

## MARY VERENA BRYNER REDD

by Lura Redd, page 1

Mary Verena Bryner Redd was born of "goodly parents," namely Hans Ulrich Bryner Jr., and Anna Maria Dorothea Mathys Bryner, on the 3rd of March 1866, in New Harmony, Washington Co., Utah. Her parents had accepted the gospel in far-off Switzerland and had immigrated to Utah in 1856, ten years before she was born. They had lived in three other places in Utah before moving to New Harmony in 1863. They first lived in Lehi, where Uncle Casper and the others who came in 1855 had settled. Aunt Pauline was born there the next year on the 2nd of November 1857. They then moved to Ogden for a time. Mary Bryner Cannon says that her father, Casper, had a melon patch where the railroad station now stands, and likely grandfather's farm was close by, as he depended a great deal on help from Uncle Casper, who had made all arrangements for his coming to Utah. Aunt Elizabeth Ann (Lisette) was born in Ogden 30 May 1860.

They were all called to settle St. George, in Washington Co., and like all other early pioneers, they never thought of not heeding the call. Uncle Casper traded his land for a gun, a bushel of wheat and other things. They moved to St. George sometime prior to 5 Feb. 1869, when Uncle Albert was born. Later grandfather moved to New Harmony, where Mary Verena and Uncle Frank were born. Grandfather moved out to Price, Carbon Co., in 1873, and was one of the early pioneers there.

Mother was blessed 15 July 1866 by Christopher J. Arthur, who was assisted by H. Lunt and S. Leigh. I know little about her early childhood, but can guess about some things, as I did about father's. Of course, she helped a lot at home, as all children of that day did. There were no places of amusement, none or very few toys, not much school, and that left lots of time on their hands, so the only thing that parents could do with their children was to keep them busy working at home. The parental adage of early American days, or any other place for that matter, seems to have been, "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," and other such sayings belittling idleness. They had to work all the time as adults, or go without bare necessities, and the earlier they learned to keep busy, the better. Every child had to assume some responsibility, and one of the first things they learned to do in their home was to 'lead father.' As he was blind, he had to be led everywhere, and someone had to do it. Very early in life, they had to learn this. I guess it was a trial for him to change guides, especially to get 'green' ones.

Mother told me of her experience when learning. She was leading him somewhere, when they came to a ditch, and she said, 'Here is a ditch, Father, jump.' He jumped and landed right in the middle of it. Another time someone was building, and had made a pond of water, I suppose to make adobe bricks, we called them 'dobies,' and she led him right into it. Then he picked her up in his arms and carried her out to dry ground, and they started over. That was something to learn to do. Aunt Lil said they always had the furniture in the same place all the time. They were very careful about this. Every chair had to be in its place. No shoes or other litter of any kind could be left about that he could stumble over if he tried to go alone. In the house, he could take care of himself. I remember when he was visiting with us, mother would say "Come and lead your grandfather to Uncle Henry's, then you can go." He could find his way home alone.

Mother's childhood was unusual. Her father, being blind, needed someone with him all the time. Her mother could help him better than anyone else at his work, so she went with him most, if not all the time, and left the house work to her girls, as soon as they were big enough to do it, when they were quite young. Mother had two sisters, eight and six years older than she, who could look after the things at home, and they did. Mother helped as soon as she was big enough, but before that, she found congenial companionship with Caroline Redd, a little friend across the street, and only thirteen days older than she was. Their friendship lasted long after they became sisters-in-law, even through life. At first they were just near neighbors across the street, but later Caroline's folks moved to the farm up through a number of fields. This was when they were four. Soon mother could find her way up there alone, and often did.

By this time too, the families were good friends. It's like Mary once said, "If you have children, you get acquainted with your neighbors who also have children." It seems the parents didn't object much to their children going to the Redd's. There they were taken care of. Mother was always quoting grandmother Redd, and telling about how she did things. Her explanation was that her own mother had to work in the fields with her father, and so be away from the home a lot. I think her mother took to that naturally, because European women are more used to working in the fields than are American women.

I imagine her home life, as a child, was similar to that of grandfather's. His father was a shoemaker. Later he bought a farm, which changed their lives materially. The whole family worked on the farm in the daytime, and at night they all did other work. His mother and sisters spun, wove and sewed, his father mended shoes, and grandfather read the Bible to them. Possibly that's one reason why he readily understood the gospel, he knew the Bible. He would like something like this after he was blind, to have someone read to him at night.

