

Mary Brown Pulsipher Autobiography

My Grandfather and Grandmother Brown I knew little about; they died when my father was quite young. They had three sons: Joseph, John and Jonathan.

My Grandfather and Grandmother Fairchild I well remember. Grandmother died when I was four years old, in Connecticut. Grandfather then went to Pennsylvania and died there. I think they had five sons and two girls. The names that I can remember are: Samuel, Sherman, Stephan, Eunice and Sarah. Grandfather's name was Stephen, and grandmother's name was Eunice.

My Father, John Brown, was born February 25, 1770. Their children were:

Juda Brown, born November 2, 1793.

John Brown, born August 24, 1795.

Eunice Brown, born August, 1794.

Mary Brown, born March 2, 1799.

Thirsa Brown, born July 11, 1802.

Sally Brown, born February 27, 1805.

Catherine Brown, born August 13, 1808.

Loring G. Brown, born April 17, 1811.

They were all born in Connecticut, but Catherine and Loring. They were born in Pennsylvania.

My father moved from Connecticut to Pennsylvania when I was six years old. My father's home was a home for the Methodist preachers and all other preachers when they came. I joined the Methodist Church when I was 13 years old. I lived in Pennsylvania until I was married in 1815 to Zerah Pulsipher. My oldest child was born May 30, 1816.

Mary Ann Pulsipher; born May 30, 1816; died July 14, 1816.

Almira Pulsipher; born September 8, 1817; married Horace Burgess; died March 8, 1868.

Nelson Pulsipher; born March 28, 1820; died May 7, 1824.

Mariah Pulsipher; born June 11, 1822; married William Burgess; died 1893.

Sarah Pulsipher; born November 20, 1824; married John Alger; died January, 1909.

John Pulsipher; born July 17, 1827; first marriage, Rosella Huffaker, second marriage, Ester Barnum; died August 9, 1891.

Charles Pulsipher; born April 20, 1830.

Mary Ann Pulsipher; born November 20, 1833; married Thomas S. Terry; Died September 17, 1913.

William Pulsipher; born January 21, 1836; married Esther Chidester; died March 12, 1880.

Eliza Jane Pulsipher; born July 26, 1840; Married Thomas S. Terry; died May 6, 1919.

Fidelia Pulsipher; born October 13, 1842; died January 8, 1846.

We lived in Pennsylvania seven years. Did a great deal of hard work there, then left and moved to New York State, in Onondaga County. There we heard the gospel preached for the first time by the Latter-day Saints. We went forth and were baptized in the year 1832 by Jared Carter.

He baptized about twenty in that place. Then ordained my husband, Zerah Pulsipher, and left him to preside over the church. He baptized more. We stayed there about two years, then moved twenty miles to

Fabius; lived with a Doctor Newcome one-and-a-half years. Then we all moved to Kirtland, Ohio, together. Stayed there four years. Zerah was ordained there one of the first Seven Presidents by the hands of Joseph Smith, the prophet.

He helped build the temple. Got his endowments in it, then we were driven from that place with the rest of the saints. We started in July (the 15th) with a large camp for Missouri. We all got there in the fall and went to Daviess County. My husband was one of the council that led the camp. We stayed in that place for one month; then we were driven from there by the mob. Then we went to Far West and stayed there through the winter. Then we had to go again. We started in March for Illinois. We stopped twenty-five miles from Nauvoo, in Bear Creek Woods.

The winter we were in the far western part of Missouri, we had to part with our good old Mother Pulsipher. She was sick one week, and then died. The day before she died, she lay looking up. I said, "Mother, what do you see?" She said, "Oh, don't you see that light?" I looked, but could not see any. The next day she saw it again over her bed. She said, "That is a light to light me through the dark valley of death." Then she fell asleep without a struggle or groan. I think she was eighty-five years old.

We stayed in Bear Creek Woods nearly two years. then the First Presidency had gotten out of prison and out of Missouri. The saints had begun to settle Nauvoo. They sent for us to move there. We went there and stayed, I think, five years. My youngest child, Fidelia, was born there. She was a very smart, promising child, but we could not keep her only four years and three months. We buried her there. We helped build the temple there – got our endowments in

it – then we started with the rest of the church west to find some place where we could live in peace. We were two years, not forty, in going to Salt Lake. We helped cultivate the bare desert and made it "blossom like the rose." My husband was one of the city council most of the time we were there.

Then we were called to go south 300 miles and help cultivate another barren desert. We have lived ten years in this place, Hebron. We have enjoyed great blessings, lived in peace, none to molest or make afraid, although we have had to part with some of our dear friends here. Almira, my daughter, died in March, 1868, and John's wife, Rosella, and little boy, William Lewis, died. We lived here, enjoyed ourselves well with our children and grandchildren all around us until my husband was called away by death, in January 1872. He lived to a good age, and then went down to the grave like a shock of corn, fully ripe. I am spared yet. I hope to do a little good before I die.

