

Our Family Links

The Groberg/Holbrook Family History Association Newsletter

Issue 7, November 2004

“The Superiority of Their Women” The Other Grand Mothers

In his famous commentary regarding 19th century America, Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville stated “if I were asked, now that I am drawing to the close of this work, in which I have spoken of so many important things done by the Americans, to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply - to the superiority of their women.” Democracy in America, 1831. He ascribed that superiority to an American recognition that though different by nature, women and men and their respective family and societal roles are of equal value. While that basis for de Tocqueville’s observation may seem somewhat out of step with our modern-day political correctness, it is in sync with our modern-day prophets’ “Proclamation to the World” regarding the family. The eternal correctness of both

de Tocqueville’s observations and the prophetic Proclamation is manifest in the exemplary - indeed superior - lives of many of the 19th-21st century Groberg/Holbrook women. In support of that thesis, this edition of the family newsletter offers glimpses into the lives and characters of family women from each of those centuries. Also in harmony with the Book of Mormon teachings on the impact a good mother and father team can have on a son in the service of his country, we offer a few observations from our family’s Stripling Warrior representative in Iraq, T.J. Hubble. May the insights gained from the stories and example of these women and that soldier lead us all to proclaim as the Stripling Warriors of old, “Behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth.” Alma 56:46.

When considering which Groberg-Holbrook ancestors match the de Tocqueville ideal mentioned in the opening article, most of us probably first and justifiably (and by training) picture our “Little Divine” - Alsina E. Brimhall Holbrook. Much has been and will yet be written of that “superior” matriarch in this and other family chronicles. With the advantages of a long and more contemporaneous life, a penchant for writing everything down, and a regiment of adoring daughters dedicated to publishing, distributing and redistributing accounts of everything she ever did, said or wrote, the radiance of Alsina’s star shines bright on us still.

As we bask in that light, however, we sometimes forget to take notice of some of the equally radiant but more distant maternal stars in our ancestral sky. Therefore, while no tribute to our great female forebears would be complete without a nod to Alsina, having thus nodded we now shift our focus in an effort to bring to light some of the worthy accomplishments and attributes of the other Grandma - the one assisting at the births of DV and Jennie’s 11 from the other side of the veil - **Maud Elizabeth Brunt Groberg**. We then close with a brief epilogue confirming the status of Maud’s immigrant mother, **Elizabeth Susan Burnett Brunt**, and Maud’s immigrant mother-in-law, **Johanna Larson Groberg**, among the most superior of the superior American women.

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Alsina and Lafayette H. Holbrook's daughters
Taken about 1922

“Never Were There Such Devoted Sisters”

Mary Jane: Faithful, Friendly, Frugal

by Beth Groberg Stratton

I thought of Mary Jane today while I was preparing asparagus for dinner. One time when I was visiting Mary she fixed asparagus...but she saved the liquid it was cooked in to use in a soup, or to drink later. A very frugal, healthful thing to do, I thought. One of Mary Jane’s admirable qualities is her frugality. Her car is old, but it still runs! Her cups and plates may not be “Better Homes & Garden” style, but they work just fine.

Over the years I’ve enjoyed visiting Mary and being treated to delightful evenings with music and conversation. I’ve learned that Mary has noble, righteous desires. Through knowing her righteous desires, I have gotten to know her. (D&C 18:38) She has a willing heart and is a devoted mother to her two beloved daughters, Annie and Rosie. Her faith in Jesus and the efficacy of the atonement is the basis of her firm testimony. She enjoys



servicing others and expects no “fanfare” for doing so. Once when I was visiting Mary, a lady called to ask if Mary could take her to the store. We went and picked her up, took her to the store and brought her home. Not a “big deal” but an evidence of Mary’s righteous desire to help others.

I think we all know how brilliant Mary is in family history and the role she has taken in research, compiling and preserving it. She truly values this history, and we all feel confident when the research has come from Mary, or been reviewed by her. Her ability in this area has also blessed our extended family and the community of Idaho Falls.

A couple of weeks ago, Mary stayed with Grandpa so other family members could come to our son’s wedding in Salt Lake. Mary emailed me that she would record the Women’s conference for me, knowing I would not be able to attend. When we arrived in Idaho Falls after the wedding, I received a tape from Mary with the conference on it. Another time, she had recorded a show about

Orem fruit farmers, many who were Stratton’s. She sent me the tape and we enjoyed it and during the years, many of Barry’s relatives have enjoyed it, also. That noble desire to be a friend, a dear sister, was shining through!

