Sarah Gittins Smart

Sarah Gittins was born December 23, 1849, at Cradley, Herefordshire, England. She was the daughter of James Gittins and Mary Powell Hadley. Sarah was a twin. There were seven children in the family; William, Jane, James, Louisa, the twins Sarah and Hannah, and Maria.

Her father was a gardener by trade. He also worked as a woodsman, felling trees and cutting them into firewood. His children would help gather the small branches and twigs and make them into little bundles called fagots. As the children grew older, they would go into the woods early in the morning and gather violets and primroses, fashion them into nosegays, then walk miles to town to sell them. They also gathered nuts by the bushel to see to help make their living. When fall came the whole family would go out to pick hops. The mother and children would pick, while the father had charge of the kiln where the hops were dried.

When the girls grew older, her sisters worked out as maids, but as Sarah was not strong enough to stand that type of work, she and her mother made fine kid gloves. Their work was in great demand because of its excellence.

Her father and mother had been baptized in 1840 at the time when President Wilford Woodruff was on a mission to England. He tells in his diary of being inspired to go South in England, and there he found a group of people who had left the Church of England. The entire congregation and minister were converted. Sarah’s maternal grandparents, James and Mary Hadley, were also in the group. This was nine years before the twins were born. Sarah and her twin sister, Hannah, were baptized in 1863 by their Grandfather Hadley.

The family had a great desire to go to Zion, and they worked hard toward that end. The two oldest girls, Jane and Louisa, had a chance to work their way to Zion. On April 23, 1862 they sailed on the ship “John J. Boyd.” They crossed the plains in Capt. Lewis Brunson’s ox team and arrived in Salt Lake City 29 August 1862, six years before the rest of the family. The oldest son, William, married and remained in England. James, who married his sweetheart, Ann Marie Summers in Liverpool, and sailed within a few hours on the ship “McLena.” They arrived in Smithfield, Utah, 9 November 1864. On Tuesday July 14, 1868, James and Marry Gittins with their three daughters, Sarah and Hannah the twins, and Mary (Maria), set sail for America from Liverpool on the steamship “Colorado.” The twins were eighteen years old. The company on board ship numbered six hundred. They arrived in New York City July 28th, making the voyage in fourteen days. An account of the trip states the weather was such as to insure a pleasant voyage.
Aside from seasickness, good health prevailed. There were no deaths or births or marriages on
the journey.

They left New York City by rail and arrived at the railroad terminus at Benton, near
Omaha, Nebraska, on the Platte River August 7, 1868. It took nine and one-half days by rail from
New York to Benton. Here they were met by ox teams sent out from Salt Lake City to meet the
emigrants. This was the last company to go by ox teams, as the railroad was completed when the
next emigrants arrived. They left Benton August 14th, after a seven day rest. They arrived in Salt
Lake City nineteen days later, September 2 1868. Sarah’s twin sister, Hannah, afterward married
their teamster, Andrew Somerville.

Sarah met and fell in love with a young man, Abel Smart. He was not a member of the
Church at the time but was later baptized before they were married. They were married in the
Endowment house in Salt Lake City, September 20, 1869. They were the parents of twelve
children: Abel born 9 June 1870, William born 7 December 1871 and died 21 July 1877, James
Gittins born 21 May 1873, Sarah born 3 June 1875, Mary born 14 April 1877, Jane born 20 June
1879, Lottie born 2 December 1881, Maud born 28 Mar 1884, Frederick born 6 May 1886, Ezra
born 13 April 1889 and died 14 January 1890, Parley born 4 August 1891, and Hazel born 29
October 1893.

Her first years of marriage were spent at Wellsville, Utah, where their first four children
were born. They had very little to start housekeeping with, but they worked hard and were very
happy. They moved to Smithfield where the rest of their children were born except Hazel, the
youngest. She was born at Glendale Ward, near Preston, Idaho. The family had moved to
Glendale in the summer of 1893 and remained there until the following spring, when they returned
to Smithfield, where they resided for almost four years then moved to Georgetown in the year
1897.

By the time Sarah had reached the age of thirty five years, eight of her children had been
born, and their financial circumstances were somewhat improved, when her husband married a
second wife, Emma Irene Staley on 11 February 1885. On 14 November 1888 he married his
third wife Annie Christena Jensen.

Pioneer life was hard. Sarah made the most of what she had. She was very independent.
She had a few chickens and some cows which provided meat and milk. She churned butter. She
dried and preserved fruit, baked bread, made soap. She washed and carded the wool from her
own sheep and made soft warm comforters. Also, she had some of the wool spun into yarn, from
which she would knit stocking and mittens for her family. Some of the wool she would have
woven into a coarse cloth called “Linsey Woolsey” from which she sewed suits and dresses.
Shoes were very scarce and they sometimes had to burn sagebrush for fuel. She planted a
raspberry patch and sold the berries along with what eggs and butter she could spare.

She was an excellent cook and she is remembered for her delicious fruit cake, made by
adding shortening, sugar, raisins, currants and peel to light bread dough, and also her suet
puddings.
She was very strict in paying her tithing and had a firm testimony of the power of prayer, and she has told incidents to her children wherein she felt that her prayers had been answered. She was a faithful Latter-Day Saint. She loved to go to meeting, and worked hard in the Relief Society, where she always led the singing. She loved to sing, and had a very good alto voice. As she went about her daily tasks, she would usually be humming a tune. She especially loved the marching song of the Pioneers, “Come, Come Ye Saints.” This beautiful song was sung at her funeral.

Sarah raised ten of her twelve children to maturity, when they established homes of their own. After all her children had married, she remained in Georgetown until about the year 1920, when she went to live with her daughter Maud at Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Here she was surrounded with all the comforts and conveniences of life. She passed away May 20, 1928 and is buried at Calgary. She was a wonderful woman. The following loving tribute to her was written by her daughter, Hazel Smart Walker.

My Mother

She was gentle and kind, this mother of mine,
With her dear sweet face and her toil worn hands
That did so much for family and friends;
She taught us truth and the power of prayer
And we felt secure ‘cause Mother was there.

And her tender love and words of cheer
That could soothe a baby or small child’s fear,
Still guides us on through advancing years;
And now she has gone to her home above
My most precious heritage is Mother’s love.

This sketch was written February 4, 1951
By a granddaughter Jennie Smart Nuffer
with a grateful appreciation for the help give by-
Hannah J. Somerville, Hazel Walker and Maud Hayes

©Marion N. Adamson of Ogden, Utah