

We are told that blessed is the mother whose children rise and call her blessed. So it is with Eliza Maretta Thurston Hymas.

Today in the prime of life, and the old age of some, her sons and daughters are enjoying the fruits of her labors and sacrifices. They also possess cherished memories of two wonderful mothers, and a fine father.

It is with sincere appreciation that I write the story of this pioneer mother. Her day was an era of time when in many pioneer homes there was more than one mother. I dedicate this story to her memory, and to her courage, loyalty, devotion, and virtue which she displayed throughout her life.

Eliza was born January 14, 1866 in Hyde Park, Utah, into a large family. There were nine daughters and three sons. Her parents, James Thurston and Mary Seamons, were pioneers in every sense of the word. At an early age the children were taught to help with the homemaking tasks and accept responsibility in many ways. Her parents endured many trials, but through them all they were blessed.

Eliza recalled her school days as being uneventful. Books and materials with which to work and study were rather scarce. However, the children were always encouraged to seek after knowledge and to do the best with what they had. Eliza was often taken out of school to help those who were ill, or to help her mother at home.

One of her earliest recollections was going to work for the Fred Turner family. She was thirteen years of age. She was really pleased at the thought of being employed and living with what she termed "nice folks". She did the cooking, the family washings, churning and making of butter, and lending a helping hand to a sundry of tasks all for the wage of \$.25 a week. This was her home for six months and then the family moved to Logan. Here she recalled her wage was raised to \$.50 per week for the same amount of work she did before.

Since the 1870's marked an era of railroad expansion and road grading there were always groups of men employed on these projects. Such groups needed cooks. Eliza hired out to one such group working on a railroad grade east of Silver Bed. She was just sixteen and very pretty. Her job lasted four months and then the crew moved on to Montana.

But Eliza saved every penny of her wages in those four months. Upon her return home the first thing she did was to buy a feather bed and some pillows. Little thought was given to herself. Satin and bows were only dreams in her day. The following summer of 1883 she continued to cook for various groups of road grading crews.

In the late fall of 1884, in October, her life took on a new course. At 18 years of age she dared to enter upon the path of plural marriage as the second wife of Benjamin Hymas. Her eldest sister Hannah was his first wife. There was more reality than romance to this marriage which was solemnized October 22, 1884. Her decision required courage of the highest type for at this time polygamists were being tracked down relentlessly by government agents; strange honeymoon that she experienced as they traveled from place to place seeking a refuge.

It was in this manner that the first year of wedded life was spent. Even at the time her first baby daughter was born, it was necessary to keep her in hiding. Wherever she went now she had to walk and carry her baby as well. All the traveled roads were being watched by those who would turn her husband in so she could not ride upon the roads. When her husband, Bp. Hymas, brought her to Riverdale they stayed with Lila and Homer Wolfe for a few weeks until he could fix up a small home down by the river.

In the spring Benjamin came for her and the baby. He had rented the Robert Reeder home in Treasureton. It was a cold March day when she moved in, bedbugs and all. She found the place so dirty and ill kept as it had previously been a bachelor's cabin. Then too, in the hurry of packing her things, they had left her broom, the lamp, and some candles. To return for them would be folly lest they be seen and her whereabouts established. So the glow from the kitchen stove supplied her light. For a broom she fastened straw to a stick. At that time there were only about six or eight ranches in the area and they were scattered. Her husband was then presiding over these families as the presiding elder, they being a branch of the Clifton ward. They met in a log house with long crude benches.

As a young wife and mother she found it very lonesome. The men would be away with the cattle and her husband she did not see for weeks on end. In her diary she writes, "I would take my little girl Sylvia, and my sister's girl Caroline (Hannah's fifth child) and go out on the hills into the warmth of the sunshine and dig the Sege bulbs." A blizzard in March can be severe. On this particular day in March, Benjamin had taken her and the baby over to Maggie Sants to quilt. The

blizzard started in early to pile the snow up so fast and so deep that their narrow roads were blocked tight. The quilters at Maggie Sants found themselves stranded and there they stayed for several days. Mrs. Sants laid beds down all over the floors. This was comfortable enough, only due to the warmth of the rooms within, the snow melted on the dirt roof above to leak and drip upon them as they slept at night.

