

Rachel Lunt Life Story
Contributed By

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Rachel's parents and grandparents came from good old English stock and her grandfather Lunt, though a member of the Church of England was not quite satisfied with what they had to offer and he used to pray earnestly that the "true" gospel would be carried at least to some of his children. He died when Rachel's father was 12 years old, but his prayers were answered as Rachel's father Henry accepted the gospel from some Mormon Missionaries while still in England. He was well known among the better class of Birmingham society and eventually fell in love with Martha Bristol, who was the daughter of one of the most honored families in the community. They became engaged, but the fact that Henry was a Mormon, made him a member of a sect which was very unpopular at that time.

Martha's parents objected strenuously to the marriage—in fact they gave Henry a choice – he must choose between their daughter and his religion. This was a crushing blow, but Henry stayed by his religious convictions. Later he left his native land and sailed to the United States, landing in New Orleans on a sailing vessel which took nine weeks to make the voyage. From here he took passage on a Mississippi steamer which took him to where he could join an immigrant company which was going by ox team to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Rachel's mother, Ann Gower was also migrating from England to the United States on the same ship as Henry Lunt, and because she was but six years old at this time, Henry did not realize that some day she would be his wife.

Soon after arriving in St. Louis, Missouri, cholera broke out, claiming Rachel's grandmother and her two youngest children. Her grandfather Gower was left a widower with his only daughter Ann. About two years later Ann's father remarried and they started their trek across the plains to Salt Lake City.

Rachel's mother was now 11 years old, but she walked a good share of the way across the plains and saw many perilous times. Once as she got some distance behind the wagon, she looked behind her and saw a big Indian in the act of springing upon her, but she managed to get away from him.

Rachel's father had four wives the first of whom they called Aunt Ellen; the second was Mary Ann; then Rachel's mother and finally Aunt Sarah. Her father and mother were married in the endowment house in Salt Lake City on the 11th of April, 1863 by Daniel H. Wells. To this union were born ten children: Jane,

Oscar, George Albert, Thomas, Jammima, Roselia, Richard Henry, Owen, Ellen, Rachel Ann. Richard Henry, and Owen died on the day that they were born.

Rachel recalls her childhood days in this manner: My childhood days were happy ones. My oldest sister Jane lived just across the street from mother and she had three girls around mine and Ellen's age. We were together most of the time, but to our sorrow one day Jane and her family moved to Salt Lake City. We were very lonely for awhile.

It wasn't long until father sent for mother to come to Arizona. This was in 1889 and I was only six years old. We took all we could haul in the wagon and went to join him and aunt Sarah and her family. The U.S. Marshalls were giving all of the men so much trouble who had more than one wife, so father decided to move both families to Old Mexico where he could go to bed at night and sleep in peace. We really faced some very hard times there both for food and clothing. At times I wondered if we would ever have any white bread to eat. We stopped for two or three weeks in Colonial Diaz and then moved right on to the mountains where it looked like we couldn't go any further. We took a few cows with us from Arizona as food was very scarce. I remember we had a little milk, but very little. I would take the milk given me, dip my corn bread in it then squeeze out all the milk I could with a spoon so I would have more mild for another bite of bread.

We children hardly ever had a new pair of shoes. In fact, we had to save what shoes we did have for Sunday- if we had any to save. The first spring and summer were blessed with the largest more beautiful mushrooms. Mother would get us girls up early in the morning to gather our share of the mushrooms for the day before the sun shone on them as the sun would turn them dark. For two summers we were blessed with the mushrooms and I do think they were sent to us people just as Manna was sent to the children of Israel. We have never seen any like them since that time.

