

Biography of Mary Ann Farnes, Wife of Samuel Woods House

Compiled by Marilyn Austin Smith

Mary Ann Farnes was born August 2, 1830, in the parish of Clerkenwell, in the City of London, Middlesex, England. She was the eldest child of Ann Isacke (born September 28, 1803, at Cripplegate, London, England) and John Burnside Farnes (born December 30, 1806, in the parish of St. George in London, Surrey, England). Mary Ann was baptized August 6, 1850, by Elder Hyde into the Theobald's Road Branch (London Conference, British Mission). Her residence in London at that time was 29 Emma Street, Hackney Road. January 19, 1851, she was received from the Theobald's Road Branch into the Globe Road Branch. She later moved to the Hackney Branch to help build it up. In that new branch she became choir leader. During her sojourn there she met Samuel Woods House. He and Mary Ann were married April 28, 1855. They lived at # 5 North Street, at Cambridge Heath, Clockney, London, which was her residence prior to her marriage.

On February 18, 1856, they sailed from Liverpool Harbor on board the ship Caravan bound for America. One night during a terrible storm Mary Ann gave birth to a baby girl on board the vessel. The gale was so severe that her attendants had to be held up. Years later Samuel related to his grandchildren his role in that drama. While the ship precariously tossed Samuel hung onto the mast (pole) with one arm while he placed his other arm around the nurse. In that way he steadied her while she cared for his wife. One of the sailors was thrown from the fore yard and killed during the storm. Their child, born March 1, 1856, was given the name Ellen Caravan House. Upon arriving in America they lived for one year in New York and for two years in Chicago. While living in Chicago Mary Ann fell down a flat of stairs and had a miscarriage. The loss of that child, a boy, was a great disappointment to her and Samuel. In the spring of 1859 they resumed their journey to Utah. They arrived in Salt Lake City on September 1, 1859, with the Horton Haight Church train. Mary Ann looked back with pride at her achievement of having walked nearly the entire distance across the plains (over one thousand miles).

In Grantsville, Utah, a small settlement about forty miles southwest of Salt Lake City, they made their home. Ellen, their only child, was married November 27, 1874, to Claus S. Anderson. In Grantsville Mary Ann was a member of the ward choir for around forty-five years. She also served as a ward and stake Relief Society secretary. Readily Mary Ann relieved any persons who, to her knowledge, were poor or needy. It is said she officiated at the birth of more than seven hundred children without the death of a single mother. She had a doctor's degree and was the only doctor in Grantsville until the time of her death January 2, 1910, in Grantsville, Tooele County, Utah. She died of apoplexy. Her husband Samuel passed away July 10, 1911, at Smithfield, Cache County, Utah.

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