

## LIFE OF MARY JANE HEPWORTH BEE

Written by Relia Hokanson as given by her father, Joseph Hepworth Bee.

Mary Jane Hepworth was born 23 December 1855 at Adwalton, Yorks, England and died 9 March 1926 at Georgetown, Idaho.

The Joseph Hepworth family must have lived in a basement in England as grandma told dad about looking out the window and seeing the beautiful green lawn at eye level. As a little girl, she and aunt Annis would visit a neighbor lady, and as kids will sometimes do, they overstayed their welcome. When the neighbor lady got tired of them she had a trained parrot who would say, "Slap their asses and send them home." The girls got the hint.

Their mother readily accepted the gospel and was determined to bring her family to Zion. She was able to finance the trip through the "Emigration Fund." This fund was to be repaid when the people were able. This fund was established by the church as there were so many saints who wanted to come to Zion and could not afford it.

Grandma, Mary Jane, Annis and Sam got on the boat. Mary Jane was terribly sea sick so the captain took pity on her and let her go up on deck where she could get some air. This helped her a lot. When a bad storm came up, she was forced to go below. The crew had to "batten down the hatches" to keep the water out. This made Mary Jane extremely ill again, her mother said, "Never mind Mary, the boat won't sink." Mary groaned and said, "Oh, I wish it would."

We do not know how long it took them to make the voyage. They finally arrived in New Orleans, from there they went up the river to Omaha. From there they started across the plains in a covered wagon company. Mary Jane walked all the way. Sometimes as children will, she would tire and fall behind. About the time the wagons got a ways ahead, she would hear the coyotes howl. This was a real incentive for her to take

off and catch up in a hurry! When they reached the valley, they were destitute. Mary Jane's mother had to put the two girls in foster homes. Mary Jane was placed in President Woodruff's home. He raised her until she was married. They did not attend school and at that time could neither read nor write. Mary Jane learned a lot while she lived in the Woodruff home.

She was married at the age of 14. They lived at Oxford for awhile. Life wasn't easy and after a period of time they moved to "Salaratis" Creek. This was a ranch south of Randolph, Utah. Mary Jane gave birth to her first child here. She was alone at the time as Grandfather had gone for help. This baby and the next one did not live. This was a sad time for such a young woman.

They moved from Salaratis Creek to Bloomington, Idaho. My father, Joseph H. Bee, was born there, also his sister Harriet (aunt Hattie). She was born on her big brother's fourth birthday.

They moved to Georgetown when dad was eight years old. About two years before this, Grandmother had to move to "Willow Creek" about six miles north from Grover, Wyoming. She went on what was known as "the underground" because she was a second wife. This was the only way Grandfather could avoid arrest. They (dad, aunt Eleanor, aunt Hattie, and their mother) lived in a dirt-floor, dirt roof, one-room cabin for two summers and one winter.

These were not easy times for grandma. She worked as a seamstress in Grover and most of the time took left over material for pay. She was able to clothe her children in this manner. Her wages were 5¢ per hour, this was 50¢ per day.

Grandpa Bee did what he could to help care for his family. He obtained a pair of shoes for aunt Eleanor, but the children mostly were barefoot. When they left Star Valley, Grandmother went to Salt Lake City with the two girls, and my father had to go to Bloomington with his father. Dad said this was a sad parting for him. Think what it must have meant to that mother.

Grandma returned and lived in Paris, Idaho, while there she took care of two boys, one of whom lived in her home. One of these boys was James J. Hart who grew up to be a prominent church authority in the Seventies. The other was Roy Welker. He was my father's school teacher and also he wrote a lesson for the priesthood manual.

When they moved to Georgetown the only place they had to live in was a log cabin that had been chinked up with cow manure. This sounds awful to us, but people had to use available materials and I imagine it worked. Dad says when they moved in, Mr. Davy Jone's fingerprints still showed in the dried manure. Grandma soon changed this. She sent her men out north of town to a hill of white clay. This clay was mixed with water and made a whitewash which was put on over the manure and soon the cabin was more like a home. She even made a ceiling from factory, which was material similar to our unbleached muslin only thinner. She had Grandpa cut a home in the wall of the cabin and put in a bay window. This was filled with flowers. Wherever Grandma went, she created a home and always had flowers.

