

# Mary Elizabeth Hartness Gordon Calkins (1855-1927)

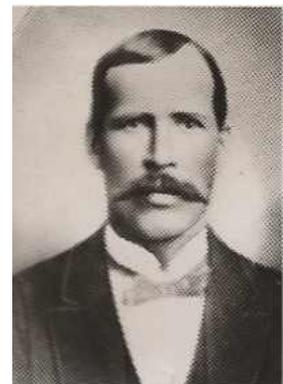


## Introduction and Early Life

Mary Elizabeth Hartness, the daughter of H. Addison Davies and Frances Emeline Dover Hartness, was born 28 March 1855 in York County, South Carolina.

Her second great-grandfather, John Hartness, had emigrated to America a century previously and was part of the great Scotch-Irish community that settled in the Carolina backcountry.

When just sixteen years of age—on 21 January 1872—Mary Elizabeth married John Alonzo Gordon, a first cousin once-removed. Her grandmother, Elizabeth Gordon Hartness was a sister to Moses Gordon, John Alonzo's father. The Gordon family also descended from early York County settlers.



**John Alonzo Gordon**

To John and Mary Elizabeth were born nine children—five sons and four daughters. Only six of the nine children lived to adulthood. All but the youngest were born in York County. William Gold Gordon was born after the family moved to Utah. The names of the children, with birth and death dates, are listed as follows:

	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Death</u>
George Marion Meek Gordon	19 Apr 1873	20 Feb 1934
Ellen Sumpter Gordon	25 Dec 1874	28 Dec 1932
Finetta Catherine (Katie) Gordon	11 Sep 1876	20 Nov 1958
Sammy Gordon	1878	After 1880
Fanny Elizabeth Gordon	14 Sep 1879	14 Sep 1879
Suzela Gordon	31 Dec 1881	10 Nov 1883
Joseph Orlando Gordon	10 Apr 1885	13 Mar 1964
James Davis Gordon	22 Mar 1887	6 Nov 1961
William Gold Gordon	7 Feb 1891	4 Nov 1946

### **The Post-Civil War Era**

The Civil War brought death and suffering to many families living in South Carolina. Mary’s father, H. Addison Davies Hartness, and her maternal uncle, William Meek Dover, both died at the Battle of the Crater in the Confederate defense of Petersburg during the closing months of the war.

Amidst the poverty and privations of South Carolina during the reconstruction period following the end of the Civil War, the Gordon family worked hard to survive. Due to the extreme poverty of the time, land ownership was held by a small minority. It was common for many families to live in small houses on the larger plantations of the area, and to work for a percentage of the crops raised. The John Alonzo Gordon family was one of such “tenant

farmers” and lived on a plantation belonging to a Mr. Oats. According to daughter Katie, it required “a total family effort” to survive.

“Life on the plantation was rather simple and primitive. The implements used to raise crops were crude and often homemade. The main crops raised included corn, cotton, and sugar cane. A small garden or ‘truck patch’ near the house was used by the family to raise their own cabbage, beans, cucumbers, potatoes, and corn. Close by was a stable for horses, cows, and oxen. Most of the plowing and cultivation was done with an ox team.” Hunting and fishing in the nearby forests and streams provided meat for the table.

Sharecropping and Tenant Farming

- **Sharecropping**- under this system, the landowners provided land, a house, farming tools and animals, seed, and fertilizer. The workers agreed to give the owner a share of the harvest.
- **Tenant farming**- (similar to sharecropping) The main difference was that tenants usually owned some agricultural equipment and farm animals, such as mules. They also bought their own seed and fertilizer.

Mary was in charge of the day-to-day management of her home and the provision of meals for her family. As her daughters matured, their help was enlisted in cooking, fetching water, working in the family garden, doing family laundry, and sewing clothes for family members.

Food was cooked over an open fireplace. Water for the family was obtained from a nearby spring. Women spent much of their time cording, spinning, weaving, and dyeing cloth. Yarn would be used to knit stockings. Shoes were supplied by an uncle, Ritchie Hartness, who was a shoemaker by trade.

“Katie preferred spending her time working around the home as opposed to doing farm work. Her older sister, Ellen, on the other hand, enjoyed working with the laborers in the fields picking cotton, cutting sugar cane, and picking up potatoes.”

### **A New Life—Conversion to the Gospel Message**

John and Mary Gordon remained in the York County area for the first sixteen years of their married life where all but the youngest of their children were born. The 1880 United States Census record listed the family living in the Kings Mountain Township of York County that year. John was working in a mill. Four children along with the parents comprised the family. One child (Fanny Elizabeth) had died at birth the year before.

Accepting the gospel message preached by Mormon missionaries in York County, John and Mary were baptized as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Elder Willard C. Burton on 27 January 1882.

After six years of saving and making preparations for their eventual move to Utah, John Alonzo and Mary Elizabeth were ready to leave with their family for the West. In the spring of 1888, they moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina in preparation for their move to Salt Lake City, Utah. While waiting for travel arrangements to be finalized, the family, with other LDS converts, lived temporarily in some empty houses in Spartanburg.

“The night before they were to board the train for Utah, the anti-Mormon mobs came to town. [The Gordon] family was kneeling in prayer when the mob broke the door down, whipped the elders, and drove all the men and boys into the woods. [They] sought protection from a family living in that area.”