We couldn't buy socks for the boys or stockings for the girls, so the spinning process had to start up. Mother taught me how to spin the yarn and Ellen how to cord the rolls. I was now between eight and nine years old and I had to spin all the yarn that we made all our own stockings with. This was for the tree boys, mother, and we two girls. I really was kept very busy. I was too small to put the band on the wheel when it would come off, so I had to have help. One day I had spun a large skein of yarn and my Aunt Ellen came over and brought us each a muffin which was made from half flour and half corn meal. This was a real treat for us. When she saw the yarn I had spun that day she took it home and weight it. She had some good scales as she took care of the post office. When she came back she said, "Oh, my word, you spun a pound of yarn on your 12th birthday". This

was generally the way we celebrated our birthdays. Mother taught us girls to know our own stockings. I surely did think I was modern. I knit myself some red stockings with white stripes going around the leg. Oh, hum! How pretty I thought they were. For May Day we would color our wool stocking black, for this was the custom.

At parties for refreshments, we would always have molasses candy and parched corn, sometimes a few molasses cookies, and we all had to be home by ten o'clock. I remember after a party one night as some of us girls were going home, we saw something cross in front of us. We thought it was taking mighty long strides to be a dog. The next day my brother George went out and found the tracks. He found by their measurements that it was a good sized lion.

Crops of nearly all kinds could be raised very successfully on account of so much rain, but the harvest of wheat was bad. The flour made such dark bread and it was very musty, so flour had to be bought from different people in the valleys.

Aunt Sarah lived two miles south of Pacheco on a ranch with a small farm connected to it. She would make cheese in the summer and lots of butter in the fall. Then she would put the butter in kegs for the winter. She would exchange the cheese for flour down in the valley and would get her whole year's supply of flour at one time. She bought most everything wholesale. During the summer I lived with Aunt Sarah's she had no girls. Every night and morning I would help the boys milk the cows. Believe it or not we were milking 75 cows that summer. What a noise there was in the evening when the cows were coming in down the lane toward the corral. My two small brothers, 6 and 8, would take the cows out on the hills and herd them all day. The grass was very good due to so much rain. I wore a pair of shoes out that summer I went wading up to my ankles in the manure, and it was so hard on leather. What a time we had. But still I was happy.

Aunt Sarah had no girls as above mentioned, so either Ellen or I would go and live with her every summer after we were big enough to be good dishwashers. I remember thinking how nice it would be to be a boy so I wouldn't have to worry about doing dishes. It fell my lot the most because Ellen could take better care of our sick mother and I was stronger and had better health than Ellen- so it fell to me to take the rough knocks over at Aunt Sarah's.

I remember once when Ellen and I went down to the river about a mile from our house to gather hops. The river divided and left a little island with lots of willows loaded with hop vines- a very pretty sight. In order to get Ellen over one stream I had to take off my shoes and stockings and Ellen held them while I carried her on my back. She said "Now, Rachel, don't you laugh or you will drop me." She know

my weakness for when I laughed I went weak all over and I was quite a one to laugh over things.

I remember the time when Ellen and I were hoeing weeds in the garden. She had a large bonnet on because she liked to take care of her complexion. While she was standing still looking over the weeds, I thought that a good chance to step up quietly and whistle as loud as I could and frighten her. I did this and poor Ellen grabbed her bonnet and crouched down to the ground and when she looked up, there I was just laughing. She never did get angry with me though. She was one of the sweetest, loveliest girls that ever was. Ellen and I were called the little girls by the families that went to Mexico. Mother's health was broken and we were so small to take over the work. Washing was done on the board and we stood on a chair to scrub on the board as we could hardly reach the water in the tub. For a while this was mostly Ellen's job until I grew a little larger. She wasn't much taller than me, though, and she was always so delicate and would catch all the contagious diseases. I remember she had Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever very hard-while all I had was a sore throat for a day or two.

At some of our parties the girls would put on a big kettle of molasses and when it was done and cooled, the boys would help us stretch the candy. It would be such a golden color. For something different we would make ground-cherry preserves with molasses and tomato preserves. The molasses was made outside in large open vats and the young folks always looked forward to molasses making time. Chasing the cane and being chased with the skimming's was fun. Oh how we would run.

Our dances were all square dances except for about three, and we wouldn't dare to put our arms around each other's waist. That was one reason we never did waltz. Many a dance I would dance every set all evening. I remember the first time I was asked by a nice boy to see me home. I didn't know what he meant so I told him to wait until I got home. Those that heard me just laughed and I wondered what it was all about. I soon found out. But that wasn't the last I had a boy friend once in a while in spite of it all. Of course of all the boys I know, I was the most attracted to Morley Larsen Black and we were finally married on November 21, 1901.

