

Mary Ann Cowles

Mary Ann was the fifth of eight children born to Austin and Phebe Wilbur Cowles. Her birth was on the 31 December 1820 in Bolivar, Allegheny, New York. The eighth child was born in 1825, and Phebe died the following year. In October 1827, Austin married Irena H. Elliott, and they became the parents of six children. Thus, Mary Ann was part of a very large family.

The missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints visited the home of Austin and Irena about 1834. All of the family joined the Church at this time. They remained in New York for about two years, then gathered with the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, followed by the move to Illinois.

These moves coincided with the moves of the Hyde family, therefore leading us to believe that Rosel and Mary Ann had a time of courtship before their marriage on 12 December 1839. This marriage was in a settlement called Payson. Rosel had established a farm there, and this is where they began their life together. In the three and one-half years they lived in Payson, their first two daughters were born, Martha Ann in 1841 and Sarah Maria in 1843.

Shortly after the birth of Sarah, the family relocated to Bear Creek, Hancock, Illinois. This settlement was located about sixteen miles from Nauvoo and seven miles from Carthage. Living here enabled them to help with building the temple and to participate in more church activities. Here, their land joined some of the Prophet Joseph's land, and they became more closely acquainted with Joseph. Mary Ann had lived and worked in the Smith home at one time. The children of Rosel and Mary Ann were also acquainted with the Prophet and sat on his lap many times. Because of this relationship with Joseph and Emma, Rosel and Mary Ann were deeply sorrowed when news of the death of Joseph and Hyrum reached them. They were later given a picture of the prophet by the Smith family, and this hung in their home for many years.

During this period, Mary Ann's father became disenchanted with membership in the church, over the issue of polygamy. He apostatized and moved his family to Hampton, Rock Island, Illinois where his last child was

born. Mary Ann never faltered in her testimony and remained faithful to the Church.

Mary Ann and Rosel were in attendance at the special conference held 8 August 1844 in the great grove at Nauvoo. Mary Ann testified to her children often that Brigham Young looked exactly like the Prophet Joseph Smith and also sounded as though he had Joseph's voice.

Their third child, Rosel James, was born in 1845 while they lived at Bear Creek. Rosel and Mary Ann were able to receive their endowment in the Nauvoo Temple on 7 January 1846. Because of the many persecutions, the temple was closed before they were able to be sealed to each other. In May 1846, their little family joined others in abandoning their beloved city of Nauvoo. Traveling with Rosel's parents, his brother William and their families, Rosel and Mary Ann arrived at Council Bluffs in July and lived in their wagons. Four days after arriving, William was mustered into the Mormon Battalion. The remaining family members built small, two room log cabins in Council Point, a few miles south of Council Bluffs.

The families rejoiced when in December 1847, William returned. He and Rosel worked to help their parents and other family members to leave for the valley in 1848. By the spring of 1849 the families of William and Rosel were prepared for their journey. They left with the Capt. Gulley Company, and arrived in the Valley on 22 September 1849. What great joy was felt as they were reunited with family and friends at the end of their arduous journey.

The family settled in Salt Lake where Rosel built a home for his family. Two more daughters were born here before the family moved to Kays Ward (Kaysville) in 1853. Here Mary Ann had a three-room log house with a dirt roof - which leaked in wet weather. There was a patio between two of the rooms which had a trap door that led to a dirt cellar. Each spring, the cellar usually filled with several inches of water. There was no lawn, but the packed-down dirt in front of the house was swept clean regularly.

Their second son, Heman, was born at this home in 1855, and sometime in the next two years Mary Ann was sealed to Rosel Hyde. According to family records, this sealing was performed by Wilford Woodruff.

In 1858 the family was asked to vacate their property and move south, pending the arrival of Johnston's Army. Mary Ann apparently was expecting her seventh child at this time, because their son Austin was born in Salt Lake City at the beginning of this exodus. Since the family left not knowing what, if any, of their homes and belongings would still be awaiting them, we again see their faith in the Prophet as they obeyed his council to leave. We also can imagine their great joy to return and find that nothing had been disturbed, and all was as it had been left.

In late 1859 Rosel was sent on a mission to New York State. He arrived home about the time their son Charles Corydon was born, May 1860. Rosel built a good two-story home of rock and adobe in Kaysville to accommodate his growing family as well as the Church authorities that visited the area. Mary Ann entertained many authorities during this time. A new arrival to the Valley, Hannah Maria Simmons, helped Mary Ann with the work in the home. The family grew to love this lovely young lady from England. When Rosel was asked to enter plural marriage, Hannah was their choice for a second wife. Hannah and Rosel were sealed in February 1862, just two months after Mary Ann had given birth to twin boys, David and Wesley. Unfortunately, the boys died the same day they were born.

Mary Ann remained in the rock home in town, and Hannah set up housekeeping in the log home on the farm. Hannah prepared the meals for the farm hands, including Mary Ann's boys who lived in town and worked on the farm. Eventually Rosel built an adobe house on the farm for Hannah. When her children were old enough to come to school in town, Mary Ann prepared their lunch meals for them.

Mary Ann and Hannah were both with child when Rosel left for two months to bring back a company of Saints from Council Bluffs. Mary Ann gave birth to William in June 1863 and Hannah's son Samuel was born in August 1863. The two women were a great comfort to each other as well as a help. Everyone was saddened when Hannah's son died two months later.

On 14 May 1868, the Relief Society was organized in Kaysville and Mary Ann Hyde was called as one of the counselors.

In the early 1880's, Rosel sold the house in town and enlarged the farm house. Mary Ann's children were grown so she joined the family at the farm, having her own apartment upstairs. That winter, Mary Ann made the trip to Logan with Rosel and the family to have their first six children sealed to them. Persecutions for polygamy worsened after that. The young men in the community guarded the roads in and out of Kaysville against attack. (They didn't know until after his death on 25 July 1887 that they had been guarding President John Taylor in exile.)

All the children loved both Mary Ann and Hannah. Hannah was only 49 years old when she died 19 March 1892. Before she died, Hannah told her children to include Mary Ann at the table and to treat her well. Hannah's mother came to live with the family, and she would sit with Rosel and Mary Ann in their later years, cared for tenderly by Hannah's daughter Mary Ann.

On 12 December 1899 Rosel and Mary Ann celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Mary Ann Died 1 December 1901, less than two years before her husband died. They are buried in Kaysville, Utah.

Sources:

Excerpts from several histories - authors not known
Family group sheets compiled by the Hyde Family Organization