From the Robert Reeder ranch they went to the Quale home. Prior to this move however, she had gone to her brother Steve's home at Hyde Park to stay and await the birth of her second daughter Ruth. When baby Ruth was six weeks old Benjamin came for her in a sleigh. They stopped at Franklin for the night at Charles Englands. They arrived at Treasureton the next day. Here she came near losing her baby due to an epidemic that was prevalent. To secure help through those trying weeks she went to her mother's home and stayed for awhile. While here to protect not only herself but her parents as well she took the name of Atkins, using the maiden name of Grandmother Hymas. Whenever the stage would arrive, she and the babies were taken to the cellar to hide, sometimes they would remain in the cellar for hours on end. Then her husband took her to Bear Lake to stay with his brother's wife. Here they fixed up the granary for her and the babies to live in until Benjamin could secure a place for her that would be secure.

When she and the babies returned from Bear Lake she learned that Benjamin had at last been arrested. So staunch and firm was the integrity of this father and husband Benjamin Hymas that he choose to serve six months or more in jail and pay the fine of several hundred dollars rather than renounce those wonderful wives and the children whom he loved as well. During those trying months the two sisters and their families continued to live in unity and harmony, showing every consideration they could to their husband in his time of distress. This was a great comfort indeed to Benjamin.

Eventually her home came to be at Hyde Park. Hannah and Ben lived at Treasureton where he was their bishop. Eliza's mother would frequently bring coal and vegetables to her and the children. This act she appreciated very much as she bore her trials alone pretty much. It seemed that for her, births and deaths went hand in hand. She brought nine children into the world, five sons and four daughters. Two infant sons, one daughter that was stillborn, and a fine eighteen year old son were taken from her in death.

The flu epidemic of World War I reads like a tragic poem. For Eliza it put her courage and heroism to the test, and it came near claiming her life. The fall the flu set in, she left Hyde Park to go out to gentile valley to care for her son Newel's wife. While there she received word of the critical illness of her oldest daughter Sylvia at Pocatello. Complications following the birth of a baby set in and she passed away on December 11, 1918. Her valiant mother stayed on to care for the three small children. She lent comfort to a bereaved husband as well.

By February it seemed that every one was down with the flu. Eliza was ill herself when her son Orson was stricken so critical that he was taken to a hospital where the flu claimed his life February 17, 1919. Eliza was in such a critical condition herself she did not comprehend the news of the death of her dear son. After being so near death's door, it required many weeks for her to gain her health again and overcome the grief of her boy's death.

So it was in the spring of 1920 before she left Pocatello, she decided she would like to make her home at Preston, Idaho where her daughter Ruth had recently settled. So the home at Hyde Park was sold and one purchased for her at Preston.

Here at Preston as it had been in all places, she worked out. The sick, the aged and the lonely were all cared for in a sympathetic manner. New babies brought into the world and their mothers tenderly nursed to health. For twenty years the only home she knew was those where she worked or the homes of her four children. She found happiness in sharing the home of her two sons and daughters as she lived with them.

Mention must be made of the wonderful devotion Eliza showed her own mother. After her father passed away at the old Hyde Park home, Eliza took her aging mother into her own home where she bestowed constant care and attention to her until her death reunited her parents in another world.

Prior to moving to Preston she worked in the Hyde Park Relief Society and the Primary. Her diary states: "I worked for eleven years as a teacher, and then as a counselor to Aunt Maggie and Sister Neilson until we moved to Preston." She continued in this service at Preston, as a Relief Society teacher, and also working in the Primary organization. Her diary states: "I remember of counting every one of the eggs so I could pay my tithing. Instead of donations to the Relief Society I would always pay the eggs collected on Sunday; they were called my Sunday eggs." After coming to Preston, she further stated in her diary that she worked out in order to earn money to pay her tithes with.

What a marvelous testimony this mother had. All the days of her life were characterized by her industry, her thrift, and her sincere faith as expressed in her humble testimony. These were the teachings and the example she gave to her children and on to their children.

On the May 15, 1925 the two Thurston sisters, Hannah and Eliza, the first wife and the other mother as the second wife was sometimes called, laid to rest a benevolent father and a true and devoted husband.

Eight years later on August 15, 1933, Eliza stood at the family plot in the Treasureton cemetery and keenly sensed the passing of her eldest sister Hannah. The years from childhood had so interwoven the fabric of her life so closely into the pattern of her elder sister that the sting of death could never them part.

Ten years later, October of 1944 a devoted family of sons and daughters and beloved grandchildren; with brothers and sisters, gathered at the family plot to pay their last earthly respects to Eliza. Tears of gratitude softly fell that day upon the sod which covered her.

She was truly one of the great pioneer women whose unselfish service will live through the ages. Her firm faith in God and her divine courage were unsurpassed. May this story of her life inspire new faith and hope for her loved ones who are honoring her name by their lives.

Written by a daughter in law, Annie Panter Hymas, wife of Newel Hymas.