She was bedfast for two years before she died. She requested every one to send her flowers that she could enjoy while she was alive, rather than wait for her funeral. Her room was filled with flowers, but there were a lot at her funeral also.

She planned her own funeral. It was to be short, no sad songs, and only one speaker. They sang happy Mormon hymns, among them "Come, Come Ye Saints". When the speaker arose he said, "We all know what a wonderful woman Mary Jane was. I would like to explain a few of the gospel principles that meant so much to her."

I mention this to give you an insight into her character. She was a peppery little woman. One of the tings I remember was how she hated to wash dishes. She was extremely neat and clean, but she used to use up all her dishes, then hire some of us grandchildren to wash them. She had a small tub behind a curtain under the sink in her pantry, where she kept the dishes out of sight. The dishes were washed in a gray enamel dish pan. While she was raising her family and before Grandpa passed away, she kept her dishes washed. It was when she was a widow with grandchildren around that her dislike

for doing dishes came out. She always had a piece of crocheting and her fingers were flying. She did not like to make pillow case lace as she hated to make duplicates.

While they were living in Georgetown, Grandma and Grandpa received word that their daughter Mary was very ill in Star Valley. They took off in the dead of winter in a one bob sleigh pulled by a borrowed team. After a hard journey, which we can only imagine, they reached Mary a short while before she passed away.

Grandma served a President of the Y.W.M.I.A. Dad remembers her walking through the snow three blocks to the church with a sack of kindling to build a fire to warm the church.

## MARY JANE HEPWORTH BEE'S STORY

by Ruth Echols

Mary Jane Hepworth was born to Joseph Hepworth and Mary Hirst on the 23rd of December 1855. Her birthplace was Adwalton, Yorkshire, England. She was the seventh child of twelve children, seven brothers and five sisters.

Mary Jane was a great lady, known to many outside her family affectionately as Aunt Mary Jane. This story about her is written by her granddaughter, Ruth S. Echols. The story comes from my recollections of conversations I have had with my grandmother and my mother. Some of it also comes from the autobiography of her husband, Richard John Moxey Bee, written when he was seventy five years old.

The only thing I know of her as a little girl in England is that she loved to gather sea shells. In her home in Georgetown, Idaho, she had a collection of them in a bottle which she kept on a shelf over the washbasin stand. She used to show them to me and let me handle them when I was a little girl. When I became older, she gave the collection to me and thus she started me on a life long hobby.

Mary Jane came to America with her mother and part of the family when she was nine years old. They were very poor so the children had to go to work. Grandmother went to work in the home of President Wilford Woodruff and she thought he was a very grand man. He was very kind to her. Her brother Samuel, sent her a picture of President Woodruff's home and she made a notation on it that she was happy to have it and that she lived there when she was ten years old. I don't know how long she lived there or what happened to her after that.

The next known record of grandmother is her marriage to Richard John Moxey Bee when she was fourteen years of age. This is recorded in his autobiography. He writes: "While living in Oxford, I had prospered exceedingly and accumulated means plenty for my family's comfort and pleasure. I made a trip to Bountiful and while there, there was a furor among my chums and acquaintances contemplating to move to Woodruff, a settlement 100 miles east of Salt Lake City. They were so elated about the new country and its prospects that they enamored me to their belief that I promised when I got home I would sell out my effects and join the colonists. I forgot to mention I had formed the acquaintance of a young lady just previously, which eventually culminated in our marriage on the thirteenth day of December 1869, in the endowment House in Salt Lake City, with the agreeable consent of all concerned." (This agreeable consent refers to the consent of his first wife and family as this was in the days of polygamy.) "According to promise I sold out at Oxford, rigged up a four horse team and in April 1870 started with my wife Mary Jane Hepworth to our prospective new home. We went by way of Bountiful and stopped over at my sisters." After helping to put in the crops the account of their journey continues: "After considerable toil and hardship traveling by way of Wasatch and contending with deep crusted snow for several miles we finally had to camp on a bare knoll for the night without water or feed for the team, and freezing cold and no fire. We survived the night and in the morning proceeded on our journey until we finally reached what is known as Saleratus Creek and stopped for breakfast, which

consisted of a sage hen I had killed on the way that morning." After breakfast they left for their destination in Woodruff.

