

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MARY ANN BOYACK

by Martha Afton Felt

My grandmother, Mary Ann, was born in Spanish Fork, Utah, on 12 October 1862. She was the daughter of Elizabeth Clark and Robert Boyack. Her grandparents had raised her and her early life she lived in Spanish Fork.

She was a very happy, compassionate person, quiet and unassuming. She went to school in a little school house in town, but in her growing up years they didn't consider it important to know much more than to be able to read and write. Arithmetic was taught on a slate. Many grades met together with one teacher in a one-room school in Spanish Fork. She was grateful for what schooling she had.

A quote from Ellen King, a granddaughter, expresses so well the feeling of each of her grandchildren. "I loved her so much. In my early life I wanted to grow up to be like her. I have said many times if I could be half as good as she was, I would be happy."

She was about five feet tall, but possessed a strong will and determination that would give her the strength to meet the tests she would need to face.

When she was nineteen years old she met and was courted by a young man, Daniel Pitman. He had come from England with his parents. He was born on 14 August 1857, in Blaenovan, Llanfoist, England, a son of James Pitman and Ann Hamblin.

His parents were converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly called the Mormon Church. He was not a member. He had been a coal miner in England and his parents encouraged him to come to this new land of opportunity.

He left a wife and a baby daughter in England. She had agreed to come as soon as he could save enough money to pay her passage. On two different occasions he sent money for her fare. The first time she used the money but did not come. The second time he arranged that the money had to be used for passage or returned to him. The money came back. She had made it clear that she would not come to him and a divorce followed.

He was a handsome man, with dark hair and a mustache. His eyes were a dark brown.

The name Pitman probably came from "Pit man", or a man that digs in the pits. Many homes in the area where they lived had coal pits in their yards and fields. The family would work the pits and even the very young children and the wife would dig the coal to fill their sacks to help support the family. Some men would come around every week or so and purchase the coal they had dug. This is most likely how the name originated.

The Pitmans lived in Clandown in old brick or stone houses. The Varteg Town is in England and where the Pitmans came from. If one should go there and ask for 20 Houses or #12 Camel Back Terrace, you would be directed to the place they had lived.

There were many people who came to the U.S. and to Utah with the Mormons and who returned to England with tales of the hardships and of the Indians. This made it so many were afraid to leave where they felt comfortable. To venture out into those frightening trails. The railroads weren't even in Blaenavon and Varteg until after the Pitmans had left for America.

Daniel had worked in the mines in England since he was 8 years old and was hoping to get work of another nature here, but mining was all he knew and his father was not well and needed his support. He tells of going out to look for work with blankets on his back and many mornings woke up with snow piled high on him. He never joined the Mormon Church but was very religious.

He found work in the mines in Eureka, but his parents continued to live in Spanish Fork. He met a beautiful young lady, Mary Ann Boyack, when he was visiting his parents, and since his wife had refused to leave her home in England and divorced him, he was interested in marrying again.

He would call on Mary Ann whenever he was in town, and his visits started to become more frequent. Being a miner, he brought coal with him and supplied Mary Ann's grandparents with their winter's supply. One evening as he was sitting by the fireplace and visiting, the fire died down and Daniel got up and went to the coal bin and began to put more coal on the fire. Mary Ann's grandmother walked in and said something like, "Now, lookie here, young man. You go easy on that coal. Don't you know it's hard to come by?"

She turned and left the room and the two of them had a good laugh. Yes, he knew it was hard to come by.

They were married in Spanish Fork on 26 May 1881, and then moved to Eureka. They didn't stay there very long, for Daniel became ill and as soon as he was able to work again, they moved to Scofield, where he worked in the mines.



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Alice and Ed Nielson
my mother's sister - She
was not able to have
children - we loved
her like a mother

Their first daughter, Alice, was born in Spanish Fork, Utah, 8 January 1882. Their second little daughter, Edith, was born in Scofield 1 April 1883. She lived for only 29 days and brought sadness to this little family. She died on 29 April 1883.

Joy came to them when a son, John, was born on 8 March 1884. He was like his father and loved to be with him.

The life of a miner was hard and demanding. Daniel would go up the hill to the mine while it was still dark in the early morning hours, then return when it was dark in the evening. The only time he saw the daylight was on Sunday, the one day he didn't work.

Another little girl, Mary Ann, joined them 10 November 1885 in Scofield. Then in 1888, on 5 January, Ellen arrived. There were now four healthy children and a very happy home.

Mary and Daniel had already suffered heartache when little Edith died and now they were called on to see two more of their little children leave them. Twins were born in the year 1895. They were stillborn. Sadness filled the home and recovery was slow for Mary Ann.

