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BIOGRAPHY OF BARRUS FAMILY  
COPY FROM GRANTSVILLE OBSERVER

MY GRANDPARENTS, FREEMAN NICKERSON, AND HULDAH CHAPMAN, WERE BORN IN AMERICA ABOUT 1780. THE GOSPEL FOUND THEM IN NEW YORK IN 1833. THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND SOME OTHER ELDERS, VISITED THAT PART OF NEW YORK AND MADE THEIR HOME WITH GRANDFATHER NICKERSON, FOR A TIME. THUS IT HAPPENED THAT GRANDFATHER NICKERSON AND HIS FAMILY, CONSISTING OF SEVERAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SOME MARRIED AND SOME SINGLE, JOINED THE CHURCH IN 1833. HE BECAME VERY ENTHUSIASTIC AND SPENT THE REMAINDER OF HIS DAYS PREACHING THE GOSPEL. GRANDFATHER WAS A FISHERMAN AND USED TO QUOTE THE SAYING IN THE BIBLE, "I WILL SEND OUT FISHERMAN TO FISH THEM, AND HUNTERS TO HUNT THEM", AND WHEN ANY ONE WOULD SAY ANYTHING AGAINST THE CHURCH, HE WOULD SAY, "BE MEEK AND LOWLY LIKE THE MASTER." I RECEIVED A GREAT TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIS FAITHFULNESS, WHILE I WAS IN THE TEMPLE. AND THROUGH THAT MANIFESTATION, I WAS ENABLED TO RECEIVE SECOND ENDOWMENTS FOR GRANDFATHER NICKERSON AND HIS GOOD WIFE. MY FATHER, EMERY BARRUS, WAS BORN IN CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NEW YORK IN 1809. IN 1833 HE WAS WORKING AS A FARM HAND FOR FREEMAN NICKERSON AND KEEPING COMPANY WITH MY MOTHER ABIGAIL NICKERSON, WHEN THEY FIRST HEARD THE GOSPEL. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE OF HIS FATHER'S FAMILY WHO WAS BAPTIZED IN NEW YORK. MAJOR RUEL BARRUS BEING ONLY ELEVEN YEARS OLD AT THAT TIME, AND SUBJECT TO HIS FATHER, UNTIL HE CAME OF AGE, WHEN HE LEFT HIS FATHER'S HOME AND CAME TO NAUVOO. MY MOTHER WAS 16 YEARS OLD; AND FATHER AND MOTHER WERE BAPTIZED AND MARRIED IN 1833 IN NEW YORK.

GRANDFATHER NICKERSON AND ENTIRE FAMILY, SONS-IN-LAW AND DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW, INCLUDING MY FATHER AND MOTHER, TOOK UP THE LINE OF MARCH TOGETHER WITH THE SAINTS IN MISSOURI, IN 1839, WHEN B. F. BARRUS WAS ONE YEAR OLD. SPENT THE WINTER OF 1839 IN JEFFERSON CITY MISSOURI; ARRIVED AT THE SEAT OF NAUVOO IN THE SPRING OF 1840; BOUGHT CITY LOTS AND BUILT HOMES, PLANTED ORCHARDS ETC; LIVED IN COMPARATIVE PEACE UNTIL ABOUT 1844 WHEN THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND HIS BROTHER HYRUM WERE ASSASINATED IN THE CARTHAGE JAIL. AFTER THAT DATE THE PERSECUTION BECAME VERY SEVERE. MEN WERE WHIPPED, HOUSES BURNED, CROPS DESTROYED, UNTIL 1845, THE SAINTS AGREED TO VACATE THEIR BEAUTIFUL HOMES, LEAVING THE ORCHARDS, WITH THEIR FRUIT TREES JUST COMING INTO BEARING. PREPARATIONS WERE MADE FOR THAT NEVER-TO-BE FORGOTTEN JOURNEY ACROSS THE PLAINS. WAGON SHOPS WERE CREATED; FATHER HAD A SHINGLE MILL ON AN ISLAND IN THE MISSISSIPPI, WHERE MOTHER WOULD HOLD ONE END OF THE CROSS-CUT SAW AND SAW THE TREES INTO BLOCKS READY FOR SHINGLES.

IN 1845 THEY MOVED TO THE ISLAND AND FATHER WOULD GO INTO THE WOODS AND GET THE TIMBER, AND MOTHER WOULD HELP SAW IT INTO SUITABLE LENGTHS FOR THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WAGON; THEN PUT IT UP OVER HIS HEAD IN THE SHOP TO SEASON. HE MADE 15 WAGONS, RIGHT FROM THE STUMPS OF THE TREES. AFTER THE PROPHET WAS KILLED, THE MOB SAW THAT MORMONISM WAS NOT DEAD; AND TOLD THE PEOPLE IF THEY WOULD DROP MORMONISM, THEY COULD REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES. MANY FOUND THE TEMPTATION TOO GREAT, AND DROPPED BY THE WAYSIDE, NOT INTENDING TO DENOUNCE MORMONISM, BUT TO SIDE-TRACK UNTIL THEY COULD FIND AN EASIER WAY TO WORSHIP GOD.

