

Caroline Ely Partridge Lyman

(History written by Mamie W. Lovell)



Caroline Ely was the fifth of seven children of Edward Partridge and Lydia Clisbee. She was born at Painesville, Geauga (now Lake County), Ohio, on 8 January 1827. While a baby she accompanied her parents and sister Eliza Maria on a visit to her Grandfather Partridge's home in Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Her Aunt Elsie Clisbee returned with them.

Many details of her childhood and young womanhood may be found in her sister, Eliza Maria's journal. She tells of many trials and driving's of their life in Missouri and Nauvoo, as well as their experiences crossing the plains. These two sisters were together as long as Aunt Eliza lived.

Caroline was four years old when her parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Previously they had been members of the Cambellites Church. Her father was appointed first bishop of the church. When he was called to go to Missouri, he left his family to settle his affairs and follow him. His business, owner of a store, was flourishing and in good condition, but was sold at great sacrifice. And his wife with her five small

children traveled with other saints to meet in Missouri. On leaving the river at a place called Arrowrock, about a hundred miles from Independence, they spent a week in the back room of a Negro's house waiting for their father to meet them. The only light they had, came through the chimney, and the only way to get in or out was through the room occupied by the Negroes.

Their first winter in Independence they spent in a small rented brick house. Their living was mostly corn bread and bacon. They had some honey and vegetables, but very little else. Their life for the next few years was made up mostly of moving from one poorhouse and neighbors to another. In July 1833, a number of armed men went to her house and took her father to the public square. There they compelled him to undress. He refused to remove his pants. They then covered him with tar and feathers. They raised a whip to give him a whipping but one of their number, who was more humane than the rest, prevented it and he was allowed to go home.

Caroline always remembered and often told about seeing him come home. She thought he was an Indian and ran and hid under the bed. Her mother was weak, as her baby boy, Edward, was only three weeks old. But some of the brethren were very kind and helped get the tar off. It took most of the night, and in many places the skin came off too.

She remembered also that, that same summer, the mob burned about three hundred homes of the Saints and drove them across the river. Her family was with them. Here they made their home in an old log house with a dirt floor. She many times found lizards and poisonous snakes behind trunks and boxes.

The following is written by Caroline, herself:

"While we lived in Clay County, my father went back to Ohio on a mission. While he was gone some of the family were sick with chills and fever. Mother had to get along as best she could. I was not sick myself, and some other little girls would go out in the corn fields and have prayers..."

When father came back, he moved us into another country, all covered with trees. He built a log house, where we lived for a few years, until the Mormons started to build Far West. Then my father built another house (in Far West) where we lived until the mob came against us again and took all the leading men, including my father, to prison. The mob said they had the governor's orders to kill our people or drive them from the state. They did kill quite a few anyway, but our leaders agreed to leave the state rather than be exterminated."

When they finally reached Nauvoo, their family along with most of the Saints who came there, suffered with Malaria or Ague. Her sister Harriet, 18 years of age, died of it after about a year of suffering. Her father followed in ten days. He had poor health for some time, due largely to the constant persecutions and driving's by the enemies of the church. His death occurred on 27 May 1840.

After the funeral Brother William Law took the family to his house to live until their half-built house could be finished. After a year or so her mother married again as she felt helpless to support her family alone. Brother William Huntington was a very good man and kind to her children.

Caroline was baptized in 1835 by Peter Whitmer.

Eliza and Emily went to live with the Prophet Joseph Smith's family. While there he taught them the order and plan of celestial marriage, and asked them to enter into that order with him. They were sealed to him as wives for time and eternity in 1843 by H. C. R. (Is this an R. or K. Albert) in the presence of witnesses. Their sister Caroline was a witness to the ceremony.

She herself entered this order of marriage when she became the second wife of Amasa Mason Lyman, 6 September 1844. A year or so after the martyrdom of the Prophet, her sister Eliza also married Brother Lyman. And later in Salt Lake City, her youngest sister, Lydia, was married to him. Emily married Brigham Young.

On 9 February 1846, with the general exodus of the Saints, Caroline and Eliza, with some other members of Amasa Lyman's family, their mother, sister Lydia and Edward crossed the Mississippi River. Their boat was caught on the ice in midstream and hindered for about an hour, but did no damage.

The last of April they reached Mt. Pisgah, where Caroline and Eliza left their mother and her family. Brother Huntington was to remain there and raise a crop for future emigrants. They traveled on with 14 other members of Amasa's family. About the last of June they reached the Missouri River. Here, on 14 July 1846, her sister's first child was born in a wagon. He was named Don Carlos. He really had two mothers, as Caroline had had none of her own. She nursed her sister through her confinement and through a long siege of child bed fever.

