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Biographical Sketch

of

Ellen Drew Gemmell Clarke

Pioneer Year 1861

Sidney Tanner Company

Born: 22 Nov 1839, Larges, Ayereshire, Scotland

Married: James Clarke, 15 Mar 1862

Ellen Drew Gemmell Clarke, daughter of Peter Gemmell and Margaret McClain Gemmell, was born in Larges, Ayereshire, Scotland, November 22, 1839. At an early age her family heard the message delivered by the Latter Day Saint missionaries and she and her mother were convinced of its truthfulness. She was baptized in the ocean on a bleak winter night in the year 1849. After joining the church she went to live with the family of Isaac Fox in Glasgow, and while there with a family of thirteen, she had the small pox, but was brought through without another member of the family getting the disease. She was an active member of the church in her native country, until she emigrated to America which she did in 1861, crossing the plains in Uncle Sidney Tanner's Company. Before arriving in Salt Lake City she was taken down with the Mountain Fever and was nursed back to health at the home of Nathan Tanner. Having left her family and all her relatives in the old country she came to Lehi and again lived at the home of Isaac Fox, Sr., who had preceded her to Utah. It was while here that she met James Clarke of American Fork to whom she was married March 15, 1862 as his plural wife, being welcomed into the family by Aunt Amelia who had no living children. As a result of this union five children were born: James Hill; Sidney Tanner, who died in infancy; Ann Loyd; Jane Drew; and Peter Gemmell. During this time both she and Aunt Amelia worked hard in helping to support the family who at best subsisted on the very plainest of living. The writer has heard her relate that before the birth of her first child they became possessed of a little tea and sugar which was hoarded for the coming event; and how that she would look at it sometimes taking a pinch of each and eating it dry.

Her husband, who was counselor to Bishop L. E. Harrington, died March 15, 1870 leaving her with limited means for the support of her self and family. Although Aunt Amelia Hardesty Clarke did her best in assisting and caring for the children, she was in delicate health; so that the task of providing for the family depended almost entirely on the subject of this sketch. Sister Ellen Clarke was one of the first milliners to do business in American Fork and many a time has walked and carried a sack of flour or vegetables to the

neighboring town of Lehi to trade for braided straw with which she made hat shapes for her business. After the death of her husband she worked for a number of years in the daytime in the American Fork Co-op. as a clerk, during which time she also worked home at nights making hats and devoting her whole time to the millinery business and her public work. She struggled on giving her children a fair education and being one of the first in American Fork to purchase and organ for her home. Her daughter Jane D. was one of the first organists of the American Fork ward. She at some sacrifice sent her oldest son to the Brigham Young Academy and with the assistance of her friends sent both of her sons on missions.

She was a firm believer in education. At the first meeting that was called in American Fork to decide whether free schools should be established here, the opponents of the free school system were in the majority; but an adjournment of the meeting was secured, and in the interval Sister Clarke with one or two others went from house to house and rallied enough of their friends to carry the motion for the adoption of free schools.

She was for 25 years a member of the American Fork Choir, also a teacher in the American Fork Sunday School for 35 years. Many of the mothers of today remember with satisfaction the teachings they received in her class. For 13 years she was President of the Relief Society, having been a Counselor for the previous 8 years, and a teacher for some years before that. She was a pioneer in the Silk Industry, and in Connection with her two Daughters, raised Silk Worms, sending her Daughter, Ann L. to Salt Lake City to learn to reel the Silk from the Cocoons, and was Finally Successful in getting a dress pattern woven from Silk Raised by herself. She was an active member of the First Old Folks Committee, and while engaged in the labor, in the year 1898, she had a fall dislocating her hips; from this accident she never wholly recovered, and while she was afterward compelled to walk with a crutch, her indomitable will carried her on, where many would have been discouraged.

She was thoroughly converted to every principle of the Gospel, she was a full Tithe Payer all her life, and a teacher of the Principle. A loyal supporter of the Authority of the Priesthood, and always in full

support of every forward movement of the Church. She was Sociable and Hospitable, her home always open to Friends, or to strangers, carrying out a maxim which she often taught, "That it is better to wear out than to rust out." Her Courage and Faith was unfaltering, and many a time has she gone into Homes where Diphtheria raged, when others have shrunk from it, changing her clothes at the Door when she came home to her own little brood; and once when her youngest boy was given up to die, with this dread disease, she insisted over the protest of the Bishop, that he again administer to him, and the Lord had respect to her faith, and the Boy was miraculously healed. These are a few points connected with the life of this Pioneer, and they but index the Lives of hundreds of the mothers who have given more than their natural lives, but live Plus Inspiration, toward establishment of God's Working the Earth.