

Life Story of Barbara May Wilkerson



I was born in Johnson town, Kane County March 3, 1894. My father's name was Isaac Nathaniel Workman. He was born February 26, 1862 in Bountiful, Davis County, Utah. My mother's name was Esther Jane Buchanan. She was born August 11, 1862 in Eagle Valley, Nevada. Her father's name was German Buchanan. Her mother's name was Elizabeth Barbara Ogleby. My father's father's name was Jacob Lindsey Workman, born July 7, 1812, in Monroe, Overton County, Tennessee. My grandfather came to Utah with the early settlers. He had three wives. He was called to go to Dixie. He settled in Virgin City. My father and mother were married January 27, 1865 at Snowflake, Arizona. Grandfather's father's name was John Workman, born October 8, 1789 in Allegany County, Maryland. Grandfather's mother's name was Lydia Bilyeu born August 18, 1793. Grandfather's father's name was Jacob Workman. Grandfather's mother's name was Elizabeth Wickoff.

I was blessed in Johnson town May 1, 1894 by my grandfather German Buchanan in the Kanab Stake. I was baptized in Hatch, Utah by Rasmus Lynn in Panguitch Stake in May 1904. This record was written in mother's record book. I received my patriarchal blessing January 9, 1921. It was given to me by J C Berthelson in Lovell, Wyoming.

How I happened to get my patriarchal blessing we happened to go to my sister's Ester Rebecca Workman Wilkerson, her husband Benjamin Wilkerson and their family were having their blessings. We were going home, the patriarch came out and invited us in so we went in and heard him give the blessings. When we were going home my husband said he would like me and my two boys to have our blessings. By the way we were traveling with buggy and team, didn't own a car. A few Sundays after this my sister and her family went to Sunday School. When she arrived there Mr. Berthelson was there, he wanted to know if he could finish giving them their blessings that afternoon. Well, she said she left her house all up set so she came to the phone and asked me if she could come to my house and bring him. I told her she could and I would have dinner by the time they got there. I did, he finished giving their blessings. I told him I would like to have mine also Arbun and Woodrow's, so he gave us ours. Thomas Wilkerson, my husband's brother happened to be there, he asked my husband if he would like his. He

said he would so we asked Mr. Berthelson if it was possible he could give him one as he wasn't a member of the church. He said he could so he gave my husband a blessing.

My parents stayed in Johnson town until I was three months old then they moved to Dixie and bought a ranch on the Virgin River just three miles south and east of Harrisburg. What I remember most about the ranch was the Virgin River. It was a large muddy river in the spring spread out over its banks then in the summer the river would go down. We has a sand bed to play in. I remember so well we were out in the sand playing one day. We looked, there came a man toward it. It was my mother's brother German Buchanan, he was just off his mission. He picked me up and carried me to the house and gave me some little red candies. My father raised all kinds of lovely fruit, peaches, apricots, apples, plums, and all varieties of lovely grapes. He also raised watermelons three feet long with the sweetest flavor, cantaloupes, and muskmelons. My father would take them to a mining camp and sell them. The camp was called Silver Reef. We children would take turns going with him. I remember watching the quick sand, they said it would gather the silver.

We had to go through a narrow canyon to get to our ranch. On one side of the canyon there were springs that sprang out, made a beautiful waterfall, all kinds of beautiful ferns grew on the side of the canyon. My father would grow a little patch of wheat to make our bread but he couldn't get any machinery to go through the canyon so he mowed the wheat with a mowing machine. He would bind it by hand by taking the wheat and twisting it together. Then he put it down on a large canvas and lead a horse around and around it until it was thrashed. He would then take a pan and winnow it, sack it, and take it to mill. He also raised corn, our neighbors up town had a mill they ground corn in. He also raised cane which he made molasses out of. The town owned the mill. Everybody made molasses with this mill. Once in a while they cooked it too much and it out go to candy. Then everybody in town would take a dripper pans and get the candy. The whole town would have candy for weeks. We surely enjoyed it, as this is about all the sweets we had in the winter. We had dried grapes, peaches, apricots, or apples also. Once in a while father would buy a little sugar but money was scarce. We used to have corn meal mush with molasses for sweets. They raised cotton down in Dixie and has what they called Washington Factory in Washington, Utah. My father would take dried fruit molasses to Washington to trade for cloth. All they made was factory and outing flannel, so mother made our underwear out of factory and our dresses out of outing. I can see them now, brown and blue outing. I guess that is why I don't like the looks of outing now. She made us two dresses in the fall, one blue and one brown. They lasted all winter. In the summer, they all wore off the outing and would just have warp left so they would be cool for summer. For the Fourth of July, mother would buy us each a print dress, wouldn't we think we were rich. Father would buy us one pair of shoes a year. When they wore out, we have to go barefooted.

