

PHEBE CARTER FOSS SESSIONS

The town of Scarborough is located in the southwest corner of Cumberland County in the State of Maine. It is bordered on the southeast by the Atlantic Ocean, with one of the most beautiful beaches on the New England coast. In the northwestern part of the town, the hills rise to a considerable elevation upon which tall stately pines grow. It has large tracts of salt march which join the sea in places.

It was in this beautifully located town that Phebe Carter Foss Sessions was born November 2, 1831. She was the third daughter and fifth child of Ezra Foss and Sarah Bracket Carter.

This family lived a very comfortable New England life. Their home was a two story building and good out-buildings were provided for their livestock. All the varieties of fruits that could be grown in that climate were found in their orchard.

When Phebe was four years old, a baby sister, Olive, was born. This was April 12, 1835 and it was six weeks after the death of her father. Now her mother had seven children ranging in ages from 11 years to a new baby to raise. While the children were too young to be of any assistance in securing a livelihood, she managed with her work as a teacher to support her family and to give each one a good education.

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ was taken to Maine by Elders: John F. Boynton, Jonathan Hale, Milton Holmes, and Wilford Woodruff, who was Sarah's brother-in-law, Sarah soon saw the light. Because of the bitterness of her neighbors toward the Mormons, she was baptized in the middle of the night on 15, September, 1834. She was baptized by John F. Boynton. Her greatest desire now was to take her children and go to be with the Saints in Zion.

Phebe, her sisters: Rhoda Harriet and Olive, were all baptized in 1844 by their uncle Wilford Woodruff.

Early in the spring of 1850, this good mother with six of her family, decided to come to Salt Lake City. Ira, her oldest son, did not accompany them, as he could see no good in this new religion. She was unable to sell her property because the feeling toward the Mormons was so bitter in the community. They took just what was necessary with them. This included their school text books and they journeyed to the Missouri River. Here Uncle Wilford put all of their earthly belongings in two wagons. One was drawn by horses and the other by oxen, and he placed them among a company of Saints he was taking to Utah.

The journey was a pleasant one with very little trouble. One incident with the Indians: As they were traveling, a band of Indians who seemed to be friendly, came to the camp. When they saw Olive, the youngest of the family, who was a very beautiful child, the Indian Chief asked if he could have her. He offered ponies or anything else he had, for her. He was very determined even when he was told "NO". The Indians followed the wagon company for days. Young Olive was kept hidden in the wagon box all this time.

There were about 20 young people in the company who walked nearly all of the way. Sometimes they would walk ahead of the wagons, then sit down to rest until they were overtaken. The girls always had their knitting to do during this wait.

When camp was made in the evenings, everyone had their chores to do. Material for fires had to be gathered. be it wood, brush, or buffalo chips. Soon a good wholesome meal was prepared. When the animals had been cared for for the night, an hour could be spent in story telling, singing or dancing. After the evening prayer was offered, all retired to a much needed rest in preparation for the long miles they must travel the next day.

They arrived in the Salt Lake Valley October 14, 1850. In Salt Lake

City, they erected a home in the 14th. Ward, on First West between South Temple and First South Streets.

Education was always put first in the lives of this Foss family, and now it was made possible for them to be self-supporting. Ezra had learned the printing and book binding trade in Portland, Maine. He was soon at work in the office of the Deseret News. Elizabeth and Rhoda taught school in Salt Lake City. Phebe went to Bountiful, which was known as Sessions Settlement. About all the books these girls had to use in the schoolroom were the books they brought with them from Maine, plus the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants.

While teaching in Bountiful, Phebe met and married David Sessions. They were married 30 December, 1852 by President Brigham Young.

David and Phebe lived in part of Perrigrine Sessions' home until after their second child was born. Then they moved into a two-room home of their own which was located at what is now 26th. South and First West in Bountiful.

David and Phebe were always kind to the Indians who came to the settlement at different times of the year. When all the members of an Indian family, except one small boy about 8 years of age were killed, about where Becks Hot Springs is, David and Phebe took him into the family and raised him as their own son. He was known as Indian Jim to the community, but to the family, he was just Jim.

As the family grew, the two-room home became smaller and smaller. At night, the girls slept in a trundle bed which was pushed under the parents' bed in the daytime, and drawn out at night. Jim, the Indian boy, slept on a bed in the kitchen and the boys slept on the floor. All enjoyed the new rooms that were finally added to the home.

