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Biographical Sketch

of

Martha Richards Featherstone

Autobiography

Pioneer Year 1864

Sailed on the McLellen

Captain Joseph Rawlins company

Born 4 Dec 1844 Attenborough, Derbyshire, England

Married Thomas Featherstone in 1866

Died 18 March

Buried in American Fork City Cemetery

I was born December 4, 1844 at Attenborough, Derbyshire, England in a little cottage on the banks of the river Trent. My parents were Isaac and Ann Towlson Richards. Attenborough at that time was a little village of about fifty or sixty houses. The greater part of the village having been devastated by the War of the Roses. The church, however, was left standing after the feudal wars were over and it was the only church in England, save one other that had ten bells in its tower. My how they ring out the chimes on the Sabbath Morning. As a child it was my greatest delight to sit on a grassy plot and listen to the chimes of those bells, the echoes of which seemed to be chasing one another, filling the air with wonderful melodies.

One Sabbath morning as the bells were chiming there came to this little village news that the Latter Day Saints were coming today to preach to us. I ran to the place and there on the green I saw the elder with his hat in one hand and hymn Book in the other. Although I was only four or five years old I distinctly remember it was a message of the everlasting gospel that was brought to us that day of days. This message has since been to me the supreme joy of my life.

My Mother invited the elders home to tea and they sang for us "For the Strength of the Hills We Bless Thee". From then on the elders came every Sunday and in the summer of 1849 my father and mother joined the Church.

In the fall of that same year we moved to Nottingham, and I was blessed in the Nottingham branch of the Church to which my Parents belonged. We all became church workers, my father being the teacher of the Sunday School. I attended Sunday School from then until I left England being baptized when I was eleven years old and was a teacher in the Sunday School at fourteen years of age.

On the 21st of May 1864 I left England with my little brother (James Richards) and sister (Sarah Ann) on the good ship McLellen bound for Zion. We had a very pleasant voyage until the 10th of June when the ship encountered a heavy storm. It was so rough that the ship nearly went down and the captain said we barely escaped with our lives. We landed safely in New York Harbor with eight hundred three souls, one more than when we started. In due time we came to

Nebraska where we met the Mormon boys from Utah who were helping the saints to gather to Zion. In the month of July, under the leadership of Captain Joseph Rawlins of Draper, we started on our journey of one thousand miles. I remember that I walked all the way excepting a few miles I rode one stormy afternoon. Every step was a pleasure for me as I felt that I was realizing my fondest hopes of getting to Zion. After a long days march we were never too tired to meet in devotional services and later join in the dance and other amusements.

Most of the time the younger people would start early in the morning and go on foot ahead of the ox teams but one day the captain said that the Indians were on the war path and ordered us to keep close by or we might all be killed. The Captain and his men made a ford across the Platt River. We all crossed safely after experiencing some difficulties. One old lady had to be rescued or she would have drowned.

When we arrived at Green River, Wyoming, two of the boys were ill, and were sent on ahead. Joseph Greenwood died and was buried at Coalville, and George Stringfellow recovered. We reached Salt Lake City September 29, 1864 and were met by kind and sympathetic friends. Two weeks after reaching the Valley, my girl companion on the trip across the plains died of mountain fever.

After staying in Salt Lake City about a month, I moved to Pleasant Grove where some of my relatives had settled. Six months later I moved back to Salt Lake City, and went to live at the home of President George Q. Cannon.

I married Thomas Featherstone in 1868. Four sons were born to us; John, Chase, Joseph and James. John and James died young. After I was married my husband homesteaded 160 acres on the bench near American Fork, and I went there to live. I thought my home on the bench was located in one of the most beautiful spots in the world, and it was there I helped to Pioneer. Beside the various duties of a housewife and mother I made soap and candles, made all our own clothes from wool carded and spun by hand, and helped the men in breaking the land, planting it to crops, orchards, and vineyards, and

dig the ditches to put the water on the land. When the crops started to grow we all had to join together to fight off the grasshoppers. I am proud to be one of the Utah Pioneers who were men and women of great power of endurance, resourcefulness, courage, and most of all an abiding faith in God and his work.

Martha Richards Featherstone.

Ox Team Pioneer Dies in Salt Lake

American Fork, Utah. Martha Richards Featherstone 85, died in a Salt Lake hospital at midnight March 18. She was born December 4, 1844 at Attenborough, Derbyshire, England, the daughter of Isaac and Ann Towlson Richards.

Mrs. Featherstone joined the L.D.S. Church at the age of 11 years, being baptized by Elder Thomas Morley. She emigrated to Utah in 1864 crossing the Plains with an ox team company, under the direction of Captain Joseph Rawlins. She arrived in Salt Lake Valley in September the same year.

Mrs. Featherstone was actively engaged in Sunday School and Relief Society work until 70 years of age. She was also a member of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. She was married July 1866 to Thomas Featherstone who preceded her to the grave several years ago.

The deceased is survived by two sons, Joseph F. Featherstone, Salt Lake, and Heber Chase Featherstone, of Lehi, also eleven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held in American fork First Ward Chapel Saturday at 2 P.M. Interment will be in the City Cemetery.