

# Our Family Links

The Groberg/Holbrook Family History Association Quarterly Newsletter Issue Three/Four, July 2003

## Delbert V. Groberg Patriarch

**"everyone according to his blessing, he blessed them." (Gen 49:28)**

As John Enoch Groberg was laid to rest beside his wife in 1909, it is unlikely that any of those looking over with sympathy at his newly orphaned 3-year-old son could have imagined that little Delbert would still be living over 94 years later -looking over his posterity of 100s with "joy and rejoicing". Those of us in that crowd of descendants now look up to and honor him as our family patriarch — a gifted and worthy patriarch in every good and sacred sense of that term and title. The following two accounts are representative of the honor and dignity with which he has fulfilled his patriarchal responsibilities:

### —Reflection on the call

Grandpa was called to serve as a church patriarch on September 15, 1955. He recorded the events and feelings that accompanied that call in a letter to his missionary son, John:

The last two days have been big ones here. Have you had any feeling Dad was going to be asked to be a Patriarch? [the answer is yes. See In the Eye of the Storm, Chapter 24]. I'll tell you about the way this happened; I had a very slight feeling I would be asked to take part at Conference. I didn't pay much attention to this as I have always been expected to be on hand and ready to assist in any way. However, when President Hart asked me to be sure to be on hand so I could be reached by phone some time Saturday, I knew something was going to happen. Friday night I had the very clear impression that I was being called to be a Patriarch. I argued with myself about it - I was too young; I was not prepared, etc. etc., I didn't talk to anyone but I reasoned with myself that if the calling was for me it would be made known to the Brethren for they would be the ones that would have to decide for even if I should regard myself as qualified, that would not mean a thing - neither then (I reasoned) should it mean very much if I regarded myself unprepared, etc. I kept trying to think of some other pur-



6 year old D.V. Groberg (left) with 8 year old brother LeRoi.



D.V. Groberg (at 92) after blessing great grandson Thomas Powell. D.V. has given more than 1130 blessing.

pose or some possible reason. I know with all my heart I wanted to keep myself in readiness both physically and in mind and heart for the phone call.

Saturday morning President Hart talked to me and said "Elder Petersen wants to talk to you. ... Again the impression came clearly to my mind as if some one had spoken it: "Elder Petersen will talk to you about being a Patriarch." I didn't ask him what was wanted or why. I just said I'd be there. ... [30 minutes before the scheduled appointment] I was ready and I picked up "Joseph Smith's Own Story" - as I read it I was impressed especially with the declaration of the Savior that the "creeds were an abomination in His sight, that those professors were all corrupt, having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof." And the convincing evidence of this related by the Prophet in the next four paragraphs - and especially the minister's statement that "There were no such things as

visions and revelations in these days." I was deeply impressed with the reality of revelation from God and the world's denial thereof - as I went over to my appointment. I felt my mind and heart united in calm but powerful thought that I was going to talk to a Prophet of the Lord, that he would have the power of a Seer and a Revelator and if I didn't place full confidence in him I would be like the professors of other religions - "having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof." This came with such firmness to my heart that I didn't want to deny the truth by saying revelation is done away with, the Lord no longer reveals his mind and will to his servants, the Prophets. ...

So Brother Petersen ordained me and conferred almost unspeakable spiritual gifts, such as the gift of revelation, and love and peace in our home, the like of which we have never before known. So now it is up to us to live to use and magnify our calling and blessing.

—continued on page 6

## Comings and Goings

Since our last report, 8 new babies (that we are aware of) have joined the ranks of the Gr.Gr. great-grandchildren: Jackson

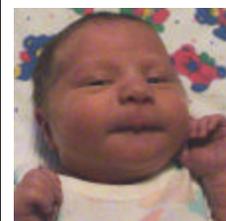
Colby son of Todd & Angie Groberg 1/13; Rachel to Carol and Dan Madsen 1/8; Tiffany Auiot daughter of Pam and Alex Odida 2/6; Abigail Claire daughter of Anna and Sean Glenn 5/17; Grace daughter of Gayle & Craig



**Daniella Hubble**

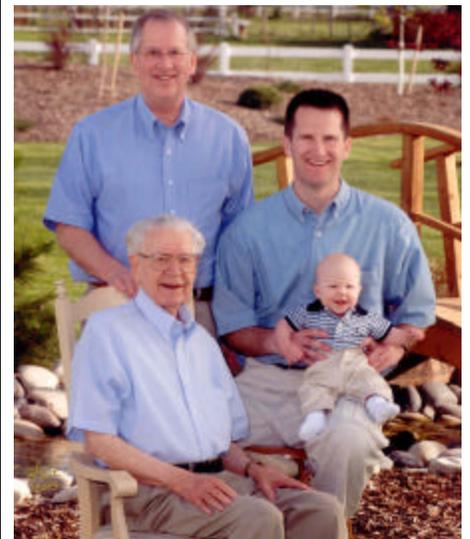
Teuscher 6/5; Daniella daughter of Jeremy and Kim Hubble 6/7; Annelise Marie daughter of Travis and Becca Hubble 6/12; Jarod Spencer son of Susan and Greg Squire 7/7.