My father got Malaria Fever when I was five years old, so we had to sell our ranch. We moved to Emery, Carbon County, Utah and lived there one winter. My mother go(t) word that her father was very ill. Well father when he sold the ranch had got two wagons and six head of horses. So father loaded our furniture on the wagons.

We went back to Johnson town but, when we got there, mother's father was dead and buried. We had been so long on the way. Then father decided we would move back to Arizona. We went by way of Lee Ferry. I remember so well crossing the Colorado River on a ferry boat. The horses were so frightened father had to hold them by the bits to keep them from jumping in the river. While we were on the road to Camp Verda (which was our destination) we ran out of money and food. We were all so hungry. We were riding along and mother said she kept praying that the way be open some way so we could get some food. All at once, she told father she had seen something white laying beside the road and wanted him to stop and let her go see what it was. So he did. It was a flour sack. It had a large loaf of bread in it and a nice piece of boiled ham. So mother was able to make us a sandwich a piece which helped very much.

That night we got to Camp Verda. We all went out and gathered sage and made a big camp fire. While we were building the fire, father went up town and got a job hauling freight for the store man. He brought back to camp a sack of flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and a large slab of bacon. I shall never forget how happy we all were. I asked my father how he got them without any money. He said he had run his check. I couldn't figure how he could do that. They all had a good laugh at my expense. The next morning he rented us a house and lot which had a good garden spot on it. Mother raised a beautiful garden on it.

My father ha the two wagons and the six head of horses so he and my brother Lindsay freighted that summer and made very good money. Camp Verda was an Indian Agency. We enjoyed ourselves very much there but there weren't any LDS people there. So father decided to move to Moca City, Arizona to put us children in school and so we could be where we could go to Sunday School. I was six years old by this time so there is where I started school. One day I and some other girls were jumping on the school house steps, the principal sent for us to come to his room. I was scared so that I ran for home. He got on his bicycle and came after me. When I saw him, I was really scared but, he put me on his bike and gave me a large orange. He told me he didn't want to hurt me but he didn't want me to jump on the steps anymore. Believe me I never did.

As Moca was so near Mexico, people could get Mexicans to work so cheap that they wouldn't hire white men, so father couldn't get any work as the railroad hauled the freight. Father decided to move back to Dixie as he had gotten over the Malaria Fever. Se we moved to Washington, Utah. Father rented a farm and hauled some freight also. The next winter he moved us to Leeds. There I went to school the second winter. One day in the spring we felt the building moving. Out teacher told us all to run outside that there was an earthquake. Then she dismissed us and sent us home. The next morning there was a crack you could almost crawl through so they had to hunt us another building to go to school in. We lived in Leeds two years. Then my mother got Malaria Fever, also my sister Leona, also my brother German. So we had to leave Dixie again.

When we were coming back from Arizona we had the two wagons. My father was driving one and my brother Lindsay was driving the other. My brother German and I were riding with our brother. We were watching the train and counting the cars. We were

kneeling up in the spring seat when all at once the wagon hit a chuck hole. My brother German fell out. The wagon ran over his leg and hand. It didn't break any bones but it just cut a chunk out of the front of his leg and squashed his hand terrible. We had to take him back to Kingman to the doctor. Father rented us a house. We stayed there for about six weeks. He hauled freight. By that time my brother was able to ride we moved to Washington. Well he had a running sore on his leg for four years. Mother doctored it every way she could think of. She would get it healed and it would break out again every time he got a little bump on it. Well after four years she heard of a Doctor Blackburn in Loa that healed by faith and prayer, so she took him in a wagon. There was a big hill to climb so she sent him on horseback with my brother Lindsay. Mr. Blackburn blessed him and told my brother to tell mother to put Denver Mud on it, she did. We never had heard of Denver Mud before but his leg got well and never broke out again.

