

FRANCES DAVIES—1844

Frances Davies, daughter of John Davies and Elizabeth Cadwallader, was born 24 April 1844 in Pembrokeshire, South Wales. She was a very beautiful child, the youngest of six children. In her early childhood she played on the shell strewn beach near the cliffs of Manobier Castle. When she was born her Aunt Susan, twin sister of her mother, said to her mother, "If you will name her Frances, after my baby who died, I will make her my heiress." It was with great pride, therefore, that Aunt Susie watched over Frances as she grew up. She sent her to boarding school and often took her up in her attic to show her the hampers of expensive china that was to be hers when she married. But a different course was in the making for Frances. Her father, a devout Wesleyan Welshman and expert stonecutter, who sang hymns while working, heard the Mormon missionaries preaching one day, and said, "their message was music to his ears." He joined the Church when he was 47 years old, and converted his entire family. - Frances was baptized in the ocean when she was 12 years old. Aunt Susan was heartbroken over this step she had taken, and withdrew her friendship and promises. However, when Frances was preparing to immigrate to America she sent her a package containing a 15-pound note and the comment, "Just a little money for the trip."

The Davies family arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in September of 1861. Frances was just 17, but old enough to make her a prize to be sought by the young men. Being of a modest and retiring demeanor, yet self-willed and determined to run her own affairs, she made it plain to her suitors that she had no intentions of getting 'married at that time. Will Smoot remarked at her funeral, "Frances was a beautiful girl. Any of us Sugar House boys would have been glad of her notice, but her quiet dignity gave us little encouragement. We were surprised therefore, when William B. Clark carried off the prize."

Raising 11 children in a pioneer environment was more than a full time task, but one that Frances accepted courageously. She was a real homemaker, spinning wool from their own sheep and dyeing the yarn green from peach leaves, brown from walnuts and red from madder roots in their garden. On one occasion she spun yarn from black and white sheep, wove it into a tweed cloth and had an overcoat made for her husband which he wore for over 10 years. One day when her husband had gone to the mountains for a load of wood a band of Indians came to her place for the express purpose of stripping the vineyard of its fruit. This was the first year the grape vines had borne, and they were luscious. It was a heartbreaking sight for Frances to see them filling their bags. The only weapon in the house was a large bowie knife. This was of no use for such a situation, but she thought of an effective solution. She quickly donned her husband's military suit, the cap and cape, and grasping his sword, rushed out of the house brandishing it in a threatening manner and demanding in a loud voice that they leave or perish. Terrified by her unexpected appearance, the Indians dropped their partly filled sacks and fled. Frances stood in the doorway until they had disappeared. Then she changed her clothes again and went out to the yard, gathered up the grapes and spent the afternoon making grape jelly.

Her calmness in the face of calamity was clearly shown when a neighbor woman one day frantically rushed into her house pleading for her to come and help. Her husband had been gored