A beautiful baby boy arrived on 10 February 1897. How happy and grateful they were for this little son, Daniel. It had been nine years since Ellen was born and all were to enjoy him. There were now three girls and two boys. Their home was comfortable and they were happy in this mining town. The main walk to the stores or to the mine was along the railroad tracks. As the trains would come chugging along, it would be necessary for them to move over to the side and let the train go by. Alice recorded in her history how they would jump to the side into the deep snow that was piled high on each side and stay there until the trains passed by.

(Ellen said that Scofield always seemed so wide while they were living there. The pine trees covered the mountains on each side of the valley. When she returned 30 years later it was as if the two mountains had actually been pushed together to form a long, narrow valley.)

Daniel was a strict father. He didn't join any church, but nonetheless kept the Sabbath day and expected his family to keep it. If Mary Ann wanted to sew a button on one of the girls' dresses before they went to Sunday School, they were first sent to see where their father was. He said, "You have six days to do that. It is not to be done on Sunday."

Alice always felt he was too strict. He wouldn't let her go to the dances on Saturday nights. He worried about his family having to grow up in the rough mining town. He sent

them to church meeting on Sunday. When they asked why they should go when he didn't, he would come back with, "You can learn good things there to help you."

Alice had to be in by 10 p.m., and if she was any later she would find the door locked. She would get one of the younger children to stay awake and then open the door quietly for her. She was married at the age of 17.

On 1 May 1900, Mary Ann sat holding her little son Dan who had the measles. The girls were out playing on the hillside when the earth began to shake and tremble; they ran to their mother and asked what it was. She sent them to the mine to see, telling them to hurry back and tell her what had happened. She waited with her sick baby, but the girls were so engrossed in watching they forgot to return to their mother with the news of the mine explosion. This would prove to be the biggest mine disaster in history.

Daniel and his son John were killed. John was just 16 years old and had just started to mine. Alice's husband, Tom, also a miner, was killed. They had been married less than a year.

So great were the deaths that there wasn't a family in Scofield who didn't lose a family member. Everyone was in mourning. There were not enough caskets available for the dead, and each home had them on their beds until caskets would arrive.

Mary Ann took the girls into Spanish Fork and left them with friends to work for their board and room. She returned to Scofield to salvage what she could of her life.

Daniel and John were taken to Spanish Fork and buried in the Clark family plot.

Mary Ann returned to Spanish Fork to live in the little home her grandparents had left her. She gathered her children home again.

She went to the Salt Lake Temple in May 1901 and did the temple work to have the children sealed to Daniel. This proved to be a great comfort for her.

She lived neighbors to a large family from New Zealand. They had moved to Utah after joining the Mormon Church. Mrs. Wilson had been having difficulty with sore throats and the doctor thought it wise to remove her tonsils. The operation was in the doctor's office, and before it was completed, she died. This was such a shock to everyone around, and all wanted to do what they could to help Mr. Wilson.

Mary Ann often baked bread and pots of soup and took over to this man, George Wilson, and his family. She would do whatever she could to ease his burden. She found him coming over to carry in her wood and coal.

A romance developed. They discovered they enjoyed each other's company and were married 22 May 1901.

They combined their families and, naturally, problems arose. They were able to meet them and all were happy for their parents. Some of the Wilson children were so young that Mary Ann was the only mother they knew.

Family prayers were always said before they sat at the table to eat. The chairs would be turned out so they could kneel easily. She made bread each night and left it to raise and bake in the morning. Pots of soup were always on the back of the stove simmering.

There was always a tub of clothes waiting for the girls to scrub out as soon as they were home from school. Saturday was a beehive, getting ready for Sunday. Shoes had to be polished, lamp shades had to be washed, and wicks trimmed in the coal oil lamps. The black kitchen stove must be polished and cleaned, even the stove pipe.

When George and Mary Ann's little son, Jim, was a small baby, Ellen loved him and so often carried him in a shawl on her back. All the family worked together and loved each other. He was a delight to her. He was born 5 June 1903.

George worked at the Spanish Fork Co-op. All of the children worked. Some worked at the Co-op making shoes.

Mary, her daughter, although very young, fell in love with William W. Hayes. It was just one and a half years after her mother married Mr. Wilson that Mary got married. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple on 24 September 1903 and left to establish their own home.

They had another son, Harold, born 9 September 1905, in Spanish Fork. A baby girl, Ruby, came to them on 2 December 1907. She was a special Christmas present for the family.

Earl came to them on 7 April 1910 in Spanish Fork. Mary Ann had many responsibilities and demands upon her and she couldn't nurse him. At that time bottles were unheard of, and the baby needed food. Her daughter Mary had a new baby, so she nursed both Earl and her own son, George.

The grandchildren loved to go to Grandma's and Grandpa's place. Both of them were wonderful grandparents. They had lots of fun there, and it was always a special treat and a delight to all when grandmother baked a cake. They could hardly wait. They knew as soon as it was cool everyone could have a piece. Grandmother's cake needed no frosting to make it delicious.