At the other end of the spectom, we send our condolences to the Joe & Jeanne Groberg family on the passing of Jeanne's father Claron Pratt, and the Gloria and Jon Hubble family on the passing of Jon's father, Clyde. Though many of us did not know them personally, we have all felt of their good influence in the many great and wonderful ways Jeanne and Jon have contributed to and continue to bless this family.



**Jarod Squire**

We hate to leave anyone out of a reporting on these types of significant events, but with a family this size we need you to keep us posted when they occur. We can only include the ones you tell us about. As always, please send all updates to mmpowell9@msn.com or tom@govirtuoso.com.



**Four Generations of Grobergs, Delbert, Dick, Todd and Jackson.**

## Find Your Family History

By Mary Jane Fritzen

My patriarchal blessing promises conditionally to help me in times of trouble and distress to overcome anything that will come in my way in living an abundant life. As I have needed help and have re-read it, I have found encouragement in the promise "that you may be able to do the work for your ancestors that they are patiently waiting for."

Several weeks ago Annette Brown Eliason, a Holbrook cousin, wrote me that, as a genealogy class project, she is researching the mother of Ann Jost Mayer (grandmother of George H. Brimhall). How I appreciate her documenting what she finds! Please look at your pedigree sheet and locate Ann Yost. As Ann did not die until 1893 in Salt Lake City, when Grandma Alsina Elizabeth Brimhall Holbrook was about 17, I expect Grandma knew her. However the name of the mother of Ann Jost was entered incorrectly on our pedigree chart. By careful research Annette and I have both located Ann's birth and her parents' marriage in the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church records of early 1800s in Reading, Berks Co., PA. (on microfilm). The Jost and Mayers families were German immigrants; dates were in German. Anna Jost's parents were Abraham Jost and Theresa Billam. By the way, the names Anna, Theresa, Jost (Yost), Billam (Gilliam) and Mayers (Meyer, Myers, etc.) are spelled in various ways. We are not researching Names; we are finding People.



Ann Yost Mayer

Even though I had read the pioneer stories of Ann and George Mayers, parents of Rachel Ann, who married George Washington Brimhall and was mother of George H.; I didn't feel a personal interest in Ann Yost Mayers until I read these birth and marriage records. I knew she had suffered through Nauvoo, Ponca Indian Camp, the trek to Utah, rearing a family while her husband was often away on missions, polygamy. But she became real when Annette cared enough to find her mother. Our temple work can ideally be for Ancestors not unknown Family Names. (By the way, Temple Ordinance Index on Internet shows ordinances for Ann Yost repeated at least 20 times during the past ten years, no doubt by people doing family names. An honest study will show that she was baptized [in Ohio?], then endowed and sealed to her husband in the early Nauvoo Temple.) She also received her patriarchal blessing in early pioneer days.

Let's keep up our own living family records! That way, we will get it right the first time. Let's turn our hearts to our families.

### Missionary and Military Addresses

**Tyler Jonathan Hubble**  
PFC Tyler Hubble  
E. Co. 187, Med. Bn. 2051  
Harney Road, Suite 237  
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

**Elder Tyler John Owens**  
N.Y. New York North Mission  
700 White Planes Road #34  
Scarsdale, NY 10583

**Elder Joseph S. Tingey**  
California Fresno Mission  
2350 W. Shaw Ave. Ste 123  
Fresno, CA 93711

## George<sup>3</sup>: The Three Patriarchs

Most of us are aware of the 3 great Biblical patriarchs, Father Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob. But how many are aware of the 3 great Spanish Fork patriarchs, Father George, his son-in-law George, and his other son-in-law George - all three of whom are just a relatively few steps out on your own pedigree chart.

### PATRIARCH GEORGE MAYER

(also frequently spelled Myer and Meyer)

In 1843, George and Ann Yost Mayer (both descendants of Pennsylvania colonists) were living with their 5 daughters and their 1 infant son in Logansfork, Indiana. Of this time, George wrote, "I was getting rich in the things of this world [and] ranked in the first class of society[, ...] but I never found any religion that suited me, or that I thought was the religion of Christ, till November 11, A.D. 1843, when I heard a Latter-Day Saint by the name of Jerry Dunham." George, Ann and the children "of age" were soon baptized. George was then "ordained an elder under the hands of Elder James McGraw, and I went a preaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ, ever since where I thought it needed."

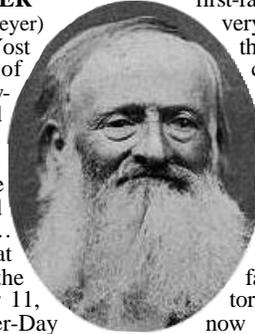
The following year (after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith) the Mayers moved to Nauvoo, where another daughter was born and where George served as "Senior President in the 32nd Quorum of Seventies [and] was chosen a police ... and guarded the three first presidency of the Church, Brigham Young, Kimball, Richards, and the temple. I stood guard every other night."