After we left Dixie we moved to Hatch Town. My father rented my Uncle Abram Workman's ranch. He let us have two little heifers that had lost their calves. They were so poor as he had wintered them in straw. They gave very little milk so my father told me and my sister Josephine it would be our job to milk these two little cows. Well when the feed got good their little bags would be so full they could hardly walk.

That winter father built a two room house downstairs and a large room upstairs. He also built a fireplace in it. Mother had a rag carpet on the front room floor. It was made of rags. My mother whitewashed the walls until they were gleaming white. My father burnt lime and sold it. That winter the snow fell until we could ride right over the fences. I remember there would be a bunch of us get in a bob sleigh and ride over the fences. We would have a nice sleigh ride and then we would go to somebody's house and have a candy pull, often at our house. Mother could make lovely candy. By this time we bought molasses by the 40 gallon barrel from the Dixie peddler and father would also buy 100 pounds of sugar as you could get it for \$5.00 per hundred.

Father was a beautiful singer. He also played the accordion. My brother Lindsay could play the harmonica beautiful. We really enjoyed our life in Hatch Town. As I said, father burnt lime. He took a load of lime down to Glendale and traded for apples. He also bought 50 pounds of pine nuts.

We the next summer my father decided to move to Vernal. He came out to Vernal in February. He had a buckboard and team. He rented a ranch in what they called Glines Ward. They also called it 4th Ward. He rented from John Glines who had a few stands of bees. Mother took care of them. We didn't have molasses (not) but plenty of honey. There was two large crab apple trees on the ranch. Mother made crab apple preserves with the honey. She filled two large buckets full of them. She waxed the buckets, it kept very nice in them. Father raised a nice garden and also hay and grain. We lived in Vernal that year and we went to school there. I was eleven years old. My teacher (my) John Murry. My brother Lindsay herded sheep that summer and fall for Bill Workman. He was our half cousin. His father was Jake Workman, my father's brother by another wife, they had the same father. Well my brother bought us a cow and my father traded for one so we had milk and butter. When my father was a young man he owned a place in Vernal. He sold it and moved to Johnson town but never got all his

money out of it. He still had the deeds when we came back to Vernal. The place had been sold many times. The man that owned it wanted his deed for it. Father could of taken the place back but he didn't. The man gave him a cow and 100 fruit trees if he would sign the deeds over to him, so he did. That's where those apple trees come from that are still on the old ranch. I think Will Overhansely owns it now.

In the spring of 1906 the Indian Reservation was thrown open. You had a chance to draw for your land. Father got a late number, all the good places were taken up but he filed on the old ranch anyway. It was terribly rocky and had cedars and sage brush. He came to the reservation in March, built us a one room cabin out of cedar post standing up, post and dirt on the top and a dirt floor. We had a large tent that we slept in. It was a good thing we did, for when it rained the cabin leaked terrible. Well the 5th of April was the day I landed here. It was 1906, I was twelve years old the 3rd of March. We moved over here in wagon and team as cars weren't thought of much in them days. A year or two after that I was back over to Vernal living with my sister Bessie or Esther Rebecca, we called her Bessie. I saw the first car ever to come to Vernal it was a red truck. I never saw another one until long after that. The first car I ever rod in was just the fall before I was married. I had a cousin named John Red. He lived in Price and came out here selling cars. He wanted to sell one to Jobe Belone and asked me if I knew where he lived. I told him yes so he took me in the car down to Mr. Belone's. That was in 1914. I never rode in another that I can remember of until we were out to Lovell and bought an old Model T Ford. That was in 1920. When we were moving back to the Reservation, as we were moving from Vernal there was six inches of snow on the ground. It surely did look desolate. The only house we saw was a log cabin at Hayden. It belonged to Henry Hall. Of course there were a few Indian houses around but we didn't happen to pass by any of them. Well after we had been here a month or two, Billy Greenhalgh and his family and George Averett and his family moved on our land. They had tents and wagons. It wasn't so lonesome after that. Mr. Thomas Dodd built a log cabin just a half mile from our place. It is the Thadd Wilkerson ranch now. Then there were many others that built cabins, John Fuel, Joe Peterson, All Kane, and many others. James Woodard and Enouch Woodard lived below Neola. That fall father built us a two room log cabin with floors but he still had dirt on the roof. It was built on the place Thearn Horrock now has. The place belongs to a man name Packer. Billy Greenhalgh was supposed to buy it was selling it for a town site. George Averett built him a house there. Billy Greenhalgh built him a log cabin there. Tom Wilkerson built a lumber house. A year or two later Lem Wilkerson built him a two room house there.

