

A life sketch of

Sarah Elizabeth Walker Hale

1838 – 1861

Sarah Elizabeth Walker, the first wife of Alma Helaman Hale, was born the 14 June 1837 at Tishomingo, Tishomingo County, Mississippi. The daughter of John Beauchamp Walker and Elizabeth Ann Brown, Sarah was the second child born to this family.

When Sarah Elizabeth was 1 ½ and her sister was 2 1/2 years old, sometime during the winter of 1838-39, the Walkers joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Very soon after joining the Church the Walkers were found in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois. They were very active members of their new-found religion and were seeking all of its blessings both for themselves and for their dead. The record of baptisms performed for the dead at Nauvoo shows that on the 18 June 1843 Elizabeth Walker (Sarah Elizabeth's Mother) was baptized for her father Daniel Brown, her brother William Brown, her grandfather Robert Winset, and her grandmother Milly Winset. Further records indicate that John Beauchamp Walker and his wife Elizabeth Ann Brown Walker received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple on 7 Jan 1846. While living at or near Nauvoo two more children were born to the Walkers and their oldest child Mary Jane died on the 6th of September 1840 at the age of four.

In the early spring of 1849 the Walkers with their three remaining children (Sarah Elizabeth was now the oldest being eight) were driven from their home in Nauvoo together with most of the faithful Saints. It was still winter and very cold. Many of the wagons crossed the river on the ice. They loaded what they could on their wagons and heading west. They made the two hundred and fifty-mile journey to the Missouri River.

It is not known where the Walkers lived at the Missouri River but it is very probable that they remained at the present site or very near Council Bluffs. Six years were spent there and four more children were born, one of which died at the age of two months.

In the spring of 1852 the Walkers were ready for the long journey to the mountains. The

family consisted of the parents and Sarah Elizabeth, age 15; Jesse H., age 11; John T., age 7; Margaret Ann, age 3 ½; William A., age 2; and the new born baby James Ephraim.

On the 25th of June 1852 the company was organized with John B. Walker as Captain. Some of the company left Kaneshville and crossed the Missouri River on June 30 but the entire company did not meet until July 3. This company consisted of about 250 emigrants, mostly members of the McOlney Branch in Pottawattamie County, Iowa. This branch was located north of Kaneshville at a place called Bluff City. There were some fifty families and they were divided into five divisions. Three of the Captains of ten were John Myres of Panguitch, Danier M. Burbank of Grantsville, and Davis McOlney of Lehi. The 4th of July was spent in celebrating and in making final preparations. The company left the river on the morning of July 5, 1852 headed for the mountains and the Salt Lake Valley.

To quote a member of this company, George A. Hicks, "We were a company of devoted Christians having prayer morning and evening." There were fifteen deaths, mostly female; thirteen were of Cholera. A Mrs. Box was killed in a stampede when her wagon overturned at Loup Fork. The grief was indescribable. The company arrived in Last Lake on 3 October 1852.

Soon after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley the Walkers moved to Grantsville where they lived in the fort. The Grantsville Ward which had only the status of a Branch at this time was presided over by Benjamin Baker, he had no counselors. In 1853 Thomas H. Clark was called to preside over the Church at Grantsville and he chose as his counselors John B. Walker and William C. Martindale. John B. Walker served as first counselor until his death. The Walkers last child was born in Grantsville in 1855.

In the spring of 1855 Sarah Elizabeth had turned 18 and was being sought after by the young men of Grantsville. The family moved out of the fort. Sarah's father became very ill with "consumption."

Sarah Elizabeth began going quite regularly with an orphan boy named Alma Helaman Hale. Alma was caring for the farm of his brother Aroet Hale. Aroet had been called on a mission to maintain a station at Las Vegas on the California Trail. Aroet's wife, Olive Whittle

Hale was soon to give birth to a child. Alma asked his sweetheart Sarah Elizabeth to come in and help Olive with the birth. There were no doctors in Grantsville at this time. Olive records in a letter to Aroet that because of the assistance given she had the best time she ever had. The new baby born at this time was named Thomas Whittle Hale. Sarah Elizabeth's parents did not approve of their daughter going with Alma and tried to put a stop to it. They felt their daughter was too young to be serious with any man. In a letter from Olive Hale to her husband Aroet dated Aug. 19, 1855 she says, "Brother Walker is very sick with the consumption. He has moved out of the fort. He has put a veto on Alma's going with his daughter but that is all the good it does for they meet here in the fort in spite of the old man." John B. Walker died 10 March 1856 in Grantsville.

