

Life History of Mary Butler Anderson

I, Mary Butler Anderson, was born at Richfield, Utah, on the 22nd of December, 1884. I was the second child of John Lowe Butler and Sarah Sariah Johnson, my brother Denison being older.

My father was a polygamist and provided his two families with a large, two storied home in Richfield at the time of my birth. He was a sheep herder and later worked in the mines.

We were a large family. Francetta, the first wife, had ten children in all and mother gave birth to six. My half sister, Olive and I were often called the "twins" as there was only six weeks difference in our ages.

Father moved us all out to a farm at Jerico, ten miles from Richfield, when I was about four years old. I remember well the day four of my half-sisters (Cetty, Sadie, Carrie, Olive) and I went floating in a big wooden tub. It was on a slew by the Sevier River. Watercress grew abundantly there, and the water was shallow. We had a gay time until my half-brother John capsized us.

When I was six years old the families were separated. My folks moved frequently when I was small. My sister, Farozine, was born in October, 1886 at Richfield. We then moved to Monroe and in January, 1888 my second sister, Elender was born. She died three weeks later. My third sister, Ann was born on June 6, 1890. About this time four year old Farozine died of membranous croup.

We were living in Elsinore when I was six. My father was suffering with rheumatic fever and Rheumatism so mother had to go out to work. I remember taking care of my little sister and it was a big responsibility for one so young. She was only two years old when we missed her one day. The big canal was near our place and we were afraid she had fallen in. We hunted and hunted for her and decided to go after the man that could empty the water from the canal. On our way we found Ann sound asleep on a neighbor's doorstep. They weren't at home so hadn't discovered her for us.

It was a big event for me to be baptized a member of the LDS church. The baptism took place in the Elsinore Canal when I was eight years of age. About this time I made my debut as a cook. It was on a Thursday, (fast meeting was held then) and my folks had gone to meeting. I made some soup and just as it was finished my father arrived home with three men. They ate heartily of my soup and praised me for its goodness.

We had a good watch dog we called Rover. He wouldn't let an Indian come on our place. Because of this I decided to fool him one day and pretend I was an Indian. I draped a blanket around me and came around the house. As soon as Rover saw me he came at me barking. If I hadn't thrown the blanket off suddenly I fear he might have injured me. I'll never forget the surprised look he had!

My last sister, Venice, was born in Monroe, August 16, 1897. My father died in December of that year just a week after my 13th birthday. Two months later we had to bury my youngest sister.

I had to quit school after father's death. We were very poor. I had to help mother earn our living. Grandmother and I used to do as many as fourteen washings in a weeks time.

Money was hard to get so I remember well an incident I had with a half a dollar. It was given to me to take to church for a donation for flood victims. On the way, I lost it in the snow and miraculously found it after praying to the Lord for His aid.

When I was sixteen we moved to Kimberly, Utah, a mining town. I helped cook and wash for boarders. We lived there for three years then moved to Marysvale to live on my Uncle Izier Howse's ranch.

One day I was taking the cows to pasture when I saw a rather unkempt looking man just ahead. I armed myself with a club and he must have known my fear as he went out of his way to pass by at a distance. I later learned he was herding sheep for our neighbors, the Thompsons. He asked us to do some washing for him and a few days later brought his clothes. I was sitting on a table swinging my legs talking to my brother. He told me that if he ever got married he would get his wife an ax with a beautiful handle so she could chop all the kindling wood. I replied that if he was my husband I would just put his food on the table raw. Then he informed me that I would have to go to church by myself the next day. I told him that I was brave enough to drive the team. Then we noticed the stranger at the door. He offered to be my teamster and I accepted. This amiable man later became my husband.

Claybourne Edwin Nelson and I were married in the Manti temple September 14, 1904. Claybourne was employed hauling coal up to Kimberly. We lived up the Sevier canyon until nearly Christmas. Then we lived for a few months in Monroe and I was able to see my mother. My father in law came to see us and we all decided to move to the Bluebird mine. I gave birth to my first baby there, July 15, 1905. We named her Virta Louisa.

When the baby was six weeks old our group started for old Mexico. Mother sold what she had to secure the team and wagon. I was glad she and my sister were with us. My husband's parents, two brothers and two sisters made up the rest of our party.

After leaving Kanab we traveled 500 miles before reaching another town. We followed the Blue River to Clifton, Arizona where we stayed for awhile. Claybourne's parents decided to go on alone. Mother and I cooked for boarders to earn a train ticket for her trip back to Monroe, Utah. She and Mr. Nelson had words and she had refused his proposal of marriage. (In polygamy, of course.)

We stayed up the Graham mountains until fall then went to Layton, Arizona. My husband was stricken with Typhoid Fever and I was at his bedside for nine weeks. I was relieved when his father came and took us to Medero, Mexico.

My husband got work cutting timber in the mountains and we moved there and lived in a tent. The unexpected can happen anywhere. I had a severe appendicitis attack and it broke. I tried native herbs as a remedy but unfortunately they brought about my baby's death as I was nursing her at the time. It was in March, 1906. My grief was almost more than I could bear. We had to bury her without the comfort of a Latter Day Saint ceremony.

We move to Chuchupa, in Chihuahua, Mexico and celebrated the first day of the new year, 1908 with the birth of Pearl, our second daughter. My husband found work as a sawyer at a sawmill in Questo, Purato, Mexico. I was the only white woman in the camp. My third baby girl lived only three weeks. The Mexicans would not let us bury her in their Catholic burying ground. It nearly broke my heart to bury that tiny baby all alone a long ways from our community. One small lone pine tree marked her grave.

