

## Elizabeth Searce Laney

Leeds, Utah, June, 1931

Among the early converts of the Latter-day Saints Church were William Searce and his daughter, Elizabeth, a girl in her early twenties. They were living at Richmond, Wayne C., Indiana, and it was here they heard the missionaries and joined the unpopular and new religion. William Searce was a colonel in the Indiana State Militia and received his commission from Jonathan Jennings, governor and commander-in-chief of the state of Indiana, the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 1817.

After joining the Latter-day Saints Church, the father and daughter left their home and relatives in Richmond, Indiana, and went to Nauvoo to be with the people of the new religion they had embraced; they were the only ones of the family to join the church, her mother died when Elizabeth was only eight years old. Her name was Nancy Walker Searce and she was the mother of eight children, three boys and five girls.

While living in Nauvoo and being an expert needle woman she went out by the day sewing for the neighbors and it was here she met and married her husband, William Laney, a convert from Kentucky. They were married September 7, 1845. I have often heard her tell of seeing the prophet and his brother after they were killed and being at the meeting when Brigham Young spoke and was clothed with the mantle of Joseph, their prophet.

Grandfather and grandmother were with the Saints and endured much of the persecutions they had to bear and when it was decided that the city would be abandoned they made a hurried trip to the homes of relatives in Kentucky and Indiana. While at their old home in Richmond, Indiana, grandmother drew from a bank some money she had saved and helped to fit out the wagons they were to leave for the West in.

The little family, consisting of grandfather and grandmother and her father, William Searce, left Nauvoo, in May, 1846 with three wagons, one being driven by a hired man. After traveling for two months, over bad roads and in rainy weather, they arrived at Cutler's Park. It was here their first child, a girl, was born and named Sarah Ann.

The family soon moved on down the river to a place called Winter Quarters. While living here the Black Scourge broke out among the Saints and grandmother was one to have it causing her to lose her teeth. This disease is caused by not having a balanced diet.

Early in 1847 they left Winter Quarters and set out on the long journey to the Rocky Mountains, arriving in Salt Lake City in September. I have heard grandmother say how she enjoyed the long journey, as they had good outfits and there was plenty of feed for the horses and oxen. One night while camped on the Platte River a herd of Buffalo, which was migrating were most of the night passing, but were on the opposite bank. The family brought their cow with them and after milking, the milk was put in a churn and at night from the jolting over the roads they would have a nice "pat of butter." They arrived in Salt Lake City in September, 1847.

The family stayed in Salt Lake City until December, 1850, when grandfather came south to help settle Parowan, Utah. Grandmother remaining in Salt Lake with her father, who was sick. He died in January, 1851. During this year grandfather returned to Salt Lake City for his family, which consisted of grandmother and three small children.

It was here they had many hardships starting a new home and making the cloth to clothe the family and making the yarn for the stockings and socks, she knit, often working late at night by light of fire. Pine wood filled with pitch or gum being often used. The coloring of the yarns for cloth and stockings was done at home by grandmother who was skilled in all the arts that went to make a pioneer home. Their lights were often candles she made from beef tallow.

After living in Parowan for eleven years she was again called to leave her home and be a pioneer to help settle Dixie, or the Cotton Country. Grandfather came down in the winter of 1861-2 and Sarah Ann, William Jr. and Hyrum, in the spring to help their father to raise a crop that summer.

Grandmother and the other five children did not come until late fall or early winter, 1862, and it was here she suffered the most hardships and the greatest fear of Indians. At one time the little band of settlers did not know when they might be attacked by the Navajo Indians and killed. The Indians had made a raid and driven all the horses and cattle away they could find. Here again she wove the cloth and spun the yarn to clothe the family and made the candles to light the home. The family lived here in Harrisburg, enduring many hardships. But when Silver Reef, the mining camp nearby, was established, a market for all extra products of the farm was had. This made times not so hard on the settlers and the tallow candle gave way to coal-oil lamps.

Besides spinning and weaving and making candles, grandmother made the family soap. She would save the cottonwood ashes in a barrel and cover them with water and with this water she would add grease and boil it to the right consistency. When articles of a delicate tint were to be laundered she would have the boys get some oose roots from the nearby hills. This was chopped and placed in clean water and worked with until a lather was produced and the water was strained and then was ready to use.

Grandmother was a true Latter-day Saint and taught her nine children the gospel as she understood it. She raised all her children to maturity and one of her greatest trials was the death of her youngest child, a grown young man, who was born in Harrisburg. Her husband died on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, 1891.

In 1897 she was one of the pioneers to attend the Pioneer Jubilee held in Salt Lake City. This was a real outing for her and she never tired of telling of the friends of long ago she met while in Salt Lake City.

Grandmother passed away on Sunday, June 9, 1908, in Harrisburg, Utah, at the age of 86 years and 5 months, leaving seven children and a host of grandchildren.

By nature grandmother was very quiet and had a natural refinement and it was the delight of many of the grandchildren to eat at grandma's. One little grandson, after spending the day with his grandmother at her home, tried to show his mother how grandmother made the biscuits he enjoyed so much.

Grandmother served as first counselor in the Relief Society in the Harrisburg branch, with Ellen Fuller, president and Ann Newton as second counselor, and Harriet E. Fuller Laney, secretary, from June 4, 1877, until March 4, 1883. Then she was made President with the following counselors: Susan Adams, first, and Ann Newton, second, and Harriet Ellen Fuller Laney, secretary. She held the office as president until the late 90's then there were so few living in Harrisburg that they were unable to hold meetings.

Grandmother did work in the St. George Temple for all her kindred dead she had record of, but she did not what part of the old country her ancestors came from.

When we pause to think of the many persecutions she endured in the early days of the church, along with the other faithful souls, of the privations, and hardships connected with pioneer life of which it seems she had more than her share, and during these trying times did not neglect the Lord's command to multiply and replenish the earth, that these trials seemed only to strengthen her faith in the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, it helps us to more fully appreciate the character of this noble woman.

That her descendants should strive with all their might to keep all the commandments of the Lord, thereby causing joy and rejoicing for her, is the only right way for them to do. In this way and no other can they show by their good works how much they appreciate being permitted to come to earth through such a splendid lineage.

She was an excellent cook, a splendid housekeeper, a refined and noble woman, beloved by all who knew her.

*Written by Elizabeth M. McQuaid, a Grand-daughter*