



## **MARY ELLEN GEARY LARSSON**

### **1854 - 1947**

Mary Ellen Geary was born in Clay Cross, England. She was the daughter of Edward Geary and Elizabeth Ann Slater. She was a gentle, delicate, and beautiful child, with a pleasing disposition.

Her parents left friends and neighbors as they crossed the Atlantic Ocean to join the Latter-day Saints in Zion. They were on the ship for six weeks, and then faced the challenge of crossing the plains. They rode in wagons until they reached the railroad, where they were loaded into box cars. The Civil War was raging at this time - Mary Ellen was 6 years old. The conditions in the box cars were deplorable. It was dark and crowded, and they had no food or drink. While they were speeding over the tracks, escaping the dangers of war, soldiers fired on the box car they were riding in, but the bullets did not penetrate the car, and the saints inside, though frightened, were safe.

When the family arrived at Council Bluffs, Iowa, the border of the western plains, they prepared to join the trek west. They arrived in Salt Lake City in 1861. From Salt Lake they moved to Bountiful, Utah, where they lived for approximately two years.

During the winter of 1863-64, they moved to Round Valley in Morgan County. They couldn't build a cabin at that time, because of the cold and snow, so they made a dugout in the mountain, and hung a blanket over the opening. They lived on boiled wheat and potatoes until spring, when they could start growing crops. They never thought of their condition as a trial; they were just happy to be in Zion with the saints. They had come to worship God without molestation or fear.

The first winter in Round Valley, Mary Ellen's father became very ill. She and her brother, Edward, worked hard to make up for the work their father would ordinarily do. They helped their mother in every way they could and never complained. They hauled wood and split it for firewood so they could keep warm. They also ground wheat in a coffee mill and sifted it through a veil-like material. Her mother used the wheat to make pone cakes in a Dutch oven. They spent many hours that cold winter sitting by the crude fireplace in their dugout.

In the spring they were able to build a new home. They located next to some neighbors they had become acquainted with. They started with one room. It had a dirt floor, a fireplace, and a quilt for a door. A dirt covered roof protected them from the elements. Mary Ellen loved Round Valley. She loved the mountains, the valleys, the streams, and the woods. This was the place she grew to womanhood. Her father died when she was still young, but she had learned to master the housework with her mother, and the hard work on the farm with her brother.

She became a beautiful young woman and was courted by Larry Larsson, who worked for the railroad as a conductor. They were married 26 December 1884, in Morgan, Utah. Larry Larsson was a son of Peter Larsson and Anna Nilsson of Hombly, Sweden. After their marriage, they moved to Idaho, but she missed the beautiful pastures and the farm life she was used to. They bought a farm in Roberts, Idaho, where they raised their two children, Mary Annie born in Shoshone, Idaho (1885), and Edward P., born in Preston, Idaho (1889). They lived on the Idaho farm in Roberts for 20 years.

Mary Ellen and Larry moved to Harrisville, Utah in 1909. They had a beautiful home with a productive farm and fruit orchards. They also raised animals. By the time they moved to Harrisville, their children were grown. However, they raised their grandson, Joseph Preston Larsson (1909), son of Mary Annie. In his journal, Larry often mentioned how much joy Joseph brought into his life.

Larry died four years after they moved to Harrisville in 1913. Mary Ellen remained in their family home. Her children lived close to her, and she enjoyed the grandchildren who came to visit often. She dedicated her remaining years to church callings, genealogy and temple work.

After spending 34 years as a widow, Mary Ellen Geary Larsson died 28 October 1947, in Harrisville, Utah. She had been an active member of the LDS Church, and was loved by her family and friends.

#### **SOURCE:**

Harris, Leander S. Information taken from a poem he wrote as a tribute to Mary Ellen Geary Larsson. Unpublished manuscript. March, 1923.

Larsson, Larry, personal diary, January - August 1913. Unpublished manuscript. In possession of Gary Preston Larsson.

Geary, Edward	Larsson, Mary Annie (Webster)
Geary, Mary Ellen	Larsson, Mary Ellen Geary
Larsson, Edward P.	Larsson, Peter
Larsson, Joseph Preston	Nilsson, Anna
Larsson, Larry	Slater, Elizabeth Ann