Ellen King relates one of her memories: "She was patient. I will remember one day as I look back on it I feel a little ashamed. We children were engrossed in a fun card game when grandmother said she needed some wood. She was ready to start supper. We all heard and she knew we had. Instead of scolding and asking again, she quietly went to the wood pile and carried in the needed wood. When I saw what she had done, I felt guilty of being a disobedient child. She had asked Harold to do it, but I still felt that I had wronged her and I loved her so much."

They moved to the Salt Flats near Magna, Utah. Dan and Jim purchased a farm. For them it was hard, difficult work to farm this land, for there was so much salt in the ground. They raised wheat and some animals and always had chickens and rabbits. This home was reached after traveling over miles and miles of washboard roads. It always seemed like hours and hours to get there. Even being so far out everyone loved to go there.

They had a reservoir where water was stored. It was built of cement and was about four feet high. When the grandchildren would go out, we would coax them to let us clean it out and let us have it for a swimming pool. They had better use for it. They kept the water for their crops here and an extra bonus was that it had fresh water running in constantly so trout thrived here and were easily caught for good trout dinners. Water was piped into the house from the well that filled this reservoir.

The washing machine she had ~~often~~ had to be turned by hand crank. At these times she was especially happy to have grandchildren there to turn it for her.

When they lived on the Salt Flats, Harold and Earl were the only members of the family that weren't married. When Harold and Edna Hanson were married, they moved into part of the home. Earl built a little radio out of a cigar box and it was exciting to put on his ear phones and listen to it.

In their parlor they had a pump organ with all kinds of buttons and controls. All tried to play it, and there must have been times when they wished we knew how to play it, for we all were constantly trying.

The song of "Over the River and Through the Woods to Grandmother's House We Go" could have been written about Grandma and Grandpa Wilson. They would set up the big long tables and have the whole family there for Thanksgiving. It was truly one big, happy family.

A couple never had better sons than Harold and Earl were to their parents. They were deeply concerned and watched over them both.

When Earl married LaVerne and moved to Magna they wanted the folks closer and built a little home for them next door to Earl. They moved in from the Salt Flats and were happy living there.

Grandfather had diabetes and was so ill he had to be taken to the hospital. Earl, Harold and Ellen spent many long hours with him, taking care of all his needs. Ellen was with him when he died on 9 February 1942. All of the children of Mary Ann loved him dearly. The grandchildren could not have loved him more.

It was a lonely time for Mary Ann with George gone. He had been so ill and dependent upon her. He couldn't lean over, so she always tied his shoes, and there were many little personal things she did for him. She was not too well herself, so she chose to move again to Spanish Fork and live with her daughter Alice and son-in-law Ed Nielson.

It was not many years before she was bedridden and very ill. She was given the best of care by her family. One of her old friends visited her and came from her room with tears in his eyes. He complimented her daughters Alice and Ellen. He said, "Whenever I have been here she has been beautiful and clean. She is being treated like a queen." Indeed, she was. There was not a day that went by that she wasn't bathed and the clean sheets put on the bed. They wanted her to have the best there was. She died on 20 May 1951 at her daughter Alice's home. She was 89 years old.

The family all gathered to pay tribute to her. Her step-children loved her as a mother and freely expressed it.

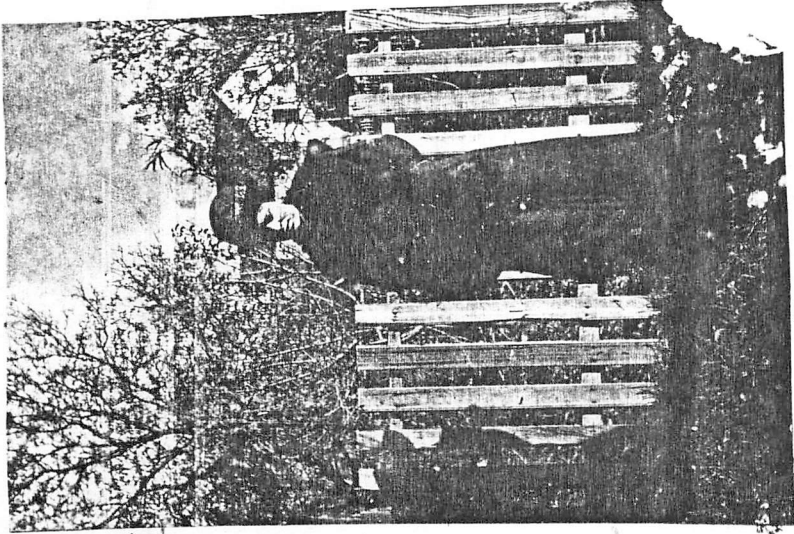
Grandfather was a tall, impressive man, with a white mustache. As a granddaughter I loved him very much. His death left a void for me and it holds a lasting impresson on me. I was in nursing training at the Holy Cross Hospital when the Sister came to tell me of his death. I sobbed and sobbed. She was disgusted with me and told me he was just my step-grandfather, to which I replied, "He was my grandfather and I love him dearly. I am his granddaughter. He loved me." I know each of their

grandchildren felt as I felt. There never seemed to be a difference. I appreciated them both and the heritage they left me. Of their love and concern, of their patience and care they gave.