Grandfather was disappointed in the aspect of the country, so after staying at Woodruff a very short time they moved ten miles to the south and took up some claims in Saleratus Creek. They established a home there and remained there through many hardships because of the severity of the weather. The winter of 1871-72 they were hemmed in all winter. In the spring of 1872 they were very discouraged with the place because of considerable loss in their stock and especially the misfortune of grandmother losing her first baby during childbirth because they could not procure proper help.

They stayed at Saleratus another year endeavoring to make improvements. The next winter was not so severe as they were better prepared. However, the family was not happy here so grandfather offered the home and surroundings for sale in the spring of 1873. An offer was made in the fall to buy it and grandfather accepted it although it was only a fraction of the worth of the property. He bought a home and lot in Woodruff for the family and went to work in Salt Lake City for the winter of 1874. He returned in the spring, but because things did not go too well he made a trip in the fall to Bear Lake Valley to assist in the harvest. While there he visited a place called Bloomington and was pleased with the location, so he sold out at Woodruff in the late fall of 1874 and moved to Bear Lake Valley in November. They were sheltered in Bloomington for the winter by a Brother Isaac Dunford. Here again they suffered considerable hardships, but spent their time as best they could among strangers. On the eighteenth day of January 1875 my grandmother gave birth to a baby girl who they named Mary.

In the spring they bought a house and lot with five acres of pasture land attached. They paid five cows and gave a note for 50 bushels of wheat payable in the fall. Fifteen more acres were purchased and other land rented. The family was supported by this farm land and grandfather teaching school and later working in a printing office.

No mention is made in grandfather's autobiography of anything relating to grandmother for a long time except a visit by her mother and sister in the year 1888. The next time he mentions her is to briefly record that "on the 4th of October 1888 my wife Mary Jane gave birth to a baby girl which we named Harriet Althea." She had a girl named Eleanor and a boy named Joseph in be-

tween the recording of the birth of Mary and Harriet, but grandfather did not record these births.

Sometime during the last part of 1888 or early 1889 grandpa must have sent grandmother and her family to Star Valley for her safety as the government was giving polygamist families trouble. She had a brother and other relatives living there. Grandpa was arrested in September of 1889 and taken to Montpelier for a hearing, but was released on bond for his appearance in Boise the following spring. Threats were made by the marshalls that they would have grandma as they knew she was in Star Valley. After grandfather's release he rode his saddle pony back to their home in Bloomington, getting there between two and three in the morning. He aroused his son, John, sixteen years of age, told him the situation and requested him to ride in haste to Star Valley and warn his aunt Mary Jane to move her quarters and be on the lookout. John willingly complied with his father's request and was on the road up Montpelier Canyon by daylight. He reached his destination, 65 miles, by two o'clock in the afternoon. He reported the situation and got his aunt Mary Jane all safe among friends and relatives from any surprises that might be sprung upon her. The plans of her enemies were thwarted and she was never arrested. The case against grandfather was dismissed and he wrote to his wife in Star Valley and told her of the happy results of his trial and assured her it would not be long before he would make a visit to her and make arrangements for her removal.

While residing in Star Valley, grandmother had an interesting experience with an Indian. He used to bring her fish to eat. He became fascinated by her young son, Joseph, and wanted grandmother to give him to him. He wasn't at all mean about it. He just liked the little boy. Needless to say grandmother did not let the Indian have him.

In June of 1891 Mary Jane moved from Star Valley to Salt Lake City with a Brother Turner and family who were on their way to the city from Star Valley. She remained in the city until the fall, when her husband went to Salt Lake to bring her home to Bloomington.

Sometime in 1891 her husband Richard traded some of his property in Bloomington for some in Georgetown, Idaho. Mary Jane and her family moved there in October of 1892.