After being driven from Nauvoo, the family spent the winter of 1845-6 living with a small group of Saints among the Ponca Indians in Iowa. (Others in that group included our ancestors Chandler Holbrook and Lucian Noble and their families. See related story in our December 2002 Newsletter). George wrote that while there, "I met with a great loss. My only son...took sick with the inflammation in the brain and bowels, and after an illness of 6 or 7 days he died, aged 4 years 6 months and 14 days. ...I buried him in

the place where we buried, about a mile from the fort, where there were 22 buried before we left the country where the camps were."

They headed west in the summer of 1848. George "drove the large team with the provision with one yoke of oxen and two yoke of cows. Rachel Ann, my oldest daughter, she was 20 years old, drove the team with one yoke of large oxen that the family rode in. She had become a first-rate teamster. Berg and Buck were very obedient to her command." Upon their arrival in Salt Lake, the family continued to live (and an 8th daughter was born) in the back of that wagon while George worked to build them a home. As a maker and seller of saddles and wagons for those en route to the California gold mine, George prospered once again as a businessman, enabling him to purchase a 1/4 acre lot for his family on the corner where the historic Salt Lake City & County building now stands. By 1852, all seemed well when George wrote "March 7, my wife bore me a fine son and I called his name George. ...My oldest daughter (Rachel Ann) got married to a man by the name of George [Washington] Brimhall. He was a member of the Legislature from Iron County. He is a good man, and enjoys much of the spirit of God." (See below, Patriarch George Washington Brimhall).

While attending the Church conference in August of 1852, George was called to serve a mission in Germany. After a brief stint in Hamburg, George was sent to serve among the first missionaries in Switzerland. He kept a detailed diary while in Switzerland which reveals that despite imprisonment and attempts on his life, he was very successful as both a missionary and a leader. On his return from Switzerland, he served as the captain of a group making their first trek west. Finally, he made it back to his home on "Sunday the 30th of September [1855, and] having found my family all well we went to meeting together..." Just 5 months later, however, he wrote "I was taken by surprise while in the tabernacle hearing the names of many brethren being called on missions to various places to hear the name George Mayer called on a mission



*Editor's Note:* Happy Pioneer Day family! Having missed Valentine's, Mother's and Father's Day target dates (and with excuses weak but plentiful) it is with great pleasure and relief that we are finally sending you this combined 3rd and 4th edition of the family newsletter. We chose a Patriarch theme for this letter knowing that we would not want for people or events to talk about. In the end, however, we had so much information that the mere sorting took much longer than we anticipated which in turn left us feeling so close to and inspired by our family patriarchs that we simply could not feel good about reducing these accounts to what we could cram onto 2 pages. Though arguably just semantics, calling this a double edition eases your editors' (well at least editor Matt Powell's) guilty conscience regarding the lateness and length while getting us back on track for the 5th edition.

We are thankful for advances in technology that allow us to share pictures, stories and other information like those in this and

other newsletters. As we face the challenges that arise with each new edition, however, we can't help but look back with increasing awe (and a trace of envy) at what Grandma was able to put out every month for so many years with her trusty manual typewriter and the DV Groberg Co. copy machine. But then again, keeping current and looking back at the same time is what we are all about here. Let us know how we are doing in both departments. As always we are open to and grateful for any input you may have. We also remind you that in addition to your suggestions or comments, YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GROBERG/HOLBROOK FAMILY HISTORY ASSOCIATION ARE ALWAYS APPRECIATED. Please send all informational donations to Matt Powell (mmpowell9@msn.com) or Tom Groberg (tom@govirtuoso.com); send all money donations to the Association c/o Joseph Groberg at 1605 S. Woodruff, Idaho Falls, ID 83404. Thanks for all you do

to Los Vegas [New Mexico] with twenty other brethren and to go this spring if our circumstances would admit and to take part of our family with us." His two months of preparation for that 2nd mission included his marriage ("by the consent of my first wife") to Maria W. Cable. Thereafter, Maria was the part of the family that accompanied him on the mission to New Mexico, where their 1st son, Samuel, was born. After a brief return to Salt Lake (where a second child was born in 1858), the family relocated to Spanish Fork where George and Maria had six more children (the last of whom was Mary Margaretta born 5 September 1870.) Mary Margaretta, at age 17, married the widower George Washington Wilkins (See below, Patriarch George Washington Wilkins).

*George's accomplishments and experiences of note during his remaining 38 years in Spanish Fork far exceed our space here to note them. Thus, we will close this account and tie in our Patriarch theme with a jump to his final diary entries and a news clipping regarding his passing:*

March the 2nd, 1896, Spanish Fork: This is my birthday. I am 91 years old this day, and my health is good. I write this and use no glasses. I now commence on my 92nd year. My health is good at present. The Lord has been good to me in all of my afflictions. I write this with my own hand.