Aunt Rose said that at five or six she must sit at her mother's knee and piece quilt blocks. All such work was done by hand, as there were no sewing machines. This was probably the way mother learned how to sew. Sewing was a real art in those days, and mother could sew a very straight seam with the littlest stitches imaginable. They were as small as sewing machine stitches and very nearly as even. She could do it fast too. I used to wish that I could do it like that, but I couldn't bother to practice, as I had the machine to do it for me. When she could sew quilt blocks good enough, she went to other tasks alongside her older sisters. No girl, or her mother for that matter, would think of her not knowing how to do such things as sewing, weaving and spinning. They had to do these things to clothe themselves and their families.

I can imagine the family all settled down for the evening to some task for each one. Everyone doing something useful and helpful. Even grandfather didn't sit idle. In the season of the year when the willows were green and pliable, he wove willow baskets, for which he found a ready sale. Aunt Lil said he would weave whole wagon loads of them, and go through the town and sell all of them. They were accurate as bushel or half-bushel measures. He could even fix shoes, and did. He could grease them (to waterproof them) for the family use the next day, and do many other little jobs. He didn't even need a light to work by, as all the others did. Then someone read to them, probably in turn. By this time, they had the Book of Mormon, Doctrine

and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price and other church works in addition to the Bible.

Now lighting was a problem at night. They used candles and firelight, and sometimes they filled a saucer or dish with tallow, soaked a bit of a rag with it, let the rag stick out of the tallow and lit it. They called this kind of a light a "bitch light." Working at night with her Swiss folks, she learned the wisdom of the Swiss, and then going up to see Caroline, she learned the ways of the American Southern gentlewoman. Brought up in this atmosphere, mother learned to do all these things well.

Mother was baptized on 23 May 1875, by Lelmuel H. Redd and confirmed the same day by her father, who was assisted by Wilson D. Pace, the bishop, William W. Taylor and Harvey A. Pace. She was blessed "Mary Verena Bryner," to be called Verena. In Swiss, the "V" had the sound of "F", and "E" has the long sound of "A", so that her folks pronounced it "Franey." I remember seeing one of her school books with her name written "Franey Bryner" in it. She said she was nearly grown before she knew that her name was really Verena. All her life, she was called "Frane" or "Franey" by her friends and associates. In later years, father's younger sisters called her Verena. They thought it much prettier than Franey. Her pal, Caroline, named one of her daughters Verena (Adams.)

There were two groups of people in New Harmony, the Swiss and the Southerners. Sometimes the Swiss thought that the Southerners felt themselves to be better than the Swiss. Mother's cousin, Mary Mathis Pace, told me that when she was a girl, she was disturbed by this, and her father, grandmother's brother, Henry, in his distinctly Swiss accent said, "Never mind, Mary, what they think out here. Your people were quality in their own country." So she was comforted. I guess among children, even today, one that can't speak the English language right might be laughed at a bit at times, by their schoolmates. The Swiss children were brought up to call their father, "Father." No other designation was ever used by them. The Southern children always called their father "Pap." Some of the younger ones didn't know that they meant the same thing. One little cousin of father's, and of course Southern, who called his father "Pap," was visiting his Swiss pal when the Swiss father returned from an extended trip. He rushed home with the news, and bursting into the house, shouted, "Pap, Father's home."

Mother's schooling, according to our standards, was meager. It was about the same as father's. They were probably in the same room at the same time, but he could sit at a desk while she sat at a little low bench and looked at her book, if she had one. If she had a slate, she could write on that, then spit on it and rub her hand over it to clean it off for more writing. She said once when she was a kid in school, someone was making faces at her, and she held up her hand and said, "Teacher, Sadie is pulling a mug at me." Her teacher, whom they called Aunt Mary Taylor, said, "Will you please bring me a drink in the mug?" They all laughed so hard at her that she never called a face a mug after that, neither did the other kids.

She went to St. George to school, at least one winter. While there she stayed with her Uncle Casper and Aunt Settie. To be real gay and fashionable, she had knit herself a pair of beautiful purple stockings and took them to St. George with her for this special winter. Something about the dye poisoned her feet and legs, which swelled up and turned dark. She had

to keep off them, so she sat with her feet on a chair for a time, and when the swelling went down, she could go back to school. Every night after that, when she got home from school, Aunt Settie had a big bowl of yarrow tea for her to drink before she could have any supper. Mother thought it was as big as a quart. Herbs of all kinds were used for medicine, and yarrow was one of them.

