

Life Sketch of Phoebe Arabell Woodruff Moses Native Pioneer of 1859

by Phoebe Moses with Pearl White as scribe

I was born May 30, 1859 in Salt Lake City, Utah, the daughter of Sarah Brown and Wilford Woodruff. About the first things I can remember was when I was about two years old. We lived in the Northwest corner of the big Woodruff home—one room down stairs and one room upstairs. Three of us children had the measles. I was very sick and a lady came in and said I had the black measles. I was too sick to care but mother was very excited.



In a few months my Grandfather, Aphek Woodruff, died. I remember him in his coffin. A few months later Mathias Cowley was drowned in the Jordon River. When I was seven years old we moved in the Southwest corner of the house with one room upstairs and one room downstairs. Here my brother Newton was born. When he was a few months old we all had whooping cough. We were so sick that mother had to carry us up stairs at night and downstairs in the morning. Soon we moved in the little new adobe house consisting of five rooms. Here my sister Mary was born.

Father had a wonderful orchard and grape vineyard. When I was 8 years old I got poisoned and nearly died from eating the seeds of rhubarb. When I was 9 years old I helped father bud a young orchard. In the spring he took buds from trees, cut a little slit in the tiny trees and put the bud in it. I held it in my fingers while he took white yarn and tied the bud. I sometimes rode down the field in the wagon with the ox team.



When I was 12 years old my first great sorrow came. President Young wanted Father to help pioneer Bear River Valley. My brother Wilford was married but another brother was old enough to take responsibility, so my mother moved to Randolph, Rich County with her family except my brother, Brigham who was two years older than me. He stayed in the city to complete his education at the University. This was a severe trial to me as there were no good schools or teachers there. I arrived in Randolph on my 12th birthday. We lived in a tent six months. I went boat riding with my sister in a tub on Little Creek. In the Fall we moved in our new home—the only home in Randolph with an upstairs. Mother taught school two years and was secretary in the Relief Society. I often attended these meetings with her. I taught Sunday School, a class of nine little boys which I dearly loved and they returned the love. I went to dances at early candle light and danced until eleven or twelve o'clock then we had intermission and refreshments and danced from two until four o'clock.

At the age of sixteen I married Jesse T. Moses of Big Cottonwood, Salt Lake County, June 14, 1875. Next April a little daughter came to us. In the Fall we moved to Cottonwood and mother moved to Smithfield, Cache County. The following February we lost our baby.

In March 1877, my eldest Brother David P. Woodruff married Arabell Hatch. The next June my brother Brigham, having completed his education, came with my husband, his brother Fred and myself to see mother in Smithfield. He had been away from her seven years and I hadn't seen her for more than a year. We arrived there on Friday June 15, 1877. The next morning before

breakfast Brigham went to see the Bishop and school trustees about teaching school. At breakfast David's wife wanted to go to the river to see her folks, so she, David, Brigham, my husband, Fred Moses and my nine year old brother Newton went to the river. My sisters stayed at home to help mother with dinner.

At one o'clock David came racing home on horseback. He staggered into the house, clasped mother in his arms and cried, "Oh he was too good to live." He and Newton had taken the gun and went to the river and shot a duck. Brigham took off his clothes and went in the water after the duck. While in the water he took a cramp and drowned. He was in the river for six days before they found his body. Both white man and Indians combed the river night and day searching for the body. The Indians found him. Mother lay at death's door for a month. I stayed with her for another month. Then I went to my husband in Cottonwood. I was ill for sometime.

On January 28, 1878 my son Jesse Tilton Jr. was born, On August 24, 1880, my daughter Sylva was born in Cottonwood. The following November 22, we started in company with Harvey Harper and family for Arizona. We had to handle the boat ourselves because there was no one to help us. We arrived in Arizona on the Salt River in Jonesville. This place was afterwards called Lehi.

