

A life sketch of
Elizabeth Precinda Hendricks Hale

1867 – 1946

Libbie, daughter of Joseph Smith and Sariah Pew Hendricks, was born on 16 December 1867, in Richmond, Cache County, Utah, in a two-room adobe house where the library now stands. Some of the games the children of the neighborhood played were hide and seek, skipping the rope, jacks, and marbles. Some of her playmates were her cousins: Libbie, Marelda and Artensia Hendricks, Libbie Merrill and Zina Pond. Her closest friend was Drusilla Harris, who later became her sister-in-law.



One day when she was small the table was set for dinner, the family ready to be seated she reached up over the edge of the table and spilled a cup of hot coffee over her. She always remembered that her father quickly tore her clothing away and thus lessened the severe burns.

After Grandfather James, died Grandmother Drusilla lived with James Bainbridge, and her grandson, whom she had raised from childhood. One day, Libbie was sent on an errand to her Grandma's. When she opened the door she saw the family kneeling in family prayer. Always a bashful child, she stood in the doorway not knowing what to do till the prayed was finished. Then her grandmother said, "Child why didn't you come in and close the door, would you freeze us to death?" Embarrassed she turned and ran home, forgetting her errand.

Libbie and Drusilla Harris used to gather chips for their grandmother 'Duress' and she would give them each a cookie. One day, she asked them to bring some chips. When they returned she made a fire and went to get them the promised cookie, but she found her granddaughter-in law had locked the cupboard. She turned sadly away, sat in her chair and cried.

Libbie's first schoolteacher was this cousin James "Jim" Bainbridge. She was baptized in City Creek in Richmond, Utah when she was nine years old. Soon after that they moved to

Swan Lake, Idaho. There her teacher was Joseph Durbin — he taught school in winter and worked for her father in summer.

One Christmas Eve, Libbie was in bed but not asleep. Will Whittle came to see her sister, Deal. She coaxed her to go to sleep and told her Santa would not come if she were still awake. But those blue eyes stayed open, as a child's eyes will, waiting for Santa. Then all at once there was a loud noise, Santa had gone leaving big sister secure in her knowledge and the little girl with nothing better to do than go to sleep and dream of "sugar plums" and "eight tiny reindeer."

Bears were no unusual menace around Swan Lake. One day Libbie and Kate Quigley ran down by the creek to cross over to Aunt Linda's house when her brother, Joe, pretending to be a bear, jumped out from behind a bush to frighten them. He did! Libbie fainted as he jumped to catch her; can we say who was frightened more?

One dread the children always had was of the men sent out to spy on the home of polygamist families, asking all kinds of questions to trick them into making incriminating statements to make trouble for the families. Once, to elude these so-called officers, Grandpa asked Joe Durbin, his friend and employee to take Aunt Linda to Salt Lake. As they left in the early evening, getting the children ready in a hurry left the house in a telltale condition. Everyone was unnerved at such a time in fear of these officers appearing unexpectedly. So when Libbie went over to straighten the house and stop the clock, for some reason, unexplained, the clock began to strike ten, eleven, twelve, in succession. She was sure then that the house was bewitched.

Libbie, as most girls of her time in small towns, went to school until she finished the "fifth reader." But having the teacher living in her home she learned equally as much out of school.

When she was about 15 years old, Mr. Durbin gave her a horse, bridle and sidesaddle. This furnished much of her pleasure, as she rode about the country. Other amusements were home theaters, house parties and dances.

Libbie's father and mother often took her in the "swan" or cutter (a small sleigh) sometimes

twenty miles for an evening entertainment.

When she was twelve years old, she taught a Sunday School Class, later she taught a Primary group. Her mother was ill much of the time; then the responsibility of the home was left to her. Mr. Durbin had watched her grow into womanhood, and one day asked her to be his wife. She also had “kept company” with Joe Brim, but these men seemingly did not suit her fancy.

In the fall of 1883, the Stake Presidency, William B. Preston, M.W. Merrill and C.O. Card, came up to visit the upper part of the Stake. When they came to Grantsville, they invited Alma H. Hale and his Uncle Solomon H. Hale to go along. In Alma’s words...

