

LIFE SKETCH OF SARAH CLARK WEAVER 1831 – 1910

by

Sarah Harris Mickelson 1880-1963

Transcription, with notes, by Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer
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Sarah Clark was born at Clinton, Ohio the 27th of January, 1831, the daughter of Samuel Clark Sr. and Rebecca Garner Clark. Samuel Clark Sr. was born at Egg Harbor, New Jersey the 18th of December, 1798 the son of Joseph Clark and Elizabeth Sooy. Rebecca Garner was the daughter of James Garner and Mary Moon and was married to Samuel Clark on the 18th of July 1827 at Clark, Clinton County, Ohio. To this union 13 children were born, namely: Joseph, Riley Garner, Sally or Sarah, John, Mary Elizabeth (who died in infancy), Jane, Emma (who died in infancy), Ann, Rebecca (who died in infancy), Samuel, Ellen and James.

This family joined the LDS [Mormon] gospel in Ohio, Samuel joining eleven years earlier than did his wife Rebecca. She belonged to the Quaker religion and was satisfied in her belief until she had a dream one night. She dreamed that they attended an apple peeling bee (as neighbors would get together

and peel apples and then dry them as canning had not been heard of), and in the dream she thought that no one could peel the apples in the right way except Samuel. She took this to mean that his religion was the only right one, and she joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints immediately.

They had a happy home and Sarah together with her brothers and sisters had many good times, as they were a very devoted family. They would go into the woods in the autumn of the year and gather walnuts, hickory nuts, hazel nuts and Paw Paws. They would get sap from the maple trees and make maple syrup and maple sugar. Sarah would go with her father to the town of Cincinnati to shop, but the way of travel was very slow, as they drove either horses or oxen.

Sarah had a very dear friend by the name of Libby Meek, whom she loved very dearly. Now it was a very sad day when the family sold their home and most of their belongings and went with the Saints to Far West; thence to Nauvoo, where they were living at the time that the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., and Patriarch Hyrum Smith were assassinated.

They were living there when the Saints were driven out of the city in February 1846, and they were numbered among them. Samuel had previously prepared for the trip west and had wagons and provisions and was quite well-equipped as he was a good manager. They had buried three daughters, Elizabeth and Emma in Ohio, and Rebecca was buried in Nauvoo. They crossed the river [Mississippi] on the ice and suffered the hardships with the rest of the Saints. A son, Samuel, Jr., was born to them October 1st 1846 at Buchanan, Missouri and in February 1846 they had to leave and go into an unknown wilderness. They traveled nine miles and camped at Sugar Creek the first night. Many came with only a few provisions and those who had plenty had to share with the needy.



Samuel and Rebecca Garner Clark
in their later years

They stayed in this camp until March 1st 1846. From there they traveled on 65 miles and made another camp and called it Garden Grove. Some of the Saints pushed on 27 miles farther and called this camp Mt. Pisgah. June 14th they arrived at Council Bluffs on the banks of the Missouri River. While here a call came to President Brigham Young to furnish 500 men to [join the United States Army] in the fight with Mexico. They called this the Mormon Battalion and Sarah's brothers Joseph Clark and Riley Garner Clark as well as her lover, Miles Weaver and his brother Franklin all enlisted.¹ Now our dear and beautiful Sarah was very sad when she saw her loved one march away to the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Her beautiful grey eyes would always grow misty when she rehearsed the story.

Right: Miles Weaver

Now with the two older boys away part of the responsibility fell on Sarah, 17, and John, 16, as their mother, Rebecca, had a small child in arms. The family decided to stay over at Winter Quarters the winter of 1847 and 1848, and in June 1848 they commenced their journey to Utah in a company of [622 individuals] ... with their accompanying goods and chattels². Sarah drove a yoke of oxen all the way across the plains and her mother Rebecca rode with her. As they traveled along they would milk their cows and carry the milk in a stone jar and at night there was a lump of butter in the jar, as the roads were rough and the motion of the wagon churned the butter. John drove another wagon and Mary, 14, drove the loose stock. While traveling on the way they encountered a herd of buffalo which stampeded their oxen which ran and ran and finally stopped on the brink of a deep ravine. Sarah was always excited whenever she rehearsed the episode.³



Grandfather Samuel walked alongside the oxen with gun in hand so as to be ready for an attack from Indians, should they decided to do just that. When they came to the Platt River they caulked their wagon boxes and floated them across. Some of the oxen and horses swam, but the people and their belongings were ferried across on a ferry boat. This family escaped a lot of the hardships that so many of the Saints endured, as they had adequate supplies and were well-equipped with food and clothing.⁴ Samuel was a good manager and provider. They traveled in the Heber C. Kimball Company.⁵

