

Autobiography of Aroetta Louisa Hale

I was born in Grantsville, Toole County, in 1878. My mother told me that my brother next older than I was very proud of me, she says I was a very cross baby and one day she asked him if they shouldn't send me back. He answered, "no sir I want our baby and we're going to keep it." however later when Brother Willey wanted to buy the baby, he told Johnie he would give him a candy as long as his arm for the baby. This was quite a temptation and Johnie told him he would make the trade. The next week he came with the candy. Johnie looked at the red and white arm length of candy and finally accepted, but when he went to take me. This dear brother always stuck by me and been my best friend. I was not a very rugged or healthy child, but mother watched over me very carefully. My hair was very thick and long and the Doctor said maybe it was taking too much of my strength, so mother cut my hair off. I remember how sad I felt when I saw how different I looked, but soon it grew long again.

I had two older sisters who did most of the work in the home, but I always had my special tasks to do each day after which I was free to entertain myself. I loved out of doors, especially the flowers. My younger sister and I would roam for hours searching for some rare flower to add to our bouquet.

We moved to Smithfield, Cache County, when I was nine years old. I was still not very strong and mother was encouraged our being out doors as much as possible.

Father had a gentle riding pony that we were allowed to ride whenever we chose. We would take the cows to the pasture up on Crow Mountain to pasture and in time we would roam, over the hills for hours, picking wild flowers or digging Sego Lilly bulbs to eat, or picking Service berries or Choke cherries.

I liked to sew and spent my hours making clothes for any dolls. I also made hats and bonnets for them. Mother taught me to braid straw to make their hats. My brothers used to tease me about my dolls. I had ten of them and they said I should pay one for tithing.

From the time I was very small I was always trying to make flowers from every s colored paper I could fine. Mother was very artistic and would help us to cut out petals and leaves and form them into flowers. We always tried to imitate the natural flowers.

My mother was the first president of the Grantsville Primary and also the first Stake. I remember of her taking me with her to visit around the stake. She was very busy with her duties and would allow me to wander about the church during meetings. I knew I must be quiet so I would walk around very quietly until I saw someone I knew then I would slide in quietly beside them. Sometimes they would take me on their lap and I would curl up and go to sleep. I loved to go with mother and I always had to promise that I would make no noise. When I was seven mother wanted me to sing in Primary conference, I was quite timid. I knew several little songs, but to sing them in public terrified me. My older brother Albert promised me a new blue dress if I would do it I will never forget that dress. Mother made it up very nicely and trimmed it with gray satin. I stood up so proudly and sang my little song. When I was nearly thru, the ladies in the audience began to smile and some almost laughed out loud. I wondered what they were

laughing at. I found that my little four year old sister had climbed up in the pulpit above me and was singing to the top of her voice. She didn't know the words but she sang the tune right along with me.

When I was nine years old we moved to Smithfield and soon after that I was put in as organist in the primary. My older sister had taught me to play the simple hymns. The chorister would select the hymns for the next week and I would practice them all week so I would be sure to play them well. I either played for or directed the singing in the Smithfield primary until I was married. I also taught the primary class in Sunday School and sang in the choir from the time I was 14 years old, and was asked to sing solos very often. I loved music and during most of my life I have been directing the singing in some organizations or in chorus work been playing for them. I directed several children's contatas prepared and presented. . .

After finishing the grade school I spent two years at the B.Y.C. in Logan. I studied vocal music under Professor Clark, and sang several duets with him. He had a very fine tenor voice. It was while I was attending school that I met Milton J. Hammond at the wedding of his sister who married my brother Frank. He was then engaged to another girl, but he broke the engagement. He was teaching school in Marysville. We corresponded and he visited me as often as he could until we were married the next year.

One of my older sisters had black measles when a small child and it left her an invalid, and she was a great sufferer all her life. She loved music and we girls used to sing to her to help her forget her pain. Many times I have awakened in the night to hear mother singing to Rachel when she could not sleep. She lived to be 21 years old and never walked. Mothers strength had been taxed to the limit in caring for Rachel plus all her other duties as mother of a large family, with church duties added and she was in very poor health.

