

Elizabeth Farmer Butterfield

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Elizabeth Farmer Butterfield was born 17 October 1848 at Reigate Surrey, England.¹ She was the daughter of James Morris Farmer and Sarah Trussler. In 1846, the parents heard the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and in 1848 were converted and baptized. Sarah (the mother) died 22 August 1851, leaving her husband with five children to rear, two sons and three daughters. Elizabeth, not yet three, with her two sisters were cared for by her maternal grandmother but the boys remained with their father. In 1856, James with his new wife, Mary Ann Biddle, and his five children made arrangements to emigrate to Utah, but the two sons, not wishing to leave England, returned to their mother's people, who were very bitter against the Mormons.

Mr Farmer, with the other members of his family, set sail from Liverpool on the ship HORIZON, and upon arrival in Iowa City, Iowa, was assigned to the JOHN A. HUNT Company. Elizabeth had her eighth birthday on the plains. Only a few days were spent in Salt Lake City before proceeding to Fort Herriman, Salt Lake County, where the family remained for a time with James' sister Emma Arnold. The Farmers moved back to Salt Lake City where the father worked for several years on the temple as a stone mason, and during that time he furnished funds for thirty-seven converts to emigrate from England.

Elizabeth's stepmother passed away and upon her shoulders rested the responsibility of caring for the younger children. As often as possible she visited her aunt in Herriman and it was here that she met Almon Butterfield, whom she married 27 January 1866 in the Endowment House. Her trousseau mainly consisted of two calico dresses, the money for which she earned by knitting socks from wool picked from fences which she brushed, carded and spun into yarn.

Their first home consisted of one room with dirt floor and roof, but they were very happy until their first two babies died rather suddenly. Their third child and oldest son was born just before "Lizzie" was twenty

¹Birth certificate in poss Jeanne Davis Cutler.

years of age. Five more children were born to the Butterfields in this humble home. A long remembered year for Elizabeth was 1876, for it was then the family moved into a large rock home, and that same year her two brothers and their families came from England.

In 1868 the first Relief Society was organized in Herriman and Elizabeth was appointed as one of its officers, namely an appraiser. In 1872 she received a blessing under the hands of Patriarch John Smith in which she was promised she would have the "Gift of Healing" the sick. From then on the greater part of her life was spent in alleviating the suffering of others. She had a natural ability but she always felt that the Lord had a hand in directing her.

Frances Bodell tells of a time when her little son, Chester, was extremely ill. Nothing seemed to help and even the doctor failed to diagnose the trouble. The baby's body was swollen and convulsions seemed near. Elizabeth was called in and she immediately prepared cloths rung out of a warm solution of water and nitre. She wrapped the cloths around the child, which she had previously anointed with oil and nitre and in a short time the kidneys began to function and soon Chester was well again. She brought another baby out of a severe case of pneumonia by applying flax seed meal poultices to the chest and shoulders.

Clifton Butterfield, when a small child fell into a bucket of scalding water and was severely burned over most of his body. Elizabeth applied grated potato packs and in time the burns healed. A number of ladies peeled and grated potatoes all day in order to supply enough moist packs. Another case of burns was treated by pricking the blisters on an injured arm to drain off the water and then covering the burn with a pack made of castor oil and flour. This was spread thin on white muslin and changed twice a day. The burned arm healed completely and left no scar.

Elizabeth was a pioneer midwife in Herriman and through the years delivered many babies. Five years after the death of her husband, Elizabeth Farmer BUTTERFIELD passed away on the 5th of February 1931. Twelve of her sixteen children grew to adulthood.

Corrected and footnote added April 1999 by Jeanne Davis Cutler.