

Rebecca Hannah Hawk Brinkerhoff
Born 12 August 1832 Park County Indiana
Died 22 December 1905 Huntington, Emery County, Utah

Sally Ann Brinkerhoff called to James, her husband, from their small home that they had built in Deuel Creek just north of Great Salt Lake City, (Later Deuel Creek would be changed to Centerville). It was 5:00 am on Sunday September 3rd 1852 and James had to be in Great Salt Lake City at 8:00 am for a meeting with Brother Brigham.

“James it’s almost 5:00 am, you better just leave the chores to me and the girls.”

The girls were Jeanette 16, Mary Ann 10 and then there were the boys Levi 5 and Hyrum 3, James and Sally Ann had buried a baby Hannah after 4 days in New York State before their journey west and a son James Junior at 1 year old in winter quarters.

“I’m almost through.” He replied. “You are in no shape to be doing chores anyway. Do you want that baby to come here in the barn?”

“Don’t be silly”. Chided back Sally Ann “She is not due for another month”.

“She? You told me you would only have boys from now on to help me with the farm.

“I guess we’ll have to wait and see,” said Sally Ann going back in the house and closing the door.

Soon James was back inside with a bucket of warm milk.

“I won’t have time to eat it is fifteen miles to the bowery and I must not keep President Young waiting.”

“Put some apples in your pocket to eat along the way, said Sally Ann. Are you going to ride one of the horses?”

“No I have tied the horses so they can graze along the ditch bank, if I walk I can take all the short-cuts and make better time, and if I take the horse it won’t have anything to eat all day, and I need the horses tomorrow for the work on the canal,” James said.

“What do you think President Young wants?” Sally inquired. “I hope that he is not sending you on a mission to England, what will we do if he does? I know the Lord won’t give us anything without providing a way, but I worry about a mission”.

“Let the kids sleep awhile” said James going out the door.

The sun was climbing high in the sky when James reached the Bowery there were already other brethren waiting for President Young. James saw old friends, others who had crossed the plains in the Perruigne Sessions Company that had entered the Salt Lake Valley in September of 1847 along with James and Sally Ann and their family. They were all enjoying renewing acquaintances and catching up on where they had located each of their families. No one seemed to know why they had been called for this meeting with Brother Brigham this morning.

Brigham Young was a little late; he had a sick cow and had to tend to it before coming to the meeting. He had sent word to Heber C. Kimball to get the meeting started. Brother Kimball announced that they would have a song and a prayer and hope the Brother Brigham would be there by then as he didn’t know what the meeting was about.

As Brigham arrived he didn’t have the smile that he usually wore, but looked somber as if he had been talking to the Lord.

“Brethren”, he began; “This is something I would rather not do, but I must.”

James felt his blood go cold, and the sweat start running down his back, now what he thought.

“We have in our midst some lovely sisters”. Brigham said; “These sisters do not have husbands to help to care for them, they need to take husbands and build homes and raise children and families here in the valley of the mountains to help build up the church to the glory of the Lord, this is the Lords commandment. I have called you brothers here today to encourage you to follow the Lords instruction and take these sisters as your wives”.

James stayed for the rest of the meetings before starting for home he hadn’t told Brigham yes but he had said he would think about it and Pray about it and discuss it with Sally Ann.

The sun was far in the West when James caught a ride with Peregrine Sessions and rode as far as the Sessions settlement, (later called Bountiful), and the sun was setting as James arrived back at his own home and Sally Ann was waiting for him.

“No they are just children”, was James’ reply.

“Children, Sarah would be about 22 and Rebecca at least 20 by now. Rebecca was 14 when her mother was killed but that was 1846 and girls do grow up” said Sally.

James put his arm around Sally and they started for the house.

“If this baby is a girl I’m going to trade it to someone for a boy” James teased as they walked.

Nothing more was said about the new wife until Sunday night September 10th 1852. James and Sally had been to Sacramento Meeting and returned home and after supper they had put the four little ones to bed.

James said to Sally “Where would we put another woman in this house?”

“She wouldn’t be another woman, she would be your wife” Sally corrected him.

“Well” said James, “I’m just going to tell brother Brigham no”.

“You will do no such thing, this is a call from the Lord just as if you had been called on a mission, and anyway she can help me with the new baby and the little ones”. Said Sally.

