

ABEL MORGAN SARGENT (1798-1847)

SARAH EDWARDS (1806-1839)

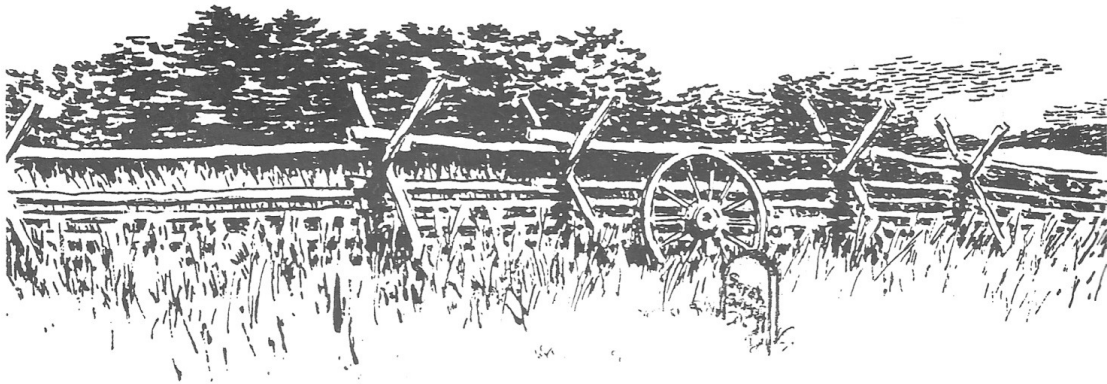
At the present time, limits have been reached on the ancestry of Abel Morgan and Sarah (Edwards) Sargent. Abel Morgan's parents were John (temple index card gave his name as Abel Morgan) and Sarah (Tunis) Sargent. It is possible that the father was called by the name of John and that his real name was Abel Morgan, Sr. This data is still in question. Upon request, Arvin M. Grant of Salt Lake City, sent a letter dated August 14, 1966, which included several notations attributed to Mrs. Drusilla (Rich) Streeper, a great granddaughter of Abel Morgan and Sarah (Edwards) Sargent. Mrs. Streeper suggested that the most promising line of research would be found in tracing the Sargent family found in Frederick County, Maryland, around the year 1775, and that the same research would apply to the Tunis family. She also mentioned that there were members of the Tunis family in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as in Maryland, with allied families, who may be descended from Abraham Tunis, one of the founders of Germantown; Pennsylvania. <sup>1</sup>

The Sargent family were living in western Maryland when Abel Morgan was born, February 28, 1798. He grew to manhood and attended schools there, graduating from Tunis College in Maryland. His grandparents on his mother's line were Henry and Phebe Tunis, well respected, financially secure people of Maryland. Abel Morgan taught school in several localities of the east before he decided to travel west to Indiana. He located, and taught school in Floyd County, Indiana, where he met and married Sarah Edwards, daughter of David and Drusilla Edwards, on August 25, 1822.

The family records of Mrs. Streeper, of mention, gives the added information that David Edwards, Sarah's father, was born November 26, 1774 and died November 17, 1858, and that he married Drusilla March 8, 1801. She also stated that the Edwards were well-to-do farmers in the area of Floyd County, Indiana. Sarah was born to them on October 9, 1806 and she grew up in Floyd County where she met and married the handsome and respected school teacher, Abel Morgan Sargent. We are told that Sarah was "a kind, attractive, intelligent daughter of wealthy parents". <sup>2</sup>

The most complete treatise on the lives of Abel Morgan and his wife, Sarah, is found in "Let Us Walk with a Saint" which is included in its entirety herein and follows later. However, at the risk of making some repetitions, it seems that the remarks of Mrs. Streeper should be on record as she was a direct descendant. She mentions the facts that Abel and Sarah heard the message of the restored gospel of Christ from Mormon missionaries during the early days of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and joined the group of Saints that had gathered in Jackson County, Missouri. They and their young family experienced the horrible persecutions that came upon the members of the Church at the time of their expulsion from Missouri. The Sargents escaped to return to Indiana where Sarah died and was buried on the Edwards family homestead. <sup>3</sup>

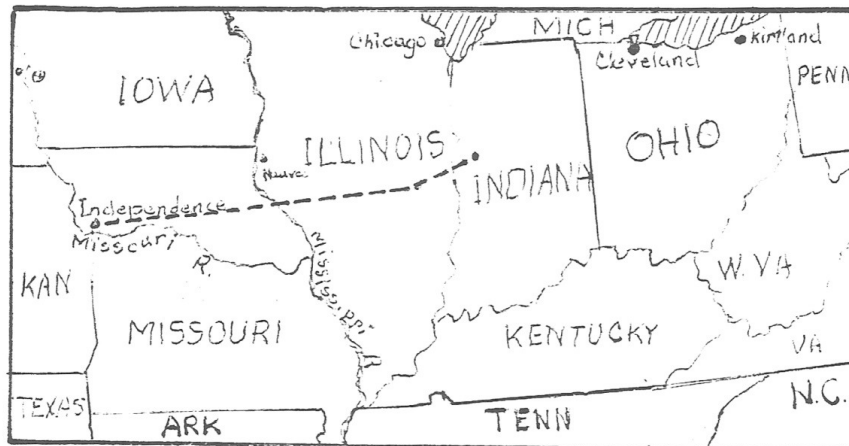
Abel Morgan and his children passed through the sorrow of losing Sarah, the wife and mother, who died March 17, 1839. We are told in "Let Us Walk With a Saint" that she died giving birth to her tenth child, a still-born son.



With courage and faith,  
Tenderness and love,  
She met the hardships  
Of early-day life.

The journey of Abel Morgan and Sarah (Edwards) Sargent from Independence to Indiana was traveled on the course taken by the Saints when they left Kirtland, Ohio for Independence and Far West, Missouri. It was, no doubt, the same route that the Sargents had taken when they had left Indiana earlier to join the Saints in Missouri.

