

MARY JANE PARKER BUTTERFIELD

Mary Jane Parker was born on January 21, 1817, in Parsonfield York County, Maine. She is the daughter of Samuel and Hannah Edgecomb Parker. Mary Jane was slight of build, just 5 feet tall, with black hair and bright, expressive eyes. She was taught early to work. Mary Jane was 18 when she married Thomas Butterfield in Farmington, Maine. Soon afterwards, they attended a meeting and heard the Prophet Joseph Smith tell of the restored gospel. They were immediately converted and baptized by Thomas' uncle, Josiah Butterfield.

Life was difficult for the new couple. They experienced many hardships. Mary Jane was faithful and courageous in taking care of their home and protecting her family. She earned a living for her family for over a year when Thomas was sent on a mission. Thomas was good with animals and was called upon to help the Saints move from Ohio to Missouri, and then to Illinois. Mary Jane packed their belongings herself in a wagon and drove the oxen. When living in Missouri, two men came to the Butterfield home while Thomas was away, climbed on the house and knocked a hole in the roof, intending to throw a burning faggot inside. With authority Mary Jane commanded them to leave. The men never returned.

Soon after the first Relief Society was organized in Nauvoo, Mary Jane became a member. She helped the sick, made clothing, and knitted stockings for the men working on the temple. Many years later, Mary Jane recalled the experience of being part of that first Relief Society, ".....(the sisters) should do a good work and be a great help to the Church. I was a member of the Society and enjoyed myself very much in meeting with the sisters."

Mary Jane was talented and artistic. When settled in Utah, the family raised sheep and cattle. Mary Jane carded and spun the wool. She would have cans on the stove steeping sage and berries, adding a little of this and that until she achieved the dye color she wanted. She was an excellent weaver. She gathered weeds, flowers, and bark to create pleasing arrangements for her home. Mary Jane was a quilt maker of record in Herriman. There is an example of her Log Cabin quilt still preserved. She was a member of the first Relief Society in Herriman, serving as teacher and treasurer.

In 1858, when the Salt Lake Valley was evacuated, Thomas was again asked to help coordinate animals and wagons for the move. Mary Jane was left to load the wagon by herself. She drove the team to Santaquin with a two-month old Hannah on her lap, and her sister-wife Mary Farmer, in labor with her first child in the back of the wagon.

With her husband, Thomas, Mary Jane settled Herriman in 1851. She lived in a log cabin for 19 years until a rock home was built and the family moved out of the fort. She was the mother of 13 children, 11 living to adulthood. Mary Jane died in Herriman on July 21, 1901.

Mary Jane was an example of pioneer faith and fortitude, persevering through trials and hardships to establish a legacy for her posterity and community.