The next morning James hitched the wagon up and told Sally he was going into Great Salt Lake City with a load of wheat to pay his tithing he said he would be gone all day.

Sally was busy all day long making baby things, at about 5:00 pm she heard the wagon in the distance and she knew it was James coming home.

“Did you have a good day” she asked as the Wagon pulled up to the gate and James climbed down.

“Yes only I’m tired” James replied, “guess who I ran into in town today?”

“Brother Brigham” Sally guessed.

“No, William Hawk” James said.

“Did you ask him about his daughters” Sally was quick to inquire.

“Yes he said Sarah was married and Caroline about to be but Rebecca is still not married. So I thought that some day you could go and talk to Rebecca for me” said James.

“Me talk to her” Sally said with surprise “it’s you that’s going to marry her not me”.

Nothing more was said about another wife until the next Sunday. James was up early on Sunday morning, did his chores, had breakfast, put on his best clothes.

“Sally Ann” he said he only called her Sally Ann when it was something of importance. “I’m going to Church”.

James Brinkerhoff galloped his horse most of the way to Great Salt Lake City. It was 11:00 am when he reached the west side of the city and the William Hawk house. He knocked on the door of the house and waited for it to open.

“Hello Brother Brinkerhoff, won’t you come in”. The young girl opening the door was Rebecca, James remembered her now.

Rebecca hadn’t seen Brother Brinkerhoff in four years, but she had always admired him and been grateful for all the help he had given her and her sister on their trip to the valley.

James noticed how Rebecca had changed; she was a nice looking girl, tall with dark hair and a sweet smile.

“Thank you I will come in for a while and I would like to go with your family to sacrament meeting this afternoon” James explained.

“Well James how is Sally and the Children?” William Hawk inquired of his old friend.

“They’re doing well Sally is expecting to have another baby soon we are living up in Deuel Creek now” James continued. “This is a nice home you have built here William”

“Yes there was a little money coming out of the Battalion and the girls have been a great help to me building this place” William said. “I have enjoy having the girls help but now they are about to leave me getting married”.

James felt a chill that he realized was relief, like having a tooth pulled it felt better but there was still pain.

“That is all but Rebecca”, William added, “Rebecca has been so busy with her seamstress work making clothes for other people that she has not had the time to find a husband”. “What brings you here this day to our home to attend church with us”? William asked James.

“I don’t really know how to explain what I have come here for, but Brother Brigham has asked me to take another wife”. Said James. “I was thinking about Rebecca, that is to say Sally and I have talked about asking Rebecca”.

The two women spend a delightful three days together exchanging ideas and getting to know one another and Rebecca went back home to Great Salt Lake City just a few hours before James returned from Ogden.

“So how did things go with our visitor”, James inquired on his return.

“They went well” Sally replied “but I am wondering if it is me she is marrying or you”.

“You will be living with her more than I will” was James reply.

Before the sun was up on September 28th just three weeks since his visit with President Young, James helped his expecting wife Sally Ann into the wagon, together they drove into Salt Lake City where they picked up Rebecca Hannah Hawk and drove onto the endowment house to have her sealed to James for time and all eternity.

The road home was dusty and it was starting to get cold. When they arrived home the Brinkerhoff children had a nice supper waiting for them. After supper James went out to do his chores, and he stayed much longer than he ever had before. When he did go inside he felt like a stranger in his own house, he had always been the head of the house but right now he felt like the tail. It was Sally Ann who took the lead.

One month later Sally Ann had the baby; James was out after the water since there still had not been much snow and Rebecca was home alone to help deliver the baby. She had never done that before as a matter of fact she had never even seen a baby delivered before, it was her first but it would be far from her last. “It’s a boy” Rebecca said as James came through the door “just like you had hoped for”

“Good we’ll call him George, George was my father name and his father was James so if I call him George it will keep that pattern going” James explained all of this to Rebecca.

The winter of 1852 was a cold one with not much snow. One Sunday at Church Rebecca was asked if she would come to Great Salt Lake City to make clothes for the Smith Family.

“I will drive you in” James told her.

“No Brother Brinkerhoff I can drive myself, you forget I drove an oxen team across the plains and horses and much easier to handle than oxen”. Rebecca worked all day and stayed with her father at night when the sewing project was complete the Smiths paid her three hundred pounds of wheat, two chickens, and three sacks of potatoes. She took them to her father as this was how she had always been paid she had never received money.