Families had great difficulty in making their escape. A large number of them went to St. Louis in a state of utter destitution after losing all their personal property. Many moved on to build the city of Nauvoo, Illinois, on the banks of the Mississippi River. (Map #17)



THE SARGENTS TRAVEL BACK TO INDIANA

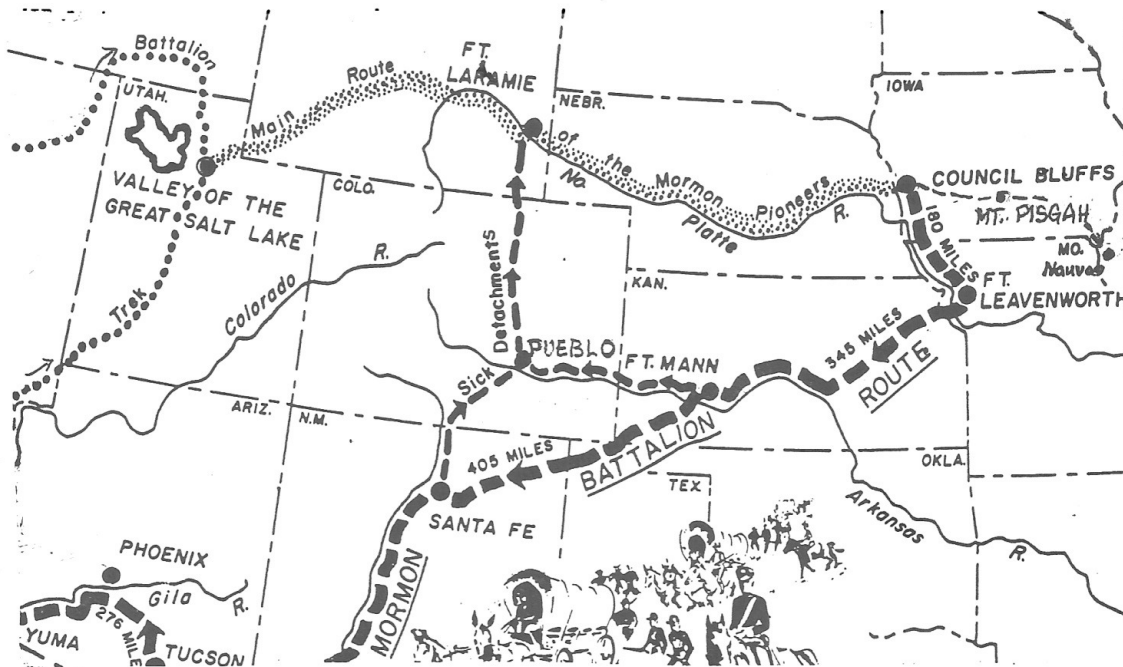
Hardships of persecutions took their toll upon the lives of the church members and the health of all the Sargent family was bad. They had escaped from Missouri, in the midst of mobbings, after being driven from their home and they had fled over the prairie to the home of Sarah's parents in Indiana, arriving there in destitute circumstances. Abel was left with seven children to care for. (The first two had died in infancy) There remained Drusilla, 13; Martha Jane, 12; Sarah, 10; David, 8; Harriet, 7; Caroline, 4, and Thomas, 2.

In the notes received from Arvin M. Grant, Mrs. Streeper went on to state:

"Poverty, and the loss of his companion, forced Abel Morgan to leave his youngest children with their grandparents, who later refused to give them up when he was settled again with the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. A boat or skiff was made by the father and the children were stolen away and taken to a place of safety on the banks of the Mississippi river and preparations were then made to start on their great journey to find a home in the West. They passed through the harrowing scenes at Nauvoo, Illinois, and made it to Winter Quarters with others in their attempt to make temporary settlements on the Missouri River before crossing the plains to the Rocky Mountains. It is very possible that the three older daughters were married by this time. We know that Martha Jane was married to Norman Sharp before leaving Nauvoo. That left only Harriet, 14; Caroline, 10; and Thomas, 9, who were still in the care of their father. David had died during the Nauvoo mobbings. Harriet was taken in by the Riches who gave her a good home." <sup>4</sup>

Harriet, later, in 1847, became the sixth and last polygamist wife of Charles Coulson Rich, who became an Apostle of the Church.

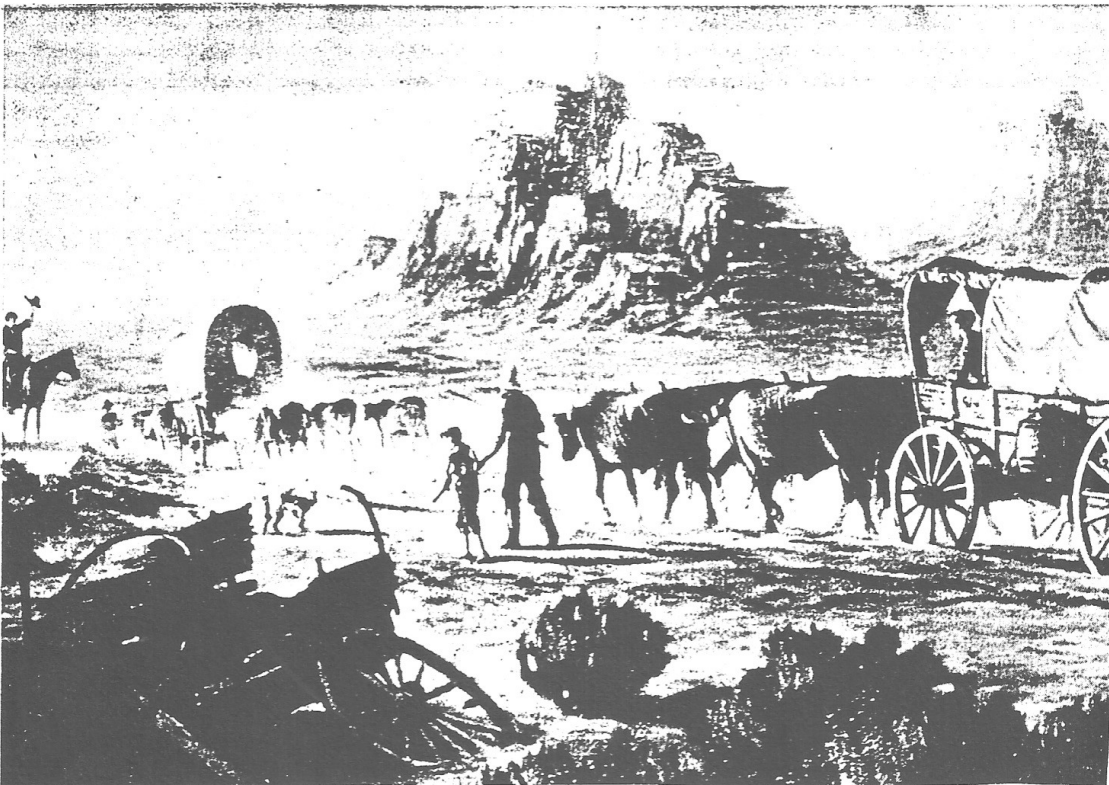
Abel Morgan and his family traveled the route from Nauvoo to Mount Pisgah (map #17) with immigrant groups on this first lap of the pioneer trek. At this point the Government of the United States made a request of the Mormons to furnish five hundred men to join the army and march to California. The book "Meet the Mormons" expresses the manner of the response in these words:



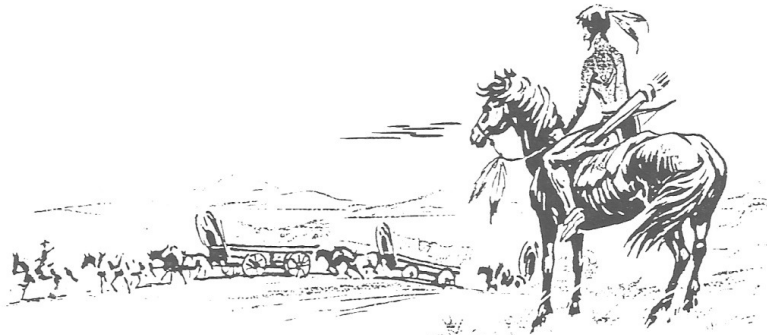
"Leaders of the church had been seeking aid from the government, and while this was far from being the kind of help they would have chosen, yet in it Brigham Young saw an overture for peace and a chance to demonstrate to the people of the United States that the Mormons were loyal to America. So, even though he knew filling the quota would throw added burdens upon an already sadly oppressed people, leaving many families to brave the plains without the help of fathers or grown boys, Brigham Young encouraged the men to enlist, and the company of five hundred was raised." <sup>5</sup>

Able Morgan became a member of the Mormon Battalion. His son-in-law, Norman Sharp, the husband of Martha Jane, also enlisted. Martha Jane and Caroline accompanied them on the overland march as far as Santa Fe, New Mexico. (map #30) Thomas, the young son of Abel Morgan, had been left with other pioneer families at Winter Quarters with intentions that his father would return later to get him. Abel's health failed on the way to Santa Fe being older than most of the men on the march and he was sent with a sick detachment from Santa Fe to Pueblo, Colorado. His daughters, Martha and Caroline, as well as Norman Sharp were sent back to help with the sick soldiers, but Norman suffered from an accidental shooting and died before reaching Pueblo.

The winter was spent in Pueblo and in the following spring the journey was made to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving four days after the Brigham Young Pioneer Company on July 24, 1847 (July 29) Soon thereafter Abel Morgan returned, as he had planned, to the Missouri River to get his young son, Thomas, who was then ten years of age. (Map #17)



Traveling the pioneer trail from Council Bluffs to the Salt Lake Valley was done in a remarkable, orderly manner. The organization of each company of wagons was precise. Each hundred wagons had a wagon master with Captains over each ten. Brigham Young had issued specific rules of conduct so that the journey could be made with the least trouble and so that any kinds of friction would be minimal. Rulan S. Howell, who wrote "The Mormon Story", mentions the following details of interest:



"The Indians were a constant threat to the pioneer travelers. At night the wagons were brought into a circle and the horses and mules were tied inside the circular barricade, while the oxen and cattle were guarded a safe distance from camp. When the pioneers camped by a stream, they formed a semicircle with the wagons, the river forming one side of their defense. One of the front wheels of each wagon was rolled against the hind wheel of the wagon ahead. Most of the men took turns standing guard over the cattle at night.

#### WAGON CIRCLE



by William H. Jackson

"Swift streams had to be crossed. There were always hazards to meet. As they met and overcame them, they would leave behind trails and rafts, as well as instructions, to help those who would follow.

"After the long trek of the day, with its chores done and the meal over, they would often sing and dance to divert their thoughts from the devious tasks of the day and the sorrows of parting from loved ones and friends who had died on the way and were buried along the trail." 6

Abel Morgan Sargent was a lover of music and a talented singer, so we can be sure he enjoyed those evenings when the travelers gathered to sing hymns around a campfire. "Come, Come, Ye Saints, written for the Saints in 1846, by William Clayton, and "O, My Father", written by Eliza R. Snow in 1843, were favorite Mormon songs that cheered the weary as they crossed the plains.

On just such evenings as this, Abel Morgan and his ten year old son had taken their turns of guard duty through the night while traveling with their particular company of wagons. Thomas was on duty the night that his father died. It has been said that Thomas' sorrow at this incident contributed to his failing condition as he, too, contracted the dreaded cholera. Both father and son died within a few hours of one another and were buried the next day in the same grave, somewhere near the Black Hills of Wyoming. It is sad to be reminded that the gladness that was no doubt felt by these two people, as they were reunited to make the journey to the Salt Lake Valley, was so soon ended. They had traveled more than half the distance of the trail, having passed Fort Laramie, but not yet reaching Independence Rock. (see map #17)

The many pioneer experiences of the Sargents are given in more detail in the story, "Let Us Walk with a Saint", written by Eva Rice Howell. It is a biographical sketch colored with church historical events. It is repeated here, in full, to make a more complete review of all that is known of Abel Morgan Sargent. He was a sincere church-man who loved the Lord and his prophets, Joseph Smith, Jr. and Brigham Young. His sacrifices were many, and were made willingly. Without a doubt, his great goal in life was to reap the rewards of faithfulness.

#### LET US WALK WITH A SAINT

In one's search for ancestors long since passed away, it sometimes happens that the name of that person appears on a list of men united in some order, such as the Mormon Battalion, with a brief sketch of his life; or find he is listed on a card in the Nauvoo Temple Endowment files, as was the case of Abel Morgan Sargent, the subject of this sketch.

For the researcher to be content with such meager information and say, "Little is known", shows a lack of the Spirit of Elijah, which was promised to those who seek after their departed forefathers. Since the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our Latter-day Prophet, Joseph Smith, this spirit of Elijah has been at work among men and will touch the hearts, turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers, if we heed the admonition of our Prophet by prayerfully and diligently seeking after our dead.

Abel Morgan Sargent was just a name on a card. It is our problem and

sacred duty to bring this card name to life; see that he walks erect among men again, and give him the credit due him for the part he played. A challenge?

This man was a member of the Mormon Battalion. Can their records help us? Although very brief, we find much that helps us to identify him. His birth date and the State in which he was born, his parents' names and the name of his deceased wife. It also states that two of his daughters went with the Battalion. In the D. U. P. files we find the story of the women of the Mormon Battalion. Now we are slowly moving forward. Soon Abel can step off his card and with him we shall walk over many miles, shed tears of sorrow and joy, become acquainted with his posterity who touch many lives.

This good man was named Abel Morgan Sargent by his parents, John Sargent and Sarah Tunnis. His birth is said to be 27 February 1798 or 9, in West Maryland. Look back to the days of 1798. The United States as a nation was but 25 years old. Transportation was limited to walking, horseback, or carts and wagons. Said boats and ships carried men and cargo over the oceans and seas. Rivers were great main highways throughout the land. Cities were built along these waterways. Communications were sent by messengers, the receiver paid the cost, not the sender. Schools were for males only and none were free.

Abel's parents must have been of a refined, high class type for we find that Abel attended school and went to college at Tunis, Maryland, and taught school in several localities. He also loved music and was a very good vocalist. Many of his descendants have inherited this talent.

Abel's daughter, Harriet Sargent Rich, tells us her father was a fine looking man with black wavy hair, dark brown eyes and a fair complexion. Her mother, Sarah Edwards, was fair with light hair and blue eyes.

Sarah's parents, David and Drusilla Edwards, were well-to-do plantation owners in Indiana. Harriet also tells us she was a little child when her parents joined the Latter-day Saints Church. At this time (1963), the date they joined the church is unknown.