Before we went to Canada, mother had a Swiss immigrant girl working for her, who did beautiful knitting, she knitted very fast and mother had her knit us all long woollen stockings for the very cold Canada where we were going to live. Mother said to her, "I want you to teach Lura to knit that way, my mother used to knit that way." I asked her why her mother didn't teach her to knit that way, and she said that her mother was helping her father, and grandmother Redd had taught her to knit. They'd finish the work in the house, and then they could knit, and not play unless they would knit while they played. They'd tie a piece of white thread where they were at on the knitting, and see who could knit the most while they played hop scotch, pitch the picket, or steal sticks.

Once when she was about twelve, mother dried fruit all summer, and was given the privilege of having a new dress with the money it brought. Someone had come to New Harmony with a very pretty dress, and she really wanted one like that one. The men of the town sort of took turns going up to Salt Lake City at Conference time. This fall it was Benjamin Brubacher's turn. She took her money to him, and pointed out the dress material she wanted. He wrote it down very carefully in his little note book, and noted the money she gave him. He would do his best. It so happened that he couldn't get the kind of fabric she wanted, so he had to pick out some himself. She was dreadfully disappointed with it, but there was nothing she could do about it. She was stuck with it. She decided to make the dress herself. Maybe it was up to her to do it, as her sisters were gone from home. No printed patterns were to be had in those days. She hunted through the town and found one, probably at grandmother Redd's, and borrowed it. Such patterns didn't often fit either. She cut it out and sewed it up, but the neck was too high, so she trimmed out the neck and got it too low, and now she had to take up the shoulder seams more. By the time the neck and shoulders were right, it was too short in the waist, so now she had to put a wide belt in it, otherwise it was alright. It's the dress she was wearing when she stood for her picture at twelve.

For this, her first picture, she wanted some very fashionable pantalettes to show beneath the hem of her dress, and she hadn't any. Grandmother had a nice hand-embroidered bed jacket she wore when she had been "confined," so she put mother's feet through the sleeves and folded and pinned the rest up around her underneath her skirts, so she had some lovely embroidered ruffles showing. Of course, this little dress was made by hand, her own hand stitches throughout and it was lined. They never thought of making a dress without lining it, and all the braid trimming was sewn on by hand. She knew no better way, she had never heard of a sewing machine.

In those days, if a mother wanted to feed her children, she had to do something about it herself. There were no food stores and no commercial canners, driers, or preparers. Mother had to do it all too. If there were surplus fruits or vegetables in the summer time, she devised ways and means of preserving them for the winter when there would be none. I can remember strips of

dried squash strung on a string across the upper part of a wall and across the room. I saw this in the kitchen of grandmother Redd's old farmhouse when I looked in the door at the back, long after the family had moved out. It had been forgotten and left behind.

Drying was the only way of preserving fruits and many vegetables. The main drying facilities were fairly level places, such as porch roofs, lean-to roofs, up high where they could get all the sun possible and be out of the way. They dried fruits with the skins on, such as peaches, apricots, plums and prunes. To spread them for drying, the halves were carefully laid one at a time with the cut side up, a little bit on the side and leaning against the next one. As they dried, they shrivelled and laid down. It took less room this way. They had no way of covering them to protect them from flies or dust. They were put in cloth sacks and hung up somewhere in the house where the air could circulate around them to prevent moulding. When they wanted to cook them, they were washed thoroughly and soaked all night before cooking. If you wanted dried fruit on the table every day, you dried enough for that purpose, otherwise you went without. When the hot dry days of summer came, there was extra activity to get all the fruit possible out for drying.

Finally fruit bottles were introduced. I quote from a history of New Harmony printed in "Under Dixie Sun," published by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. "Elizabeth Ann Imlay Prince was the first one to obtain bottles. She put up some green beans in them. Due to lack of knowledge as to the proper method of bottling, they all spoiled. She was so disgusted that she threw bottles and all away, and went back to drying for the time being." Her husband was father's counsellor in the bishopric when we left for Canada. They lived there for years after, so it wasn't very long before we left (in 1905) that they began to bottle fruit. Mother used to have a hard time at bottling time. She had old, hand-made bottles with lids that weren't very true, and were hard to fit. Sometimes she had to try several lids before she got one to fit, and maybe they would fit another one better.