“You must take this all to your husband” William Hawk told his daughter.

“But he doesn’t need it” Rebecca protested.

“It doesn’t matter he is your husband and what ever you earn belongs to him” was William explanation. Rebecca didn’t go to town too often during the winter. But, when spring came she spent a lot of time sewing for people. Rebecca would card her own wool, spin and weave her own cloth, sew beautiful and very serviceable clothes. She would spend the night with her father but always went home to the Brinkerhoff home in Centerville on the weekends.

In May of 1854 James was again called to see President Young and again he was asked to take another wife. After discussing it with Sally Ann and Rebecca James took Eliza Jane Henderson to the endowment house in Salt Lake City.

Rebecca had her first child a boy Clark born in September of 1854 and from then on a child was born in the Brinkerhoff house every year. Eliza had a boy David in 1855, then Rebecca had Mary Caroline in August of 1856, Eliza a son John 1858, Sally had Willard in 1858, Eliza had Silas in 1859, Rebecca had Margaret in 1859, Eliza had Eliza Ann in 1861 Rebecca a boy Samuel in 1863.

They were one big happy family with Sally managing the home, Rebecca doing all the sewing and tending to all the clothes for the family and Eliza doing all the cooking and keeping the kitchen. The children were tended by all the mothers. If a child misbehaved, no matter whom he belonged to or which mother saw the infraction the child was punished.

James was a busy man what with the farm and the canal work and the roads and more and more people coming to Centerville all the time, James and his wives were very active in all the community activities.

Once again in the fall of 1863 the call came from President Young to meet with him at 8:00 am in his office in Great Salt Lake City.

“What can he want this time” James wondered to his wives the night before the meeting.

“I’m sure I don’t know” was Sally’s response, “but whatever it is I’m sure that you will be there and you will follow whatever he asks, and we will do whatever you ask.”

However while they were there Rebecca did give birth to Ira her seventh child. When they were release James moved his family first back to St. George, where they stayed with friends and then on to Orderville, in Orderville the family joined the United Order, even though they remained in Orderville for one year it soon became obvious to James and his wives that human greed was keeping the Orderville experiment from working. James bought a piece of land in Glendale and one more time moved his family to Glendale.

“I will not get into another wagon”, Rebecca said to James. “I have spent most of my life in a wagon and I am finished with wagon travel, I will walk to Glendale and help to herd the cows”.

They arrived at the new home in Glendale just before Christmas and the next day Eliza had a baby boy. “We were afraid Santa Claus would not know where we were”, James said after the baby had come. Life was good in Glendale for the Brinkerhoff’s; they had cows and sheep that they kept on the mountain in the summer and the valley in the winter. Rebecca had two more babies in Glendale Sally and Loretta.

James Brinkerhoff had been on the move all of his life. He had answered every call that Brigham Young had asked. He had lived a hard life; he had lived the law of sacrifice and the law of obedience. He died at age 59 of sunstroke and is buried in Glendale, Utah he left three wives and 24 children.

Rebecca got in a wagon and moved one more time. In 1875 Rebecca moved to Huntington, Utah, the town was just being laid out. Lots were drawn to see who would get which piece of property Rebecca drew a very choice lots right on main street and she settled there, just before she died her son Jesse moved her to his home to the west of Main Street still in Huntington. She died and was buried in Huntington, Utah December 22, 1905. She had nine children.

Sally Ann moved her family to Thurber, which became Bicknell she died there February 8, 1895 and Eliza stayed on in Glendale she died there in 1905.

These three ladies had made a life together they had raised their families together they had loved and stood by the same husband. They had mother 24 children and these children had each grown up calling the other mothers Aunt Sally or Aunt Eliza. These women had been a part of a very interesting and challenging time in Utah and American history and in spite of all the hardships they had been forced to overcome they had remained strong in their faith and to their husband.

This novella is an adaptation of the history “James Brinkerhoff’s Wagon”, written by George Melvin Brinkerhoff, George was the son of Jesse Brinkerhoff and James Brinkerhoff’s Grandson. The original was written in October 1975. This adaptation was written November, 2005, by ValJo Hess Sansevero a Great-Great-Granddaughter of Rebecca Hannah Hawk.