My oldest sister married soon after and went to the Samoan Islands on a mission with her husband J. H. Merrill. They were there only a few months when she gave birth to a premature baby and she and the baby both died. This was a terrible shock to all of us. It was made known to mother that Katie had passed away, some time before the news came. Katie was buried on the Islands. Joseph finished his mission and brought home when he returned. Later he married the next younger sister Grace.

Mother's health was still very poor so the responsibility of the house rested on my younger sister and I.

On December 22, 1899 I was married to Milton James Hammond and we started a new life, boarded a train and traveled north into the Snake River Valley. Milton's father met us at Market Lake (now Roberts) with a covered sleigh. It was snowing so hard we could hardly see the horses heads, but they knew the way and stayed on the road. We drove to Parker that night and arrived in Marysville the next afternoon, the next morning you couldn't see the fence posts, the heavy snow drifts never left until late spring.

My husband taught school and we lived in a one room log house that winter.

The snow drifted around the house and you could walk on top of the drifts on to the roof of the house. I was very glad to see spring come.

Our little girl Gladys was born in September 23. My mother was with me, for which I was very thankful as I was very ill and gained strength very slowly.

We moved to Teton that fall where Milton taught. I loved my dear little girl, her eyes were so blue and expressive, and she was such a happy little darling, always singing in her childish way. I gave her a little book about the time she learned to walk. It had pictures of farm animals in it, she loved it so much and carried it with her nearly all day and took it to bed with her at night. She couldn't call the animals by name but would mimic each of them as she turned the pages. Maybe I loved her too much, anyway God saw fit to take her from us when she was 16 months old. She was ill for six weeks with Pneumonia. Several times it seemed that she was going, I would pray again for recovery and call the Elders in to administer to her and she would revive. Finally Brother Donaldson called me to him and told me that the Lord wanted my little girl and that I was prolonging her suffering by clinging to her, that I must give her up. I couldn't stand to see her suffer longer, so I asked them to bless her and ask the Lord to take her. She passed away a few minutes later.

It seemed that everything worthwhile had been taken from me. I wondered what I had done wrong, I felt that God had taken our baby to punish us for some wrong. Brother Donaldson came and talked to me many times and helped me to reconcile myself to her loss. That fall we moved to Rigby where Milton was superintendent of schools for 14 years. When we moved to Rigby there was three teachers in the school and they had never turned out a high school graduate.

There were several small district schools in the near vicinity of Rigby and Milton saw the possibility of improving the schools by . . .

Milton was a very brilliant man and a wonderful educator, he was not a college graduate, although he had some college training but was almost entirely self-educated. One of the school board told me they had never had a better teacher in Rigby before or since he was there. He was a great reader and could not resist the temptation to buy good books although at times the money was needed for necessities. Even though our home was poorly furnished we always had a good library.

Milton was also blessed with musical talent. He did not play an instrument but was a very fine director and sang very well. He led the choir in Rigby for 13 years.

Two years later Ronald was born and I was happy to have a dear little baby in my arms again. Glen came 14 months later and my two little boys grew up almost like twins. Ronald was not very strong and Glen was very rugged and strong and healthy. When they started school Glen was the one who fought Ronald's battles. They both studied the violin and piano, later Ronald took up the Cello and Glen played the saxophone and clarinet. They chummed together played their music together and worked together until they were married.

Sarah was our next baby a lovely little girl with large expressive hazel eyes and golden curls. As she grew up she loved and cared for our younger children like a mother and they loved her and looked up to her almost as much as to me for the little attentions they needed. When she was fourteen years old the terrible flu epidemic struck the country and she was the second victim in that vicinity. The Doctors did not know what it was at the time but months later they knew it was flu she had, and people were dying all around us.

It was very hard to consol myself and to feel that God was just. But I prayed for help and tried to understand that God was good, that He had given into our care this beautiful spirit and had permitted her to be with us for fourteen years, and that he must have needed her to do some important work on the other side.

