

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MY MOTHER'S, ELIZABETH ANN DREDGE, LIFE  
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JESSE LLOYD ROBERTS  
at Brigham City (Her eldest son) Nov. 8, 1965

My mother, Elizabeth Ann Dredge, daughter of Jesse Richard Dredge and Ellen Rhees, was born 5th March 1861 at Monmouthshire, Wales. She was the fourth child born to her parents, however two sisters and one brother had died in infancy. Thus Elizabeth Ann was the only surviving child to accompany her parents to the United States for the sake of the Gospel of the restored church. The parents and the little girl sailed from Liverpool May 16th, 1861 on the Monarch of the sea, arriving in New York June 19th of the same year. This was an eventful year in the U.S. history. Lincoln had stated his position regarding the Union in his inaugural speech in March of that year. On April 12th the first blood to mark the beginning of the Civil War was shed. With much difficulty the little family managed to proceed westward by train, ox team, or hand-cart. However, Grandfather being a skilled horseman was called to remain and even return back some distance to assist other immigrants to make their way too and over the Platt River. This explains why they (Grandmother and the baby) entered Utah with the Joseph Horn and Homer Duncan Companies. Grandfather arrived in Utah about two months later, 21st of October, 1861 with the Godby Freight Company.

After reaching Utah the Dredges lived in Kaysville for a few years. During this time two daughters were born to them, Hanna Adelia March 28, 1863 and Lucy Ann in May of 1865. Lucy died in Dec. 1865. After a very short stay in Willard, Box Elder County, the little family moved to Malad Valley Idaho. This was in the spring of 1866. Here they were greeted by many of their former friends whom they had known in Wales. While living in Malad more children were born to my grandparents; Emma, Alice, Jesse Horatio, Richard Henry, and William Rhees. Thus, my mother, Elizabeth Ann was the eldest in a family of nine living children.

Grandfather and Grandmother were devoted religiously and of course this means devout Latter Day Saints, and each of their children was also faithful and active in the Church. I am at this time unable to give much in detail relative to my mother's childhood or early adult life, except to say that in addition to assisting her parents in the home and on the farm, which lay just West of Malad City, she did assist neighbors in need and often accepted house work in and around Malad. As a girl mother was always active in the church and especially in musical circles. She was a very good alto singer and most of her life she belonged to quartets, choruses, and choires.

I know little about my mother's and father's courtship and marriage. She did marry my father, John Lloyd Roberts, as a 2nd wife in polygamy. From my father I learned how this came about. He said, that during a Stake Conference one of the visiting Apostles envited him to a private conference following one of the sessions and said, "Brother Roberts, we have been observing you of late relative to your faithfulness to the church and also in relation to your economic status, and we feel that you are worthy and economically able to enter into plural marriage. We would suggest that you talk this over with your wife and then seek to enter into this marriage." My father did talk to Aunt Addie, his first wife and she had no objections and in fact assisted him in selecting the choice of girl. Shortly thereafter father had a talk with Jesse R. Dredge, father of Elizabeth Ann, and informed him of the council he had received during the recent conference, Grandfather Dredge, a very faithful and obedient man to the church was agreeable to the suggestion and suggested to my father that he talk to Lizzie. Shortly after this father conferred with Elizabeth and it was agreed that they should go together and talk to Addie, father's first wife. This they did on several occasions. Aunt Addie was agreeable to the proposition, and thus on March 26th 1881 my father drove to Salt Lake City, with a team and a wagon of lumber. Thus they were married March 26th in the Endowment House. At this time father and Aunt Addie were the parents of six living children.

Father and his two wives continued to live in Malad Valley until 1883 at which time they moved into the Upper Snake River Valley as one of the original pioneer families of Rexburg. It was shortly after this

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that the Poligamy Crusade was inaugurated by the Federal Government in an effort to stamp out poligamy among the Mormons. My father went into hiding and his wives did all that they could to protect him. These were trying times for father and no less for his wives and children. May 10th, 1885 father was arrested for unlawful cohabitation and the following day was transferred to Blackfoot, the county-seat at the time, and from there he was sent to the penitentiary at Boise where he served for four or five months. Mother and Aunt Addie of course suffered in feelings and sometimes for the necessities of life, but one thing that they did do was to stick together. They loved each other and in one way or another they assisted each other. During this period and following father's release my mother with her small children assisted by Aunt Addie's older children moved the family cow-herd into the hills or mountains during the summer months, while the other members of the family remained on the farm near Rexburg to care for and produce crops. This summer range was some fifteen to twenty miles south and east of Rexburg, on the Lyman Creek just where it comes out of the mountains. There were no neighbors for miles but wild animals were plentiful and frightening and often destructive. Squirrels, woodchucks, badgers, cyotes, wolves, cougers, bears, etc. were plentiful and fearful.