The convert Saints were finally able to board the train and begin their journey westward. Traveling by rail, they arrived in Salt Lake City 6 May 1888. John was able to secure a job as a night watchman for the Burton Lumber Company. All members of the family worked at whatever jobs they could to earn money.

## Later Years



**Mary Elizabeth Calkins**

It was in 1892 that “discord entered the home and the parents were separated by divorce.” At the April 1893 General Conference of the Church, Mary Elizabeth met William Cyril Calkins, Jr. of Payson, Utah.\*

According to Katie, her mother “seemed to like him [William Cyril] very much.” At his suggestion, Mary moved herself and her children to Payson.

On 18 July 1893, William and Mary Elizabeth left for Salt Lake City where, the following day, they were married in the recently-dedicated Salt Lake Temple. Thereafter they immediately returned to Payson where they lived in the old Calkins home (located at 90 South 1<sup>st</sup> West in present-day Payson and since torn down). To this couple was born one son, Wilford Cyril Calkins, on 26 January 1896.

Mary died 23 January 1927, just two months shy of her seventy-second birthday. Cause of death as listed on her death certificate was “chronic endocarditis and arteriosclerosis” (heart

\*Of interest is that William Cyril Calkins, Jr., and William Michael Fillmore, who later married Mary Elizabeth’s daughter, Finetta Catherine (Katie) Gordon, were second cousins. Their common great-grandfather was Israel Calkins, Sr.

State Board of Health File No. 43

**STATE OF UTAH—DEATH CERTIFICATE**

1 PLACE OF DEATH 2703915

County Utah

Precinct \_\_\_\_\_

Village \_\_\_\_\_

City Payson No. \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Ward \_\_\_\_\_

2 FULL NAME Mary E. Calkins

(a) Residence No. Payson Uta St. \_\_\_\_\_

Length of residence in city or town where death occurred 33 yrs. mos. ds. How long in U. S., if foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.

3 SEX Female 4 COLOR OR RACE White 5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED (Write the word) Married

6 DATE OF BIRTH March 28 1855

7 AGE 71 yrs. 10 mos. 25 ds. IF LESS THAN 1 day, hrs. or min.?

8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work \_\_\_\_\_ (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) Housewife (c) Name of Employer \_\_\_\_\_

9 BIRTHPLACE (City or town) York County South Carolina

10 NAME OF FATHER David Harkness

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) South Carolina

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Unknown

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) Unknown

14 Informant William Calkins Address Payson Utah

15 Filed Jan 20 1927 Registrar Lillian Vance

16 DATE OF DEATH Jan 23 1927

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from Aug 21 1926 to Jan 23 1927 that I last saw her alive on Jan 21 1927 and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at 3:30 p.m. The CAUSE OF DEATH\* was as follows: Chloroform Edeh-Carditis (90) and arteriosclerosis

18 Where was disease contracted if not at place of death? \_\_\_\_\_ Did an operation precede death? No Date of \_\_\_\_\_ Was there an autopsy? No What test confirmed diagnosis? \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) J. M. Stewart M. D. Jan 25 1927 (Address) Payson Utah

19 PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL Payson Utah DATE OF BURIAL Jan 27 1927

20 UNDERTAKER Melgrum Mortuary ADDRESS Payson Utah

21 4 22 4

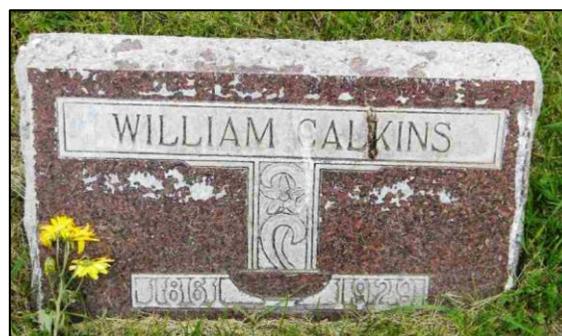
READ CAREFULLY INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK OF CERTIFICATE

N. B.—WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS CAUSE OF DEATH is plain text so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. See instructions on back of certificate.

disease). She was buried in the Payson City Cemetery.

Mary's temple ordinances have been completed. On 1 March 1906, she was sealed to her parents in a ceremony performed in the Salt Lake Temple. On 25 November 1886, she was also sealed (by proxy) to her first husband, John Alonzo Gordon, in the Jordan River Utah Temple.

Two years after Mary's death—on 10 July 1929—William died and was buried next to his wife in the Payson City Cemetery..



Robert C. Lofgran, great-grandson of Finetta Catherine Gordon Fillmore  
December 2017

## **References**

The Fillmores Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow by William Rosland Fillmore.

By Ship, Wagon, and Foot to York County, S.C. by George Bowman Hartness.

A life history of Finetta Catherine (“Katie”) Gordon Fillmore written by the author in October 2009.

A life history of John Alonzo Gordon written by the author in October 2017.

Five Generations of the Hartness Family in America written by the author in February 2012.

LDS Church’s FamilySearch.org website.

U.S. Census Records of 1860, 1870, and 1880.

Death Certificates of Mary E. and William Calkins.

Ancestry.com.