UNCLE LEVI NICKERSON WAS THE ONLY ONE OF GRANDFATHER'S SONS THAT REMAINED TRUE TO MORMONISM UNTIL DEATH. GRANDFATHER NICKERSON AND FAMILY, WHO HAD LEFT NEW YORK IN 1839, LEFT NAUVOO IN AUGUST, SEVEN YEARS LATER. CROSSED THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND AGAIN TOOK UP THE LINE OF MARCH. HIS WAGON CONTAINED HIMSELF AND GRANDMOTHER NICKERSON AND A SISTER BUTLER, GRANDFATHER'S COUSIN. ELIZA BECKETT AND HER SON, WHO HAD BEEN CONVERTED BY HIM, FIVE IN NUMBER. ONE OF THE OLD LADIES DIED ON THE PRAIRIE, SIX MILES FROM DES MOINES. THEN WE TURNED DOWN INTO A GROVE OF TIMBER AND MADE WINTER QUARTERS, AT A PLACE CALLED SHERIDAN POINT.

BY THE TIME JANUARY 1847 WAS HALF OVER, GRANDFATHER NICKERSON AND THE OTHER OLD LADY AND HER SON, HAD DIED OF HARSHIPS AND EXPOSURE, LEAVING GRANDMOTHER NICKERSON, THE ONLY ONE OF THE FIVE OCCUPANTS OF THE WAGON. SHE JOINED WITH HER SON LEVI AND FAMILY AND ARRIVED IN SALT LAKE CITY IN 1850. SHE DIED IN PROVO CITY IN 1860.

DURING THE WESTWARD JOURNEY WE TRAVELED IN APPLETON HARMON'S COMPANY AND HE WAS A FAITHFUL CAPTAIN. HE APPOINTED MY FATHER AS HUNTER FOR THE COMPANY. FATHER WOULD GO AHEAD OF THE WAGON TRAIN AND WHEN HE COULD FIND BUFFALO CLOSE TO THE ROAD, HE WOULD SHOOT ONE DOWN AND WAIT FOR THE WAGON TRAIN TO DIVIDE IT UP. THE CHOLERA WAS IN THE WAGON TRAIN IN FRONT OF US, AND THE ONE BEHIND US, AND THE CAPTAIN ADVISED THAT WE USE AS LITTLE MEAT AS POSSIBLE.

THE BARRUS FAMILY ARRIVED IN GRANTSVILLE IN OCTOBER 1853. MY BROTHER OWEN WAS BORN IN DECEMBER 1853, TWO MONTHS AFTER OUR ARRIVAL. WE BUILT A FORT BY JOINING HOUSE TO HOUSE AROUND A TRACT OF LAND OF ABOUT FOUR ACRES. THE INHABITANTS OF GRANTSVILLE BECAME QUITE NUMEROUS BY THE SPRING OF 1854. SAMUEL STEELE ARRIVED WITH THE FIRST SEVEN FAMILIES IN 1851. THE INDIANS MADE A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE FOR THE SETTLERS IN EARLY DAYS. WE HAD TO HERD OUR STOCK IN THE DAY TIME ON THE RANGE AND STAND GUARD AT NIGHT TO KEEP THE INDIANS FROM DRIVING THEM OFF.

IN THOSE DAYS THERE WERE NO CARDING MACHINES. DAVENPORT AND WILSON EACH HAD A FLOCK OF SHEEP. THE HOME OF MOTHER BARRUS WAS A REGULAR MANUFACTURING PLANT. MOTHER WOULD TAKE THE WOOL RIGHT FROM THE SHEEP'S BACK, CARD AND SPIN IT INTO ROLLS, MAKE THE ROLLS INTO YARN AND THEN YARN INTO CLOTH; AND STOCKINGS; THE CLOTH INTO CLOTHING FOR THE FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS. AFTER THERE WAS A CARDING MACHINE IN PROVO; MOTHER WOULD TAKE THE WOOL TO PROVO, DRIVING A PAIR OF COLTS WE BROUGHT ACROSS THE PLAINS, AND GET THE WOOL MADE INTO ROLLS. SHE ALSO MADE THOUSANDS OF POUNDS OF CHEESE AND BUTTER. FATHER BROUGHT 46 HEAD OF LOOSE STOCK, BESIDES THE OXEN THAT WERE YOKED TO THE WAGONS, ACROSS THE PLAINS.