Now the boys had returned to Salt Lake City from the Mormon Battalion and Miles and Franklin Weaver immediately set out to meet this company of Saints on the last part of their journey.⁶ These Saints arrived in Salt Lake Valley in September 1848. Sarah Clark and Miles Weaver were married the 24th of December 1848. They lived in the old fort for a few months. They always lived in fear of the Indians, as they were on the warpath much of the time. Miles Weaver was called as an interpreter to the Indians in war and also in missionary undertakings, as he had mastered the language real well and also was a great friend to all of them.

They spent a fairly peaceful winter in the old fort, but Grandmother Sarah had the shock of her life when two young men came galloping their horses into the fort and gave the Indian war whoop, firing their six-shooters. Most of the men folks were away at the time trying to get back some of the cattle that the Indians had driven away. Grandmother, thinking them to be Indians, collapsed and fell to the floor. These boys were none other than Brigham Young Jr., and John Taylor. They were very much chagrined when they saw the effects of their practical joke.

In March 1849 President Brigham Young called a number of the Saints to go colonize south from Salt Lake City, which they named Provo. Among these Saints were 15 Clarks and Weavers. It was very hard going in this desolate country, with so little to do, with nothing to buy. They helped each other to build and bartered with each other.

Sarah's first child, Miles Joseph Weaver, was born in Provo on November 7th 1849. I have heard Grandmother say that there was for three months no bread nor flour—just scant rations of cornmeal. They would use the bulb of the Segó Lily in various ways as food. Thus the Segó Lily became an emblem of the Pioneers and also the state flower of Utah.

Sarah and Miles Weaver became the parents of four children, namely: Miles Joseph, Zelnora, Sarah Jane and Rebecca. Sarah Jane died from croup when five years of age. Miles and Sarah later lived on Church Island in the Great Salt Lake and milked some of the church cows, as Miles was working for Brigham Young and caring for the church cattle. [In January 1955] Miles married the beautiful Sarah Elizabeth Holmes [as 2nd wife in a polygamous relationship]. But the happiness of this very happy family was not for a long duration, as Miles

passed away on the 7th of December 1854, at age 29. His widows were heartbroken and almost destitute. It was very hard going now with a family of six and no breadwinner or provider.

Grandmother has rehearsed the following to me many times: as she was lying on her bed one evening she was so very depressed that she wished she could wake up in Heaven. While she wished these things, there entered into her room four personages. They came to her bedside. She recognized her husband and he turned to the other three and said, “Peter, James and John” then said to one of them, “Will you be mouth?” They placed their hands on her head and administered to her. She wanted very much to remember the things they spoke but it was in an unknown language and she could not understand. But this left a comforting spirit, and never again was she as depressed as before. This spirit continued with her throughout her life and she never spoke ill of a single person.

Now, as circumstances were hard for the widows, it being the last wish of Miles on his deathbed that his brother Franklin marry and support his two wives. With the advice of Pres. Brigham Young, Franklin married Sarah Elizabeth Holmes Weaver on the 3rd of May 1856 and Sarah Clark Weaver just two days later on the 8th of May 1856. His first wife was Rachel Reed [whom he had

married in California in 1848, she having arrived in San Francisco with a group of Saints aboard the ship Brooklyn in 1846].



Franklin now had a large family to support, for a young man, and everyone in poor circumstances. [In 1856 Franklin was 28 years old, Rachel was 26, Sarah Clark was 25 and Sarah Holmes was 18.] But there was harmony in their homes as everyone loved each other and respected everyone else. In all the twenty years my grandmother Sarah lived in my mother’s home, I have never heard her say an unkind word about any of the family, nor about anyone else. She was a perfect lady in every respect.

Left: Franklin Weaver

Sarah’s sister, Anna Clark, came to stay with her, and it was then that she met Solomon H. Hale,

who was working for Franklin Weaver, and they were married in Salt Lake City 1863. [See Anna's pioneer trail memories below.]