Phebe was a pleasant, agreeable, hard-working person. She was of that

sturdy New England stock, plain, simple in dress and habits, practical in all respects and full of good common sense. She believed in the words of the Lord, "He was pleased that the apparel of his people should be the work of thier own hands". So like other Pioneer wives and mothers, she made the clothing for the family from home woven materials. She would stand for hours by the New England spinning wheel, twirling the carded wool into skeins of yarn, preparatory to being placed on the weavers' loom and then made into cloth. The cloth may not have looked as good as that made in the factories of today, but at that time cloth was made to wear, rather than to be looked at. David, the husband, made the boots and shoes for the family.

The fire place, with its' cross bar or crane above the fire, had hooks to hold the copper kettles. In these kettles, the different foods were cooked for the family. There was the iron bake oven with a heavy lid to hold in the heat. Here meat, bread, pies, corn bread and those good Boston baked beans were cooked. In the evenings, the fire place was the gathering place for the family.

No household task was easy in those days. Not even the laundry. On Sunday night, the clothes were put to soak in a tub. Monday morning they were scrubbed on a board with plenty of home made soap rubbed on the soiled spots. Then they were boiled in a heavy copper kettle or boiler, wrung by hand, and placed on bushes or fences to dry.

Medicines to treat the family illls were all home made. Salve for sores was made from the bark of the Indigo weed which was boiled down with beeswax, mutton-tallow and a very little rosin added.

Remedy for Bowel Complaint:

1 teaspoon peppermint essence
1 teaspoon rhubarb
 $\frac{1}{4}$ spoon carbonate of soda
1 teaspoon brandy
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teacups warm water

Mix together, and take one tablespoon full once every hour.

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For Kidney Trouble:

Make a tea from the roots of the marshmellow weed. Drink one cup full three times a day.

Phebe always found time to help comfort those in need, especially caring for the sick and preparing the dead for burial. At times she would make the burial clothes. She thought every woman should know how to do this. One time a baby died, so she took Phebe, her daughter who was about 12 years old, and instructed her how to do this. She even had her make the babys' clothes.

She was a very good seamstress. She even cut her own patterns. Her stitches were fine and even. Her buttonholes were near perfect. She made many beautiful rugs and when her grandchildren began to marry, she made each one a quilt. She was never so busy that she couldn't stop and show you how to sew a seam, tell you how to make mustard pickles, cut fruits for drying, or how to make her good baked beans.

She recorded in her account book that she commenced teaching school December 17, 1883. On the 14 of January, 1884 she received from Mother Sessions, \$30.00 for one months' teaching. She taught at the "Patty Sessions Academy".

She was a teacher in the East Bountiful Sunday School for 25 years.

When the First Relief Society was organized in Bountiful, 24 April, 1857, she was chosen to be the secretary. Then when the Bountiful Ward was divided, she was Second Counselor and Secretary in the Teachers' Quorum. In 1897 this Quorum was discontinued and their duties were taken over by the presidency of the Relief Society. She was a secretary in the Relief Society Ward and Stake for 35 years.

Her children and grandchildren always looked forward to New Years'

Day, when they could have a family get-together at Grandma Sessions' home. The little New Year always left a gift somewhere about the house for each small child to find. No New Years' dinner was complete without a pot of Boston baked beans. She always said, "If you serve beans on New Years' Day, you will have a prosperous year."

She would never begin a new project on Friday that couldn't be finished that same day. She always said if it can't be done that day, it never would be finished.

When she was 67 years old, her son, Fabyans' wife died, leaving three small children. She took them into her home and reared them as her own.

She was the mother of 10 children. Sarah Phebe -- born 26 November, 1853. Cerdania Estelle -- 30 January, 1856. David Jr. - 9 January, 1858. Olive Cordelia -- 26 December, 1860. Fabyan Carter - 22 July, 1862. Darius -- 22 October, 1864. Calvin Foss -- 24 December, 1866 and he died 15 June, 1869. Elizabeth -- 29 May, 1869. Rhoda Harriet -- 3 October, 1871. She died 31 July, 1873. Annie Sylvia -- 30 October, 1875.

She also raised the Indian boy, Jim, and her son, Fabyans' three children, Carter, Robert, and Hilda.

She was an ideal daughter, wife and mother who was ever faithful, devoted and true to her parents, husband, children and to her God. She was full of hospitality and kindness to all who came into her home.

Besides her sons and daughters, she left 38 grandchildren and 47 great-grandchildren to mourn her loss when she died 25, July, 1913. She was buried beside her beloved husband in the Bountiful Cemetery.