

Elizabeth Mainwaring (Brockbank)

(This is a report given by Anastasia Horning England at the Horning reunion in November 2014 about Elizabeth Mainwaring Brockbank who is her fourth great-granddaughter).

Elizabeth Mainwaring was the daughter of Peter and Jane Molyneux Mainwaring. She was born in July 6 1812 at Liverpool, Lancashire, England and the oldest of five children, four girls and one boy.

She was inclined to be religious and joined the Wesleyan Methodists and was a very zealous member of this church. It was at this church that Elizabeth Mainwaring met Isaac Brockbank and they were married in about 1836. Isaac was thirty-one years old and Elizabeth was twenty-four years old. She told Isaac that she had been married before to a man named Smith. He had died soon after they were married; she never talked about it or told any of the particulars.

Elizabeth and Isaac were well known and well respected. Isaac and Elizabeth had many friends and were known as leaders and good people. Elizabeth was very happy and grateful for all the blessings she had. She was very fond of her children and was a wonderful mother. They had two children, young Isaac and Elizabeth.

In 1840 they had a baby boy named Daniel. He died very young and was buried in Stanhope Street Methodist Chapel Yard. Then in 1842 they had a baby girl. They named her Susana. She also died very young and was buried beside her brother in the Stanhope Street Methodist Chapel Yard. These deaths were a source of great sorrow to the parents. Isaac was now five years old and Elizabeth was four years old.

Early in the year of 1843, Isaac, Sr. went with his friend, John Linday, to hear a missionary preach. His friend, John, worked with Isaac at the Booth Water Works Company. The missionary preaching was Parley P. Pratt, a Mormon. Isaac Brockbank and John Linday were so sure of the truthfulness of the teachings of Brother Pratt that they were baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

But, what about Elizabeth Brockbank? She was so happy in her home and as a mother. She and Isaac lived in a comfortable home, wore nice clothes, and had all the comforts of life. She loved the people who they associated with and did not want to break friendships and separate from friends nor did she want to leave her church. She would not listen and set her face against the Mormon Church. It was a very sad case and there was a rupture between this couple.

One day young Isaac was to bring his sister, Elizabeth, home from school to have lunch. As they were going home, a woman came along the street catching the little Elizabeth and took her from her brother. The people stripped her of her nice clothes and exchanged them for old ones. She looked so different that it was hard to tell who she was. The strange woman then took the little girl to the police station. After some time, little Elizabeth was found by her family and brought home. Young Isaac never forgot the frenzy and suspense of that time when his little sister was kidnapped.

At one time, Elizabeth became so upset because her husband went to a Mormon meeting that she took all his literature and books, papers, and everything she could find pertaining to the new religion and burned them. Of course, this did not improve the family condition. In fact, Isaac was so angry he took her in hand and began to punish her. He even flogged her. This was permissible at that time, if the wife did not obey her husband.

So no comfort or happiness seemed to be in the home any more. Isaac and Elizabeth had another baby born in 1845. They named him John. He too died in infancy and was buried in the Necropolis in Liverpool, England.

Elizabeth's husband was very stern. Her friends told her all the stories they had heard about the Mormon Elders. Elizabeth believed them. When Isaac brought the Elders to their home, Elizabeth was harassed. She did not know how she should treat them.

Isaac's father had a delivery cart and horse which he turned over to young Isaac. On Saturday nights he was to call at the Butcher Shops and get the amount of their bills. Young Isaac soon became familiar with the business.

The Brockbank's had another baby boy born on May 15, 1848 at Liverpool, England. They named his Joshua. At this time the father, Isaac, was still faithful to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and began to talk about immigrating to America. Here was a new problem. Elizabeth talked to her children, Isaac now fourteen years old and Elizabeth, twelve years old. She tried to persuade them to stay with her and let their father go alone to America. But, Elizabeth found that Isaac had already secured the consent of these two children to go with him across the ocean.

A little daughter, Agnes, came to their home on June 5, 1851. Isaac, Sr., planned to leave the next February for America. Elizabeth asked no questions and made no preparations. She had at last consented to go with her husband to America for the sake of the children. She told some of her people that if things did not work out in this new country, that she would return to England.

