



Almira Emily Hill Harris



Artemissa Harris Maxfield

HISTORY OF ALMIRA EMILY HILL HARRIS SMOOT (Mother)

Born: November 25, 1816

Died: March 20, 1862

ARTEMISSA HARRIS MAXFIELD (Daughter)

Born: January 3, 1835

Died: June 3, 1885

Emily Hill was born Nov. 25, 1816, at Pendleton District, South Carolina. She was the second of six children, her mother being an invalid.

When she was four years of age, her parents moved to Tennessee, traveling on horses, carrying what was required for food and bedding. They settled on Cuck River, White County, and resided there about eight years. They started a move to Illinois but spent one summer in Kentucky, in Christian County. They reached their destination in the Fall and homesteaded land in Macoupin County, Illinois.

Emily Hill married Zachariah Harris at age 18, in 1834, and left her family and went with her husband to Millsborough, Montgomery County, to live. She lived there only a few months when she was called to the bedside of her 'mother, who was dying; however, her mother had passed away before Emily arrived.

Her oldest sister, being married, had moved to a distant county, so Emily and her husband were obliged to remain to keep house for her father, and be a mother to her brothers and sisters. Here she encountered many trials. After her mother's death, her

father began drinking; but, by her kindness and patience with him, she succeeded in getting him to reform.

While living here, her first child was born, a daughter, whom she named Artemissa, born Jan 3, 1835. Soon after this, her father's family broke up and scattered among relatives. Emily and her husband moved to Morgan County, Illinois, where he went into the Harness and Grocery business, being successful and prosperous.

On Oct. 25, 1836, her first son was born, named William Jasper.

After this, two little girls were born, namely: Martha June, who died at the age of two years, and Mary Elizabeth, who died at seven months. Between the deaths of these children, her husband Zachariah, suddenly died of consumption, having eaten his breakfast a few hours before with the family. This left Emily a young, widow with three children. The baby (no name given) survived the father only a few weeks. Emily didn't own her own home but was provided well with clothing and household goods.

After the death of Emily's husband, she went with her two children to live with her oldest sister, Mary and her husband, Charles Crismon, at Massidona, thirty miles from Nauvoo. She helped support her children by weaving. Her sister allowed her to have a loom in her kitchen. She was a beautiful weaver. while living here, she first heard the gospel preached. Two of her sisters, Mary, and Elizabeth, joined the Church earlier.

Emily was most bitterly opposed to the Mormons, feeling disgraced by her sisters joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. In her early life, she had joined the Campbellites, and was strong in that faith.

Living with a family of Mormons, and being visited by them often, she soon overcame some of her prejudices and was finally persuaded by her brother-in-law, Charles Crismon, to attend a Conference in Nauvoo. More from curiosity than any interest she felt, she went anyway. At the first sight of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, her feelings softened. At the Conference, she heard him preach a powerful sermon, after which she never doubted for one moment; and she was baptized by Andrew Perkins in the winter of 1842. Two feet of ice had to be cut in the river in order for her baptism to take place.

After her baptism, she went to visit her husband's family. She remained with them for a year, bearing testimony all the time and trying to persuade them to believe as she did and to go with her to the Rocky Mountains. They were all such strong Campbellites, and opposed her so bitterly, that she met with no success. She returned to her sister to

make preparations to move with the Saints where they might go. The visit she made to her husband's family was after the death of the Prophet.

The week the Prophet Joseph was killed, she was visiting with the Perkins family, who lived on the main road to Nauvoo, and who had baptized her.

On January 18, 1846, she married Abraham Owen Smoot, at Nauvoo. Three children were born to them: a son, Albert, who was drowned at the age of twelve; a daughter, Zina, who married Orson F. Whitney; and a daughter, Margaret (Maggie), who married Wilson Dussenberry.

Emily Harris Smoot and her husband came to Utah in 1847. She left her two children born of her first marriage, Artemissa and William, at Winter Quarters with Preindn and Heber C. Kimball until the next Spring, when they left for Utah, arriving in the Fall of 1848. They joined their family in Sugarhouse, formerly known as Canyon Creek. Artemissa and William had walked barefoot most of the way across the plains from Nauvoo and were rejoiced to be with their family again.

Emily Hill Harris Smoot died March 20, 1862, in Provo, Utah, and was buried there. Her first two children, Artemissa and William, were sealed to Brother Smoot in 1944. William married Martha Ann Smith, daughter of Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith, on April 21, 1857. William left on a mission three days after their marriage, and Martha Ann lived with William's mother while he was away.

Artemissa Harris lived with her parents until her marriage to Richard Dunwell Maxfield, October 31, 1854. Richard and Artemissa acquired forty acres of land in Cottonwood, of which twenty acres was fertile land and twenty acres pasture. This land was on a rolling hill between Highland Drive and Thirteenth East (now Spring Lane).

It was a delightful area, as it still is. Artemissa taught school, having several prominent people in her classes, including: Eldredge Kennedy, Packards, Jesse Knight, Joseph F. Smith, Newell Knight, Lydia Knight, Reed Smoot, Emily Huff, and many more.

She was the mother of eight children, two girls and six boys. She was a kind and considerate woman. She entertained many of the General Board members in her home.

She always kept a light burning in the window at night in case some of the workmen lost their way. Men who were injured in the logging operations (which was Richard's occupation) were cared for by Artemissa.

Three sons were born to her after she had previously contracted pneumonia, which resulted in a heart condition, aggravated by her pregnancies. These things contributed to her death, June 3, 1885. At that time, Richard was serving his second mission and was in Illinois, unable to return home. She was buried in the Murray City Cemetery. Circumstances relating to her death are reflected in correspondence to Richard Maxfield by C. D. Brinton, a son-in-law, copies of which follow.

The family attended South Cottonwood ward, where most of their church records originated.

This history was compiled by Tena Maxfield Larsen Birrell, granddaughter of Richard Maxfield, and who is the daughter of William Albert Maxfield.

Edited by Nanette Garrett 2022