I used to say when my children were small that if I could live to see my children grow up and be honorable men and women it would be all I could ask for. I have lived to see them all settled with good families, all trying to do what good they can to build up the kingdom of God. I feel very thankful and much pleased with my children. I hope they will live and do much good; be united and be agreeable, and try to help each other and carry out the council their father and mother have given them. I write this after I am seventy-two years old for my children to look at. It is written very poorly. Perhaps you cannot read it.

Eight years have passed away since I wrote the little sketches. I am still here. I will begin by writing my first experiences in the Methodist Church. My parents taught me to be honest, industrious, and to

kept the Sabbath Day. They were very strict Methodists. When I was about thirteen years old I thought I ought to join the Methodist Church. It was the only church I knew much about. The preachers came every week to preach at Father's house. I told him I wanted to join the church and he said I could. I did not know but they would call on me to relate a great experience when I was converted, but I could not have told them. All they did was to put my name on the class paper for six month's trial. When six months was out the preachers said, "Here is Sister Mary. She is a good, faithful, worthy sister. I motion that she be taken in full fellowship." I was voted in.

Perhaps one year passed – not a word was said about baptism. I said to the preacher, "Do you believe baptism to be a duty for us to obey?" He said baptism was not a saving ordinance, just to answer a good conscience. I said, "I see by reading the New Testament, I consider it a duty – a command." He said, "What say?" I said there was only one way that looked to be right – to be immersed and buried in the water. He said, "The Savior set the example and he was not immersed. He went out into the water and knelt down and had some water poured on his head." He said he had seen it in history. He went to the water. He sang and prayed, then took me by the hand and led me to the water, saying, "Step in and kneel." I did. He dipped a little water, said over the ceremony, and poured it on my head, while he stood on the bank – did not wet his feet. I thought if baptism was to answer a good conscience, I was not satisfied. It looked like a mockery to me, but I had done my duty.

I write this to let my children see the darkness and ignorance the world was then in. Surely the prophet could say darkness and sin covered the earth, and

gross darkness, the people. I rejoice that we live in a day that the true light and true gospel was shining.

I think I was in the Methodist Church about twenty years before I heard the true gospel. We happened to see the Book of Mormon. We borrowed it, read it, and believed it, but did not know anything more about it. We were very anxious to know more about it. It was not long before a Mormon preacher came. We had a great many questions to ask. He told us how the book was found and translated. He said baptism by immersion was the only right way. It was for the remission of sins. I thought that looked right. In a short time some were ready to be baptized. I wanted to be at the first opportunity, but Satan thought he would hinder it. The night before baptism I was taken very lame with rheumatism or something. I was so sick I could not get around much. As they were fixing to go, Brother Carter said to me, "Sister Pulsipher, if you will do your duty, you shall be healed." I took a cane and hobbled to the water and went in. It was a very cold day, but I came out well, left my cane, and went away rejoicing. I was very ignorant. I had not heard anything about being confirmed, or receiving the Holy Ghost. The next evening I went to meeting and the six that were baptized were there. When he put his hands on my head, he said, "Sister Pulsipher, by the authority of the Holy Priesthood and in the name of Jesus, I lay my hands on your head to bless you and to confirm you a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. I say unto you, receive the Holy Ghost." He promised great blessings if I would be faithful. The Spirit of the Lord was there. We sang, prayed, and praised God together. It was not long before the news went around that Brother and Sister Pulsipher were Mormons. Some would not believe it until they came to see us. We had plenty of

visitors. Some came to try to convince us that it was all delusion. They thought they could reclaim us, but went away disconsolate. Others came to inquire. They said if we had got something better, they wanted to know it. They would be baptized and go home rejoicing.

I will mention one that came to see me. My brother-in-law, Joseph (Joe) Chidester. He lived four miles from me. He was going to move away, but could not go without seeing me. I had belonged to the same church he did. He was a preacher. He said I was the last one he thought of as being led away with such heresy and delusions, as he thought it was. "Well," I said, "if this is what the world calls heresy, to worship my God, I know in whom I believe." He said, "I think in about six months you will see your error. I think Mormonism will be all down flat in that time." I said, "Joseph, I have not the least idea that it will. It will stand. But, if it does come down, I never could go to the Methodist or another church that I know of. It would be going right into darkness." He said, "I see I cannot convince you, but I have done my duty." He cried and bid me farewell. I said, "I thank you for the kind feelings you have for me. Do not worry about me." I never saw him after that. He moved away, lived a few years and died very suddenly with heart disease. He had an appointment to preach the day he was buried. His wife, my sister, died soon after. I think they have heard the gospel preached before this time. Zerah and Joseph were great friends. He had not read the Book of Mormon nor heard a sermon preached. He judged before he heard, like many others. If they would hear and heed, without prejudice, there would not be half so many among heresy, delusion and false prophets.