This brief bit of information is also gleaned from Harriet's story: "As a result of the persecutions and driving of the Mormons from their homes and farm lands, Father took Mother to her parents' home in Indiana, for their health was bad. As a result of all these hardships, Sarah Sargent died giving birth to her tenth child, a still born son. The death date of this noble mother is 17 March 1839. If one really wishes to walk where this good man trod, we must seek "and ye shall find". Christ said, "My sheep know my voice". Surely Abel and Sarah are counted among His Sheep for they heard and accepted the message of His Latter-day Prophets.

People who had joined the Latter-day Saints Church were gathering from all parts of the Eastern States and foreign lands to places known as Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri, and other nearby localities. Abel and Sarah with their children were located as near as we can find, through much research, in Fountain County Indiana where the Saints were traveling between Kirtland and Independence, Missouri, probably this is where they heard the gospel. Caroline also gave her birth place as West Liberty, Jackson County, Missouri,

when she had temple work performed. West Liberty was a place by that name at the time, but not found on maps today, possibly a settlement near Independence. Abel built a small boat and took his family down the Missouri River to safety when the mobbings and persecutions were so prevalent in and around Jackson County. The "Grim Reaper" had taken three of their children while small. They were Phoebe, John and David. The living children were Drusilla, Martha Jane, Sarah, Harriet, Caroline and a son, Thomas, was born to them about 1837 or 8.

A committee of twelve Missourians had been sent to Mr. Phelps, editor of the Mormon's local paper, and a few other Mormon leaders in that place, demanding that they agree to leave Jackson county. Mr. Phelps said he had no authority to tell 2,000 people what they had to do. He needed at least 90 days to confer with the Church leaders.

He was given two hours--no more. The conference ended and the committee went back to report. The Mormons were given fifteen minutes to make up their minds. Thereupon, the men proceeded to the home of Mr. Phelps. They took possession, threw the printing press out of the upstairs window, drove Mrs. Phelps into the street with a sick baby, tore the roof off the house and destroyed books of literary value to the Church. From there they went to homes of the Saints, caught several of the men and dragged them to the public square where they were "decorated with tar and feathers", as an anti-Mormon gleefully reported.

Later, Lieutenant Governor Boggs said to some of the Saints, "You now know what our Jackson County boys can do. You must leave this county."

That night, in darkness, the women and children who had fled in terror, returned to their homes in fear and apprehension.

In July, 500 men began searching for the Leaders of the Church, swearing they would bestow fifty to 500 lashes on the backs of all whom they caught. The fiends shouted, "We will whip and kill the men, we will destroy their children and ravish their women!"

The Saints saw there would be no protection from county, state or nation. They had only to leave. The enemy agreed to leave them alone to sell their property which had been bought legally and in good faith. Instead, local men formed mobs, entered homes of the Saints, ransacked every place, beat the men folk and in many cases burned the houses. Ministers and soldiers vied with each other in inflaming the people near and far against the Latter-day Saints.

The foregoing gives us a picture of what was going on in and around the country. Now we see why Abel and Sarah, with their children, went to the home of Sarah's parents in Floyd County, Indiana. The ravages of mob depredations claimed two more victims with the passing of Sarah and her stillborn child.

It takes no great amount of imagination to follow this family in the face of the historical records dealing with these uncivilized actions meted out against a defenseless people who had reportedly "broken no law". Two hundred and three homes had been destroyed by fire and otherwise. Added to the loss of other property, \$175,000 worth of property was sacrificed by the Saints for which they received no compensation ever.



Not all of the people at that time were against the Latter-day Saints. Here is an excerpt from Quincy Argus, March 16, 1839: "We have no language sufficiently strong for the expression of our indignation and shame at the recent transactions in our sister state...we could wish her star stricken out from the union. She has written her own character in letters of blood and stained it by acts of merciless cruelty and brutality that the waters of ages cannot efface...an organized mob, aided by...civil and military officers of Missouri with Gov. Boggs at the head have been actors in this business... of political hatred and by...motives of plunder." (Taken from History of Utah by O. F. Whitney.)

Lucy Mack Smith, Mother of the Prophet, in her story of the life of her son, tells us the Prophet Joseph, upon hearing what had happened to the Saints in Jackson County, burst into tears and cried, "Oh My God! What shall I do, What shall I do."

It was no wonder that defection occurred in great numbers in Kirtland, Ohio, as well as other parts of the country where the Saints were located. Many Mormons driven from their homes in Missouri turned against the Prophet and the Church, some joining with mobs. The Prophet said, "I feel thankful that no more have denied the Faith. I pray God in the name of Jesus Christ that you may all keep the faith unto the end; let your sufferings be what they may, it is better in the eyes of God that you should lose your life than that you give up the Faith".

This simple statement, "Father took Mother to her parents due to the persecutions ", begins to mean more to us when we have a better understanding of the manner of suffering they endured. We should pay homage to a couple who stayed firm in the Faith as their Prophet had prayed, that they and others of like strength would do. Let your head bow in reverence to them.

Here we come to another period of silence. We do know that Abel and three daughters went to Nauvoo, Illinois, but not the exact time. He had to leave Thomas, who was too young to travel, and Drusilla, who was afflicted with "swollen limbs", with their grandparents in Indiana. A daughter tells us that Martha Jane and Harriet worked in the homes of the Saints in Nauvoo. Caroline stayed with Martha Jane, who had cared for her since their Mother's death. Sarah was with them for we find she married John Stutesman some time later when she was of age.

Try to walk in the footsteps of this faithful Saint as he makes his way with three motherless daughters to a frontier place to take up a life so different from the one he had known as a respected school teacher in various localities.

What is Nauvoo like as the Sargents begin a new life here among the Saints? Surely Abel helped to build the Temple, the second one in these latter days. He would be very grateful to be associated again with the Prophet Joseph, whom he loved so much as a leader and a kind, cheerful, hospitable friend. Abel's heart must have swelled with pride at the sight of the Prophet on his favorite horse as their Commander of the Nauvoo Legion.

A visitor to Nauvoo, Mr. Newhall, wrote in the Salem Advertiser: "I sought in vain for anything that bore the marks of immorality, but was both

astonished and pleased at my ill success. No drunkards could I see, no loungers in or about taverns. I saw no...ruffians or the ill bred or impudent. I heard not an oath, I saw not a gloomy face; all were polite, cheerful and industrious. In fact, one could not buy 'ardent spirits' in the city."

Another visitor of 1844 said, "When I was told this place was but five years old...that it had been a swampy wilderness...I could scarcely believe my senses."

This was the type of city Abel and others were enjoying; the largest city in Illinois. Young shade trees lined the well laid out streets of this city. Back of neat picket fences were lawns and flowers and back of the comfortable well built homes were gardens and fruit trees. Many of the citizens were descendants of Revolutionary War heroes. Here we count among these : thrifty, God-fearing patriotic people, Abel Sargent, the lonely heart.

At the historic grove just beyond the steadily rising Temple, the Saints attended conferences and celebrations under the leadership of their Prophet. Let us take part in a celebration in 1843, the last one conducted by that noble man, Joseph Smith.

