew for others, especially weddings and also burial clothing.

Whenever she sat down to rest, she had knitting or something to pick up to keep her hands busy. Her motto was, 'If you want to be happy, keep busy. Also, if you want something done, ask a busy person. With all these activities, she found time for her Church work.

She was President of the Primary for Twenty -five years. And in worked many years in the Relief Society.

One of her great concerns was to gather the names of her kindred and does the Temple work for

them in the Temple. The last seven years of her life she lived near the Temple in Mesa, Arizona, attending most every day, Most of her effort in gathering and doing the work was for her husband's people. She did some work for the LeSueur's, but others were doing this. Her nephew James W. LeSueur did much to help her and she appreciated him.

Wilma Davidson Merrill often spent the night with Grandmother Harriet Ellen as a child. She once told Wilma, "When I die I want to have done all my laundry and house cleaning on Saturday and have a bath on Sunday and be dressed and ready to go to Church on Sunday." That is exactl what happened.

On Sunday morning, 7 May 1833, she dressed for Sunday School, sat in her rocker by her bed, where she could see when her ride came. She opened her Lesson book and was reading her Sunday School lessons when the Lord called her home; she went quietly to sleep.

At the time of her death she was the mother of 10 children and one orphaned infant girl, Lillie Pearl Thompson, who she raised from infancy. She was the grandmother of 36 and the great grandmother of 12.

I remember Cousin James W. speaking at the funeral, held in Layton Ward; that she had done or bad been paid to be done 5000 names in the Temple. A wonderful heritage. Wilma adds: "Few people live such a good and noble life as Harriet Ellen LeSueur Warner.

Compiled from memories of Lenore Gale Merrill and Wilma Davidson Merrill.