On Sunday the 19th, [April 1896] I was at Provo at the conference and two of the twelve apostles came, and the first presidency of the seventies. ...After the forenoon meeting they all went in the council room ... and there they asked George H. Brimhall [a grandson] to bring me in the Council room and to take a seat, which I did. Then they commenced to ordain [various men to various positions]. Then they told me to take my seat and they all laid their hands on my head, and Joseph F. Smith of the First Presidency ordained me a patriarch, George Mayer, and I thank God and His servants for this gift, and I pray to give the Spirit of God in all my labors in my office. Amen. Patriarch, George Mayer

His final diary entry, dated May 12, 1896, concludes: "George P. Garff and his wife Tryphena [Brimhall - a granddaughter] were present, and I gave them blessings, and they left for their mission (to Hawaiian Islands). All that are members in the Church of Jesus Christ in good standing are welcome to receive a patriarchal blessing under my hands."

Just 3 months later the local paper reported, "One of God's robust sons, Elder George Mayer, passed away on July 24 [and what day could be more appropriate] at 9:50 o'clock p.m."



George's home while on Swiss mission.

### PATRIARCH GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIMHALL

*Except as otherwise noted by [ ], the following is a meld of excerpts from a short personal history George recorded in his "Patriarchal blessing book" and a substantially longer history (95 typed pages) that he appears to have written before his call as Patriarch:*

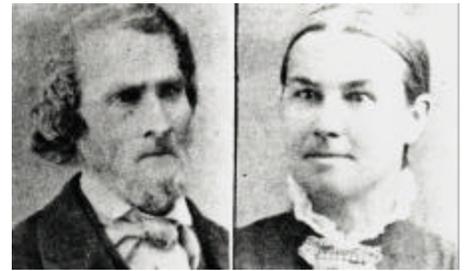
[I] was born Nov. 14, 1814 in the town of South Trenton, Oneida Co., New York. My father's name was Sylvanus. Mother's name was Lydia Guyteau [Guitteau], of Scotch and French descent. My grandfather's name was Sylvanus. He was an officer in the American Revolution in the Continental Army under Washington, and served during the war. My father volunteered under General Brown in the McCombs division and was at the Battle of Sackett's Harbor in 1812 [1812 being the name of the war; the battle actually occurred in 1813].

My oldest brother Horace prevailed upon me when I was in fifth grade to climb up with him into a cherry tree about thirty feet high, from which I fell down on to the hard ground. My father, being but a short distance at work, came and took me up for dead and carried me home, saying as he laid me down, "This is one dead child." I could see and hear them but could not move. My mother went away but shortly returned with water and began to examine every inch of my body and limbs. Her very touch seemed to give me courage for life. In about two hours I could speak. My mother's faith, works and prayers prevailed with our Father in Heaven, and I was spared for the great works of the latter days.

My father and mother were both of a roving mind and moved north into Steuben County on the Cohocton River. They went to lumbering for a living. Father and mother both wanted to go West if ever they could have the chance and means to do it. [In 1826] father rafted his lumber in fourteen sections, placing the bundles of shingles on near the outer edge of the raft for full works, then making a garret-roof on two sections for a house. ...The raft floated about one foot out of the water and was eighty feet long. [One of George's granddaughters added that just 6 weeks before they all loaded onto the raft a new baby joined the family. "This child was their tenth and in honor of the newly constructed 'ark' they named the little boy 'Noah.' ...[L]ittle Noah in his 'ark', accompanied by parents and his 9 brothers and sisters, set sail on a long memorable voyage." The trip lasted several months and took them from upstate New York, along the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, to where they finally disembarked in Lawrenceburg, Indiana - a total distance of more than 1000 miles.] For a man to come to the conclusion of putting his family on to such a conveyance to travel further than twice across the Atlantic Ocean and that too by water, has ever been a profound mystery to me. It was successful without loss of life, but it was close.

[Father] was unable to give me a classical education, but being endowed with life and vigor, I concluded to take the world as it was. I learned music from the thrush, goldfinch, crossbill and nightingale, forming pleasures in my being and incense in my make-up. I learned to read and compute numbers by torchlight at the old kitchen fire. Believing in a Supreme Being from hearing my mother's secret prayers, I made Him my friend, and He never deserted me. I have never been put on trial in any court of God or man for my conduct, always working for peace.

[By 1837] I thought of settling down and improving my farm, but my best girl deserted



George W. and Rachel Ann Brimhall

me. However, I built myself a respectable home, fenced my farm, rented it out, quit work and became disconsolate, oblivious to everything but my books and music.