Well, I began to gather with the church. I went to Kirtland. There I had my blessings from the first

patriarch in this church, Father Joseph Smith. He said I should have my friends with me in this church, and that I would be the means of saving and redeeming them. I believed every word, but did not understand how it could come to pass. I never heard nor thought of being baptized for the dead. He said I had left all for the gospel, I should have a hundred fold in this world and in the world to come, life everlasting, with many more good blessings if I would be faithful.

I am almost 81 years old, have lived and enjoyed myself well with my children a long time. I expect the time will come when I must leave them. I have watched over them, tried to comfort them and instruct them right. I pray that they may live in peace, be united and keep all the commandments of God. If riches increase, set not your hearts on them, but lay up treasures in heaven. It is the only safe place that we can lay up riches.

I would like to have my children live near together to help and comfort one another. May God bless you all.

Mary Brown Pulsipher
Hebron, March, 1880.
Utah, Hebron

I, John, take the liberty to write a little in this book, as mother has passed away from mortal life. She died on the 7th of May in 1886 in the midst of friends and about as near ready as mortals ever get. So I record a little more of her history in this book.

As she lived to such an advanced age, her children well desired her to give up housekeeping and live with some of us. Then we would know if she needed anything and could help her so much better than if she was alone in her little house. So she did close her

house and have a good time. She went to St. George and visited her daughters, Sarah and Eliza, and their children and friends for several months. She then returned and had pleasant, happy times with us at Hebron for about two years.

Truly we did have an enjoyable time talking of early life, incidents of history in Connecticut, the United States and the restoration of the gospel and the rise of the church in this age of the world.

When she died we buried her by the side of father in the Hebron cemetery. Here are some of mother's own loose papers that I will record in this book.

On March 2, 1879 mother recorded:

“When I went to the Relief Society meeting I expected to see ten or twelve sisters and three or four of the brothers there. The bishop told me he was going. When I opened the door, the first I saw was long tables loaded with pies, cakes, cheese and all the comforts of life. I looked around and saw about every family in town seated there, about ninety percent besides the babies. I was so surprised it almost overcome me. I said, ‘What does all this mean? I came to a meeting, but it looks more like a feast.’ I then took my seat.

“The bishop then arose and said, ‘This is in honor of Mother Pulsipher. This is her eightieth birthday.’ I then began to cry, I was so overcome. The food was then blessed and all enjoyed it to their fill until all had enough.

“I was then called on to preside over the meeting. After singing, I asked my oldest son, John, to open the meeting with prayer. Another hymn was sung, then I walked onto the stand and

said, 'I don't know as I can say much, but I think these people can keep a secret, for I knew nothing of this feast until I was right here and opened the door. I feel very unworthy to have so much honor and respect shown me. I thank you all. I ask my Heavenly Father to bless you all. I suppose I am the oldest person here, eighty years old today. I have been in the church over forty-seven years. I have passed through persecutions, mobbings and have been driven with the saints since the days of Kirtland. I rejoice that I am worthy to have a name and place with these people. I left all my friends but my own family. Father Smith, the first patriarch in the church, laid his hands on my head and blessed me. He said I should have my friends in this church, would stand on Mt. Zion, and help save and redeem them. He said I had left all to obey the gospel and that I should in this world have a hundred fold. That is being fulfilled very fast. I have fifty-six grandchildren and seventy-five great grandchildren. So you see there is upwards of a hundred fold now and increasing at a wonderful rate. I beg you all, the sisters of the Relief Society, to be faithful, do all the good you can, be united, put your faith in God, and you need not have any fears.'

Mary Brown Pulsipher

MARY BROWN PULSIPHER'S FAREWELL ADDRESS
TO HEBRON

*(These are a few lines Mother wrote on October 16, 1883,
before going to St. George to live for a while.)*

I have been in Hebron from the beginning. I located with my boys as they were herding cattle at Shoal Creek when the main part of this country was a desert and sage plain. I have worked hard to make this a beautiful happy home. With the help of my boys, I built the first house out of the fort. I have lived in it about fifteen years, and enjoyed myself wonderfully well in it. I have had much joy and comfort in it. Have seen the place grow and flourish, but the time draws near when I expect to leave it, perhaps never to return, but I leave it with the best of feelings. I never expect to find any place I like as well. If I should die away from here I want to be brought back and buried here with my friends that are waiting for me behind the veil.

I have been in this church fifty-two years; passed the persecutions with the saints, never felt to complain, but that all would be well. I pray my Father in Heaven to bless Hebron, bless the people. May the Lord bless the land, the water, the cattle, and all. May it be a healthy delightful place. I bid you all farewell.

Farewell Dear Hebron

Farewell, dear Hebron, we love so well,
Farewell, dear saints, that in it dwell.
May you all be true, keep covenants well
That we may all in glory dwell.

Mary Brown Pulsipher 1799 - 1886