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Biographical Sketch

of

Mrs. Emma Grace Austin

by Lettie Gudmundsen

Pioneer Year 1868

Sailed on the Minnesota

Born 20 Mar 1827 at Whipsnade, Bedfordshire, England

Married 20 Mar 1847

Died 29 Nov 1893

A Mother of 17 Children

On the 20th of March, 1827, a beautiful spirit left Mansion on High to come to live at a beautiful place on earth and gladden the hearts of the game-keeper and his wife a monor at Whipsmade, Bedfordshire England. This child, Emma Grace, was reared by worthy parents amid pleasant surroundings until her marriage on her twentieth birthday to Mr. John Austin.

To Brother and Sister Austin were born the following children: George, Parley, Heber C., William, Mark, Thomas H., John E., Mrs. Harriet Jacobs, Mrs Julia Brown, Mrs Annie Munns, Mrs Lettie Gudmundsen, Mrs. Sarah Allen, Alfred, Joseph and Hyrum (twins), Hectir and Frank. The seven last mentioned are deceased.

A little less than a year after marriage (January 13th, 1848), Sister Austin joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Two years later Brother Austin also joined. They then moved to the small town of Studham, Bedfordshire, England, where they lived some eighteen years and engaged in the mercantile business through a man who came to mother's door selling straws to make straw braid for hats and wanted her to buys some. She was anxious to try and help to get some money to come to this country and so she bought them and proved very successful. They tried in every way possible to help the work of the Lord in that locality and during those eighteen years kept an open house for the Elders, both foreign and local, and Brother Austin was Branch President for several years.

Early in the Spring of 1868, Sister Austin read in the Millenial Star that the S.S. "Minnesota" was chartered to sail for America the latter part of June. She turned to her husband and told him she felt impressed that they and their family take passage on the Minnesota. Brother Austin, realizing the struggle necessary to take care of such a large family as they had and that business was not at all times in the most flourishing condition at that time, assured his wife that it was utterly impossible to think of such a thing then, and not to even mention it to the children as they would only be disappointed. She expressed her belief that the Lord would help them inasmuch as they

had always tried to do what they knew to be right, and further that they had cared for his servants whenever an opportunity presented itself, and now that they desired to join the body of the Church in Utah and be their son and daughter who were then in Zion she was positive the Lord would help them; but Brother Austin still held it was impossible. Sister Austin said no more but went to her duties in the usual manner; however, she secretly prepared clothing for the children and packed into trunks and boxes such things as she thought would be necessary to take with them on the journey she felt confident they would take.

About two weeks before the "Minnesota" was to sail a very close friend of Sister Austin's called on her. A wealthy uncle of the husband of this lady had recently died and left them considerable means. She told Sister Austin they were anxious to go to Utah but her husband was not willing to go unless Brother Austin and family would go along with them. Sister Austin said they were anxious to go to Utah but didn't have enough money. This friend offered to assist them with part of the money necessary to make the trip, and final arrangements were made to sail on the "Minnesota" June 30th, on the first steamship carrying a company of Latter-day Saints from Europe to America. Twelve days later they landed in New York City. They crossed the Plains by teams and arrived in Lehi the latter part of August.

By industry and frugality Brother and Sister Austin accumulated sufficient of this world's goods to take care of themselves comfortably and assist in promoting the work of our Heavenly Father. Sister Austin was at all times and under all conditions a devoted Latter-day Saint and had perfect faith and confidence in the Lord; and though she had a large family who needed her care and attention, she always found time to attend to her religious duties and helped to take care of the sick and needy.

She left his sphere of action on the 29th day of November, 1893. The good she accomplished while in the mortal state will not be easily forgotten, and she has left sons and daughters who have taken up the good work she was engaged in. Two of her sons are at present president of stakes, and other of her children are holding responsible

positions in the various wards in which they reside. A number of her sons have been diligent workers in the furthering of the sugar industry in the State of Utah as well in other useful pursuits.