When the baby was nearly five months old he was taken sick and died. His mother writes this about it:

"We have done the best we know how for him but nothing has done any good. My sister Caroline and I sat up every night with him and tried to save him from death, for we could not bear to part with him but we were powerless. The Lord took him, and I will try to be reconciled and think that all is for the best."

In April 1847, her husband left them to accompany the first pioneers who reached the Salt Lake Valley on the 24th of July of that year.

The two sisters remained in Winter Quarters in a log house their husband had provided for his family. They were thankful to be sheltered from the wind, even though the sod roof did not keep out the rain, and there was no floor. They made a garden, washed, carded and spun wool on shares. Did their washings in the creek. In October of that year they dug and stored in their cellar, 57 bushels of potatoes.

Their mother, with her children Lydia and Edward, came up with them here, Brother Huntington having died at Mt. Pisgah. Caroline waded the river to see them when they first came. Then they divided room with a wagon cover and let D. P. Clark and wife use one part as he had helped build it. They had room enough for their beds, by having the foot of each come together and a space, six feet square from the beds to the fireplace.

They started their journey once more towards the valley of the Great Salt Lake on 29 June 1848. They were better prepared than when they left Nauvoo. Amasa had been back to visit them and had been on a mission to the Southern States and returned to travel with them. The two sisters had one wagon for their own use, to cook and eat by themselves. They had a bedstead laid on the projection so that it did not need to be moved about. They had room for a chair, which was a great luxury of Eliza at this time.

On 20 August 1848, Platte De Alton Lyman was born in the wagon on the east bank of the Platte River. The next day they forded the river. Eliza writes:

"The rocks in the bottom were so large it seemed sometimes as if they would tip the wagon over. I held fast to the baby and Sister Caroline held fast to me so that I was not quite thrown out of bed."

On 17 October 1848, they reached their destination. Caroline was one of nine to occupy one log room in the fort. When it rained the floor was a mud hole. The next spring when Amasa left for California, Caroline, Eliza, and Pauline, (another wife) were without flour to make bread, but they knew it was not in his power to get any before the next harvest. They spun some candlewick and sold for a little flour and corn meal.

The two sisters once more moved to themselves, leaving the fort to live in their wagon box on their own lot. Brother Frederic, hired man, went with them. They also had the baby. Their sister Emily gave them 14 lbs. of flour. Once a Negro woman named Jane James gave them two pounds of flour being half she had.

Caroline paid two and a quarter dollars for a calico dress pattern, and a quarter to Charles Burke for his

trouble in getting it for her.

Early in May she went about ten miles north of Salt Lake and taught school for a couple of months, to earn enough to get something to eat. While she had this job, their tent and rocking chair burned down.

Caroline has told about the first spring in Salt Lake. They were all out of soap. She remembered seeing a dead ox not far from the fort the fall before. As soon as the snow melted in the spring, she went out and gathered up the bones and boiled them up for the fat, then combined it with wood ashes and made soft soap to do their washing.

In September 1850, Amasa returned from California and spent the winter with his family. In the spring he prepared to go again as he and Brother C. C. Rich had been called to preside over the Saints there. He took part of his family with him. Caroline was one to go. They left 11 May 1851. She and her husband and a boy, Marion, came home again on 20 December 1852.

1 April 1853, Martha Lydia Lyman, Caroline's first child was born. She had been married for eight and a half years and had almost despaired of ever having a family. She was sick for a long time after the birth of this child.

For the next three years the two sisters worked at whatever they could find to do. In eighteen months they made 102 dollars at weaving. They did such other work as sewing and spinning, coloring, housework, tending gardens, and almost every kind of work that a woman could do.

On 12 October 1856, Sunday morning, fifteen minutes past six, Frederic Rich Lyman was born. He was blessed by Bishop Hoagland when he was eight days old.

Caroline, Eliza, Lydia, their mother, and Platte De Alton Lyman were all rebaptized by Brother Mancott on 23 March 1857.

Caroline's third child, Annie, was born on 2 July 1860. She and the child were both sick for a long time. Eliza in the next room was confined when her daughter, Lucy Zina, was born on 26 August 1860. They had watchers sit up every night with Caroline, and had girls do the work. They were without flour and other food. They had no soap. Finally they called on the Missionary Fund for help, which hurt their pride considerably. Eliza nursed both babies for a while but had to give up feeding Annie.

Three years later Caroline, with her sister Lydia and some of Amasa's family moved to Fillmore in July. On 1 October 1863, her son, Walter Clisbee, was born. Harriet Jane was born 17 August 1866.

It was the next year that her husband, Amasa Lyman, was excommunicated from the church for teaching false doctrine. She and her two sisters did not live with him anymore. The three of them with their families lived in a three-room log house for a while. Then Eliza moved into an unfinished brick house. Caroline had a loom and wove rugs and carpets to help make a living. She also raised a good garden and had a strawberry patch.