After father's release from prison he joined his family or families and attempted to carry on and care for and live with both families. Some polygamists pledged themselves to forsake all of their wives but one. This my father would not consent to do, he said "I married these two wives in sincerity and there was no law against it and I shall not now forsake either of them." This was in harmony with both of his wives. Late in 1887 it became evident that he had lived with both of his wives for both of them were expecting new babies in early spring or late summer of 1888. Officers again came searching for him but this time he took Aunt Addie and most of her children to Canada. (Cardston). He was among the first Mormons to live in Cardston. He and his first family lived in Cardston for the one winter only. During the summer of 1888 he moved into Montana where he found work. It was during this period that I was born at Rexburg April 29th 1888. Shortly after my birth and after mother had regained her strength she joined father in Montana with her children and Aunt Addie returned to Rexburg with her children. It was during this period of separation that Aunt Addie gave birth to Georganna Camilla. Georgie, as she was called, died Feb. 6, 1892, which brought sorrow to both families.

U.S. Marshalls were still trying to force father to give up one of his wives and this led mother to go on the underground (into hiding under an assumed name) She and her children moved to Logan, Utah under the assumed name of Elizabeth Lloyd. (Lloyd was my father's mother's maiden name). While living in Logan she was closely associated with two, perhaps many, wonderful women both of whom, like herself, were polygamist wives, Sister Isaac Smith, wife of the President of the Cache Stake and a sister of Aunt Addie. We always called her Aunt Milly. She loved mother as she would her own sister. Uncle Isaac was also good and kind to mother and to us children. We were almost like members of the Smith family. Uncle Isaac managed the Co-Op store and mother worked for him much of the time. The second sister, Sister Crouch, was also living on the underground with her children. Mother and Sister Crouch occupied a small house together and they loved each other so very much. They suffered together, they prayed together, they cared for each others children, they had many joys together and through it all they became so close and had such affection for each other, that, altho later in life they lived far apart they never forgot and when possible visited. They loved each other with fond and deep memories. (During the summer of 1960 Zina Crouch Smith came to my home, the first time we had met in more than sixty years, and O how we enjoyed that visit. I guess we loved each other in memory of our mothers' love for each other.)

While living in Logan my brother William Corlas was born Sept. 1, 1901. This was less than one year after Pres. Woodruff issued the "Manifesto" relative to the practice of poligamy and in compliance with the desission of the United States Supreme Court ruling. Shortly after the birth of my brother mother returned to Rexburg to join father, Aunt Addie and family. This I can remember personally for I was about five years of age. My brother-in-law, Alf Ricks, met us at Market Lake

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(Now Roberts) when we arrived by train and took us to Rexburg where for the first time, so far as I can remember, I met my father and brothers and sisters and also Aunt Addie.

At this time father had homesteaded a farm three miles north east of Rexburg and his first family was living on the farm in a moderately sized dirt roofed house. My oldest sister, Mary, had died in child-birth and her widdower was living across the street and about a mile south of fathers home, all alone. Mother and us children moved into his home and cared for the home. This arrangement didn't last long for Aunt Addie died in child-birth Aug. 6th 1893 when my brother Henry Charles was born. Mother now of course moved into father's home permanently. There were many problems even now for the two families were joined together for the first time. I think the children were somewhat prepared for this merger due to the close association of our mothers, for they did spend much time together even while mother cared for Alf's home. I well remember the real affection that had developed between Aunt Addie and my mother. If they ever had any trouble between them I knew nothing of it but I can truly say that there was very much evidence that each loved and trusted the other very much. I remember distinctly playing about the home where Aunt Addie was sewing and my mother was ironing. Not knowing that anyone was listening to them I heard Aunt Addie say "Lizzie, I love you so very much and I trust you more than I trust myself, if one of us should die and leave the two families in the care of one I could leave my children in your care, knowing that they would get love and attention! In fact, said she, 'I feel that it would be much better for you to care for my children than for me to care for yours". My mother replied, "I have the same feeling about you and if I should die first I would know that my children would be loved and properly cared for."

It was not very long after this that Aunt Addie did die and mother did assume the care of both families. I can't say that there were never any incidents of trouble but problems were never very serious and I feel that Aunt Addie's children loved mother and we all lived as one big family. My mother was the most self sacrificing person that I ever knew, ready at any time to sacrifice her wishes for others.