In spite of the opposition at home, Sarah Elizabeth had found the one she loved. Without telling her mother, she and Alma were married on the 14 April 1856 in Grantsville. The Deseret News carried the notice in the weekly issue of April 23, 1856 under the heading of "Married." It read, "In Grantsville on the 14th of April 1856, by Elder A. C. Broer, Mr. Alma H. Hale and Miss Sarah Elizabeth Walker, all of Grantsville." Sarah Elizabeth was two months under 19 and Alma was ten days under twenty years of age.

This young couple was not satisfied with a mere civil marriage so they traveled to Salt Lake City on the 4th of June, seven weeks after their civil marriage in Grantsville, and received their Holy Endowments. They were sealed for time and eternity by the Priesthood of God in the old Endowment House.

About this time Aroet returned from his mission and he divided the farm into two equal farms of eighty acres each, giving one to Alma for his labors in clearing and caring for it while he was away. Aroet helped get out the logs for a two room house which Alma was building as rapidly as possible between farm chores. The building did not progress very fast because of the many duties Alma was called upon to perform. As Sarah Elizabeth approached the birth of her first child the house was still not finished. Her mother insisted that the baby be born in "Lizzie's" own house so she rounded up all the help she could. They put on the roof and chinked the cracks, put in sand for the floor and covered the roof with dirt. She moved in and

the first child was born in her own home. He was born the 11 June 1857 and named Alma Helaman after his father. With the help of Lizzie's mother and Olive and Aroet the young couple was made comfortable with just a few necessities in their new home.

In the summer of 1857 Alma was called away to serve in Echo Canyon against Johnston's Army. He was gone much of the time during the fall and winter. In the spring of 1858 matters had been partially settled and the Army was allowed to pass through the city of Salt Lake. However, Brigham Young was not taking any chances so all of the people were ordered to evacuate their homes and move "south." Grantsville and all other settlements were abandoned, leaving only enough men to burn everything in case of any hostile move on the part of the army. Alma and Elizabeth loaded all of their possessions into their wagon and with two oxen Elizabeth drove off. Their little baby, Alma Jr. was placed in a hammock slung from one of the wagon bows. Alma was to stay behind as one of ten men left to guard the town and burn it if necessary. Elizabeth drove as far south as "Pontown" near Springville. On 11 June 1858 the Army passed through Salt Lake City and crossed over the Jordan River. Here they camped not making any move against the now deserted city. In a day or two the Army moved on southwest to Cedar Valley where they built Camp Floyd, 39 miles from Salt Lake City. In July, after an investigation by a peace commission, matters were settled and the Saints were allowed to return to their homes.

On the 6th of April 1859 a second child was born to Elizabeth and Alma. The baby was named Olive Elizabeth. These two little children always loved their grandmother Walker. She was so kind and could always find some bread and applesauce or other goodies. Alma Jr. recalls that one day he wore his new pants and the buttons were very stiff. In fact they were so stiff he could not get them undone and he had an accident. Grandma Walker came to his rescue and soon had his pants washed and ironed before he went back home to his mama.

On the 14 September 1860, Aroet's wife Olive passed away leaving six little children. This was a very sad occasion for Elizabeth. Olive was a dear and true friend. Eliza was just starting out with her third child. The pregnancy seemed to be a normal one. The child was born 8 May 1861 and named Enos Eliphalet. Complications set in at this birth and on 21 May 1861

Sarah Elizabeth passed on. Tragedy had indeed come to Alma. Enos Eliphalet did not do very well without his mother and he too died 20 September 1861.

Sarah Elizabeth was a lovely person of average height. She was well built, modest of dress and action. She was a true Latter Day Saint and a devoted wife. Her descendants can well be proud of their heritage.

*This Life Sketch of Sarah Elizabeth Walker Hale was taken from the book "Alma Helaman Hale" by Nathan Hale Gardner
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.*