

# **ESTHER ANN PIERCE GHEEN**

## **1801-1858**

Esther Ann Pierce Gheen was born to Thomas and Margaret Trimble Pierce 24 December 1801 in Thornbury, Delaware, Pennsylvania. The Pierces were Quakers. Esther Ann married her first husband, William Atkins Gheen, a fellow Quaker on 7 May 1823 at the Concord Meeting House in Concord, Delaware, Pennsylvania. For the first years of their marriage, they lived with William's father, Thomas Gheen, until they could find a proper home. William and Esther Ann lost interest in the Quakers and on 25 February 1824 they were cut off.

William and Esther Ann were the parents of eight children: Margaret Pierce, Thomas Pierce, Ann Alice, Amanda Trimble, Mary Ann, Stephen Harris, Levi Atkins, and Sarah Ellen.

In 1839, Esther Ann and her family began to hear about the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Lorenzo D. Barnes, a missionary, came to their home and taught the Gospel to those who would listen. The Prophet Joseph Smith became acquainted with the Gheens when he traveled through Pennsylvania after spending time in Washington D.C. to present complaints about the treatment of the Mormons to officials.

Lorenzo D. Barnes baptized Esther Ann, William, and their daughter Margaret on 5 August 1840. Their younger daughters, Ann Alice and Amanda Trimble were baptized four months later.

On 30 March 1842, William and Esther Ann sold their farm in Uwchian, Pennsylvania and made the seven week trip to Nauvoo. They bought a city block, two blocks west of the temple site. They built a two story brick home and a frame barn. William also bought 80 acres of land on the road to Carthage four miles from Nauvoo. On 6 June 1843, Esther received a patriarchal blessing from Hyrum Smith.

William assisted in building the Nauvoo Temple and also contributed money. Authorities of the church visited their home often. Two of their daughters became the plural wives of Heber C. Kimball. In the spring of 1845, William became ill and eventually died on 15 July 1845 at the age of 46. Brigham Young spoke at his funeral. At the time of his death, five of the youngest Gheen children had whooping cough.

Esther Ann was privileged to enter the Nauvoo Temple and be sealed to her husband on 2 February 1846. Ellis Mendenhall Sanders stood as proxy for her husband. After the sealing she was married for "time only" to Ellis. Both the sealing and the marriage were performed by Heber C. Kimball.

A few days later the saints were forced to leave Nauvoo, crossing the frozen Mississippi River. She left her beautiful home and with her four youngest children moved west to

Winter Quarters. Before traveling to Utah, Esther Ann divorced Ellis Mendenhall Sanders on 29 January 1848. It is not known exactly what company and which year Esther Ann and her family came to Utah, but she appears in the 1850 Census for Ogden, Weber County, Utah, age 50 with her four children Mary Ann, Stephen, Levi A. and Sarah Ellen. They were living in the house of Lemuel Mallory at the time of census. Some family records suggest that Esther Ann was married to Lemuel. If they had married they would have been divorced before 1853.

In 1853, the residents of Ogden were told to move to a central place and build a fort because of the hostilities with the Native Americans. Esther Ann moved into Bingham's Fort. There were about 110 families living in the fort. Records listed Esther Ann and her family as Widow Gheen and her home was on the north side of the fort.

During their time in the fort, the family became more acquainted with the James Lake family. They had known each other since both families moved to Ogden. James and Philomela Lake and Esther Ann all traveled to General Conference in the fall of 1853. On 8 October 1853, James was called as the first patriarch for Ogden and the patriarch of the Weber Stake. That evening Heber C. Kimball sealed James and Philomela Lake. Following the sealing, Elder Kimball married James Lake and Esther Ann for "time only." It was quite common for widows to be married to a man in order to help provide for her. They all returned to Ogden and continued to live at Bingham's Fort until 1856.

The next year, the settlers were forced to move from the area because of the advance of Johnston's Army. Before the evacuation of the Lake family, James gave Esther Ann a blessing on 4 April 1858. He had also given several of her children blessings prior to their departure. Esther Ann probably traveled to Spanish Fork with James Lake. They returned at the end of August of 1858.

Esther Ann died in Ogden on 2 September 1858. James Lake purchased a family plot for her family in the Ogden City Cemetery where she is buried.

Esther Ann was known as the Widow Gheen although she was married several times. She was buried under the name of Gheen in the Lake plot. She was 56 years old when she died.

#### **SOURCE:**

Jeffrey, Janet Franson. *History of the James Lake, Jr. Family*. Murray, Utah: Roylance Publishing, 1990, 319-321.

Barnes, Lorenzo D.	Johnston's Army
Bingham's Fort	Kimball, Heber C.
Gheen Sarah Ellen	Lake, James
Gheen, Amanda Trimble	Lake, Philomela
Gheen, Ann Alice	Mallory, Lemuel
Gheen, Esther Ann Pierce	Pierce, Esther Ann
Gheen, Levi Atkins	Pierce, Margaret Trimble
Gheen, Margaret Pierce	Pierce, Thomas
Gheen, Mary Ann	Sanders, Ellis Mendenhall
Gheen, Stephen Harris	Smith, Hyrum
Gheen, Thomas	Smith, Joseph
Gheen, Thomas Pierce	Trimble, Margaret
Gheen, Widow	Young, Brigham
Gheen, William Atkins	