Julia: Excellence In So Many Areas

by Gloria Groberg Hubble

It’s hard to know where to begin to describe what makes Julia a special sister. I truly feel blessed to have her for a sister, friend, confidante, role model, etc. etc. Some of the qualities I most appreciate about Julia are her generosity and her humility. Julia always makes you feel welcome, not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. You can talk to her about anything. She invites you in not only with acceptance but with appreciation.

Julia always makes you feel that you are special. Although it is clear that she is very talented, intelligent and has achieved excel-



By all accounts, **Maud Groberg** was a vivacious, independent woman - "more fun-loving than quiet." She was the 5th (and 1st American born) of George and Elizabeth Susan Brunt's 7 children.

George's sudden death during Maud's 5th year introduced Maud early to sorrow and hard work. With young Maud apparently minding her baby sister, Elizabeth took in laundry, Maud's brothers worked in the potato fields for a bushel of potatoes a day, and her older sister, Eliza, worked in private homes for \$2.50 a week. In later describing that work, Eliza said, "I felt like I was there as a slave to do their bidding and I sometimes was taken advantage of." However, when the time came for Maud to go from home and do the same work, the family was confident she could handle it. Eliza wrote, "Maud was not like I was. She was more independent. Mother said, 'I am not afraid to let Maud go to work. They won't work her until she is sick. They won't step on Maud's toes or she will tell them of it.'"

Eliza also recounted that "Maud had lots of friends and was a great favorite with them and associated with the best in town." Some of those friends described Maud as gentle, friendly, and a good student. She was "one of those kind of women that you love to be with, to talk to, to associate with, and to feel their presence." One noted that "Maud had pretty, dark, curly hair - just beautiful." Others noted, however, that despite her best efforts she was not much of a singer: "She loved to sing but she couldn't carry a tune. Maud told me she stayed up and sang most of the night but she never learned."

Imperfect pitch aside, Maud's other good graces were sufficient to earn her one adoption proposal and two marriage proposals before she was 20. Her mother rejected the adoption proposal. Both marriage proposals, however, she accepted. Her first fiancé died while visiting family in Utah; the second engagement Maud called off when the fiancé returned from an extended time away and she felt that the "spark" was gone. However, when later introduced to the dashing John Enoch Groberg (who was in Idaho visiting a friend) the spark was immediate and eternal.

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Maud Elizabeth Brunt Groberg

lence in so many areas, she is not as the scripture says "puffed up". She is always open minded and willing to learn from others and recognizes their intrinsic worth. She's a wonderful listener and a wonderful encourager. She truly exemplifies the attributes of charity (I Corinthians 13). I truly feel blessed to have her for a sister!

Beth: A Beautiful Birthday Treasure by Julia Groberg Blair

I can't remember a moment in my life when I was more totally delighted, excited and thrilled as the moment my dad announced that we had a baby sister, born on my 12th birthday. I had previously made it clear (after five little brothers) that I didn't want another brother. Beth was the answer to all my girlish dreams and she has always been a beautiful treasure in my life. She came to the Groberg home in Idaho Falls on December 28, 1944. I remember calling everyone I could think of to tell them the glorious news. Beth was six years old when I left for BYU and nine when I was married. I liked to think that she belonged to me. She was always a beautiful little song bird and loved by all.

A famous Groberg event involving Beth occurred at Christmas time when Beth's older brothers decided to play a trick on her. They came downstairs after Santa had distributed his gifts and emptied Beth's treat-filled stocking and filled it with coal. Beth was heartbroken and in tears when she found this evidence of Santa's disapproval. The mean big brothers were justly punished by our good parents and I think Beth has by now forgiven them.

When Beth and Barry set up housekeeping in Provo after their marriage, Beth had a piano. I had failed in getting Meg to stick with piano. She was twelve and had begun 7th grade. Beth suggested that Margaret stop at Stratton's apartment each day on her way home from school and have supervised piano practice. We were amazed at Meg's progress during one semester with Beth who is a master teacher and a generous and kind person. To know Beth is to love her.

