

BIOGRAPHY: LAVINA WOLLERTON DILWORTH HARPER

BIRTHDATE: 05 Nov 1818 Chester, PA.

DEATH: 09 Jul 1903 Rexburg, Madison, Idaho

PARENTS: Caleb Dilworth, Eliza Wollerton Dilworth

PIONEER: 1848

SPOUSE: Charles Alfred Harper

MARRIED: 19 Dec 1839 PA

DEATH: 23 Apr 1900, Holladay, Salt Lake, Utah

CHILDREN: Susan, twin, 28 Jul 1841; Ann, twin, 28 Jul 1841; Harvey J. "John", 10 Nov 1842; Ellen, 25 Jan 1846; Charles Alfred Jr, 23 Jul 1848; William B, 10 Jul 1851; Alfred, 07 Jul 1856; Edwin, 31 July 1858; Park, 16 Sep 1860; Chester, twin, 15 Apr 1864; Lavina, twin, 15 Apr 1864.

Lavina was the fifth daughter in a family of twelve daughters and one son. Prior to his conversion, Charles did not like the Mormons and when his wife became one, he told her he would not walk down the street with a Mormon, so he walked down one side and she would walk down the other side. They did this for one year. One day he walked away from home and said he would be back soon. Lavina started her washing and it was not very long before she heard him coming home singing, seeming to be very happy. She looked up and saw that his clothes were wringing wet and she said to him "So you were baptized today, I knew you would be without me asking you." He replied, "Yes, I did it today and I am the happiest man alive."

The Harpers were among the thousands who established Winter Quarters. Charles was a carriage maker and wheelwright and was included in the first pioneering migration, under Brigham Young, to the Salt Lake Valley. Lavina was a good tailor and while he was gone she made enough money to buy a wagon. He returned in the fall of 1847 and in the spring of 1848 with their 5 year old son they set out to rejoin the Saints in the Salt Lake Valley. Lavina was pregnant with her fifth child. She drove the heavily loaded covered wagon and a pair of oxen most of the distance across the hot dusty miles. They did not reach Utah before the baby was born.

Only by thrift and industry were these pioneer families able to overcome the effects of cricket plagues and other hardships. They became skilled in making butter, cheese, bread, candles, sops, lye and starch; and in drying the wild fruits.

Lavina was a noble and true pioneer. She was loved by her family and all who knew her.