Potatoes, carrots and beets were stored in pits and covered. Cabbage and cauliflower were pulled up by the roots and buried in a trench upside down with the root sticking up. When wanted, the root was uncovered and used as a handle to pull out the head. The outside leaves (as many as possible were left on and wrapped around the head to bury it) were peeled off and the inside cooked. Grandfather Bryner made lots of sauerkraut for his family. Father like it, and I have seen grandfather make it. He took good solid heads of cabbage and with a sharp knife, sliced it very thin, then he put it in a barrel with a little salt, and punched it down hard with his fists. Then more cabbage and more salt until his barrel was full, and the cabbage covered with juice drawn out by the salt and punching. This was put in the warm cellar for a while until it fermented, then it was sauerkraut. It was very good, and stayed good until the last drop.

The Swiss were never an idle or an indolent people. They all worked, from little tots to the very old, and the women folks worked outside and inside. Especially did grandmother work outside, and she taught her daughters to do so too. When the men folk went hunting and brought back excess game, much of it was preserved. They jerked, or dried, the venison. To do this, the meat was cut off the bones into strips two or three inches across and a foot, more or less, long. It was put in a barrel and covered with brine until it was well penetrated with salt, which was their

main preservative, then it was strung up in the hot sun, or over a smoldering fire and smoked and dried. This was often carried in lunch boxes and eaten raw. They shaved it off crosswise with a sharp knife. It is supposed to be the same thing as the chipped beef we buy in little bottles, or loose. However, the chipped beef is dried beef and not venison.

If a beef was ever killed in hot weather, the meat was treated in the same way, as they had no refrigeration and it would have spoiled in a few days. I guess the time they dried meat was in the summer during good drying weather. Pork was covered with lots of salt and seasoning. Hams were sometimes hung in smoke for flavor. Certain woods (apple etc.) and corn cobs were used to give special flavors. The hams were then sewn up in unbleached muslin sacks, kept from year to year for the purpose, and buried deep in the wheat bins. Thinner bacon was kept in salt. Pork was the main standby for meat in those days as it kept better than other kinds.

If a mother wanted milk, butter, and cheese for her family, she had cows and made these things herself. Mother did. She had learned how at home, and her sister, Lissette, capitalized on her knowledge of cheesemaking. For years she supported her family by making cheese. She went up on the ranch in the summer, and she and her family milked about twenty-five cows by hand, every day. She made a cheese about fourteen inches across and four inches thick. She would make 125 to 150 per summer.

Nowadays some people get the fad of using stone-ground flour. That was the only kind they had then. Mother made her own yeast and put hop tea in it, which made good healthful bread. The yeast was slow-rising, so she mixed it at night so it would have all night to rise once. Then she'd mix it down and let it rise again. Mother knew how to make excellent bread. When she went to Canada and had to use dry yeast cakes and a different kind of flour, and coal to cook with, it was almost disastrous. She almost had to learn over again from scratch. She could make good buttermilk bread, but the first summer in Canada, we had no cow, and so no buttermilk. Our only relief was when father came in and made some baking powder bread as he had learned to do at the sheep camp. Mother never made it.

New Harmony used to be on the short cut route between Silver Reef and Pioche, Nevada, two early mining boom towns. A few travellers passed by that way. Mother said that one time she and some other children were playing ball in the street on a Sunday afternoon, when a wagon load full of people passed through, travelling between these two places. The people put an article in the Pioche paper about the non-reverence of the Mormon people for the Sabbath day. Another time a wagon stopped at their home, and the people asked if they could get something to eat. They would pay for it. Mother was alone, but didn't turn down the opportunity. She cooked potatoes, fried bacon and made gravy. This, with bread and butter, and dried fruit she thought was a good meal. She was rather deflated when a lady passed the gravy to one of the others and asked if he'd like some starch.

On the 23rd of May, 1883, when she was seventeen, mother was sustained as secretary of the Y.L.M.I.A. of the New Harmony ward. She was secretary until 7 Nov. 1888. During this time she was married, had two children and her husband was on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Irene said something in her history of Will that reminded me of an incident which I will insert here. While father was on his mission, mother, of course, had full charge of caring for her two children, one two years old and the other about four months old when he left. After he had been gone a couple of years, she missed them one day. She hunted all over and went to the neighbors, and some child said he had seen them on the way up to the farm. Frantically, and with a prayer in her heart, she ran all the way up there, and found them safe. They had had to cross a deep creek, over a long narrow foot bridge with no railing. All out of breath and through her tears, she asked, "Willie, how did Grace get across that long bridge?" He said, "Oh, mama, I took hold of her hand and led her across." The beginning of leadership.