Concerning the Personal Papers of Dad and Mom by Mary Jane Fritzen

Dad and Mom both wrote prodigiously about the importance of the two intertwined values: Church and Family. These they saved to be sure their children know just how much they treasure these values, for which they lived. As I have sorted and filed their personal papers, I have felt this love, and their desire to transmit it. Much of Dad's writing concerned either his personal history or his talks on temple doctrines given at many occasions, including funerals. Mom's was mainly about "Gospel Living in the Home," scriptures, or her Holbrook and Brimhall heritage. Many of

Gloria: A Considerate Example by Mary Jane Groberg Fritzen

Before Gloria was born I was living at Knight Hall, BYU. As usual I felt the excitement of our family's expecting a new baby, yet being away from home, I was left to my imagination. For weeks I was "on pins and needles," whereas for the previous nine siblings I had been on the scene at home. Inner excitement mounting I felt relief when I found a fellow classmate in the dorm whose mother also was expecting at that time. She too was a big sister in a big family. It was a big relief when I learned that Mother had a baby girl, and in several weeks she brought her to see me at BYU. Thus Gloria was the only sister that I didn't live with. Julia and I shared a room; Beth was one I tried to protect from her rambunctious brothers. Gloria had the most time alone with Mom.

It is good to learn from one another. A few years ago Gloria wrote requesting we have a circular letter, which became our "sisters letter." Gratefully we four kept the letter going for a few short years until Gloria said it was time to end. It was a pleasure to add a page to replace one's previous one, then forward the four letters at once, from Mary to Julia, to Beth, to Glo. It was a meaningful way to share

our hearts with one another. I learned a lesson from Gloria, who advocated a rule, that each must not only write about herself, but must also say at least something pertinent to each one of the others. This was a valuable insight - to be thoughtful of my sisters by personal messages, even just a few words. Thank you, Gloria, for showing me how to be more considerate.

This trait of mutual consideration shows in their family. Recently the Hubbles visited Dad-Glo, Jon, Travis's wife Becca and baby, and the two BYU-Idaho students. I was much impressed by the consideration of Jon and Glo, and of Geff and Heather for one another. Such love and unity is exceptional in today's society, yet needed; it represents the sweet Primary song, "I love Mother; she loves me; we love Daddy, yes-siree; he loves us and so you see, We are a happy family."■

these are filed and kept, including photos. We will maintain a family library.

As they saved the letters and mementoes from and about each of their children, I have also sorted these papers and photos into boxes for each of you to pick up. You may find some treasures, so don't discard all your papers without carefully looking through them.

Other items may be useful for family home evenings, as Mom saved visual aids she had made for lessons and programs. You are invited to contact me and select any of these lesson materials, before they are discarded.■



Enoch, as his friends called him, extended his visit and eventually extended his hand in marriage. Maud and Enoch then sealed their love in the Logan Temple on Christmas Eve 1902.

The young couple welcomed their first son, LeRoi, the following October. On February 14, 1906, Enoch proudly announced the arrival of their "10-pound valentine" - Delbert Valentine. Their joy seemed full with the birth of their daughter, Maud's namesake, on April 30, just 2 years later. That date also marked the 54th birthday of Maud's mother, causing the ever-cheerful Maud to "laughingly" introduce Elizabeth to her new grandbaby with the words, "Mother, here's a birthday present for you." Tragically, those happy words took on a new and grim meaning over the course of the next two weeks. The following emotion packed words from the Idaho Register provide the "pathetic" detail of those weeks as well as a final testament to the short but well-lived life of one of the Noble and Great:

one child but then added three, all in different cities. After a failed farming venture in Eagle Rock (now IF), Idaho, George went to Butte, Montana in search of yet another job and home. Two weeks after his departure, Elizabeth learned that though he had secured employment he had immediately thereafter contracted a serious illness and was already dead and buried. Thus the wanderings ended with the family still in Eagle Rock where, as described above, Elizabeth then had to send her little ones out to work to make ends meet.

By that point most of us in similar circumstances would feel we had every right to complain. Yet of Elizabeth's reaction her then teenage daughter, Eliza, later recorded, "I never knew how Mother took father's death. She always bore her troubles alone." More impressive though than the absence of any known negative verbal response is Elizabeth's legacy of positive active responses to that and every other challenge she faced, including her willingness at 54 to take over as "Momma" to her new granddaughter, Maude. The grown Maude probably best captured Elizabeth's sublime essence in the following account:

"Whenever anyone would say, 'Oh, Sister Brunt, that is such a big job for you to do!', (meaning to raise a little girl in her later years) I never could listen without just waiting and waiting to see what Momma would say back. And she would always, every time, would say, 'Oh, no! It is the greatest blessing that could come to me!' And I was always so grateful. ...I never would have had the love and I would never have had the faith and the knowledge of my Heavenly Father like I had it with my grandmother. She was so close to Him. She felt like there wasn't anything that I needed that she couldn't

provide for me because she felt since the Lord had blessed her with having somebody to take care of, he would give her what was needed to do that job."