In the spring of 1872, Platte De Alton was called to preside as Bishop of Oak Creek Ward. Some of his brothers went with him to try to find work. Caroline moved with her family to the new settlement where she kept house and cooked for the boys. Besides her own sons, Fred and Walter, Jody and Eddie came along.

She bought a city lot from a man named John Anderson. It had a log room with a dirt roof on. They all lived in it until the boys had time to build an adobe house. This had four rooms, two downstairs and two up. While the upstairs rooms were never finished, they made good sleeping rooms. The log room was kitchen as long as the house stood.

Her sister Lydia died in Fillmore, 16 January 1875. Her girls, Ida and May, after her death lived with Aunt Eliza and Eddie continued to live with Caroline until he married Mary Miranda Callister. "Grandma Carling" gave her the use of one of cows for its feed the first winter she was in Oak Creek. She had a hard time getting feed for her.

One of those first winters she had a young heifer. The feed was so scarce and looked as though she might not survive until grass grew, so Caroline fed her a few handfuls of straw every day from the straw tick in her bed.

She was able to get "skimmings" from the cheese mill rather cheaply. And the bishop, her nephew, often got her to make the tithing butter on shares. Even though it was sometimes too strong to eat it helped out their scant living.

She had known what it meant to be hungry herself and to see her children hungry. In her later years she

often tried to teach her grandchildren to never waste food. A crust of bread or a kernel of corn should never be burned or thrown away. It would help keep a dog or a chicken alive. She told of a time while crossing the plains when her family had just one handful of parched corn for their suppers.

She made candles of tallow. She brought her loom from Fillmore and continued to weave. She also carded and spun yarn. She dyed yarn and cloth. For yellow she used madder roots, for red she used aniline, for blue she used blue vitrol.

She was often her own children's schoolteacher, and the neighbors' children sometimes attended with them. She had the north half of her lot planted to alfalfa, the south was an orchard, with a garden spot at the top. She had a few hives of bees, which supplied her with honey.

When the Relief Society was organized in the Oak Creek Ward on 3 May 1874, Caroline E. Lyman was chosen President. She held this position for thirty-two years. She was released on 15 July 1906, because her sight and hearing had failed to such an extent that she felt she could no longer do justice to the Society. No one will know all the charitable things she did in all those years. She went personally to relieve the poor and wait on the sick and prepare the dead for burial, and comfort the bereaved.

During the first years of her presidency the Society held monthly meetings. Then twice a month, one testimony meeting and one work meeting where they pieced and quilted quilts, sewed carpet rags, etc.. Then the weekly meetings and study courses were introduced. While she was president, Susan Finlinson was first and Anne E. Lyman was second councilor and they built a fine brick Relief Society Hall on the Public Square.

The members worked and donated tirelessly to accomplish this building. They donated Sunday eggs, sold quilts and carpets, made and sold ice cream in all dances to add to their fund. Her son Fred, member of the bishopric, helped her in planning the house and hauled some of the rock for the foundation and helped her in every way he could.

When she was released from being president, the Society copied into its minutes, resolutions of respect, which had been written and accepted, also a poem written by Mary M. Lyman.

In December 1876 her mother came from Fillmore to live with her, which was a great comfort to her. But she passed away 9 June 1878. She was taken to Fillmore to be buried by her daughter Lydia's side. Her husband Amasa M. Lyman had died 4 February 1877, in Fillmore.

Her children married one by one. Martha married Alvin Roper. They had ten children. When their third child, Caddie, was a baby, Martha's health failed to such an extent that she could not care for her. Her mother took her and raised her. She lived with her grandmother most of the time until she was married to Joseph William Lovell.

Caroline's nearest neighbor, John Lovell, became the father-in-law to her other four children. Fred married Anne Elizabeth Lovell. They had but one child, Edith.

Annie first married William Dutson, had one child, which lived but a short time. She then married Peter Anderson, bishop of Oak Creek. She was his second wife. They became parents of eight children. During Annie's first few years of married life, she had several serious sick spells. She lived with her mother, who was devoted to her. And later, when Annie had to leave home, often very suddenly and sometimes stay for long periods of time, her mother accompanied her. The U. S. Officers hunted her and other women and men who were living in polygamy. At one time Annie and her mother went to San Juan, again to Salt Lake, where Eldon was born, then to Ogden where Lois was born.

When the manifesto was issued they came home to live and Annie moved into her own home where her last three children were born.

Walter and Harriet were married the same day to Sylvia Ann and John Lovell, respectfully. Walter and Sylvia had one child. Sylvia died at the birth of her baby girl, Lilly Anne, which also died. Walter then married Elizabeth Finlinson, also Lucy Hall, who had three children. After both of these wives had been dead several years, he married Leah Brown in his sixty-sixth year. She did not have any children but took wonderful care of her husband in his old age. They were devoted to each other.