“We came from Gentile Valley, visited Chesterfield, Marsh Valley and Oxford. The Presidency was contemplating the organization of a new Stake. In a council meeting they talked over the proposition of putting Uncle Sol in the new Stake Presidency and me for Bishop in his place, but could not owing to the fact that I was not married. Pres. Preston asked me if I was keeping company with anyone so I could get married. I told him I was not.”

“He said, ‘Brother Alma, if I were you I would get married and if I had no one in mind I would go before the Lord and humble myself before Him and ask Him to show me a young lady who would be a good companion for me.’”

“I felt the importance of this council and obeyed. That very night I dreamed of seeing a young lady, whom I had never seen and someone introduced me to her and said, ‘This is to be your wife.’ The next day as we traveled along I could not get this dream out of my mind, and I could see this lady before my eyes all the time that day and the next. When we reached Oxford a friend of mine, William Whittle, invited me to go home with him. While I was there his sister-in-law came in to whom I was introduced. I could see at a glance that she was the girl of my dream. On leaving, my friend invited me to come back and get acquainted with his sister-in-law and that he would like to have me for a brother-in-law. I told him that I would.”

Libbie had been riding her pony home from Oxford and stopped by to call on her sister and let the horse rest. Thus it came about that she first met her future husband, because he did come

again, many times. One day in January he rode horseback to Swan Lake from Gentile Valley, which was over the mountain east intending to stay two nights when a blizzard came up and he had to stay a week. The people of Gentile Valley had just made up a searching party to go look for him when he returned.

Alma and Libbie both attended the Dedication Services at the Logan Temple in May 1884. She had been ill and had to be carried up the stairs.

Friendship between these two grew into courtship and true affection and about eleven months after they first met they were married 1 Oct. 1884 in the beautiful and new Logan Temple.

This trip to the Logan Temple was not made by fast train or car. Her father drove ahead in a wagon; Alma followed in the buggy, taking Libbie and her mother with him. It was stormy and the roads were muddy and bad. The father said, "Keep the west road," but in the mud and water he missed it and into the deep mud they went. Alma went out on the buggy tongue, then brought poles and laid them so he could carry Libbie and her mother over to solid ground. Brother Waddups sent a boy with a horse and heavy chain to help them out. Fortunately, they had not planned to go through to Logan that day, but to stay at Aunt Linda's house about five miles farther on. The next day they went on to Logan and were married by Manner W. Merrill.

Alma served as first counselor to Bishop John B. Thatcher, Bishop of the new ward, but not for long. He was called to act as Stake Clerk in the new Stake. He moved to Oxford and lived in a building known as the Tithing Office. While they lived there two children were born, however, not in that house, but in Mother Hendricks' home in Swan Lake. They were Finnie and Mabel. When Mabel was two weeks old, Alma left his home and little family to go to Ireland to fill a mission. So Libbie and her two little children made their home with her father and mother. For about twenty-six months she helped on the dairy farm to keep her husband in the mission field.

One morning at this place, a tramp came in and told her she must get him some breakfast. She told him she could not because the children had whooping cough and she had to take care

of them. He was so demanding and insolent that so stepping into the next room as if to comply, she sent the little girl out the other way to call her brother Joe who came and sent the fellow on his way.

It was Decoration Day when Alma came home. His wife and children were at his father's place in Smithfield, Utah to meet him. Soon they moved to Preston where he worked in Larsen's Store and the Co-op. They built a nice home there. Some of their friends were the Hales, Parkinsons, Smiths, Tippets, and Cowleys. Elder Cowley was a special friend. In later years the sorrow they felt when this friend was taken from his high position in the Church was surpassed only by their joy when he humbly returned and asked that he might be numbered again among his brethren as a member of the Latter-day Saint Church.

They went to the Temple many times to work for the dead. Once when they were there, as they waited outside the door to enter, the Brother in charge seemed to be having difficulty with the door. Supposing he had the wrong key he sent for others, but the lock would not yield. Presently he turned and said, "There is someone here who should not enter." After a moment a lady, who was standing near Alma and Libbie began crying saying she had intended to enter the Temple with her sister's recommend. When she went away the doors were opened and the work of the day went on as planned.