We had been married for two years when we had our first baby—a boy which we named George Henry. He was such a sweet baby with blue eyes, red hair and was so smart. He talked real early, but died when he was fourteen months old. We next had a girl whom we named Reta. Then a boy Alberto, then Kimball, Glenn, William, Kline, Carma, Kelly, Darlene, Myrtle Ann and then twins, Rex and Rachel. Just before the twins were born I got the urge for some fried onions one morning

for breakfast. Soon after eating them I wished I hadn't because I had such cramps. However a few hours later I had the twins, but the boy died when he was six months old.

My first four children were born in Pacheco and the next two in Pearson. Glenn was the first white child born there. In Pearson Morley was put in charge of 200 Mexican workers at the big electric saw mills. Because he was able to handle the Spanish language well he was put in charge of all Mexican labor. Morley was pleasant and kind to them and they learned to think well of him. This proved to be a wonderful thing later on.

When the second child was nine days old Morley was called on a mission to Old Mexico City and Rachel had to take the responsibilities of both Father and Mother.

When Kimball was three years old the Mexican Revolution broke out. At this time Rachel and Morley had a lot of property and livestock which was all confiscated by the Mexican Government. During this time they faced many unpleasant experiences. At one time Morley was captured by the Rebels and put before a firing squad. Just in the nick of time a couple of his Mexican friends appeared on the scene and talked them out of shooting him. One morning during the revolution about 5:00 am the rebels were shooting at the government soldiers who were stationed on the hill. The Blacks' house was directly in line of fire. As the shooting continued, a number of bullets went through the house. Morley and another man helped to get Rachel and the children out of the house, and for three hours they remained huddled in an old dry canal under a bridge. They could hear the bullets zing as they passed over and some of them hit the metal on the bridge. During this time many people were killed. The outlaws became so aggressive that they would come in the house and search it and take anything they wanted.

In 1915 the U.S government and the L.D.S church instructed all American people to leave Old Mexico so Morley and their four children moved to Cedar City Utah, then to Price, and then on to Thompson or any place where Morley could get work. Finally they settled in Blanding Utah which is by the "four corners". Morley started farming and Rachel and the children would help in the summer while Morley would find work in the mines, on the road, in the saw mill or wherever he could get it.

Life on the farm was hard since they had to haul all their drinking water for a mile in a barrel. During the following years Rachel and the children worked hard on the farm. One day when Rachel's tenth child was very young she suddenly became ill. The children became very alarmed and got the team and the old

rough wagon put some blankets in the bottom of the wagon, and drove eleven miles to town over rough, rocky roads. With every bump she would scream with pain. The doctor said it was appendicitis and made arrangements to operate. Suddenly they decided it was an extremely painful attack of pleurisy and in a few days she was back to the farm.

In 1922 they got their first electric lights. The children were delighted over this because it ended the task of cleaning chimneys for coal oil lamps. In 1924 they got their first washing machine. This was an electric Maytag and the first electric washer in town. It was indeed a luxury after having to wash on the board for such a large family for so many years. In 1927 they got their first automobile—a Dodge. In this same year they sold the farm and Rachel remained in town and Morley soon got a contract for hauling logs in Colorado. Rachel went out cooking for her husband and family three other men all summer. After 1928 Rachel's life became easier. Although the depression came and it did add worries to the family and cash was scarce, still living on the farm provided enough food for the family.

Now Rachel and Morley had thirteen children. During this time Rachel taught the boys in Primary who were advancing into the priesthood. She graduated many boys and before they graduated she cut their hair and got them all dolled up for the exercises. In 1945 all the children were married and Rachel and Morley were going to take things easier, but Morley took sick and had a long and painful struggle with cancer until his death in September 1951. During this time Rachel nursed and cared for him constantly.

After Morley's death in 1951, Rachel would come to visit with Kim, and Myrtle who lived in the Ogden 8th ward.