

# Biography of Rhoda Wheeler Hill

Genealogical Society of  
The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter Day Saints

In a small town in Southern Tennessee there lived a family noted for their generosity, simplicity and faithfulness. They numbered twelve in the family of which Rhoda Wheeler was the fifth child. She was born the 24th of May 1823, Monroe County, Tennessee. Her mother, Margaret Gowan Wheeler, died when she was very young leaving her to assist with the younger children as she only had one sister her senior. One night her father was sitting up rather late, when all at once the room became very bright. He immediately went to the door and saw the stars falling like rain. He aroused his children. Rhoda said, "I shall never forget the sight, nor the counsel my father, Samuel Wheeler, gave me at that time saying, "My children if we could live to enjoy the light from Heaven as you see now, every heart will e'er be filled with joy." Hence years passed and father married again. About the same time, I became acquainted with Return Richard Hill. Return Richard was born October 13, 1817, we were married the year of 1841, a few months before I was 18 years old. Some years later we removed to Dade County, Missouri. At this time we were blessed with four little children and means to make us comfortable. Just about this time my brother-in-law, George Washington Hill, came to our home and said he came to bring the glad tidings of the Gospel to us. We made up our minds he was lost to us and that the Mormons had stolen his wife. He tried to reason with us and begged us to listen to him, finally he spoke to us about saving our loved ones who had gone on before. This was very interesting to me as I had a dearly beloved mother on the other side and if I could reach her with those blessings I was a willing listener. Often we talked until the wee hours of the morning. I and my husband stayed up the remainder of the night reading the Book of Mormon. Next morning we were willing converts to the truth and were ready to give over all for the gospel. We joined the church and immigrated here in the early fifties with oxen or rather a cow and oxen for our team. The cow was milked for the aid of little children. One day our cow got sick and we were compelled to remain behind. We both asked God in prayer to help us and help our cow get well. We were then warned to let the cow and oxen feed a few hours on the grass just over the next knoll. While we were there a large Indian rode up to the wagon and asked for money and things, I could not understand, my youngest child was lying there very sick and he said, I will kill papoose and raised his bow and aimed at him.

I looked him in the eyes and said you can't do it. God won't let you do this. He rode off saying Scotch Wigwo Squaw, I never knew what it meant till years later when I was placed in this valley of the mountains. We made our home at Ogden, Utah.

It was here that my husband was called to the other side to deliver the glad tidings of joy to those who had passed on. We dreamed he was to leave on a mission in

1853, which date he departed from this life. This was a sorry time to me and I felt I could hardly brave the winds with five small children. I fought with life and struggled on. The crickets were terrible and caused many privations. Finally a good sister of the Relief Society called on me and encouraged me to lift my heart and soul from dark dismay to a light which beamed from my eyes through out my life.

She loved the Relief Society and particularly the teachers whose hearts opened the doors to her soul through prayer and little acts of kindness when in distress. Years later she lived with her youngest son, James Allen Hill, and I, Rhoda Hill Jackson, was the favored one sharing her bed. She taught me to love prayer and the gospel by her daily acts. Often in the early morning I would awake to find her offering up the grandest and most humble prayer. She was head teacher in Relief Society in the ward and though humble and very unassuming in her gentle way, she won the love and respect of all. She called me to be a helper in getting the Sunday eggs to assist in building the Manti temple and I used to say to my mother, "Save the eggs for me" and she would save them for days. It was a fact--the eggs were laid much heavier on Sunday. This was another proof to the divinity of the work. One day she called me to go with her to visit two blocks I had not been too before. They called me the youngest sister teaching, being only 14 years of age. Why she wanted to give me this change I could not understand, as she didn't say much, but although she didn't say much her example was a light unto all. As we entered one home the family was very poor and distressed, under the circumstance the mother was not able to do much. We cleaned her home and made two small aprons for the little girls. She knew I loved to sew so that was my portion. Then she undone a parcel that she brought from home with little infant clothes in it. The woman gave a cry of relief and called her a savior and a guide. I shall never forget the joy it gave to that sister, nor will I forget the quiet way she talked to me not to speak of it.

The thing that worried me was she called Grandma a saint and a guide. Well, in later years I learned how she saved many from the pitfalls by the spirit of Relief Society work.

She died a full fledged Relief Society mother, a kind and true latter Day Saint, and to her dying day I never heard her speak a cross word in any way. She passed away the 2nd of July 1900 at Price, Carbon County, Utah.

This biography compiled by her granddaughter, Rhoda Hill Jackson. Typed by Carma Heilesen