

AMY ANN HEPWORTH BURNHAM
BY Francis L. Burnham

Amy Ann (Hepworth) Burnham was my Father's mother, and so is, of course my own beloved grandmother. It is sad to say, but we have very little of her personal history and most of that is from my own memories and what she told me as a child.

She was born on 26 January 1864 in Drighlington, York, England. Her mother was Hannah Hepworth. According to a certified copy of her birth certificate, she was illegitimate as the father's name is absent. On the certificate Hannah Hepworth signifies her name by an X mark.

From our meager information, the early day missionaries of the L.D.S. Church offered them a way out of their hard life, to a new chance which they took eagerly. Hannah's father, Joseph Hepworth and his family joined the church.

Where Amy Ann and her mother landed in America we do not know, but probably in Massachusetts. Then they journeyed to the Salt Lake valley by wagon train.

She told me as a child she had had to walk much of the way and help take care of her baby sister, Emily, born 14 November 1867. She had told me she was only about 3 years of age when they left England. This daughter, Emily's, father is listed on another certified copy of an entry of birth as a Thomas Turner, but we have found no marriage certificate at all for them. There were two other children mentioned, who died in infancy, an Ezra and Mary Ann.

Amy Ann grew up in Salt Lake City and when she was about 6 or 7 years old, her mother Hannah Hepworth, was married and sealed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake to Charles Balmforth, whose first wife was Martha Lumb. This marriage resulted in 9 more children.

I have a picture of a little store located on 2nd South between Main and State Streets in Salt Lake City, where Charles and Hannah made their living, and where Amy Ann delivered in a little wagon the produce, groceries, coal, and kindling they sold there. Amy Ann

had to work hard as a young girl and as a young woman with very little schooling and fewer of the joys and pleasures most young people have.

On 14 March 1885, she was married to Edward Foster Burnham, a fireman with the Salt Lake City Fire Dept. He had been in the army when he moved from Cleveland, Ohio. He was transferred from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, to Ft. Douglas, Utah, and then was discharged. Then he worked for the fire department.

This union resulted in 4 children:

- #1 Amy Ann Burnham 11 January 1887
- #2 Edward Earl Burnham 16 January 1888
- #3 Alfred Clarence Burnham (my father) 20 March 1888
- #4 Florence Burnham died an infant

My grandfather, Edward Foster Burnham, was a Methodist from what I can determine, and never joined the L.D.S. Church. He was a good man, father and husband, but had one habit that made life miserable for Amy Ann and their children. He was, apparently, a chronic alcoholic, and when drinking became quite mean and irresponsible. Fortunately, my grandmother Amy Ann was a large woman and grandfather a small man. Amy Ann told us that there couldn't have been a better or kinder man when not drinking.

My father was 6-8 years old when his father pulled him around the yard in his little wagon, talked and played with him, then picked him up, hugged and kissed him and told him to be good and help his mother. That was my father's last memory of his father. He abandoned his family, and I am sure that he was worried about their safety. Years later we found he had gone to Butte, Montana, where he died at 45 years of age of pneumonia, and acute alcoholism.

So Amy Ann was left with 3 young children to support and care for and to do it had to resort to the delivery of coal and wood and taking in washing and ironing. It was a very hard time for her and her children. My father was able only to get to the 3rd grade of school, but he remembered that he was to watch out for and help his mother.

He worked in a Chinese Truck Farm and received vegetables for his pay. In his free time, he loved to fish and brought

home many a big carp or sucker to help out. Amy Ann's story of this, to us, was that she went to great lengths to prepare the fish in a special way and when ready would place it on a special board and bake the fish. When it was ready she would take it out of the oven, give the fish to the cats, and eat the board. How she would laugh over this. Then she would ask us riddles like, "Where was Moses when the lights went out?" She was full of little surprizes and sayings that we loved. She and my father would talk to us with the English Cockney accents that would delight all of us. In spite of her hard life she kept her sense of humor and was a joy to be around.

She was finally employed by a large Salt Lake City furniture store that gave her more money and more time. She loved to put furniture together, painting and varnishing and cleaning and dusting it in the large show-room.

About this time, Salt Lake City electrified the city and homes and streets with Thomas Edison's wonderful invention of the light globe. What a great thrill it was when they first lighted up the city. It was like a miracle.

In about 1905 she answered an ad from an Idaho Falls paper for a housekeeper to help with 3 small children, from a Heber Kelley. He had a large farm at the village of Lincoln, near Idaho Falls, Idaho, where the Utah and Idaho Sugar Co. had begun building a sugar factory in 1903. It is still in operation at this time, 1979.

She left her home and journeyed to her new job and this worked out so well that they were later married. Heber was a wonderful man and father to her children, and she had found a new lease on life with this man in a big spacious home that she loved very much.

The Lincoln Ward here took her and her family into their hearts and homes and she became very active in the Relief Society which she loved very much and here gained wonderful lifelong friends.

She embarked on a new social life of church and entertaining. She was a wonderful cook and she began educating herself. She gathered a library of good books, china, glass and silverware and was thrilled by it.

Amy Ann's home always smelled of good home cooking, like soups, stews, pies, cakes, cookies and bread which she always had ready for us. She kept her home immaculate, as well as herself and all her children.

When my mother and father were married 30 June 1915, she opened her home for them, invited all to attend and cooked all the food for it. My mother has always loved her for this and remembered it. Later years Amy Ann gave my mother china, silver, and a nice bedroom suite. She still has it, being 86 years of age now.

Amy Ann and Heber left the farm in 1925 and moved into Idaho Falls, just one block from my parent's home. Here she immediately made new friends and with all her old friends was happier and busier than ever.

In 1932 her husband, Heber, passed away and she was alone in her big home, but we were close by and all her friends and relatives helped her through this time.

As a young boy I was elected to take care of her chores: lawns, coal and wood, chickens and etc., and I loved it all very much as with a wink of her eye she would slip me a great big silver dollar which to me looked like a fortune, and in those days it was.

When Amy Ann grew older she became heavier and it was difficult for her to get around. She developed leg cramps or charley horses. These left her helpless, crying in pain, many times on the floor until we could work the cramps out. Then she would hang on us and cry in relief.

She loved to play cards, and she and my father would play 2 handed Pinochle for hours. This filled many of her lonely hours.

She became quite ill and after a brief illness, Amy Ann passed away on 8 September 1936, at the old L.D.S. Hospital.

We were left with the memories of a very special and wonderful mother and grandmother and a great empty space in our hearts, and homes, and lives.

I am now 63 years of age and have lived dreams of going down the alley to her home and helping her and I can see her tall, dignified, royal and beautiful in her bearing. She was a most handsome woman in her younger years. This is what I know of Amy Ann (Hepworth) Burnham, my Grandmother.