Before Father left for his mission, he made arrangements for her comfort, and his brother, Wayne Hardison Redd, accepted the responsibility of seeing that she had the necessities. Now to do this, he'd see that she had plenty of wood for cooking and heating, all cut and ready for use. He'd cut her lucerne (alfalfa) and put it in the barn for the cow, and maybe he'd milk the cow. He'd take her wheat to grist and bring back her flour and bran for the pig. He'd plow her garden, maybe help her plant it. He'd dig a pit and trenches for her vegetables, plow or dig them up and store them. If she needed her pig butchered, he'd do it, and any other job that needed to be done. It always required a trip, no telephones. She had many friends and relatives who were willing and anxious to help in any way. That was quite a responsibility for a seventeen-year-old boy, but I never heard of any complaints.

Willie didn't like apricots, when he was a little boy, but he did like the sweet pits. One day someone asked him if he liked apricots and he said, "I don't like the aper but I do like the cot."

On the 7th of November 1888, she was released as secretary of the Y.L.M.I.A. and sustained as first counsellor to Angie Pace, and kept that position until the 23 of September 1890, then she was made president with Rose Nagle as first counsellor and Ellen Redd (later Bryner) as second counsellor. Nora Taylor was her secretary. The M.I.A. was reorganized on 16th of Nov. 1890 with Verena B. Redd as president, Della Redd (later Ivins) first counsellor, Sarah R. Prince second counsellor, Nanie Pace secretary and Mollie Redd treasurer. She held this position until 26 Oct. 1892. On the 6th of Nov. 1895, she was chosen as second counsellor to Vinnie Rohner, which she held until 7th of September 1903.

Here I will give mother's Patriarchal Blessing, given her after she went to Canada.

"A blessing given under the hands of James Kirkham, patriarch, upon the head of Mary Verena Redd, the daughter of Ulrich and Mary Mathis Bryner, born the 3rd of March 1866 at New Harmony, Utah, U.S.A.

"Sister Redd, in the authority of the holy priesthood and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the order of the Patriarchs, I seal upon you a blessing. At thy birth the heavens rejoiced, for the Lord knew thy destiny and blessed thee with that great gift to become a mother of nations unborn, for the fruit of thy loins shall rejoice in thee and thy name, and with honor thy name shall be remembered from generation to generation. Thou art of the tribe of

Ephraim, a daughter beloved of the Father, and for thy faithfulness unto thy covenants shalt thou be blessed with inspiration and become as one endowed with wisdom, to be honored with authority in the midst of thy sex.

"I bless thee with strength of body and mind, to run and not be weary, and in the midst of the sufferers to be as a ministering angel whose words shall be like the balm of Gilead and whose counsel shall be a healer unto the troubled mind.

"Remember the poor and turn not the stranger from thy gate, but speak to him and it shall be made known unto thee whether or not he be a Nephite of old. Faith shall be among thy gifts, and from thy loins shall come forth a mighty one in Israel in whom thou shalt acknowledge the hand of the Lord and like Sarah of old, thou shalt give the honor unto the father.

"Thou shalt see thy sons and thy daughters become noble men and women, and in thine old age they shall bear thee up and thou shalt bestow upon them thy blessings for they name shall be recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life, and thy prayers shall be recorded in the archives of the heavens to come forth in blessings upon the heads of thy posterity.

"In connection with thy companion in life, thou shalt set thy house in order. As a token unto the Lord of his loving kindness unto thee and thine, may thy basket and store never want for the bounties of the earth, and may the blessings of heaven provide in thy habitation. May every righteous desire of thy heart be granted thee. Pray for these blessings, dear sister, to come to pass, and the words of thy mouth shall not fail.

"I seal thee up to come forth in the glorious resurrection of the just, to be crowned as a queen to sit at the right hand of thy companion, to reign through all the millenium, for ever and ever, Amen.

William A. Redd, scribe

Given at Raymond, Alberta, Canada. 27 December 1906.