

## HISTORY OF



### MARY ELYRA SWAN SHERMAN

**BORN:** 15 December 1836 at East Wemyss, Fife, Scotland

**PARENTS:** George Swan & Elizabeth Warrender

**PIONEER:** 1849 or 1851 with Almon W. Babbitt Family and again After  
21 October 1854 with and unidentified company (18 years old)  
(Crossed the plains three times)

**SPOUSE:** Albey Lyman Sherman

**MARRIED:** 10 June 1854 at the North Platte River

**DIED:** 15 November 1914 at Huntington, Emery, Utah

## HISTORY OF

# MARY ELVIRA SWAN SHERMAN

A Sketch of my mother's life, as I remember her telling me

*By Ada Sherman Jones as told to Mary Jones Brown*

Mary Swan was born 15 December 1836 in East Wemyss, Fifeshire, Scotland. Mary lived there with her parents, George Swan and Elizabeth Warrender Swan. When she was six years old, they were converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1841. Reports are that their families disowned them.

There were six children: George, David, Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth and Helen. As soon as arrangements could be made, they set sail for America in a large sailing ship. There were six weeks that they did not see land.

While on the sea one day, they missed one of the little boys they searched high and low. They finally discovered a little speck high up in the rigging, which turned out to be him. (Guess they hadn't looked high enough before) One of the sailors said, "Now everybody be quiet and don't scare him, I'll go up and bring him down." He put a big strap around his waist, climbed up, tied the little boy to the strap and brought him down safely.

They could only travel when the wind blew in the right directions, otherwise the sailors would have to drop anchor and the ship would have to sit still until the course of wind changed and blew in the right direction for them, then they would float along again with all the sails to the wind. They landed in New York.

From New York they made their way to Nauvoo, Illinois and there they found that the mob was after Joseph Smith and the Mormon people. They were all driven out into the woods but the mob soon found them. The families were ordered to leave their homes but Mary's Father was very sick and told them, "We are at your mercy, do with us as you see fit." The mob left them then but came back in a few days to find both her Father and Mother very ill. They ordered them out again, telling them if they were not out by daylight the next day they would come back and murder every one of them. Fortunately they did not do this.

Mary's Father died there in the woods. He was buried under the cover of darkness some distance from their home. The Mormons had to bury their dead under the cover of darkness.

While Mary's father was corpse, lying in the house, a man, stranger to them, came and wanted her to go with him, to his home, to help his ill wife. Mary's mother let her go. Mary was at the tender age of nine at the time.

This man and Mary traveled by horse-team and wagon way into the night. She was very frightened and could hardly stand it. When they arrived at the man's house they

found that his wife had gone to another town to stay with some friends, so again Mary felt very frightened. She needn't have feared however because this man was very kind to her. They went into the house and he gave a little bowl of porridge. He told her they would go for his wife the next morning. He then showed her to a room, gave a key to her and told her to go to bed, that he would knock on her door when he was ready to leave the next morning. Mary could not sleep. True to his word, the man knocked on the door next morning, telling her he was ready to leave. She was given another bowl of porridge and then they were off to get his wife. They traveled all that day and into the night getting to the place where his wife was.

Mary stayed with these people for nine weeks and then was so homesick that she was allowed to go home.

Young as Mary was, she remembers distinctly having her Mother take her by the hand, going out into the woods and being shown her father's grave.

Some years later Mary's Mother married Leslie Symms, a very cruel man. Each night, before the children went to bed, he lined them up and whipped them with a large strap. He called this strap, 'a cat of nine tails' and that is what he whipped them with. He said he knew the children had done something during the day for which they needed to be punished, whether anyone knew it or not. We don't know how long Mary's mother lived with this man, but they had a daughter that they named Jannett (Nettie) Symms.

When Mary was twelve years old she again left her family to accompany the Almon W. Babbitt family, who were leaving to cross the plains. Mary was to help Mrs. Babbitt care for their little son. Mr. Babbitt was leader of the company and also Secretary of Utah.

The year they left probably left in 1849 or 1851 and it must have been late in the season. They traveled for many days to a place where two nations of Indians were camped for the winter. There was no way for the company to drive past them without being seen and some of the drivers refused to do it. Mr. Babbitt told them there was no other way so they drove in where the Indians were. Mr. Babbitt and his family were riding in a large surrey drawn by two large white horses. There were six other teams and wagons in the company. Mr. Babbitt called for the 'Big Chief', telling the Indians that they were white friends, wanting to stay the night. The Chief had some of the Indian boys take care of the horses. Mary said they were all very frightened when they saw the boys leading the horses away. The women spent the night frying bread and cooking for the Chiefs and their wives.

Just at the break of day, to the company's great surprise and joy, the Indian boys brought the horses back. Then hurried to hitch the teams up but found two of the headstalls missing. When Mr. Babbitt told the Big Chief, the Chief got up on a high stump, shouted and yelled. Soon the boys came sneaking back with the horses so the company was soon on its way, very thankful that the Lord's protecting hand had saved them.

The company traveled for many days and were getting short on provisions. To their great joy, they met a company going back to Nauvoo that gave them provisions enough to go on to Utah. After staying in Utah at the time, Mr. Babbitt was Secretary of Utah at the time he had a box of money when he came over, he felt very blessed and lucky to get by all the Indians with it intact and not taken by the Indians.

Upon returning to Nauvoo, Mary found that her Mother had passed away. She had two brothers and three sisters who did not treat her very well so she left with the first train of emigrants that left Nauvoo for Utah. She was nineteen years old when she reached Utah. She never saw any of her family again.

This was her third trip across the plains. On this trip she married Albey Lyman Sherman. This was done at the North Platte River on June 10, 1854. It was said that the company had had a birth and death and needed a marriage.

Mary and her husband lived in Salt Lake City for a time before moving to Payson, Utah where their first child was born. They then, moved to Santaquin, where their next two children were born. They then, moved to Santaquin, where their next two children were born. From Santaquin they moved to Fountain Green, Utah where the rest of their family of eleven children were born.

In 1880 Albey Lyman and Mary were called to help settle Castle Valley in Emery County, so they moved to Huntington where they took up 160 acres of land to the North of the town. They lived on these acres until the summer of 1897 when they moved to a Huntington town site, where they built their home in the center of town, right on the main street.

She was very supportive of her husband. She was very frugal and a wise homemaker and an excellent seamstress. At one time they bought a bolt of cloth and made six suits and three dresses for various members of their family.

Her husband died in September 1911. They had been married 57 years, had 14 children and raised 12 and had 98 grandchildren. She was a widow for three years. Mary died 15 November 1914 at Huntington, at the age of 79, leaving a large posterity. Many of the children married and settled in Huntington where many of their children also made their homes.