In Sept. 1842 I heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ and embraced it. [After baptism,] I then preached the Gospel in the regions round about, and 2 years in the Eastern States, with much success. In March 1844, gathered with the saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. In 1845 on 4th of July, was married to Lucretia Metcalf, and she bore me Sylvanus [who died as a child] and Mary and Rufus. In 1850 I fled from the mob, leaving father, mother, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wife [who refused to accompany me] and children for the Gospel's sake; walking 620 miles; arriving safely across the Missouri River, among the Indians. I gathered with the Saints July 9, the same year.

About this time a new colony was formed [in Parawan, Iron County]. ...Oh the force of fate for me. I volunteered to be one of this desperately determined colony. [George wrote much of interest regarding the work of colonizing in general and his various roles in the process in particular. We include his comments regarding only 3 -- his work as a translator and negotiator with the Native Americans, his work as prosecuting attorney, and his work as the county's representative in the territorial House of Representatives.] I thought if I could only master the [Native's language] so much as to converse with them, it would be a great achievement. But I learned very slowly indeed, it being mixed with so many gesticulations and of every conceivable position of body, arms and legs, feet, eyes and fingers that I almost despaired of ever obtaining the first lesson. But with diligence, close application and great care, I did learn and was ready for promotion. [George made productive use of this acquired skill to promote peace and bless many to the end of his days].

I was appointed prosecuting attorney for Iron County and ... was admitted to the bar in the United States Court Utah. I will here remark, that the crooked road of human law gave me much pain and my teeth are yet on edge.

[One day] I received a letter advising that my wife in the East obtained a Bill of Divorcement from me by law, notwithstanding my solicitations to join me in the Valley of the mountains. On the following day ... a committee was chosen for nominations [to the new territorial legislature. I was shocked to learn that my own name would be on the ballot for one of two house seats. When I and other nominees were sustained at the polls,] I thought, "What good am I? What good can I do here - the last man on the list of roll call?" What a change, with the responsibilities of assisting in making rules, ordinances and laws the most applicable for the government of so many different nationalities. This was a task that all my former experience gave me no knowledge in which I was wanting. Therefore, I went, as in times past, to my Heavenly Father and humbly asked him for

wisdom. He did give me liberally, for which I thank him all the time. Being thus provided for, I was astonished to myself as well as to others and was soon nominated the "Buckskin Orator," at no time allowing myself in discussion to step aside from charity and gentlemanly decorum.

[Once while in Salt Lake on legislative business, Brigham Young recommended that I remarry before making my return to Parawan.] My past experience revolved before me in double quick time. From once sailing in partnership on pleasant seas and from unknown causes, drifting to the cold regions of Norway and being swallowed up in the maelstrom of treachery, was a very dark picture indeed. But [Brigham] explained to me by his own history, that man must have experience to give satisfaction to his being, although it cost suffering, for no great man ever achieved great acts without receiving wounds that would leave scars of the facts as witness. After he concluded, I remarked that I would give his reasoning due consideration. . . . But being a live Yankee of the old stock, I calculated the part and tried to solve the future, but failed. O, the fates had found me again?

I took Governor Young's reasonings into candid consideration and concluded to begin where I had left off. Going back to Judge Rhoads, I found the object of my search, having been acquainted with her during the winter. [Her name was Rachel Ann Mayer]. She had been Mrs. Rhoads assistant for some time, a large, blond, well-developed girl about twenty years of age, of no ordinary makeup of Swiss descent (see George Mayer above). I soon made my business known and gave her a brief history of my past life. After consulting her parents and friends, she concluded to be my wife, go with me to Iron County and take care of me in my log cabin. . . . I visited my friend, the Governor, and found him in a small kitchen trying to eat some cold potatoes in the dark. He asked me to have some. I thought if ever I was a governor, I should want a better supper and better care. [I then asked and Brigham consented to perform the ceremony later that same evening.] The marriage can be found in the Acts and Doings of Brigham Young, Governor of the Territory of Utah. This was done February 2, 1852.

In Aug. 22 1852, I was again elected Representative to the Legislative Assembly, 3rd session. I remained about 2 years in Salt Lake City and had a son George Henry born 9, Dec. 1852.

*As with the other Georges, we must now leap to the end, merely noting in summary that 9 more children, 35 years, several moves and countless additional interesting experiences and honorably fulfilled assignments later, George and Rachel were still very happily married and living in Spanish Fork, where George was set apart by Lorenzo Snow to serve as Patriarch.*

George served as patriarch from April of 1887 until the day he died at age 81 - September 30, 1895. The area of his Patriarchal jurisdiction ranged from Spanish Fork southward into the state of Arizona. Unlike today, it was the patriarch rather than the blessing recipient who traveled to a blessing site. Thus, George's final years were filled with buggy travel, satisfying that "roving mind" he had inherited from his parents while at the same time justifying the motherly love and faith that had preserved and prepared him for participation in "the great works of the latter days."

The epitaph on his Spanish Fork grave marker aptly identifies George as "a Patriarch and a Patriot."