There was a terrible fire at the lumber camp and my house was the only building that was saved. Shortly after the fire my husband lost three fingers of his left hand. All these adverse incidents

gave me a nervous breakdown. I was in such a bad condition I was taken back to town to stay and recuperate.

Four months later Claybourne wrote me a letter to tell me he would go 500 miles further down if I did not join him where he was. Of course I hired a man to take me back to the lumber camp. Claybourne met me at San Pedro and I saw immediately that our months of separation had brought a change in him. He was honest with me and sorrowfully told me of his unfaithfulness. A Mexican woman had wiled him with her charm. We did not exchange any hard words, but he did not live with me in the house he secured for me. I was unable to travel or I would have gone back to Chuchupa sooner. It was so hard to be in the same camp, see him, each of us feeling the sadness for what had to be.

I finally ventured the trip over 90 miles of rough road with my father in law. Our wagon wheels had to have rims two inches thick to stand the trip. We were on the road from Monday until Wednesday. My baby was born the following Saturday, October 23, 1911. He never saw his father. My husband's aunt cared for me during my confinement and named the baby Caril Dee.

The church financed my trip back to Manard, Idaho where my mother and sister were now living. I left in May, traveling 9 days and nights on the train. While en route a man and wife who had no children offered me \$1,000 for my baby. Of course, I refused.

We arrived in Salt Lake City about 4:00 o'clock one afternoon. My half-sister Sadie, failed to meet me as previously arranged. I hired a taxi to take me to Sadie's house because my baby had the croup so bad he couldn't cry. Sadie wasn't very glad to see me, so I took the midnight train for Gooding, Idaho. I arrived there a day earlier than planned, so no one was there to meet me. I knew my half-brother John would meet me the next day; and feeling very blue I got a hotel room. I put the children to bed, but I couldn't sleep. Towards morning, as I dozed off, a knock came upon the door. It was the hotel clerk to tell me he had a chance for me to go on to Manard right away with two men. Although they were total strangers to me, I accepted their offer and went with them. It took my last cent to pay them. Brother John passed us on the road. When we got to Manard, the men let us out of the buggy about a mile from my sister Ann's place, where mother was staying. I had to go through the field to get there and carried the baby, with Pearl clinging to my skirts. When I reached the house the dogs began to bark. Mother and Ann came out to see what the matter was, they didn't know me, I was so thin. I said, "Oh mother! Don't you know me?" then they did.

I stayed with my mother for a time and we took in washings. Then my brother Den built me a little house and mother went to live at Den's place in Kaysville, Utah. I was in Idaho for two years. My little boy was very active and hardly ever cried. Once he fell in a badger hole and gave us a scare. Another time a mean rooster was annoying Pearl and he chased it with a stick. I was afraid he would be pecked before I could rescue him. I lost my little boy in June 1912. He hemorrhaged from a bad fall.

Grandfather was alone now and wanted mother and I to live with him in Monroe so I returned to Utah with my little girl. Mother and I went out often to care for the sick. I took in washings and she cared for Grandpa. He passed away on November 4, 1913.

About a year later I met Andrew C. Anderson. He was a widower and 30 years my senior. He asked me to marry him and although many of my friends did not think I should, I married him. My

former marriage had been annulled so we were married in the Manti Temple on March 5, 1915. We were very happy.

Andrew was a rock mason and a good one. Some of his work stands today as evidence of his skill. He was a sheep herder when I met him. After we were married he served as a janitor of the church for many years along with his mason work. He was a good worker but could not always find work and as a result we were always poor.

Our first baby girl was born in the 28th of November, 1915. We named her Maurine. On the first day of March, two years later, we were blessed with another girl, Ora Lexy. We were happy that our next baby was a boy. Grant Butler was born on March 27, 1919.

We moved to St George, Utah and my husband worked for my stepfather. A few years later we moved to Springdale. Andrew could not find work and we became very destitute. Then he went over the mountain to Orderville to do mason work on the school house. For a week my children and I lived on melons. The children had a little milk. It was summer so the children didn't mind having no shoes. I wrote to Andrew asking him to try to get some advance on his pay as the children would be needing shoes with winter coming. I cried when I received not only some money, but the children's shoes.

We went over the mountain, now Zion's canyon, to live in Orderville that winter. We had a donkey to help us make the trip over the dangerous narrow path. Andrew worked as a janitor of the school house. When summer came we moved four miles out on a ranch. Later we sold our tent and went back to Elsinore. Edward Lowe, my last child, was born on October 10, 1923. The girls were delighted with a baby brother. Pearl ran over to the neighbors shouting "It's a boy! It's a boy!" We were happy, even though we weren't always able to make ends meet.

Andrew was a good husband and father. The children will remember our "home" nights when he read the Bible to us and played games with the children. I have enjoyed watching them. We used to have dances in our home and the neighbors would come and enjoy them with us. We all mourned Andrew's passing on the 27th of February, 1937. My youngest child, Edward, was only fourteen.

Since Andrew's death and until recently I have lived with each of my children. I have enjoyed the grandchildren and have given my love and what else I could offer to them all. I like living in Salt Lake City where it is easy to go to the temple and to work for my kinfolks. I look forward to the day I can see each of my children sealed there to their loved ones so we can all be together when we join Andrew again some day.

[Mary Butler Anderson passed away to join Andrew on the 17th of April 1961.]