Grandmother's husband lived about 21 years after they moved to Georgetown. During this time he held a number of positions, one of which was to carry the mail. He had several accidents while carrying the mail and also one on the farm. These undermined his health to the point where the family went through more hardships. Their son, Joseph, had to take over the mail route and daughter, Harriet, had to quit school to carry on the work at home. Grandmother had a talent as a beautiful seamstress, so she helped make a living by sewing for many people. On one occasion my mother remembers that grandmother made white dresses all alike for a group of cousins and they were beautiful. She and a man by the name of Nels Larsen also cooperated to make coffins for the dead. He did the carpenter work and grandmother lined and covered the coffins so she took care of the needs of both the living and the dead.

She also did beautiful handwork of all kinds. I remember her best for her lovely crochet work. This reminds me of another pleasant association I had with her. She taught me to crochet before I was eleven years old. We made edges on small linen circles about two inches in diameter. This resulted in small doilies about five or six inches in diameter. At sixty years old, I still have the doilies and always remember the lovely lady who helped me make them. Many people have enjoyed her beautiful handwork.

During her busy life she still found time for participation in church activities. She was active in Relief Society and the Mutual Improvement Association. While active in the M.I.A. she scrimped and saved every penny she could to enable her to go to Salt Lake City to April conferences, and also to visit her mother, her sister, Hannah, and her brother, Samuel. She took her youngest daughter Harriet, with her as she was young enough not to require a ticket on the train. She really looked forward to this trip as she felt "buried alive" in Idaho. She had never wanted to leave Utah and her people. She stood by her gate one day and looked down the road. As she stood there she turned to her daughter and made the expression, "buried alive".



Many things are missing in this story, but since they were never recorded the story will have to end with a few comments about her family. She had seven children. The first two and the last died at birth. Mary, Eleanor, Joseph and Harriet lived to maturity. However, Mary died at age twenty-two, six months after her marriage. Eleanor died at age 67 after raising a family. At the present writing (May 1976) Joseph and Harriet still survive at the ages of eighty-seven and ninety-one. Grandmother lost her husband July 18, 1912. She had thirteen grandchildren.

Cancer claimed the life of this lovely wife, mother and grandmother. She suffered a painful and lingering illness but never complained. On Sunday before her death she told us that grandpa would come for her at five o'clock on Tuesday. I was standing at the foot of her bed when her eyes were closed at five o'clock on Tuesday, March 9, 1926.

She had overcome a life of hardships which began in America with her walk across the plains as a little girl of nine. A brother Walter Lambourne was kind to her and carried her across the rivers. When he wrote a book about the trip, he put a personal inscription in it and gave her a copy. Throughout her life she endured many hardships but she accomplished many great things and met life with courage even when the end came. She even overcame the inability to read and write; she was taught by her husband after they were married. Because of her lack of education she always felt very humble about appearing with those of better education, but she was every inch a "lady". While visiting her sister Anice, one time a very prominent Doctor invited them to a party in his home. Grandmother was hesitant about going. When her sister told the doctor her sister felt like she would not fit in their society he said, "Your sister could appear in any society and everyone would be proud of her."

She brought joy and beauty to many. No wonder she was so loved by her family and affectionately known to so many as Aunt Mary Jane, a lovely lady due all respect, honor, and most of all love.

Obituary from the Deseret News  
(Thursday 18 March 1926, Sec. 2, page 8)

FIRST Y.L.M.I.A. HEAD AT GEORGETOWN DIES:

Georgetown, Idaho, March 17: Funeral services for Mrs. Mary Jane Bee in the ward chapel were well attended. She died from the effects of Cancer of the stomach. The ward choir furnished the music. Prayers were by former Bishop Alma Hayes and President E. C. Rich spoke. Interment was in the local cemetery.

Mrs. Bee was born in England on December 23, 1855 and came to Utah when still a child walking all the way across the plains. She lived at the home of President Wilford Woodruff and was married when only 14 years old to Richard J. M. Bee. After living in Utah several years she came to this county and resided here 51 years. She lived in Bloomington 20 years and moved here with her husband 30 years ago. Three children survive: Mrs. Eleanor Hess, Willard, Utah, Joseph Bee and Mrs. Hattie Stoddard who resides here, also 12 grandchildren.

Mrs. Bee was the president of the first Y.L.M.I.A. organized here, and was at one time in the Relief Society presidency.