Along in August, the year 1906, the people decided they wanted a Sunday School, so the church organized them a Sunday School. John g. Davis was living in an Indian house. He had the place leased and it was about the nicest house here so we decided to have it organized there. It was two large rooms built of sawed logs, had a shingle roof on it. When they organized it, put James Woodard as Superintendent, Dave Evans from Bennet as one Counselor and Charley Okey as Second Counselor, Letissie Davies as Secretary.

That winter the people decided we needed a school house where we could hold school and church. So my father, Isaac Nathaniel Workman, Billy Greenhalgh, John Fuel, and George Averett went to the mountains and got the logs and built the school house. They got Al Kane to help put the floor joists down, build the windows and doors as he was a carpenter. Well they built the log cabin that Sister Spencer now lives in. It was built in Packer and later moved to Neola.

We had five months of school that winter. Rose Conrad Washur was the teacher. When they built the cabin they also built wooden benches and hung a board on the back with hinges. It was all the desks we had. Many a bottle of ink was overturned by somebody on the other end. As we didn't know what fountain pens were then, we wrote with what they called scratch pens. We had to have our bottle of ink by us all the time. That winter the people decided to have a community Christmas tree. Everybody brought presents and put them on the tree. We lit it with wax candles. This was the first Christmas tree I ever saw. We had a nice program then we all danced and had a very nice time. Jake Taylor had moved here by this time, he played the violin and somebody played the guitar. What a time we had.

My father's brother had worked for a week and built a sled as we didn't own any bob sleighs. They put wagon tires on the runners. Well father took the family and some of the neighbor children for a sleigh ride a March afternoon. There was about two feet of snow on the ground. Didn't we enjoy it though. It was much better than a car ride now. My mother had roast beef, potatoes and gravy, carrots and apple pie for dinner. We didn't know anything about turkeys then, in fact the first turkey I ever ate was at Zina Meham's wedding, also the first fruit cake. I kept a piece for years. My husband ate it.

We had to all knit our own stockings then. Mother made each one knit a few inches on our stockings before we went to play. We were quite poor so mother and I took washings in the summer from people over to Whiterocks. She would go get it on a wagon. We would wash and iron it and take it back. All we had was a wash board, tub, and stove irons but, we made a little this way to buy clothes. One day I was looking in the Sear Roebuck Catalog and saw silk stocking advertised for \$1.00 a pair. I asked mother if I could have a dollar of that money we earned to buy me a pair of stockings. She said yes. They were black silk wasn't I a proud girl! My first pair of boughten stockings I had ever owned. Well then they began selling cotton stockings after that. We soon were all wearing them. There wasn't any dry goods store in Neola. We had to send to Sears for all our clothing except Mr. R. L. Marimon had men's shirts and overalls and shoes. Of course we could go to Vernal to buy clothing but that was a long way with wagon and team. The roads were very poor and were over sage brush and rocks.

A copy of this history was provided at the 2009 Workman Reunion in Hurricane, UT
by Violet Wilkerson Voss