Multitudes gathered to hear the oratory, the Nauvoo Legion Band and many forms of amusement that day. Quoting from history it is said, "This band could not be duplicated for hundreds of miles. To that celebration came 15,000 spectators to attend. Three steamers on the Mississippi River brought thousands of guests from Quincy, Burlingham, and St. Louis. A gallant welcoming committee met each boat. They were conducted to the historic grove and seated." From the Quincy Whig, "The assembly convinced me that the Mormons had been grossly slandered. They respect, cherish and love the free institutions of our country as all patriots do. The services of the day opened with a chaste and appropriate prayer."

Nauvoo, to those Latter-day Saints, became a holy city and a sacred shrine.

Let us listen to the tumult in this fair city in June, 1844. Their Prophet and his brother Hyrum were murdered in cold blood in Carthage jail by white men with blackened faces. These beloved martyrs were carried to Nauvoo in open boxes shaded by a few willow branches. When the Saints assembled to hear what Willard Richards had to tell them, after his return from Carthage, Abel Sargent must have been there.

When you look for courage, when you need an example of living the teachings of Christ, hear what Apostle Richards said, "Bro. Taylor and I, as Apostles of the Church, have pledged there will be no violence." It was not cowardice. It was faith expressed in the due process of the law. To kill was punishable only by legalized authorities. It was "doing good for evil" and being kind "to those who spitefully use you".

Not one of those who took part in that murder was ever punished by the laws of the land. But read in Lundwall's "Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith", and learn how God punished all who were implicated in murder that sad day.

The great moral victory of that day went by unnoted. The enemies were

sure that once Joseph Smith was destroyed the Mormons and all that concerned them would simply disintegrate. From the great number of apostasies that followed, they had good reason to rejoice. But they did not know that man cannot destroy the work of God. Nor were they happy when men like Abel Sargent and hundreds of others went right on working on the Temple and carrying forward the affairs of the Church. These actions caused their enemies to renew their relentless persecutions.

Records show that the Nauvoo Temple was completed and dedicated to the Lord in face of the fact all the people knew it must soon be left to Satan's agents to despoil. Many of the worthy Saints were privileged to enter its sacred rooms to receive their Endowments. Abel Morgan Sargent received his Endowments on February 3, 1846. Is he still waiting for his descendants to bring to him his beloved wife and children that they may go on to their exaltation?

Where were the living members of the family of Abel Morgan Sargent in February of 1846? Martha Jane has become the wife of a young Mormon by the name of Norman Sharp. Caroline is still with Martha Jane. Harriet, now a well-developed charming young lady of 14 or 15 years, is living with the family of Charles Coulson Rich. Drusilla has married and Thomas is still with his grandparents in Indiana.

Abel's life has been full of sorrow and strife, but nothing has been more heartbreaking than the events leading up to the expulsion of the Saints from Nauvoo the Beautiful. These law-abiding citizens in a so-called "free land" making ready to flee from civilization's boundaries at the demand of the State Governor.

It was in February 1846 that these outcasts began to cross the Mississippi River and then camp in the snow a few miles beyond its banks. Before they had agreed to leave their homes and everything they possessed, facing hostile Indians and the bitterness of a sub-zero winter, the government authorities gave their word that all would be done by them to influence the mobs against renewed attacks, and help the people to dispose of their property. Not only did they fail in this, but they looked on as mobs took over many homes with no sale at all. Here was robbery at its protected best.

Out in the almost trackless area, snow had to be shovelled before tents could be pitched. Many had no tents and used wagon boxes for shelter, if room could be found in them, or tried to sleep under their wagons in the snow. Great bonfires lighted up the camp which, in a few weeks, amounted to 400 wagons. People throughout the camps were cheerful, reported authorities who visited the scenes.

Of an evening, when the day had not been too disagreeable, the people danced in the snow to a fiddle or a trumpet. No camp sight was lacking in musicians. Songs rang out in praises to God on the cold night air. Not far away these outcasts knew lawless people rested secure in their homes while they must try to rest on the snow covered ground.

From "The History of Utah", by O. F. Whitney, we read, "One of the first weeks out from Nauvoo, President Young had the people out in a dance to the

merry music of Pitts Brass Band. Not inside of a well heated, brightly lighted hall, but out in sub-zero weather with a clear sky for a roof and trodden snow for a floor. Men and boys gathered wood for huge fires that lighted up the area and were seen far off by citizens, who came often to witness the strange, interesting scene. They could scarcely believe these were the homeless Mormons forced to flee from "civilization", bound, they know not where. Often these Iowa strangers helped gather wood for the camp fires--helped clear away the snow, then enjoy the fun of watching and listening to the music. These uninvited guests were amazed to see the order and good will that prevailed. Abel Sargent, his lovely daughters, and son-in-law were there.

From the records of the Mormon Battalion we know that Abel Sargent and his family were with the Saints at Mt. Pisgah when word came that the United States had the nerve to ask for 500 volunteers from these outcasts to help with the war with Mexico. These people did not lack spunk. They resented the call and many refused to take the call in any degree of tolerance, but it was felt, and later proved, that to do otherwise would lead enemies to call the Mormons disloyal. Still later, it was learned that a plan was set in motion to invade the fleeing Saints by an army, take from them their arms, (not a new tactic by the State's government!) and, if necessary, destroy all hope or possibility of these homeless people going forward or back. Five hundred men and boys signed up without knowing the trick back of the call.

The sad question is often asked, why were men almost fifty years old permitted to join up? They had to. Many young men and lads were all over the area trying to get work as they had done all the way along, cutting down trees building pole fences, digging wells, building barns, anything in exchange for money, food or other needed supplies. So the older men enlisted. Abel Sargent was one of those older men who felt it was his duty to answer the call. His son-in-law, Norman Sharp, also enlisted and, according to Battalion records, Martha Jane Sargent Sharp and Caroline Sargent, about 11 years of age, went with them. Harriet Sargent remained with the Charles C. Rich family.

When the enlistment was completed, "a more merry party was never given than the one at Council Bluffs in honor of the departing men". This was held in a primitive bowery on a trodden earth floor. Violins, jingling bells, a few horns and tamborines kept all dancing. In this dance were our Abel Sargent and his children.

Before Abel was many weeks on the trail, his daughter Harriet became the sixth wife of Apostle Charles C. Rich, one of the great leaders and colonizers of the West. It would be months before Abel would learn of his daughter's good fortune.

July 20, 1846, these ill prepared men took up their memorable march. Be it known that the Leaders of the L. D. S. Church had asked the President of the United States to accept their services in building forts and carrying freight westward to different forts, but nothing could have been a greater sacrifice at this time than to be asked for 500 of the able-bodied men to leave and furnish their own outfits, so badly needed by the outcasts in their flight. It meant that many families were left without a provider. True, the Saints

had little to be grateful for to their government. They had called upon officials in Washington, D. C. for justice after being robbed and driven in Missouri and Illinois but were snubbed. "Your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you", are words that rang in the ears of the offended Mormon citizens, spoken by the President of the United States.

