

Marler, Allen (1809-1850)

Heath, Harriet (1813-1869)

Harriet Heath Marler, the daughter of Adolph Heath and his unknown first wife, was born October 15, 1835 at Port Gibson, Claiborne, Mississippi. Harriet Heath married Allen Marler 2 Feb 1832. Allen Marler was born at Port Gibson 14 Apr 1809 to Ithamer Marler, and his wife, Lydia Norton.

In the early part of their married life, Allen was a renter and overseer on several plantations. In 1845, he bought his father's home place. They soon became well-to-do plantation owners in Claiborne county. They possessed a good deal of landed property and colored servants to operate it.

Harriet Harriet was converted to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (Mormons) through the teachings of her father, Adolph Heath. Allen and Harriet were baptized in Sep 1845.

In March of 1850, Harriet and Allen with their eight children, and Harriet's brother, Samuel, his wife, and two little boys left their home, loved ones, and friends and all that was dear to them to make the long and arduous journey to Zion. They took with them a Negro mammy to help with the children.

Allen hired a team to take them twelve miles to the Mississippi River where they took a boat at Grand Gulf and traveled up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, where they changed boats for the Missouri River and traveled until they reached St. Joseph, Missouri, where they planned to buy equipment to cross the plains.

Before the boat reached St. Joseph, the dread disease of cholera had broken out among the Marler family. A child in arms was seriously ill. The captain of the boat, fearing that his boat would be quarantined if a sick person was found aboard, insisted that they leave the boat at once. It was a dark, stormy night and they were strangers in the city. The mother carried the child in her arms and the father held an umbrella over them as he tenderly guided the family along the wet, unfamiliar streets until they found a place of refuge for the night. When they finally reached a place where they could stay, the child was dead. It had died in Harriet's arms, without her realizing it. All the members of the family, except Sarah Jane contracted the fearful malady; as did the members of Harriet's brother, Samuel's family. Although she was only fifteen years of age, Sarah had to go through the great ordeal of preparing her loved one's bodies for burial. She performed this sad task lovingly and reverently, and at the same time kept up her vigilant care of the members of the household who were ill. Within less than a month's time, her father, three sisters, her two little boy cousins, and the Negro mammy all succumbed to the disease. It also took the life of a premature baby girl of her mother which died at birth.

During Allen's illness, he seemed to realize that he was not going to recover. He told Harriet that if he passed on, she had better return to Mississippi. "You had better use your money to go back home to your own people," he said, "instead of trying to go on to Utah. There will be too many hardships for you to endure alone."

And now Allen was gone, and the row of graves large and small told the tragic story of their sacrifice. The survivors were soon well again and the time came when they must decide on their next move.

This heart-breaking event was a crucial test to Harriet's faith. She scarcely realized, herself, what great odds were in the balance. The fate of generations yet to come hung on the decision she would make. It was the most momentous hour of all her life. Down the flowing Mississippi to the south lay her sunny home with warm hearted friends and tender ties. To the west stretched hundreds of miles of barren desert, with promise of hostile Indians, arduous toil, privations, and discouragements. She took it to the Lord in prayer. When her decision was made, it was final. After remaining in St. Joseph for about one month, they took up their journey for the West.

They had set their faces toward the West. Come hardships, come death, it mattered not; she had started for the Rocky Mountains and the Latter-day Saints and there would be no turning back for her.

And so, instead of taking passage back to Mississippi, Harriet bought equipment to cross the plains. She and her remaining five children joined a company of Saints and pressed onward toward the goal of their highest hopes. They arrived in Salt Lake on 2 Oct 1850. In Salt Lake, they made camp on the Jordan River, and met in conference with the Saints on the 6th of October. After the conference, Harriet, her two daughters, Sarah Jane and Susan; and her three sons: William, George, and Allen, went to Pleasant Grove, Utah, with three or four other families, where they established their home, being among the earliest settlers in the town. Their home is one of the first homes built in Pleasant Grove. Their first home is now a museum of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in Pleasant Grove. Harriet's brother went on to California--fully intending to return to Utah, but he never did.

Harriet was known as the rich widow. When Harriet came west, she brought with her some very fineblooded stock-- milk cows of exceptional value--and large fineblooded brood mares. These animals increased in number and were sold throughout this section of the country to the advantage of all who owned them. The hard winters of 1855 and 1856, took nearly all the stock and through other reverses, the family passed through much poverty and trying times.

In the winter of the year after their arrival, Sarah Jane married Bailey Lake. They had become acquainted while crossing the plains together. His father was the captain of the company in which they traveled. Sarah and Bailey moved to Ogden and lived in a log cabin in Farr's Fort. Later, she lived in North Ogden for a few years.

Sarah and Bailey persuaded Harriet to come to North Ogden and live. Harriet purchased twenty-five acres of choice meadow land, located east of the present highway in North Ogden. She had a comfortable home and was happy and content in her work.

Bailey went on a mission to Salmon River to the Indians and was killed while discharging his missionary duties by some hostile Indians. Sarah Jane later married Pleasant Green Taylor and went to live in Harrisville, where she resided the rest of her life.

After Sarah Jane moved from Harrisville, Harriet often went to see her, riding horse back. She used a sidesaddle and had a beautiful embroidered saddle blanket. She was a good rider and enjoyed getting out in the open.

Harriet's other daughter, Susan, was a beautiful, dark-eyed young lady. She met Henry Harmon at a place of amusement in North Ogden where she was teaching a game to a group of young people. Soon after their marriage, they were called on the Salmon River Mission along with their brother-in-law, Bailey Lake. Soon after Bailey was killed, Susan nearly died while giving birth in freezing temperatures. Harriet nursed her daughter back to health and took care of the newborn infant.

Harriet's daughters were women of high moral character and gracious womanly traits. Harriet's own wholesome manner and gracious southern hospitality were reflected in their behavior.

In 1856, Harriet's son, William Norton Marler, married Lucetta Maria Gates. Her son, George Washington Marler married in 1863, a Welsh girl named Mary Mathews. They settled in Providence, Utah. William later followed his brother to Providence for several years, then to Clifton, Idaho. Her son, Allen, the youngest of the family, was only seven years old when he walked a good deal of the way across the plains. He married Amanda Melvina Taylor, a daughter of his brother-in-law, Pleasant Greene Taylor, by a previous wife. Later he married Mary Eliza Shurtles.

Harriet was a very bright, intelligent, progressive woman. She was liberal in helping those in need, and always had an open door to relatives and friends traveling through the country. She was a prayerful woman, having learned early in her pioneer work to depend on her God for solace and strength in her hour of sorrow. She was God-fearing, prudent, dependable, always able to see the rainbow above the clouds - walking in faith to the journey's end.

Harriet passed away 23 Dec 1869 at her home in North Ogden, Utah.

Contributed by: Cheryl Harmon Bills