Franklin and Sarah had a baby daughter born to them on March 9, 1857, and they named her Josephine. She grew to womanhood and married Alexander Harris, Jr., on July 14, 1877, and they became my parents. At Farmington, Utah, on November 11th 1857 a son was born to Franklin and Sarah Elizabeth Holmes Weaver. Grandmother Sarah Clark Weaver, my parents, Josephine and Alexander Harris, and also Jane Clark are buried in the cemetery at Thatcher Ward, Gem Valley, Idaho. [Sarah Clark and Franklin were also the parents of Helen Weaver, born 1859; Samuel Henry Weaver, born 1861; and Riley⁷ Weaver, born 1868, the same year Sarah's oldest daughter, Zelnora, married Thomas Stevenson. Sarah had four children with her first husband, Miles Weaver and four children with her second husband, Franklin Weaver. See family group notes below.⁸]

The [entire] family now moved to Cache Valley, Utah, to a place known as the Church Ranch on 22 July 1859. Franklin was still working for President Young, caring for the church cattle. A while later they moved to Millville, Utah. The first school that was held in Millville was held in the home of Franklin Weaver.⁹

The three families each had their own apartments, but they were all united and all worked together. Rachel made all the men's clothing, Sarah Clark made the women's clothing. She pinned paper on the person, then cut the pattern to fit. She also made buckskin gloves and braided straw hats from the oat straw. Sarah Holmes knit stockings and mittens and did patching. They were not flushed with means, but by everyone doing their share they fared quite well. The whole 21 of them were all brothers and sisters.

Now Franklin's health began to fail, and the laws became a little more strict [regarding polygamy], so Franklin and his first wife, Rachel, moved to Bennington, Bear Lake County, Idaho. Sarah Clark with her family moved to Liberty, Bear Lake County, Idaho. Now the boys were old enough to support the family. Sarah became the President of the first Relief Society organization in Liberty, with Margaret Morgan as 1st Counselor, Elizabeth McMurry as 2nd Counselor and Mary Hymas as Chorister. Her oldest son, Miles Joseph met and married Annie Lindsay and they resided in Liberty for a number of years. Then with her two younger sons, Henry and Riley, Sarah moved to Bennington.

Henry was working at a ranch near Star Valley, Wyoming when he contracted pneumonia and passed away on March 16, 1891. Henry never married. Now Sarah and her youngest son, Riley, were alone, as Josephine and Helen had married and had families. Riley was seven years younger than Henry, and Sarah's health was poor, so my mother, Josephine, persuaded her to come and live in our home, and Riley went to live with his sister Helen and family.

Sarah lived with her daughter Josephine Weaver Harris until February 18, 1910 when she passed peacefully away [age 79] being ill only 15 minutes!

Grandmother Sarah Clark Weaver was a lady in every respect. She was calm and composed at all times. She never gave utterance to any words of fault-finding, and her motto was: "If you can't say good of people, don't say anything at all." Some of the best advice I have ever received was from my dearly beloved Grandmother. She reigned as a queen in our home, and we all loved her dearly. She was always thoughtful of others and was a woman of noble character. God Bless Her Memory!

Sarah Harris Mickelson

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* Editor's notes appear in brackets [], without italics.



Riley Weaver, standing right, about 1898

Memoirs of Anna Clark Hale

Hale, Anna Clark, [Autobiography], *Memoirs of Anna Clark Hale*, in Heber Q. Hale, ed., [1965], 16-18. [Sister of Sarah Clark Weaver] Trail excerpts:
<http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/source/0,18016,4976-5501,00.html>

Come spring of '48, things were a buzzing in Winter Quarters. Everybody busy with their own affairs, getting ready for the long, hard, journey to the Rocky Mountains. We were among the earliest to leave. We were assigned to the Heber C. Kimball Company.

Oh, how we did miss the stout help of our two oldest boys, who had enlisted with the Mormon Battalion in '46. We had three wagons, five yoke of oxen, two cows and two horses. Father drove the lead wagon with two span of oxen, John (then 16) followed with the second wagon and two span of oxen, and Mother followed in a lighter wagon with one yoke of oxen—Sarah (17) and Mary (14½) relieved Mother a lot in driving and in caring for baby (8 months old Sammy), Jane (10½) and I (7)—sometimes on horse back, sometimes on foot, followed behind, driving the cows. [Anna would have been age 7.]

Our first real trouble across the plains came at Poison Springs, where we lost two of our best oxen—old Buck and old Brandy. Then, we had to work our cows. Father took them on his wagon. It was hard to get them used to the yokes, so they would help pull the load. However, father had given them a little training before we left—just in case.

We encountered many herds of buffalo on the way, and they would sometimes stampede the small herd of cattle which was being driven along with our large company.

I would be assigned every time we camped across the prairies, to go and gather 'buffalo chips' in my apron for our camp fire on cold nights and for cooking our meals. Before we came to this, I asked my Mother: "Why do we have to use these chips—where did all the wood go?" She replied: "You'll find out soon enough, daughter"—and I surely did.