Elizabeth Susan Burnett Brunt - truly divine.



Maude Groberg with her "Momma" Elizabeth Brunt



Like Elizabeth Brunt, Johanna Groberg viewed her late life increase in motherly duties as a late life increase in blessings. Also like Elizabeth's, Johanna's late life strength of character was born of an early life sense of independence and self-worth augmented by a faith in God tempered in the fire of life-long tribulations. Of her early life in Sweden Johanna wrote:

"My mother died ... when I was 14 years old. She had been sick for a long time. I did my duty and took care of her and the home during her sickness. Afterward I was confirmed a member of the Lutheran Church. ...I had good faith and respect for the Lutheran Religion until I was 23 years old, when the missionaries of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to our town and preached. ...I was convinced that this was the true church and I was baptized. ...After this I was reprimanded and hated by the Priest as well as all my friends and relatives. I didn't have any peace or happiness in my home town so I moved to Stockholm on July 24, 1871 and on the 30th I started to work in a silver plating factory where I worked until June 11, 1874 when I came to America and Utah. ...[In Utah] I started to work in a boarding house [in Salt Lake City] where I stayed until I was married to John Groberg December 21, 1874."

Thereafter, Johanna and John worked as farmers in and around Farr West, Utah (near Ogden) for the remainder of their days. Though off to a relatively late start at the age of 29, Johanna still gave birth to nine children and also gave a home to and raised one nephew. Of those 10 children, 5 died in their early youth and 3 (John Enoch, Jennie, and nephew John Anderson) died as relatively young adults. Only their son Charles and daughter Ellen outlived Johanna and John. Yet notwithstanding Johanna's "many trials and hardships in rearing her family," daughter Ellen was later able to write of Johanna's American years:

"Mother was very generous with her hospitality and many sick and unfortunate came and stayed with us for months at a time. Mother remained a true and devout member of the Church attending meetings and bearing her testimony at every opportunity; also acting as Relief Society visiting teacher as long as she was able to walk from place to place. She took great pleasure in doing all the good she could such as giving to the poor and helping the sick. ...[Although] she outlived all [but 2 of her children, she] also lived to see some of her grandchildren grow to young manhood; and had the opportunity to help take care of Enoch's two boys, LeRoi and Delbert who had been bereft of their father and mother."

Johanna's grand and giving life came to a close in her 80th year on December 29, 1924. Like his son John Enoch, father John ceased to thrive with the passing of his good wife; John joined Johanna in the grave just 3 months later.

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IDAHO FALLS, BINGHAM COUNTY, IDAHO, FRIDAY, MAY 15, 1908.



Mrs. John Groberg Dead. An extremely pathetic death occurred on Monday of this week when Mrs. John Groberg, a mother just in

the morning of life, passed away. She gave birth to a child about two weeks ago and while the infant is living and doing nicely the mother sleeps at rest.

The funeral services were conducted in the L.D.S. church yesterday afternoon, the large edifice being of insufficient capacity to hold all the sympathizing friends in attendance. The casket rested among banks of flowers, and touching remarks were made by Pres. Jas. E. Steele, Counsellor R.L. Bybee, Bishop Crabtree and C.L. Warnack. Beautiful and appropriate music was rendered by a quartet composed of Mr. and Mrs. Pike, Mr.

and Mrs. Morley. The pall bearers were Wm. Steele, O.K. Iverson, J. Judd, E.C. Neilson, W.R. Robinson and F.W. Ball, all members of the Sunday School Union Board of which Mr. Groberg is superintendent.

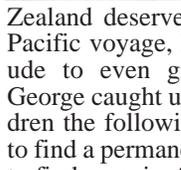
The deceased was a daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Brunt and a sister of George, Joe and Violet Brunt and Mrs. Henry Catmull. Besides these relatives she leaves a husband and three children very lonely indeed.

Among relatives from outside points were the father, mother and sister of Mr. Groberg of Ogden, Mrs. Wm. Bennett and son of Salt Lake and Mrs. Henry Catmull of Rupert.

Mrs. Groberg was 27 years of age and possessed a disposition that endeared her to all who were fortunate enough to know her. She was charitable and kindly toward every one and will be mourned by those of her immediate family as a perfect wife, mother, daughter and sister.

As the widower father of 3 infants, Enoch's already fragile health began to deteriorate quickly. And thus it was that he rejoined Maud and his Maker just a year and a month later. The coroner called the cause of death tuberculosis; the family called it a broken heart.