## A Grandfather's Blessing

Both GW Wilkins and GW Brimhall exercised their authority as family and official church patriarchs to bless their granddaughter, Alsina. That Alsina cherished, read and relied on those (and 2 other patriarchal blessings) is apparent in her repeated references to and quotes from them in her prolific writings. As just one example, we include this 1958 account (complete with pictures) regarding the blessing she received from her Grandpa Brimhall 65 years earlier:

[This] picture is one of my grandfather and grandmother Brimhall and their family. One daughter had died at eighteen years. My grandfather had been ordained a Patriarch in the year 1887 at Provo City, Utah by Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards and Heber J. Grant. One day while I was in his home, the one at which the picture was taken, he said to me "I have a blessing for you." . . . I was then 16 years and 8 months old.

Standing, he placed his hands upon my head saying, "I do at this time in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and by the Holy Priesthood conferred upon me, seal upon thee the power of health, of reason, with strong body to continue to a very old age. (Here I am at eighty one years as I write.)



George Washington and Rachel Ann Mayer Brimhall family (George H. standing directly behind his father).

*Continuing his words; he said:  
"Not many years hence, thou shalt choose a companion. He shall be like unto King David, of a ruddy countenance and for his faithfulness he shall be wise in teaching the children of men the ways of life and salvation in the gospel.  
The young man in the picture with his parents and four of his sisters is standing between two of them. He it was spoken of by the Patriarch.*

(We include the portion of the account in Alsina's own strong, clear hand as a further testament of her strength and reason at age 81. Also worthy of note, the blessing states, "Thy first born shall be learned, even in youth; behold, he goeth forth like a young lion. He shall have great faith judging and ministering unto the children of men. Thy second shall be like unto Nephi's eldest sister and thou shalt name her the same as Jacob's first love; meek and lowly of heart, ever diligent with her hands and her mind." While we don't have room in this edition to say much about Raymond and Rachael (Alsina's first two children), we can say these words their great-grandfather offered years before their births accurately summarize the tributes paid by their closest associates at the time of their respective funerals. In fact, in a recent conversation with John Groberg, President Gordon B. Hinckley recalled working with Raymond (a Stanford Law School graduate) on the General Sunday School Board, commenting that Raymond "was as smart a man and as good a lawyer as any I've ever met."



Lafayette and Jean Holbrook family

## PATRIARCH GEORGE WASHINGTON WILKINS

George Washington Wilkins and his twin brother Charles were born Oct. 28, 1822 at Petersboro, N.H. - the 10th and 11th of 12 children born to Abraham and Mary Emmons Wilkins. Charles did not survive his first year. George, however, thrived. At age 17, he began training as a moulder (mold maker) in a factory. While still working as an apprentice at age 19, he walked past a place where a group had gathered and were singing. The spirit of the song touched his heart and caused him to stop, listen, and eventually enter the meeting. Following the song, he listened to Mormon missionary Eli Magin pray and preach a sermon regarding the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Of this event, George wrote:

I met Mormon missionaries who explained the gospel of salvation as revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet. I was convinced of the truth of their message and formed an intimate acquaintance with them. They urged me to be baptized. I was conscious of a long-standing habit of swearing and decided not to enter the water of baptism until I had repented of that sin. I tried to break the habit that caused me to feel unfit for any divine ordinance. After weeks of effort to rid myself of it, the habit clung to me. At last one of the Elders said to me, "if you will be baptized, I promise you that you will be able to overcome this bad habit." Feeling that he spoke the truth, I was baptized and confirmed a member of the church. The day following my baptism, I had a series of accidents in the performance of my work. These annoyances were of such a character that my fellow workmen all expected me to express my displeasure in my accustomed way. Amazed at my calmness of self-control finally the foreman said to me, "George why don't you swear, for certainly you have cause enough." I then awoke to the fact that I had not been tempted to swear. I have never had an impulse to do so since.

*George's granddaughter, Alsina Brimhall Holbrook, later commented that Grandpa Wilkins "was known to his grandchildren as the kindest man and the freest from faults, so much so that when they heard this incident it was hard to believe that a swear word ever passed his lips. But we always knew he had great faith and we loved to hear him tell his experiences proving it."*

George's baptism took place on Oct. 9, 1842, just a few weeks shy of his 20th birthday. Not long after that birthday, he achieved journeyman status as a moulder and began working for himself. He then moved about a great deal, finally settling in Lowell, Mass., where he met and soon married Catherine Augusta (also spelled Catharine Augusta) Lovett. Mindful of her American Revolution forbearers, Catherine chose July 4, 1846 as their wedding day. *(In fact, the roots of both George and Catherine trace back to the very beginnings of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, with ancestors playing roles of varying significance in historical events as notable as the Revolution and as notorious as the Salem witch trials. Catherine's 4th great-grandfather Benjamin Balch is indentified in many*



**George W. and Catherine A. Wilkins**

*accounts as the first male child born in the Massachusetts Bay Colony).*

While they remained in Massachusetts, George served as President of a 40 member branch of the Church. In April of 1849, they left for Utah with a group of Saints, finally reaching their destination the following October. Shortly thereafter, in response to a general plea from Brigham Young, they adopted a Native American baby from among the many who had been orphaned in recent federally sponsored Indian battles. Regarding this adoption, a descendant Dena Little later recorded:

Grandfather Wilkins and his wife had been married about five years and they had no babies of their own, so as soon as the word came that the white people should take care of these little motherless and fatherless babies, grandfather and his wife were very pleased and willing to do their part so they found a tiny new Indian baby boy and they took him to their home and cared for him as their own baby. They called him Moroni. He grew very nicely and when they had him for about a year our grandparents got a little baby girl of their very own. She was named "Augusta" and as the years went by other children came, [four] boys and two more girls, and so they were very happy with their large family, and felt as if the lord had been very kind to them because they were willing to do their part and take care of the little Indian boy.

Before their baby Augusta ("Gustie") was a year old, the Wilkins (this time in response to a direct call from Brigham Young) left Utah with a company of 500 Saints to establish a settlement in San Bernardino, California. Their sons George and Charles were born there in 1853 and 1854 respectively. Brigham Young recalled the group to Utah in 1855. On the return trip, baby Charles became ill and

(like his father's twin brother Charles) died before his first birthday. Understandably, George and Catherine counted leaving that baby in an unmarked desert grave among the most difficult trials of the lives.

Rather than all returning to Salt Lake City, the San Bernardino Saints divided into smaller groups who in turn stopped to join LDS settlements along the way. The Wilkins made it as far as and finally settled in Spanish Fork. Shortly after arriving in Spanish Fork, George accepted a call to serve as a counselor to the Spanish Fork Ward bishop. He continued in that calling under a new bishop who was called in 1864. When that bishop left to serve a mission in 1866, Brigham Young called a man from a neighboring community as the new bishop but appointed George to serve as "President of the Spanish Fork Ward." It was during those years of service in the various bishoprics that Catherine gave birth to the couples final four children, Alsina Elizabeth in 1856, Lucy in 1858, Joseph in 1860 and Albert in May of 1863.

In 1867 and then again in 1869, George and others became "convinced of the impolicy of leaving the trade and commerce of our city to be conducted by strangers or individual enterprize, [and thus] resolved in public meeting assembly to unite in a system of co-operation for the transaction of our own mercantile institution." The group's 1969 meetings resulted in the formal organization of "Zion's Co-operative Spanish Fork Mercantile Institution," with George selected as its first president.

Following his father's example, Moroni was an industrious worker. By the time he was 21, he had purchased his own wagon and team of horses, owned shares in the co-op, had expressed a desire to preach the gospel to his native people, and was engaged to be married. While working at a job in Big Cottonwood Canyon near Salt Lake City shortly before the scheduled wedding, Moroni contracted a serious illness. Accounts vary as to how George made his way to where Moroni was, but are fairly consistent in relating the detail set forth in the following account from George's daughter-in-law Armintia Wilson Wilkins:

[After calling out to his horses while driving in darkness, George heard a voice call out] "Father, O Father, help." He stopped and asked, "Who's there?" The voice answered, "It is I, your son Moroni." He jumped out of the wagon and hurried to the side of the road where he found Moroni lying on the ground



**Diorama of Mormon settlement in San Bernadina, CA.**

very ill. George W. helped his adopted son into the wagon and brought him back to Spanish Fork, where he lay very sick a long time. Moroni explained that he known his father's voice when he heard him speak near where he lay.

Moroni passed away on May 24, 1871. He bequeathed all that he had acquired (including savings and assets in addition to those noted above) to his mother as a final expression of his love and his appreciation for her constant love, devotion to and acceptance of him as her own in a day when racial inequality and intolerance was otherwise the norm. Moroni is buried in the Wilkins family plot in the Spanish Fork Cemetery.

Near the time of Moroni's death George was called on a mission to England where he was appointed to preside over the Bedford and Norwich Conference. Regarding the close of that mission, Vol. 18 of a book called "Our Pioneer Heritage" informs that "the steamship Minnesota sailed from Liverpool, England, with 602 Saints, in charge of Geo. W. Wilkins. The company landed in New York, Sept. 17th, and arrived at Salt Lake City, Sept. 26th [1872]." (The Minnesota was of the same class and line as the ship that brought the Anders Groberg family to America earlier that same year - see picture in the first newsletter).

Catherine came down with what was to be her final illness in 1874 as her daughter Alsina was preparing for her marriage to George H. Brimhall. Upon hearing that Alsina planned to postpone the wedding because of her illness, Catherine called the young couple to her bedside to give her final blessing and to



**George W. and Mary Mayer Wilkins**

extract a promise from them that they would not delay or otherwise change their wedding plans in any way on account of her impending death. Catherine Augusta died on December 5, 1874. Alsina and George H. were married on December 28.