One historian said, "To comply was a manifestation of unselfishness not often paralleled in the history of men". Some historians tell us it was not an unfriendly act of the U. S. Government. Capt. James Allen, who was to be commanding officer was a friend of the Saints. He gave them much consideration. President Young, with other leaders, felt it was a blessing, for the money given the enlisted men could be sent back to the Church to provide much needed provisions. The amount was \$42.00 per year.

President Young and other leaders met with the Battalion on the banks of the Missouri River to give them parting advice and blessings. President Young's words were, in part, "...the expedition would result in great good and their names should be held in honorable remembrance to all generations. Remember to be prayerful, do not profane, be clean in personal habits and ever be virtuous. Keep this advice and you will not be called upon to kill any man." Where was ever a branch of the service in any government sent toward a battle field with such words as these from the lips of a Prophet?

Capt. Allen was considerate as long as he lived, but Adj. Dykes, one of the command, was a great walker and in spite of Capt. Allen, the men were forced to walk long distances daily. Thus, right from the start, many men began to feel the stress, their strength was failing before some reached Fort Leavenworth. A few of the men bought ponies from the Indians to ride upon, but all suffered in the boiling July sun. By the 24th of July 1846, they were out of flour and no place to buy any. Abel Sargent and his loved ones, as well as the rest, slept many nights after a long walk in the hot sun with nothing to eat but parched corn. Sometimes they walked 15 to 20 miles a day in dust and heat with hunger as a constant companion.

At last a man hired to deliver flour stopped at a distance from their camp with a wagonload of flour. He refused to take it to the quartermaster and get a receipt for it because the company was made up of Mormons. Enraged, the Colonel ordered it delivered at once or the freighter would be arrested and put under guard. Flour was had at last.

Always the roads were bad, the few inhabitants along the way were miserably poor. Some of them were found to have been among the Missouri mobocrats who admitted the fact to the passing Battalion. Some confessed they had been misled by false rumors and regretted having taken part in those wicked acts.

Marching to the tune, "The Girl I Left Behind Me", the Battalion passed through St. Joseph, Missouri where Luke Johnson resided. Johnson, once an Apostle in the Church, but now on the outside, called upon Sgt. William Hyde and informed Hyde that the Missourians were astonished at the course the Mormons were taking. Upon hearing of President Polk's request, he, Johnson, and many others, predicted the Saints would reject the call. When they saw the Mormon Battalion march through the land with such civility and good order they were dumbfounded.

On July 30, 1846, they camped on a small creek just outside of Bloomington. By 9:00 p.m., the wind commenced to blow with such a gale that trees fell all around the camp. Men hurried out of their rude brush shelters--few had tents. Eighty smouldering camp fires, whipped up by the wind, added to the terrors of that dreadful night. Here, with fires to fight, winds blowing, trees crashing to the ground, lightning flashing and thunder rolling like nothing they had ever experienced before, not a man or horse was injured by the falling trees that literally covered the earth by morning. It was a marvel to the owner of the campgrounds.

The people of a thriving little town, Weston, were also astonished when they heard of President Polk's request. Some said it was a disgrace and a shame upon the United States. Many said, "No one but Mormons, under such forbidding circumstances, would have enlisted."

At last the Battalion reached Ft. Levenworth. Now they could set up a tent city. These tents lacked comfort in heat or cold, but they were better than the brush-made wigwams. Soon songs rang out in the camp. Listen! Can you hear the fine voices of Abel and his family?

After nearly two months of marching from Council Bluffs to Ft. Levenworth directly down the Missouri River, here, for the first time, they carried guns enough to go around. Camp supplies were issued which had been totally lacking all the way.

It was August 4, 1846, when these men drew their Government issue. Here before the quartermaster were 500 men who could sign their own names. This was a compliment to the Mormon Battalion for two out of three in other outfits could not sign their own names. Capt. Allen said his Mormon Battalion was the most intelligent and obedient men he had ever had. He had "never had to give a word of command a second time. These men, although unacquainted with military tactics, were willing to obey orders".

Their first Sabbath day in Ft. Levenworth was spent attending religious services.

The weather was extremely hot--101° in the shade. Whitney's History of Utah states, "About one week after leaving Ft. Levenworth these men were again visited by a furious windstorm. The constant roar of the wind, thunder, lightning and falling hail on the tents was said to be like heavy artillery. When morning came, only five or six tents remained standing, although the men had fought frantically to keep the tents from being torn from their grasp. Three wagons were upset, two of them were heavy Government baggage wagons. Hats blew away and bare heads were pelted with rain and hail. Everyone and everything was soaked". Animals were scattered for miles around. It took several days to gather them up.

August 22, 1846, according to Daniel Tyler, "the weather distressingly hot. The men reached a small stream most difficult to cross. Long ropes were fastened to each side of the wagons and ten to fifteen men to each rope lugged their strength to exhaustion trying to help the already worn out teams in that crossing".

August 29, 1846, was a day of sorrow for all men. Word came that Capt.

Allen, who had remained at Ft. Levenworth due to ill health, had passed away. His promise had been that the Battalion could choose their own officers. In his absence Capt. Jefferson Hunt had taken Capt. Allen's place. Now troubles multiplied. A most unfriendly man, Col. St. George Smith, became their commanding officer and with him a man called "Doctor" Sanderson. He was less than a doctor and loved to see the distress he could inflict on these men he seemed to hate. So determined was he that the sick men should take his calomel and arsenic (these being all the medicine he ever used except a concoction of bayberry bark and camomile flowers), he threatened, with an oath, to cut the throat of any man who would take any other medicine. When Capt. Allen was with them, he had appointed a Dr. McIntyre, a good Botanical man, to take care of the sick. He was a good Latter-day Saint and commended to the men by Brigham Young.

One historian says, "It would have been difficult to have selected the same number of American citizens from any place in the land who would have submitted to the wicked tyranny and abuse that the Mormon Battalion took from Col. Smith and Dr. Sanderson, nor would they have done so on any consideration other than as servants to their God and as Patriots to their Country."

Hardships multiplied as the days grew hotter. The teams were in a miserable plight. The men and women alike were growing feeble. Many were obliged to walk always when ascending hills. The men had to pull on long ropes helping the half dead animals up hills, through sandy stretches, and fording streams with steep banks. Hunger and thirst plagued them all along the way. Many times the animals were scattered and had to be found, usually by foot men. Ever and ever Col. Smith and Dr. Sanderson bore down on the sick men, even though wagons had been issued for the sick at Ft. Levenworth. When Col. Smith took command he would have but few hospital wagons. That meant all sick men walked until they dropped. No one could ride without the doctor's permission and with it went his vile medicine, known to be poison.