As a young boy I thought that my mother was the best alto singer in the world. She sang in the home very much, and was always a member of choruses and ward and stake choires. As a small boy and even as a young man I accompanied her to practices helping tend the team. I sang alto at her side in these choires. Mother was called to preside over the Salem Primary and until the Sugar City ward was organized she did this assignment in love, patience, and faithfully. In 1904 the Sugar ward was organized and mother was called to preside over the Relief Society. She still loved her Primary and I attended with her until I was sixteen years of age. I remember driving her from our home in Salem (now Sugar City) to Teton to attend a primary conference. Flood waters were so deep on the direct road to Teton that we had to go south about two miles and cross over the South Fork of the Teton River over what we called the Basset bridge, thense east through the Moody Creek area keeping close to the hills to keep above the water and thence north into Teton. It was at this conference that I sang my first vocal solo, "The Mormon Boy", mother had coached me and was so anxious and proud of me. When she was released from Primary to become President of the Relief Society she cried with all her heart and said that she just knew that she could never love the grown people as she did the children. This I think did not prove to be true.

From July 1904 until the time of her death in Feb. 1921 she gave herself to her new assignment and for many years with horse and buggy and later with automobile she visited the sick, the needy, took care of the dead and of course many things unmentioned that needed attention. In this work she was assisted by Sisters John K. Orme and sister John E. Pincock, her councilors. They loved each other and they loved the other sisters in the ward and they were loved by all. Mother was very ill with cancer for many months before her death but, I think, Bishop Ricks kindly posponed her release, leaving the work to other sisters, until the Lord took her Feb. 27, 1921.

Mother always led me to believe that I was a son of promise for she had wanted a son. (She already had had three daughters, Lucy, Nellie,

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and Katie) She said that she was so anxious to have a son that she prayed to God for a son and pledged that she would do her very best to rear him as an acceptable child of God, and had practically covenanted to give him to the Lord. Mother always expected lots of me and I now know how proud she was when I did something worthy and in line of duty. On the other hand I caused her much anxiety and sorrow due to my many weaknesses, and I had plenty of them, never-the-less her known concern over me and her prayers saved me from many evils that seemed to beset my path especially through the teens and early manhood. I remember especially that on one occasion mother took me into her bedroom (She had over heard me boast to my brother Bill and some friends what I hoped to do if and when conditions developed between me and a certain girl a little further.) and with tears in her eyes and her arms around me she plead with me to be clean; to protect and not rob any girl of her virtue. She seemed so very serious and said that she would rather give her life than to have me commit immoral acts with any girl. Among specific words she used were the following, "Jesse, I would rather have you brought home dead than to have you come home in sin". I never forgot that council and as I faced temptations thereafter, and there were many, my mother's words always flashed through my mind and I do not hesitate to say that had she not impressed me so very much with the conviction that I was a son of promise and that death was sweeter than sin, I would in all probability not have come through to manhood and wedlock with a clean body. Thank God for my dear mother.

Mother was always concerned with my companions, places that I went, hours that I kept and thoughts that I thought. As a young man I often came home late, too late, after parties, dances or even from church at nights. Mother was always waiting up for me. During the cold winter she was up with a hot fire and a warm welcome. It seemed that she so impressed me that I never could forget her and I am now ashamed for the many times that I caused worry and sleepless hours.

Mother had her sorrows, secret sorrows and trials, and I guess misgivings, and I suppose there were times that I thought that she was impatient, but I always knew that she loved me, and that she loved and had faith in God, that she had done the will of God in marrying my father in "Poligamy", and that to her very best she loved and served Aunt Addies children always.

Before closing this personal story I must say that mother had four daughters, Lucy born 22 Dec. 1881 at Malad; Nellie born 27 Oct. 1882 at Malad. Nellie died 1 March 1892 at Logan; Katie born 1 Oct. 1884 at Malad, died 5 Sept. 1914 at Sugar City; Jesse Lloyd (Nuff said); William Carlross born 1 Sept. 1891 at Logan; and Addie 17 May 1896 at Salem (Sugar City). A word about Aunt Addies children that mother mothered and cared for until they grew to adult-hood. At the time of Aunt Addies death Winnie her eldest (a young woman) 18 years of age; Lloyd, eldest living son 13 years of age; Horace a boy of 10 years; Prentice a boy of seven years, and Henry an infant of 6 days.

Mother died after an extended illness due to cancer 27 Feb. 1921 at Sugar City, Idaho and was buried in the Rexburg Cemetery near Aunt Addie and when father died in 1932 he was placed between them.