NOT A FRUIT TREE OR SHADE TREE WAS GROWING IN GRANTSVILLE IN 1853. BROTHER SCEVA, JOHN CLARK, AND JAMES McBRIDE WERE THE FIRST TO PLANT FRUIT TREES. MY FATHER MADE THE FIRST BARN IN GRANTSVILLE AND SOME GOOD HOUSES. FATHER THOS H. CLARK WAS OUR FIRST BISHOP, AND TIMOTHY PARKINSON AND JOHN B. WALKER WERE HIS COUNSULARS. IN 1855 THE GRASSHOPPERS CAME SO THICK THEY DARKENED THE SUN, AND DESTROYED THE CROPS. IN 1856 WAS THE YEAR OF THE FAMINE. A GOOD HORSE WOULD NOT BUY A SACK OF FLOUR. WE WERE WITHOUT BREAD FOR MONTHS, LIVING ON SEGOES, THISTLES, ROOTS, ETC. BROTHER JOHN W. COOLEY HAD A PATCH OF BARLEY GET ALMOST RIPE IN 1856 AND BROTHER WILLIAM BURTON AND JAMES KEARL HARVEST IT BY HAND, THRASHING IT WITH FLAILS, AND CLEANED IT UP IN THE WIND. EACH FAMILY GOT ONE HALF BUSHEL AND GROUND IT IN COFFEE MILLS TO MAKE CAKE FOR THE 4TH OF JULY DINNER IN 1856. THE ONE HALF BUSHEL OF GRAIN WAS A GIFT FROM JOHN W. COOLEY. SOME OTHER GRAIN GOT RIPE ENOUGH TO BE HARVESTED AND MILLED, AND EACH FAMILY GOT A PAN OF FLOUR FOR THE 24TH OF JULY DINNER. EMERY BARRUS FURNISHED A FAT ANIMAL FOR BEEF, SO EACH FAMILY HAD A FLOUR CAKE AND A BEEF STEAK FOR DINNER JULY 24TH, 1856.

IN 1857 WE HEARD THAT JOHNSON'S ARMY WAS COMING TO CIVILIZE THE MORMONS. EVERY ABLED BODIED MAN AND BOY WAS EXPECTED TO GO TO ECHO CANYON TO HEDGE UP THE WAY OF THE ARMY. 1858 WAS THE MOVE SOUTH. IT WAS DECIDED TO BURN EVERY BUILDING, DESTROY EVERY TREE AND ANY GROWN CROPS PROVIDED THE ARMY PERSISTED IN COMING IN. BUT THEY DID NOT COME IN UNTIL A TREATY OF PEACE WAS SIGNED. EVERY FAMILY HAD LEFT THE GRANTSVILLE PRECINCT. WE LEFT A FEW FAITHFUL BRETHERN TO WATER THE CROPS WITH ORDERS TO BURN IF MOLESTED BY THE ARMY. WHEN THE TREATY OF PEACE WAS SIGNED, WE ALL SWUNG OUR HATS AND MADE A RUSH FOR HOME.

FATHER WAS THE FIRST MAYOR OF GRANTSVILLE CITY AND ATTENDED TO SURVEYING THE CEMETARY INTO BURIAL LOTS, AND DROVE THE STAKES WHEN IT WAS SURVEYED BY CHARLEY HERMAN. HE WAS A FAITHFUL WORKER IN THE TEMPLE AND ONLY CAME HOME TWO WEEKS BEFORE HIS DEATH. I WOULD SAY "FATHER YOU OUGHT TO REST" BUT HE SAID, "BEN, I HAVE NOT MUCH TIME LEFT AND WHEN I MEET MY RELATIVES OVER THERE, THEY WILL ASK ME WHAT I DID FOR THEM." WE HAVE LABORED DILIGENTLY AND FINISHED THE BARRUS GENEALOGY AS FAR AS WE COULD GO; AND NOW IT REMAINS FOR OUR CHILDREN TO CARRY ON THE WORK. IT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD THAT I HAVE FINISHED MY FATHER'S WORK. THAT OUR CHILDREN WILL APPRECIATE THE SACRIFICE THAT FATHERS MADE FOR THE GOSPEL AND THAT IT MAY HELP TO MAKE THEIR LIGHT SO SHINE, THAT OTHERS CAN FOLLOW IS MY SINCERE DESIRE. AT THE PRESENT TIME THE DECENDANTS OF EMERY BARRUS TOTALS OVER 400 SOULS. B. F. BARRUS (WRITTEN JUST PRIOR TO HIS DEATH.)