There is one story that caused a good laugh among the men: "Soon after Col. Smith took command he made a grand ramble of inspection around the camp one night to see if the sentinals were doing their duty. He was halted by Thomas Howell of Company D, sentinel of the guard. When Col. Smith gave the wrong countersign, Howell held him as a prisoner until the arrival of the relief guard. When Col. Smith was turned over to the relief guard he was angry and also frightened. He told another officer, 'Howell would just as leave kill a man as look at him'. To those who knew Howell it was funny, for Howell was a kind, friendly man--anything but 'bloodthirsty'. Although the Colonel never admitted his mistake, the countersign was in his own handwriting." From Daniel Tyler, historian of the Mormon Battalion.

October 9, 1846. One of the highlights of their march, Santa Fe was ready for the Battalion with a greeting from General Doniphan, Commander of the Post. He ordered a salute of one hundred guns from the roofs of houses in honor of the Mormon Battalion. Why? General Doniphan had been an eminent lawyer of Clay County, Missouri. He was present when Joseph Smith and several of the leaders of the Church were tried by a Court Martial of the mob at Far West, Missouri in 1838. Gen. Doniphan denounced the whole affair as a "cold Blooded murder". He swore he nor his regiment should witness the coming execution of Joseph Smith and his friends. His influence was so firm and spirited, the decision of the trumped-up court martial was changed to the civil authorities

of the state. Thus, this lawyer, later an officer in the National Government, recalled the past abuses this people had suffered. He admired them and was happy to see among these volunteers many of his Mormon friends. The salute was not repeated when the regular soldiers arrived. They and their officers were upset because of it.

Here at Santa Fe it was found many of the men were in no condition to go on. The teams were completely worn out. The officers were sure there were too many women and children in the outfit. From Santa Fe on would be over paths never taken by teams and wagons. Only the most fit could be expected to carry on.

This was a distressing blow to a number of those found unfit to go all the way. Among those considered willing but lacking in strength we find Abel M. Sargent. Since his daughters, Martha Jane Sharp and Caroline, were in the group destined to go back to Pueblo, Colorado, it goes without saying they were glad to learn that Norman Sharp had been selected to help them on this journey of the Sick Detachment.

Lt. William W. Willis tells us he was ordered, November 10, 1846, to take a sick detachment back to Pueblo, Colorado to spend the winter there. His 26 days of rations for that many men, not to mention the women and children, was a sorry allotment of food. This amounted to ten ounces of flour for each soldier per day. Through some mistake, not even this amount of flour was loaded on the commissary wagon; they left without it.

By four o'clock of the same day, they had collected 56 sick soldiers, one big wagon, four yoke of oxen in poor condition, and for the detachment, but five days rations. It was up to them to hunt or starve. Two dressed sheep were provided for them, which, of course, did not last long. One wagon must carry all camp equipment, as well as be used for a hospital bed for the very sick.

Words can never tell the misery endured by those men and women as they wended their way back to Pueblo, Colorado, in November and December of that year. Look carefully at those weary wanderers camped at night, destitute of every need in life; foot sore, tattered clothing, ill in body and sick at heart. In the campfire light could be found Abel M. Sargent, Norman Sharp, Martha Jane Sharp, and Caroline. Perhaps Martha Jane is trying to make some rabbit meat fit for their evening meal.

Then one day Norman Sharp was taking his blunderbuss (gun) from a wagon when it discharged, the ball passing through his arm. Norman had to be left behind. Imagine the sorrow felt in the heart of Abel. Here in no-man's land he is ordered on while his daughters remained with Norman. One soldier was detailed to remain with them and an Indian offered to help care for the suffering soldier. Norman suffered untold agonies before he died four days later. With the aid of the soldier and Indian, Martha Jane buried her beloved husband in a shallow unmarked grave.

A friendly Indian warned this little group that Indians were on the war path between them and Ft. Pueblo. It was necessary for the sad party to travel night and day for safety's sake. They reached Pueblo in December and were once more with Father Sargent. Here in this desolate place the young



widow, Martha Jane Sharp, gave birth to a baby daughter.

Rude huts were built by the more able-bodied men to shelter them from the winter weather. Their food consisted of wild meat and what few provisions could be found near the fort.

With the coming of spring, preparations were commenced to rejoin the body of the Church. When word came that Brigham Young and his party were heading for the Great Salt Lake Valley, the Sick Detachment started for the main trail, eventually entering the Valley a few days later than Brigham Young's party.

Enroute to the valley, Martha Jane Sargent Sharp married, July 4, 1847, Harley Mowrey, a member of the Battalion.

Now let us look in on the affairs of one of the most desolate regions on earth--Great Salt Lake Valley. Here again was nothing inviting, even discouraging, for many. But to the faithful Saints the words of their Prophet-Leader, "This is the Place. Here we will stay and from this dull sod a Temple to our God we shall raise to His name and glory", brought them courage and faith to carry on.

A fort was started, lands plowed and seeds planted before wagons began the long drive back to Winter Quarters for families left there. In the lineup we find Abel Morgan Sargent in the thirty-fourth wagon. It is August 26, 1847, only one month since arriving in the valley, we find Abel listed among this east-bound caravan. Two months and five days later they reached Winter Quarters, October 31, 1847.

Enroute, Brigham Young's party met the west bound companies, which included those counted among the 1847 Pioneers in Joseph Fielding Smith's "Essentials of Church History": (1) Brigham Young, (2) Mississippi Saints, (3) Mormon Battalion (in which were listed Abel M. Sargent, Caroline Sargent, Martha Jane Mowrey and her baby girl, and Harley Mowrey), (4) Daniel Spencer, (5) Parley P. Pratt, (6) A. O. Smoot, (7) Charles C. Rich....and others by October 1847.

Up to this date, 1963, we do not know if Abel Sargent's daughter Harriet was reunited with her father and sisters, Martha Jane and Caroline, before his return to Winter Quarters. It is highly possible they, Abel and Harriet, met somewhere on the plains for Harriet; a wife of Apostle Rich, was in his company, which entered the valley in 1847. Surely that lonely wanderer's heart rejoiced when he learned his lovely daughter was safe and well cared for by the noble Apostle and colonizer.

Abel did not linger at Winter Quarters any longer than necessary before he was on the trail once more. He must go to Indiana where he had left his son, Thomas, and daughter, Drusilla, at the home of their grandparents, David and Sarah Edwards. What a joyful meeting awaited this tired, lonely traveler. Drusilla had married, but Thomas, Abel's only living son, left Indiana with his father to travel the endless miles back to the Great Salt Lake Valley. We do not know the date nor the company with which they traveled, but daughter, Harriet, tells us briefly, "...they were on their way to the Salt Lake Valley when, somewhere near the Black Hills, cholera broke out in the Company they were traveling with and Abel was stricken with the disease and died one night

while Thomas was 'night-herding'. When Thomas learned of the death of his father, he began to pray that he, too, might die. Within twelve hours he died with the same disease, and they were buried in the same grave."

