

HISTORY OF SEREPTA MATILDA JOLLEY AHLSTROM

Serepta Matilda Jolley was the first of fourteen children born at Mt. Carmel to William Jackson Jolley Jr. and Elizabeth Stolworthy. She was named soon after birth because she was a premature baby and it was feared she would not live. Her Father and his brother, Rube Jolley, had built cabins within a few yards of each other and these cabins were surrounded on all sides by a green meadow. This farm came to be known as Fiddlers Green due to the fact the two brothers provided the music for many of the villages.

As a young girl Tillie lay awake many a night listening to the chanting and singing of the Indians, around their campfires. The family was visited on many occasions by Indians but always tried to keep on friendly terms with them. One such visit occurred on a summer's day when Tillie was five years old. An Indian brave rode up to the log cabin on a pinto pony and asked for food. He was invited into the home and offered a plate of food and was beckoned to sit in the rocking chair while he ate. He accepted, very awkwardly, not being used to plates or chairs, and when he sat in the rocking chair it turned over and his plate fell to the floor breaking into pieces. He was very much embarrassed and gathered up the pieces of china and said he would come back some day and pay for the dish. And after eating his dinner he rode away. About a year later an Indian on a pinto pony was seen coming up the road. It was the same Indian brave and he carried in his hand a braided rope made of bark. He had made this to give to the family in payment for the broken plate. It was the family's first clothes line and later a family relic.

When the weather was too cold and the roads too muddy to enable the family to attend Church, Tillie's Father would tune the violin and start playing hymns. Then the whole family would join in and sing to their hearts content. Tillie remembered helping her Father harvest his crops and every tenth load of hay, every tenth cabbage or squash or any of the produce that was raised was set aside for the tithing office. And, the family knelt often in prayer to thank the Lord for his goodness to them.

When fifteen years of age, Tillie was called to serve as First Counselor in the Mutual Improvement Association. She was in school at that time and she had to walk two miles home from school to help with the work, then she would walk the two miles back to the school and prepare it for the M. I. A. meeting that night. She had to remove the ashes from the fireplace, clean the lamp chimneys and lanterns and see if they were filled with oil. She and her sister, Elizabeth, were talented both in music and dramatics and often performed at various functions.

During one summer Tillie worked for an Aunt and Uncle who had a cattle ranch. Her duties consisted of all kinds of household tasks and she learned how to make cheese and how to take the yellow juice from carrots to color the cheese. Tillie even learned to milk the wild cows that were brought into the corrals by the cowboys. One day a message came for her to return home. Her Mother had broken her leg and with seven younger children Tillie was needed badly at home. She returned the fifty miles horseback over mountainous country. With the help of the older children, things went well and soon after a new baby arrived adding to the responsibility and joy of the family. Every piece of clothing was hand made even to the shoes and much knitting was required to keep the family in socks and sweaters.

She met her future husband at a dance. The couple lived in a one-room log cabin until a new home was finished. The irrigation conditions were very poor in that part of Southern Utah and Jimmy felt it would be to their advantage to go where there was more water. They sold their home and moved to Idaho and purchased a farm in Basalt. Later they sold this farm and invested in dry farm land. The family lived on the dry farm in the summertime and lived in town in the winter where the children attended school.

During World War I the family had to economize a great deal. After the war farm prices dropped and farmers took a loss on their produce. The summers were dry and arid and the dry farm wheat didn't mature enough to pay to harvest. It became necessary to turn the farm over to creditors. The family then moved to Idaho Falls.

After the death of her husband, the Church was the main social outlet in her life and she has always been attentive to her duties there. She has been active in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers and also the War Mothers Organization. She has always loved sports and as a younger woman often participated in them.

Her posterity includes ten children, eight of which are living, thirty grandchildren, and seventeen great grand-children and she has the honor and respect of each one of these children.

Source: "The Jolley Family Book" by Bryant Manning Jolley and Committee, with contributions from family members. BYU press 1966.