The Brockbank's sailed from Victoria Dock on February 11, 1852 on a merchant ship, The Ellen Maria, which had had been fitted to carry emigrants. Mr. Whitmore was the captain of this sailing vessel. It was a rough voyage; there were many storms and calms. They were eight weeks and three days cross the Atlantic Ocean and landed in New Orleans on April 11, 1852.

Their entire luggage was transferred to another steamer, which then took them up the Mississippi River. In one week they landed in St. Louis. When they reached Kansas City, the president of their company, Brother A. O. Smoot, told them he thought it best to remain here for a while and wait for the wagons to come. The wagons were being made in St. Louis and would be sent to them as soon as they were finished.

They were in the first company that had traveled overseas under the auspices of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company. The members of the company were to be taken well care of and sheltered and protected. The people of the company were taken about three quarters of a mile from the river where the land was elevated. They pitched tents and made themselves as

comfortable as they were permitted to be. There folks were not in the best of condition due to the effects of the long sea voyage, the food of hard tack, and the common food with no vegetables. They had to dig up roots to eat, which they were not acquainted with.

While they were camped here, cholera broke out. People who lived around them grew hostile to the emigrants, for they did not want to catch the disease, which was taking the lives of these poor homeless people. The local people held indignation meetings and the residents around Kansas City were afraid to go near the camp. It was an especially trying time for the mothers and what they had to endure. Elizabeth Mainwaring was a mother with a small baby and a little boy who was four years old.

At last the wagons came. The people were anxious to take possession and get away from that awful place. They hired oxen to take the company out on the prairie seven miles west of the City of Kansas. The people were in a poor fix to take care of the sick. The dead could not be cared for properly and rude boxes were made to bury them in. Isaac Brockbank, the father, rented a small house half a mile from the camp and moved his family in. They knew they had a journey of thirteen hundred miles before fall and winter set in.

Elizabeth seemed indifferent to all of it. She was very good to her children, was affectionate with them, and made them as comfortable as she could. There were four children, Isaac, Jr. - fifteen, Elizabeth,- thirteen, Joshua - four, and Agnes, a nursing baby. Another three children were buried in England.

Elizabeth was a strong willed woman and she was most sure that if she were not suited when she came to the end of her journey in Salt Lake City, that she would return to England. This she had in her heart as she accompanied them, against her will.

It was about the first of June when they finally began their trek west. It was the latter part of July when they passed Fort Laramie and Elizabeth seemed more reconciled. She had not yet weaned little Agnes, who was past thirteen months old. The weather was good, but quite hot. Elizabeth had been riding in the wagon all morning. It was quite rough country and about noon there was a steep hill before them to go down. Elizabeth gave the baby to her daughter and proceeded to walk down the hill. There was a nice little stream at the bottom of the hill and quite a lot of currant bushes loaded with berries.

Elizabeth dipped a shiny tin cup in the stream and gave little Joshua a drink. He has told me that he could remember the cup and how she held it in her hands for him to drink. Then she told him to get in the wagon and she would pick some berries. That was the last she was seen by anyone of the A. O. Smoot Company.

When they stopped for noon, Elizabeth was not there. She was not in camp. A search party then went to find her. Young Isaac got a mule and rode the two miles back to where they saw her last. They hunted through the bushes, calling her name but all to no avail.

The company moved camp to a place where they could stay and stock could get food and water. The search party continued to look for her and camped at Horseshoe Creek. The next morning,

Isaac Brockbank and Brother Layton took a pair of mules and a light buggy and went back to find her. There were tracks near the spring, which were hers. She had taken the road back toward Fort Laramie. They expected to overtake her, but they did not. They made inquiries but found no trace of her that was in any way satisfactory.

Isaac Brockbank and Brother Layton met three or four men coming west on horses that had come from a sheep camp. They reported seeing a woman traveling alone toward Laramie. She had hidden in the bushes as they approached. She seemed to be demented by the way she had acted. They did not follow her. This was the last information of anyone seeing her and no one had found a body.

The company moved on toward Salt Lake City. The authorities at Fort Laramie were notified to forward any information that might receive about a lost woman. No one has ever found out what happened to Elizabeth Mainwaring Brockbank.