Our tent was just nine feet by eleven feet, so we found an adobe cabin with two door holes but no door and no floor. Just across the river was a village with many Indians. Sometimes my husband had to leave me for three or four days and nights at a time to work. The sun came up very early in the morning and set very late at night and disturbed us. The Indians would come and lift my quilts from the door and then look in and laugh at me.

My husband made a bed by setting four posts in the ground, nailing four posts around them and covering the top with poles and willows. When it rained, we put tubs and pans on the bed to keep the bedding dry. In March the heavy rains set in. An old gentleman by the name of Ross Rogers, living 2 miles away, came to see how we were getting along. He put my baby and myself into his wagon and told Jesse to load the things and leave as the Indians would steal everything he had left. We went to live with him. He had two rooms and eleven young children, none of them Married. We stayed there a month. Mrs. Rogers had a good sewing machine. I, being a good seamstress, did a lot of sewing for her while my husband freighted. We then moved into another little cabin on the Tenpe Canal. This cabin had two doors but no floor. The bridge was by the north side of the house. The road going to Mesa City was by the east side of the house so there was a continual stream, of travel both ways, of both white and red men. I had Indians lying in my dooryard most of the time.

One day a tall young fellow wanted to come in. He gave me a slight push. I picked up a hatchet and he jumped to the canal bridge, drew his bow and arrow on the baby sitting on the ground. I stepped to the mantel and picked up my loaded pistol and pointed it at him. He gave a whoop and run. He didn't stop running until he reached the village. Some of the Indians told Jesse he had a "he squaw" for a wife.

We had all kinds of vermin to contend with. Jesse made the same kind of bedsteads here as in the other cabin. We made a bed on the cedar chest for little Jesse. One night he cried with an ear ache. His father was going to get up to him. I told him to light the candle first, which he did, and right beside the bed where he would have put his foot was a tarantula, as large as a saucer. It is a hairy legged spider that runs and jumps. My husband killed it with a club. One morning I picked

the baby's stocking up by the toe and a scorpion fell on my finger. It happened to be a young one so a bath of alcohol and a poultice of indigo cured it. We had to shake our bedding twice a day because we very often found lizards in them. One night we shook a centipede out. It is a flat green worm with dozens and dozens of legs on both sides, and deadly poison. It runs very fast.

One evening a half dozen Indian men came into my yard. I picked up my babies and locked the door with a padlock. My husband wasn't home, so I went to my nearest neighbor and stayed all night. We moved upon the mesa in December, after spending Christmas with our friends Harvey Harper and family in Lehi. We had our cook stove in our little tent, and built a willow shed for our bed room. I had a young girl staying with me. One morning I wasn't feeling well. She came to my bed and told me that our tent was on fire. We had twelve 100-pound sacks of wheat in the tent. I called for help, and, living on the banks of Montizamach Canal, they soon put the fire out.

In the summer of 1882 we built a comfortable home consisting of one large room with a fireplace in it and a porch on the back that faced the East. We boarded up the South end and part of the East, making a kitchen where we put our stove. During the summer small-pox broke out in our young city. Many of the people had it. There were eighteen who died with it, seven of them being in one family, by the name of Shepard. I could hear our undertaker across the street making coffins day and night. He finally got the smallpox, but not very bad. Later he went to the pest house and nursed the sick people there. My husband, having a fine team of horses, was appointed to go to Phoenix to get supplies and medicine for the sick, as our city was quarantined. He had to dodge the officers all the time. On November 18, my son Wilford Newton was born. When he was a year and a half old I was sick and so was he. I came home in April and stayed until October. The next July a large beautiful son was born. We named him James Julian. The water did not agree with me there, and it did not agree with the baby either; therefore, he only lived ten days. The next July another son came to us, David Courtney. The water did not agree with him but an old neighbor nurse came and cured him.