Two years after his wife died, George was called on another mission to the New England states, his former home. During his two year absence, Alsina and George Brimhall moved into and managed his home and other affairs. While there in the home where she had been born, Alsina gave birth to her second daughter and namesake, Alsina Elizabeth.

When he returned from his mission in 1886, George married Mary M. Mayer (who, on the off chance you missed it in the other two accounts, was the youngest daughter of George Mayer and his second wife, Maria Cable, also making her the youngest half-sister of Rachel Ann Mayer Brimhall). Four children were born to this marriage: Naamey, Eugene, Heber and Lorin.

Several accounts of George's life include the following tribute offered in October 1891

by his friend and neighbor William Robertson (who your editor Matt Powell feels compelled to gratuitously note is his own great-great grandfather): "George W. Wilkins we have known as a wise and careful counselor, a kind and affectionate husband, a true and loving devoted father, an honorable and true citizen, neighbor and friend."

In a later tribute, George's granddaughter Alsina wrote that George "prospered about the same as most of those settlers. Their molasses mill and other produce raised was not always perfect but was shared with the Lord in tithes and all the people saw to it that no one went hungry." Alsina's husband, Lafayette Hinckley Holbrook, noted: "I had several visits with Grandfather Wilkins late in his life when he had again married and had a younger family. He was a refined, likeable, and intelligent typical pioneer and reportedly always was a good speaker and active church member. I knew all but one of the children of both families and most of the grandchildren. All were highly respected and some prominent in the affairs of our state."

On Aug. 18, 1901, one month before turning 79, George was set apart by Apostle George Teasdale to fill the position of Patriarch for the Spanish Fork Area - the same position held by brother-in-law George Washington Brimhall from 1887 until his death in 1895 and by father-in-law George Mayer during the last year of his life in 1896. George Washington Wilkins (nearly doubling the tenure of those noted predecessors) faithfully fulfilled his responsibilities in that calling until the end of his life at age 93 on March 9, 1916.

## Patriarch

—continued from page 1

### —A Patriarch even a Matriarch-in-law can love.

Mothers-in-law throughout history have been notoriously sensitive to (if not overly critical of) the patriarchal qualities of the men their daughters marry.

Given Alsina Holbrook's frequently professed and manifest devotion to her daughter Jennie, we can safely assume that few, if any, sons-in-law have ever been subjected to greater scrutiny in this regard than Jennie's husband Delbert. Indeed, Alsina's voluminous writings establish that she was an exception to the general mother-in-law oversight rule only to the extent that she consistently was able to report that Delbert measured up in all respects. She included one such report in a tender recounting of events surrounding the birth of Delbert and Jennie's second daughter, Julia:

\*This little sister [Julia] was in no hurry to come but just a day or so after Christmas Daddy and Mama went to the hospital to get her with full expectancy that it would not take long. Somehow someone of the workers said there was a note left to call the Dr. at 6 o'clock. This instruction was to the letter obeyed. Julia, in her own way tried to tell them she was ready, but everybody said no, at 6 we will call the Dr.

This Dr. had always said, "follow nature; I have great respect for the 'Old Biddy.'" But no

one awakened him at home until daddy rebelled after many hours of mama's suffering when the nurse would say "hold that pain," meaning "don't let it progress." He, your daddy, called the doctor and you came as you wished.

About breakfast time he came home [and] melted to a flood of tears, all the time telling me they had a baby girl and now everything

was alright. [The forced delay, however, resulted in some fairly significant complications that required Jennie to remain in the hospital for a time].

One night while Jennie was still in the hospital, he [Delbert] sat meditating after Mary Jane's little curly head drooped in his arms and he carried her to bed.

I was sort of quietly thinking of their problems and wishing I

might say the right thing to encourage him. I was wanting to help him and possibly myself too; but I arose to go to bed also, as I saw he was still in deep thought - but I lingered as I moved on for I saw a change in his personality for a moment his hair seemed almost white,

there was a very pleasant look of calmness and assurance in fact, very much of a Patriarchal person as they were in those days - nearly always Patriarchs were chosen from the ranks of those who were fully ripe in experience. That was all, but it gave me the satisfaction that all was to be well and their problems of now would work out in their hands and a great and wonderful work would be theirs thru the constant devotion to their family with the Church as the great instrument.

Then one day, a short time after he had become a patriarch; I was sitting in the B.Y.U. Field House as one of the audience in morning devotion. Delbert and Jennie were sitting on the platform facing father and I. I glanced at Delbert. His arms were folded and his chin slightly touching or inclining downward - His hair a bit streaked with gray. Something in his personality reminded me of 1932 when Julia was born. What was it? Well, he was a Patriarch, with all the powers to bless the members of the church. That was a real pleasant experience, and I can partially realize how he and Jennie must enjoy that work together.

[\*except for minor additions offset by brackets for clarification or summary, all spelling and punctuation appears as it is in the original handwritten account.]



DELBERT GROBERG  
I'll be content with present circumstances, yet I'll strive to make them better



D.V. Groberg with 1 year old Mary Jane.