Here is an incident I shall never forget: I remember Mother had to do some sewing on our clothing, but couldn't do so because she had lost her needle. The next day I showed up with a needle and told Mother I had found it. She said it wasn't hers and asked me where I got it. My answers did not satisfy—and she demanded the truth. I finally confessed that in visiting another camp, I saw a lady sewing on a button and beside her was a little cushion with a lot of pins and needles in it—and I thought she could spare one needle for my poor Mother, who had lost hers. Well, Mother made me take the needle back and apologize to the lady. I can say right here that it was one of the hardest things I ever had to do; but it taught me a lesson that I never forgot. Later, the kind lady came over to see Mother and gave her one of her needles. Incidentally, Mother did have some more needles packed in a trunk down in one of the wagons.

We would camp on Saturdays at some 'watering place', where we could wash our clothes, take our baths, and give our oxen a chance to rest and feed up a little. On Sundays, they would hold services for the entire company, presided over by

President Heber C. Kimball. I was always happy to take my bath and wash my dirty feet and put on some clean clothes and go to meeting. I had to go bare-footed most of the time.

One Sunday morning when we got up, we were told that the company horses had been driven away in the night by some Indians, who outsmarted the night herder. President Kimball went ahead with the morning service as usual. Shortly, an old Indian Chief and two of his braves came walking into the meeting and stood at the rear. Right then, one of our Brethren got up and commenced talking in 'tongues'. The Indian Chief understood everything the speaker (Brother Draper) had said. The Chief immediately turned to the Indians who had accompanied him and went through the same motions Brother Draper had used, together with some excited talk of his own—then they hurried out, jumped onto their horses and sped away. In about two hours, they came back with all the stolen horses—not one missing. You see how the Lord can help His children? We never did learn what Brother Draper had said. Maybe he didn't know, himself. Anyway, we all got our horses back, and that was enough for us.

As we were camped one Saturday, some of the children were being baptized by the Brethren—and I cried because my Mother would not let me be baptized too. She said I was not old enough—I would have to wait another year. But I'll say here that when another year rolled around, I was baptized on my 8th birthday (1849), by Miles Weaver, in the Provo River. I don't remember who confirmed me. Oh, fiddlesticks, here I am in Provo, before we get across the plains. That's the way my mind runs—pretty fast, isn't it?

Now, what else worth mentioning do I remember of our long, tiresome trip across the plains and over the mountains? Oh, yes, I recall seeing that huge mountainous 'Independence Rock', and 'Devil's Gate' with the stream of water running through it. And we stopped quite a while at Fort Bridger, where some of the men had to make repairs on their wagons—and my father had to do some fixin' too. And, oh, what a sight to behold, when those sky-high Rocky Mountains came into view. I wondered, as a child, how in the world will we ever be able to get over them.

Anyway, our worries about Echo Canyon did not amount to much—we got down through it safely; but when we got to what was called 'Big Mountain' and 'Little Mountain', they lived up to their names alright—and more, too. Father and John finally made it with their double yokes of oxen on their wagons; but poor Mother with just one yoke couldn't make it. So, Father sent Mary to help John watch the two lead wagons and oxen, while he took one yoke of his oxen and a long chain back and hitched on in head of Mother's team and helped her over. Oh, My! I never imagined that such big mountains existed in the world.

ENTRANCE INTO GREAT SALT LAKE VALLEY

As we came down through and out of Emigration Canyon, the beautiful valley of the Great Salt Lake stretched out before us. We all stopped our wagons and came together to look and wonder and thrill at what our eyes beheld. At last, we could see our journey's end. We drove on down into the city—a little over a year old—dotted with log and adobe cabins and tents. This was Sunday September 24, 1848

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ENDNOTES

¹ See Shaeffer, Ellen Claire Weaver, *Franklin Weaver, a Timeline 1828-1884*; 1996, for a full description of the Weaver boys in the Mormon Battalion.