In the fall our city was stricken with typhoid fever causing several deaths. I was one of the sick victims. One lady died leaving eleven young children all unmarried. The following April 1, with my children, I came home to my mother in Smithfield. My husband came in October and returned to Arizona in March and stayed there two years. Then he sold our place consisting of ten acres of land covered with grapes, figs, peaches, and small fruits.

In 1889 we went to Grandpa James Moses farm, in Big Cottonwood, Salt Lake City, Utah. I remained there until my husband returned from Arizona. In 1890 we moved to Smithfield, Cache County, Utah. On March 30, 1891 Grandpa Moses died. On April 15, 1891 my son Clarence Frederick was born at my mother's home. The following summer we built a nice comfortable home with seven rooms. We had our first meal in it on Thanksgiving Day.

On June 5, 1887 twins came to us, a son and a daughter—Elmer W. and Ethel W. On March 18, 1895 little Ethel died. This was a sad blow to us as our only daughter was nearly grown. The following June we celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary. My parents were with us and we had a very enjoyable time. On January 20, 1896, another little daughter, Phoebe Esther was born. This was a great joy to us. On September 28, 1898, my father Wilford Woodruff died. This was a sad blow to me. On November 11, 1898 Harry Brown, my youngest son, was born. In April 1898, my son Jesse went on a two-year mission to the central states. On June 14, 1901 my sister Mary died. She was a teacher in the Provo Academy. Her death was very sad because it left my mother all alone in her home. Mother stayed there two years sending grandchildren to school.

Then she came and lived with me the remaining five years of her life. This was a great pleasure to us as we all loved her so much. She helped my children with their school work a great deal. She died May 9, 1910.

On November 22, 1903 my last child was born—a little son—Brigham W. He died soon after his birth. I had pneumonia at the time and came near going also. In 1904 we moved to a ranch 1 mile north of Smithfield, Utah—where we lived until 1934. The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers was first organized in Smithfield on September 14, 1905.¹ It was named after my mother Sarah Brown Woodruff, and I was elected the first president of the organization with Kate Cragun as first counselor and Ellen Timmins as second counselor. Zerviah S. Smith was the secretary and treasurer. We worked together for years. I enjoyed this work very much.

Now my children are all married grown children, and scattered. Jesse Married Lavina Harper and lives in Blackfoot, Idaho. Sylva married Benjamin F. Handley and moved to Salt Lake City. After her first husband's death she married William Krause and lives in Clearfield, Utah. Wilford graduated from the USAC College at Logan and went on a mission to Great Britain. He later married Carrie Thomas and lives at Berkley, California. Then David Courtney married Winifred Burton and lives in Berkley, California. Phoebe married Irl White and lives in Logan. Elmer married Maud Pettit, and lives in Blackfoot, Idaho. Clarence enlisted in the great World War and went to France. He came home when the Armistice was signed and went to California where he met and married Anna and lives in Compton, Calif. Harry Brown, my youngest son, married Alverda Peterson and lives in Boise, Idaho. Mary W., my youngest daughter, married Leon Durant and my oldest granddaughter, Mary H. Moses, married the brother to Leon.

In 1925 I lost my eye sight, so my youngest daughter, Mary and family, came home to Smithfield to live and take care of me. While living in Smithfield before I lost my eye sight I was a teacher in Relief Society for 20 years. In 1934 I, with my daughter Mary and family, moved to Cornish, Utah. We live on what is called Sugar Factory lane where there are 16 comfortable brick homes. The people are very kind and sociable. They have a wonderful Relief Society and they celebrate the birthdays of every woman over sixty years of age. We live within a block of a very nice LDS chapel, so I can easily attend Church.

I have nine living children all married and all except one have from one to eight children. I have seven great-grandsons for which I am thankful. My scribe is my granddaughter, Pearl White. I am patiently waiting to go to my husband, who was laid to rest in Smithfield, Utah March 5, 1928.

By Mrs. Phoebe Arabell Woodruff Moses herself.

¹ This is the Smithfield chapter. The DUP was first organized by Annie Taylor Hyde in 1901.