In their home in Preston, Joseph and Alta were born.

Always they gave time to Temple Service. There will be many to bless them for their release from the Spirit Prison over there!

In the fall of 1895, they left Preston and came to Marysville, Idaho. Libbie and the children went on the train to Market Lake, (now Roberts) which was the nearest railroad station. There her father was waiting with team and wagon to take them home. Alma came two weeks later with his team, arriving 16 Dec. 1895, his wife's birthday. That first year they lived in her Brother Joe's place. Then they homesteaded a farm on the hill overlooking part of the North Fork of the Snake River. They cleared the land of sage and buck brush and planted crops. Again they were on the frontier farming, cutting timber, building homes, helping each other in planting and

harvest. They built canals, fences, schools, and church buildings — giving assistance at times of birth, and in sickness and death.

At one time a neighbor's baby was very severely burned by fire. A few days later another little one, a cousin, was scalded. During the awful hours of suffering and death, Libbie assisted in caring for them. Then she prepared the injured little bodies for burial. Factory made caskets could not be obtained in that country so far from the cities. Many were made by Alma, fashioned of common lumber, planed, covered and lined with white cotton or silk cloth, trimmed with dainty ribbon and lace and pretty brass or nickel plated handles and name plates. Often he worked far into the night to have this ready by the time of the funeral. And while doing this, Libbie and another sister would perhaps be sewing burial clothes.

Theola was born in 'Aunt Deal's' house, since it was wintertime. La Grande was born at the ranch. Lella was born in a place rented in town while the new brick house was being made. And in the new house, Harold was born.

The snowfall was heavy in the yesteryears. Sometimes it would take several teams there or your days to open up a six-mile road.

Both parents and older children were active in the ward; Libbie helping in Relief Society, Mutual, Religion class, and Sunday School. Alma worked in most of the organizations and was a member of the High Council. Always he did record work. He went from house to house to gather the historical record of the Marysville Ward and bring it up to date.

As the Jews turned their face to Jerusalem, so Alma always in his thoughts turned toward the Temple, which was so far away from Marysville he could seldom be there though his family would meet for Temple work twice a year. They went to Utah, first to Lewiston, then a little time at High Creek, to Smithfield, and then again to Logan. There they resumed this work again until Alma died 9 April 1938.

This was a stunning blow to Libbie. He had always shielded her from the storms of life so much as he could and this first death in their own family was so hard to take without him. She went to Gridley with Alta for a while, then came back to Logan. After a few years she became ill

and Finnie took her home. Then when Finnie became too ill to care for her — at times she would be bedfast — she made her home with Lella. She and Joseph, her husband, sold their home in Inkom and moved to Idaho Falls. For many years Libbie suffered from diabetes. Then the 8 June 1946 she suffered a stroke from which she never entirely recovered; though for a time she seemed to improve. At about 2:45 on Wednesday 27 Nov. 1946 she passed away. She was buried Sunday, December 1st, beside her husband in the Smithfield Cemetery.

Asked one day what her favorite song was, she promptly answered, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.” She seemed to fear and dread death, though never to doubt Life Eternal. Perhaps because so long and so many times she nursed the sick and the dying. She never lacked faith in administration. She put us to shame once when we asked her should we pray for her relief, as a family, rather than call the Elders — because we did not think she could get well — she replied very quietly and meekly, “I have always been taught we should call the Elders.” I wonder sometimes had our faith matched hers, would she have recovered? She wasn’t my Sunday School teacher for long — but in that brief period, she taught me to love the Book of Mormon. Outwardly we rather looked to our daddy for spiritual lessons. Indeed she would tell us to go to him, but, I realize now that in her unobtrusive way she implanted many lessons of faith in me, the importance of which I failed to realize at an earlier age when they were given.

This Life Sketch of Elizabeth Precinda Hendricks Hale was written by her daughter, Mabel Fidelia Hale Knapp.

Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of K. Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.