When Elizabeth Brunt, assumed the charge of her "birthday present," many viewed it as one more hardship than any woman should have to bear. The story of her journey to the US with 4 small children in tow while husband George remained in New Zealand deserves its own mini-series. That Pacific voyage, however, proved only a prelude to even greater challenges. Though George caught up with Elizabeth and the children the following year, the family struggled to find a permanent home as George struggled to find meaningful permanent work. In those wandering years, Elizabeth and George lost



Maude Groberg with her "Momma" Elizabeth Brunt

Perspectives from Iraq

E-mail excerpts from Tyler J. Hubble



Yes, prayer goes a long way over here. One thing I've been thinking lately is I really feel for everyone from your generation who had to go through Vietnam and everyday hearing of another friend or classmate killed in action for a country 7000 miles away. There was so much bloodshed in that war and a lot of the soldiers didn't even sign up for it. I have tremendous unconditional respect for anyone who was involved in that war.

With the American elections coming up people like to throw around phrases like "service for our country" "patriotic duty" and "sacrifice," but I have to wonder how many people actually understand what it means. I know before I came here I didn't know what sacrifice meant, not to this extent -- giving up all my time and energy for something I don't even understand, for something that's not guaranteed to last, for something that I may even have to give my life for. Before maybe I knew what it meant to sacrifice a little here and take there, but now I know that the reward to sacrifice is in itself. To do the right thing just for the sake of doing the right thing, to be a part of something, to know that I would put my life on the line for anyone in my unit, and

to know that I have 400 brothers that would do the same for me, that's the reward in itself.

War changes a person. I know you vaguely know this, but I want to detail a few things to help you understand a little better. The first time you had someone die in your arms you realize 1) how fragile life is. 2) If I die tomorrow, my life will have been finished. I want to live my life in such a way that this is true. I look at everyone this way, and please pay me the same respect. 3) war is a horrible waste, but a necessary evil. I recognize this juxtaposition, but still serve honorably. I need your love and support to continue in this way.

I'm on R&R right now in Europe. I'm in an Air force base right now with a jogging trail through the woods, mountains, a swimming pool and some great food. It's great here. I want to let you know though, that although it is a complete 180 from the environment I've gotten used to in Iraq, I feel confident that when my vacation here is over, I will have no problem deploying again to the combat zone and finishing my tour there with the army. Even if 10 years from now nobody talks about the war in Iraq, I will be proud of the service I've done. Serving my country



Tyler J. Hubble

and sacrificing my time for the American people, the Iraqi people, and my brothers around me has given me a sense of accomplishment I can't describe. My heart is now filled with something different than I've felt before. ■

Missionary and Military Addresses

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Grand Mothers (Johanna) -continued from page 3

The independent strength, love and devotion of Maud, Elizabeth, Johanna, Alsina, Jennie and other superior Groberg/Holbrook women continues to bless and influence all of us in this family as it lives on and is manifest in the lives of so many Groberg/Holbrook women of our current generation. May we all continue to remember and honor its origins, that the power of its glow may continue to bless the generations to come. ■



Johanna at age 77

The Recipe to Jennie's Success?

Tucked away in a box of letters Jennie wrote to Delbert in their courtship days was a handwritten note with the heading: "To Be Read and Considered in Order of Appearance (Which is (maybe) Order of Importance.)" The list beneath that heading is a revealing rough draft outline for the superior script that was to become Jennie's life. (It also explains why that script was typewritten):

1. **Stutz touring car.**
 2. **A piano to put in my _____.**
 3. **A complete library of fine books for the same _____.**
 4. **A large carriage Underwood Typewriter.**
 5. **That Delbert be a first class student.**
 6. **That Delbert satisfy himself in his debate.**
 7. **A little more belief and trust in Jennie by Delbert.**
- ,and if there is such,**
8. **A little more frank expression of such.**
 9. **That Delbert assume an attitude of tolerance while Jennie boldly suggests some propositions.**



(All capitals and emphasis as in original).

Time is running out for sending in your 2004 tax-deductable contribution. Send to Groberg/Holbrook Family History Assoc. c/o Joseph Groberg 1605 S. Woodruff, Idaho Falls, ID 83404. We suggest at least \$25 for single adult or young families, \$50 for the "doing fine on an established budget" individuals or families, and anything more generous than that for those of you with more generous means to dispose of. Also, if you need a duplicate or have not yet received a receipt for contributions you have made in the past, please contact Matt Powell at mmpowell9@msn.com.