Harriet and John had twelve children. They lived next door to her mother until Lulu was a baby. Then Harriet had a bad sick spell and her mother took her home and cared for her. When she recovered, Caroline invited her baby girl to bring her family and live in her house. Caroline kept one room for her own use. The Lovell family enjoyed Grandma's hospitality for ten years, when they built their own new home on the corner.

On 5 November 1880, Caroline, with four of her children, started for San Juan with Aunt Eliza and Platte and family. They camped the first night on Eight Mile Creek. It had been a hard trip that far, so they held a consultation and found that their load was too heavy for their teams. So they decided that Caroline and her girls, Annie and Harriet, should go back to Oak Creek and wait for a year *"or until there should be grain raised on the San Juan, so that she could go without taking so many provisions."* The camp waited while the boys brought their mother and sisters back to town. Then Fred and Walter took their teams and wagons and helped the others go more comfortably on to Bluff.

Caroline didn't ever go to San Juan to live. Her sister Eliza came back to Oak City in the summer of 1883 where she remained until her death on 2 March 1886.

When Harriet was fourteen years of age she accompanied her mother to St. George where they worked in the Temple. Caroline and her brother, Edward, and sister Emily Young, were baptized for many of their family, did sealings and endowments for them. She was always very much interested in work of the dead.

She used to go to Salt Lake at Conference time as often as she could to visit Emily while she lived. Later she visited Emily's daughters, Carlie Canon, Emily Clawson and Mamie Hardy. They all had several daughters each and were glad to give her a load of "hand-me-downs" to take home with her.

These homecomings were real celebrations to the grandchildren. Usually the oldest first had their pick of dresses. When one happened to fit, it was cause for rejoicing. On one such occasion she brought a big wax doll, without a wig. Who should have it? Hettie was the only one just her age, so all the rest had to hide their disappointment and beg her to let them hold it.

Once, when Caroline was about seventy-five years of age, Apostle Marion Lyman came to see her. He said he wanted to bless her to die. Everyone was shocked to hear him say it, but the blessing he gave her was wonderful. He promised her that she could live as long as life should be desirable. Then she should sleep peacefully away. He also told her that it was her duty to bear her testimony about the Prophet Joseph on every opportunity she had. There were so few then living who had known him. So every Fast Meeting she would tell of some incident of her life connected to with the Prophet and her early experiences in the Church. She often related the story of attending the meeting when Sydney Rigdon claimed the right to be guardian of the Church. She was so thrilled when she heard the voice of Joseph, and on looking up, seemed to see him standing and talking to the people. It was Brigham Young, but the resemblance to Joseph being so great, and noticed by so many people, there was no doubt in their minds that he was the real successor to the Prophet.

When Harriet's youngest child, Angelyn, was about two weeks old, Caroline, who had been helping during the confinement of her daughter, was taken sick with pneumonia. She was sick about a week, the last day she just slept until her breath grew faint and finally stopped on 5 May 1908. President Joseph F. Smith and Elder F. M. Lyman were the speakers at her funeral.

President Smith said during his talk that he was sure that Amasa Lyman had paid the penalty for his wrong doing would have all his wives and children who were worthy in eternity. He also said that the celestial order of marriage, or polygamy could never have been carried out successfully had it not been for the Partridge sisters.

Elder Lyman said that he had known *"Aunt Caroline all his life, and he wanted to bear testimony that no finer, better woman had ever lived on the earth."*

She was buried by the side of her sister, Eliza, with whom she had lived so much of her life. In death they were not parted.

She often spoke of being *"the last leaf on the tree."* She was indeed the last of her generation of Partridge's. She loved the birds. She could never be convinced that the robins ate her strawberries. During the last several years of her life the Church sent her ten dollars a month. She spent most of it doing nice things for others, but it was a wonderful thing for her to be able to feel so independent after many years of poverty.

She often expressed herself as being thankful that the Lord had never tried her with riches. She was sure it was easier to keep humble when poor. On her 79th birthday she wrote *"Seventy nine years have passed almost like a dream, and I wonder sometimes how many opportunities for doing good to my associates have I neglected. In all these years that I have lived, my desires have been to do all the good that I could, and as little evil as possible."*

Her life was truly a wonderful example to her posterity. All of them who knew her think of her as a

perfect character and all hope to emulate her fine virtues, at least to the extent that they hope to enjoy her society when their time comes to leave mortality.

(Mamie Wells Lovell was the oldest daughter of Harriet Jane Lyman Lovell, youngest child of Caroline Ely Partridge Lyman of whom she writes.)