Thus ended a life of sacrifice, faith, love, and unselfish devotion to his loved ones and to the Gospel of Christ, for which he gave his all. Abel and Sarah Sargent were indeed martyrs to the cause they espoused. May they enter into that Glory which our Lord has prepared for his Faithful Saints who once were "just a name on a card".

Here we end our long walk with a faithful Saint. 7

A review of Martha Jane Sargent Sharp Mowery is included in the book, "Our Pioneer Heritage--Wives and Children of the Mormon Battalion". Her particular review was compiled by Harriet A. Dingman and is found on page 498-9. To avoid repetition of the family events, the details are given in part only:

"Martha Jane, daughter of Abel Morgan and Sarah Edwards Sargent, was born in Floyd County, Indiana, September 24, 1827...Before leaving Nauvoo, Martha married Norman Sharp in September, 1845, and to them was born one child, a daughter, Sarah Ellen (Thomas). Norman died from an accidental shooting while on the Mormon Battalion march. Martha Jane, her baby and ten year old sister, Caroline, had accompanied the marchers, but returned with a sick detachment to arrive in the Salt Lake Valley on July 29, 1847.

"On July 4, while traveling on the trail, Martha was married to Harley Mowrey. She shared with her husband all the privations and dangers of pioneering in Utah, California, and Idaho. She was a woman of highest and noblest character and always an active worker in the Church. Her life was adventurous and eventful, even after she had reached the age when most people are willing to lay aside the many tasks of the day. When she was ninety-one years of age, their little home in Vernal was destroyed by fire. Here they had lived for thirty-five years. She was a sympathetic and loving mother to ten children, three having preceded her in death. Martha passed away two months after her husband's death in 1920. She was 93 years old and was buried beside her husband in the Vernal cemetery." 8

A life sketch of Harriet (Sargent) Rich, printed in the Centerville, Utah newspaper, following the occasion of her death, is a memorial to all pioneer women whose experiences took them over paths of hardship and persistent endeavors. She was the wife of Apostle Rich. It is entered here, in part, as additional family history:

"Centerville, August 14, 1913 - Harriet S. Rich

"Harriet Sargent Rich was the daughter of Abel Morgan and Sarah Edwards Sargent, born in Fountain County, Indiana, October 23, 1832...Her mother died while the family was being driven from their home and exposed to the hardships connected with the Mormon persecutions when Harriet was seven years of age...Harriet was married to Charles C. Rich, that great pioneer, who became an Apostle, in March, 1847, at Winter Quarters, and drove a team from there to Salt Lake Valley, arriving October 8, following. Her husband, in connection with Amasa M. Lyman, in 1849, with a small company, was called by Pres. Brigham Young to go to California and establish a branch of the Church in that State. Harriet accompanied her husband on that mission and thus they became pioneers of California also. While in that State, they purchased a large

grant of land known as the San Bernardino ranch, on which the present city of San Bernardino is located, and of which city Charles C. Rich was the first mayor.

"They returned from California to Utah in 1857, and settled in Centerville, in Davis County. In 1862, Charles C. Rich and family were called to colonize Bear Lake Valley in Idaho, and settled in Paris, in which town Harriet's permanent abode was then established. Harriet's life was one of pioneering, including constant toil and hardships. She became the mother of ten children. In those early days, to assist in clothing and providing a home and maintenance for the family, a mother must understand the art of making cloth, both flannel and lindsay. Carding, spinning, coloring and knitting were all understood by Harriet. Native Indians taught her how to tan and dress the skins of animals, which she used in making gloves and other articles. Her first dress after reaching the Salt Lake valley was made from flour sacks colored with willow leaves. Harriet was an excellent housekeeper and while her life was crowded and burdened with work, she was ever ready to make any sacrifice for the advancement and welfare of her children. She was an officer in the Relief Society for many years. She visited the sick and cared for the dead. She was a pioneer of three western States; Utah, California and Idaho. She helped to fight the crickets. She dug sego roots for food. Her life was a living testimony of God's goodness to all who put their trust in Him. She often declared that the sweet influence of prayer had guided her whole course of life.

"Sister Rich departed this life at the home of her daughter in Centerville, July 18, 1915. Short, but impressive services were held at Centerville, at the home of her eldest daughter on July 20th, at which Pres. F. M. Lyman, Dr. Edward I. Rich and J. J. Cherry bore testimony as to the integrity of her life. The body was taken to Paris, Idaho, and funeral services held in the Bear Lake Stake Tabernacle, on July 23, at which Pres. Joseph R. Shepperd, Thomas Slight, and other old time friends were the speakers. Burial occurred at Paris. She left a sister, Martha Jane Mowery of Vernal, Utah, and five sons, two daughters, 35 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren."



This picture was copied from the Centerville newspaper from which the above sketch was taken.

For the story of Caroline, we must turn to STODDARD (8-2). We are told by Mrs. Streeper that "Harriet, in both youth and old age, was strikingly beautiful". From other sources it was known that all three sisters were unusually attractive and beautiful, as was their mother. Abel Morgan was a handsome man. Harriet, herself, left a record that identifies her father in these words, "He was a fine looking man with black wavy hair, dark brown eyes and a fair complexion. Mother (Sarah Edwards) was fair with light hair and blue eyes."

The family group sheet submitted to the Library in Salt Lake City by Mrs. Alta Stoddard Whittaker is used to list the children of Abel Morgan and Sarah (Edwards) Sargent:

1. Phebe Sargent, b. abt. 1823, in Indiana; died an infant.
2. John Sargent, b. abt. 1824, in Indiana; died an infant.
3. Drusilla Sargent, b. 1 Feb. 1826, in Floyd County, Indiana; married John Seymour Anderson.
4. Martha Jane Sargent, b. 24 Sept. 1827, in Floyd or Fountain County, Indiana; md. (1) Norman Sharp; (2) Harley Mowrey.
5. Sarah Tunis Sargent, b. abt. 1829, in Floyd County, Indiana; md. John Strutsman.
6. David Sargent, b. 23 Oct. 1831, Fountain County, Indiana; died during the mobbings in Nauvoo, Illinois, ae. abt. 14.
7. Harriet Sargent, b. 23 Oct. 1832, Fountain County, Indiana; md. Charles Coulson Rich in 1847 as a polygamist wife; died July 18, 1915.
8. Caroline Sargent, b. 28 Oct. 1835, Fountain County, Indiana; md. Aug. 23, 1852, Arvin Mitchell Stoddard; died May 21, 1905. (8-2)
9. Thomas Sargent, b. abt. 1837, Fountain or Floyd Co., Indiana; died in the Fall of 1847, ae. 10, on the Pioneer Trail, near the Black Hills, Wyoming, while enroute to Utah with his father. He died a few hours following the death of his father. Cholera.
10. Child, still-born son, 1839 <sup>9</sup>

1. #61
2. ibid
3. ibid
4. ibid
5. #189 p.44
6. #185 p.48
7. #200, pp. 1-12
8. #199, pp. 498-9
9. #170, p. (8-3)