² The Heber C. Kimball Company left Winter Quarters June 7th 1848 arriving in the Salt Lake Valley September 24th 1848.
<http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompany/0,15797,4017-1-179,00.html>

³ Hale, Aroet Lucious, *Diary of Aroet Lucious Hale, 1828-1849*: I was in my 20th Year. My Sister Rachel in her 16th year. My Brother Alma in his 12th Year. My Brother Solomon in his 9th Year. I was apointed One of the Hunters for the first 50[.] Oure [Ozro] Eastman was My Hunting Companion[.] Buffilo and Antleop was verry plenty full common up the Plat[te] River. We had good Luck and Surplide our Division with what Buffilo Meat they Needed while we wair in the Buffilo Country. Our travels acrest the Planes was a Long tiersom trip. Trip over One thousand miles with Ox teames. Was hard on Old People and Women with Chraldren[.] The Young folks had injoyment. Presedent Young and Kimble was Verry kind and indulgent to the Young. They frequently Stop within a Mile or So apart. The Young yould [would] Viset from One Camp to the Other, and frequently would get musick and have a good Dance on the Ground. Some times the Older Folks would Join with us[.] On One Occation President Young took part in the Injoyment. I formed an acuantance with a Yound [young] Lady Crosing the Plains that I after wards Marr[i]ed. her Name was Olive Whittle, a Daughter of Thomas Whittle, formerly from Canada. So I done My Sparking along the road. So I did not have So much to Do after I got into the Valley.
<http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/source/0,18016,4976-5502,00.html>

⁴ Nevertheless, towards the end of the journey the pioneers as well as their animals were near exhaustion. In the diary of William Burton we read: "Friday Aug 25th This morning more of our Cattle was dead S[amuel] Clark 3, M[artin Horton] Peck 1, J[asper Harrison] Twichel [Twitchell] 2[.] a part of the day was Spent in taking care of our meat." Burton, William, *Diaries, 1839-1851*.
<http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/source/0,18016,4976-5487,00.html>

⁵ To note a family connection with Heber C. Kimball: He is the ancestor of the grandchildren of Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer through her daughter-in-law, Kristin Alldredge Shaeffer. The youngest child of Kristin and Duncan Shaeffer is Heber C. Shaeffer, so named after his illustrious ancestor.

⁶ Hale, Aroet, op. cit.: describes the arrival of the Mormon Battalion boys to meet their dear ones. *On our travels, as we neared the Valley, we met Saints of '47 on their way back to the Mis[s]ouri River after famleys that was Left[.] Olso Quite a number of Battalion Boys. My Dear Ol friend Lucus Hogland was One of the number. He found what he was Looking for. My Dear Sister Rachel Hale. They Commenced Keeping Company before they Left Nauvoo. of corse he turned about. Came into the Valley with us. We arrived in the Valley of Grate Salt Lake in the fawl [Fall] of 1848. We camped around the Old Fort that the Poyneers [pioneers] of 47 had built. In the fawl of '48 all the Saints had Liberty to Scatter out. and farms near by Settlements, and Settle on their City Lots.* <http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/source/0,18016,4976-5502,00.html>. However, the family of the Weaver boys, did not come west until the following year. Their mother, Martha, had died in Winter Quarters, and their siblings came west in the George A. Smith Company of 1849, leaving 14 July 1849 arriving in the Salt Lake Valley 26 October 1849.

⁷ Riley Weaver and his wife, Margaret Duncan, became the parents of Henry Duncan Weaver, the father of Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer.

⁸ Franklin and Miles Weaver, brothers, were children of Edward Weaver and Martha Raymer. Franklin married Christiana Rachel Reed. They were the parents of eleven children. Miles married Sarah Clark and they were parents of four children. Miles also married Sarah Elizabeth Holmes, but they had no children. Miles died later the same year he took a second wife. Franklin then married both of Miles' widows, each named Sarah. Franklin had four children with Sarah Clark and eight children with Sarah Elizabeth Holmes.

Timeline:

1821 Edward Weaver married Martha Raymer in western New York
1826 Miles Weaver was born in Scio, Genessee County, New York
1828 Franklin Weaver was born in Scio, Genessee County, New York
1835 the Weaver family join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, moving to Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Nebraska with Miles, Franklin and their other children
1846 Miles and Franklin join the Mormon Battalion
1847 Miles and Franklin are mustered out of the Mormon Battalion
1848 Miles and Franklin are working at Sutter's Fort when gold was discovered on the American River
1848 Franklin Weaver marries Christiana Rachel Reed in California
1848 Miles Weaver marries Sarah Clark in Utah
1850 Miles and Franklin and families are among the original settlers of Provo, Utah
1855 Miles takes a polygamous wife, Sarah Elizabeth Holmes
1855 Miles Weaver dies
1856 Franklin Weaver marries the two widows of his brother
1888 Franklin Weaver dies
1893 Rachel Reed Weaver dies – mother of 11 children
1908 Sarah Elizabeth Holmes Weaver dies – mother of 8 children
1910 Sarah Clark Weaver dies – mother of 8 children

⁹ To see photo of the Franklin Weaver home & school see webpage:
<http://www.emsol.com/weaver>