Merrill came to us when Sarah was past two, with his big black eyes and abundant black hair he looked like a little papoose. How I loved each one as they came. When he was passed two I was very ill for several months when little Frank came to us I was still very ill and finally was taken to a hospital and underwent a major operation. I was very near death for several days. My mother sent for my brother Ernest to come. He came to the hospital about eight A.M. When he saw me he said he was afraid he was too late that I was dying. He sat down beside my bed and prayed for faith to administer to me. Finally he placed his hands on my head and administered to me. New life seemed to course into my body and the warmth returned and I began to improve, I had neither taken nourishment or slept for eight days. I was very thankful to be able to go back to my little family once again.

Our dear little Frank was not permitted to be with us very long. When he was taken very ill with dysentery which turned to brain fever and in a few days the Lord took him from his terrible suffering. It was a terrible blow but I tried to convince myself that it was the Lords will and I must submit and do my best to rear my remaining family right.

After my operation my health was very much better and four more children were given to me. Floyd was our next son, then came Ruth and Viola and the tenth one dear little Roy, who was born in Blackfoot where we moved in 1917.

Floyd was a strong healthy boy until he was about 6 years old when he had inflammatory rheumatism. He never seemed very well after that, then when he was about 10 he hurt his knee and T.B. of the bone was the result. We took him to a bone specialist in Salt Lake. He put his leg in a cast for three months and when the cast came off he could walk again, but he was not well after that. He married Ruby Hoge and after their second child was born he died from Tubercular Meningitis. Once more my heart was torn with grief, but it was not the last time I was to suffer a great loss from death. My youngest boy, little Roy was never very well and we found that he had diabetes. He did not suffer greatly but gradually grew weaker until he finally went into a coma and passed away at the age of 2 years and 2 months.

My two little girls have been a great comfort to me, having lost my other girls I am thankful that the Lord blessed me with these two wonderful girls.

I am so thankful that He saw fit to permit dear Ruth to remain with us, as I know that it was through blessings that she recovered from her terrible sickness. She was so near death, such faith as hers cannot help but be recognized by our Heavenly Father and I am thankful that he has been so good to us.

Before I was married I had a patriarchal blessing pronounced upon my head which has been fulfilled. I remember that when this blessing was given me I was very desirous of going on a mission and I was silently praying for this blessing. I was not given this promise but I was told that my mission would be with the young people. I worked with the smaller children in primary and Sunday School, also in Relief Society for many years but never had the opportunity to work in mutual, as I got older I began to wonder whether this part of my blessing would be fulfilled. At that time I was working in Logan, had been working at the college girls dormitory during the winter and taking care of the M.I.A. girls Summer camp in Summer for three years. I was at that time house mother and cook at one of the Fraternities. I was reading my blessing over one Sunday and wondering if I was not worthy of this blessing, when it dawned on me that it was being fulfilled. I was working with the young people, even though not in a church capacity. I had great opportunity to use any influence for good, and help to improve their lives. I spent eighteen years with young people of U.S.A.C. and made many very good friends among them.

(Before the war.)

Three years was spent with the returned missionary Frat. the "Delta Phis," and they were three very happy years.

The house was run on a cooperative basis, the boys did all the actual work except the cooking, and through working with them every day we were very close to each other. I came to love these boys almost like my own. After war was declared they one by one left the house and went into different branches of the service. Each of them wanted me to write to them so I promised that if they would all write to me, I would compile news from all their letters and send it on to each of them. During the war I corresponded with nearly 100 boys from every country the war effected. On Christmas I sent candy and nuts and a cakes or plum pudding to each of them.

I have always been interested in Temple work and have done some endowment work each year, last winter I spent the winter in Mesa Arizona doing endowment work and am leaving December 1st to do the same this winter.

At the age of seventy years I have 20 living grandchildren. Three grandchildren have passed away. I love them all very dearly and I hope and pray that my children will live lives worthy of an exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom, and rear their children to be worthy of the same.