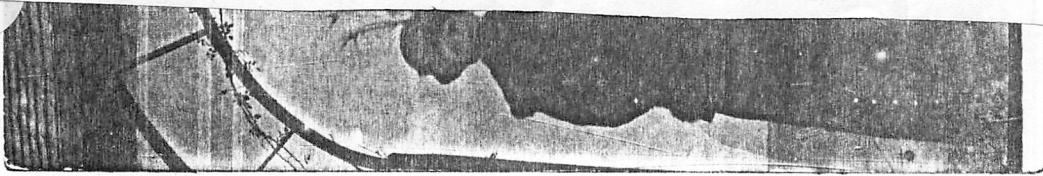
These grandparents have left a beautiful heritage. We can justly be proud and grateful to them.



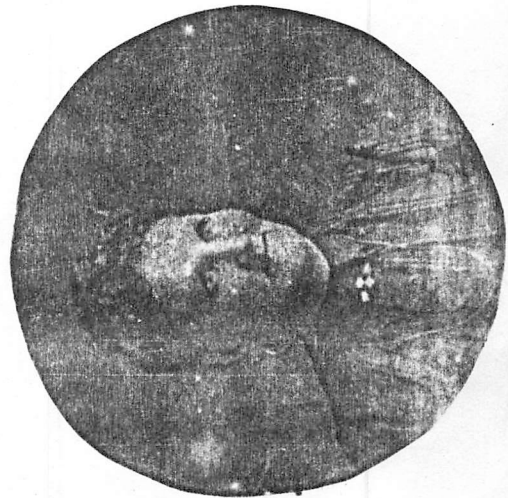
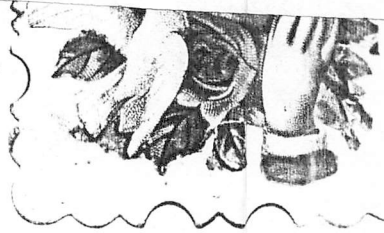
Alice Pitman Nielsen, Mary Ann Boyack Pitman Wilson, Ellen Pitman Harris



Ellen Pitman Harris



Mary Ann



Spanish Fork, Utah 18 Apr 1902

#33 — A Patriarchal blessing by George W. Wilkins, Patriarch, upon the head of Mary Ann Pitman daughter of Elizabeth Craig and Robert Boyack.

Sister Mary Ann in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I lay my hands ^{upon your} head and seal upon you a patriarchal blessing for thou art entitled to the same blessings that were conferred upon Abraham, Isaac & Jacob and through your faithfulness & diligence in keeping the commandments of God you shall receive of the Holy spirit of God. You shall be blessed with wisdom and the spirit of delight and truth that shall guide you in after life and you will be blessed and comforted with the spirit of meekness and humility that you may be a comfort and a blessing to your children through all the days of your life.

Thou art an heir to the same blessings that were conferred upon Joseph and his seed. Thou art of the lineage of Ephraim and shall receive ~~and shall receive~~ the same blessings that were conferred upon Joseph and his children. You shall be blessed in all your duties and labors as a mother in Israel. You shall be a comfort to those you associate with in life and you shall be blessed in all the duties you have to perform. You shall have the spirit of the Lord to guide you day by day and you shall be directed by the power of God. Through your faithfulness and diligence you shall receive great blessings at the hands of the Lord for thou hast passed through trials in the loss of your husband and son and you shall receive an inheritance upon the earth and a kingdom that shall never pass away with your husband and son who have gone before you and you shall be blessed with another companion in life and receive a crown of glory and exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom of God and I seal upon you all these blessings which you have received under the hands of the servants of God which I seal upon you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
Amen

An additional memory of Aunt Alice:

Alice married Thomas Padfield and they lived in Scofield. He was killed in the mine disaster on May 1, 1900, along with her father and brother. She moved to Spanish Fork and met Edward Nielson and married him. She later went to the temple with Ed--on February 6, 1918, in Salt Lake City.

He was a farmer by trade and they were very happy together. She was unable to carry a baby to term and took her nieces and nephews under her wing. She was like a second mother to each of them.

She was born 8 January 1882, in Spanish Fork, Utah, a daughter of Daniel and Mary Ann Boyack Pitman.

She died on 12 October 1954 in Spanish Fork, Utah. She was loved by all that knew her.