

Matilda McClellan Loveless

In an auto-biography written prior to her death, Matilda McClellan Loveless stated in part as follows:

"I am the daughter of James and Cynthia McClellan, and was born in Nashville, Tennessee, December 15, 1829. My parents moved to Nauvoo in 1840, the year I was eleven years old, losing their eight cows and other valuable property on the way. The first winter we suffered very much from want and sickness, still we did not murmur, but were thankful we had gathered with the Saints in the beautiful City of Nauvoo. My parents were very industrious and through the blessings of the Lord we were soon in comfortable circumstances again. I can remember very distinctly the appearances of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Joseph always used a black horse and Hyrum a white one whenever riding on horse-back.

I very often saw Joseph and his wife Emma at meetings, out walking and riding in their carriage with Porter Rockwell as coachman on their way to Joseph's farm, passing by our house. This farm of Joseph's was managed by a man whose name was Lott.

I always attended Sunday School in the morning, and meeting in the afternoon in a grove near the Nauvoo Temple. Joseph was usually present. My happiest childhood remembrances are those spent in Sunday School, and many scriptural passages I learned at that time. I remember often seeing Emma Smith singing in the choir.

At one time while attending meeting it was raining very hard. I was holding an umbrella and it seemed that Joseph had been absent a few meetings and at this time was speaking very powerfully and everybody was so interested that they did not notice the storm.

At one time Joseph was taken to Carthage for treason and on his release Emma and many of the brethren and sisters left Nauvoo on horse-back to go and meet him and he returned in a carriage, while I together with many other children were very much interested in the return of our Prophet and great rejoicings were among the people. The feelings of the people when Joseph returned after having been arrested, cannot be described for it was heavenly.

Down on the flat, south from the City of Nauvoo, I have often seen the brethren drill and Joseph taking the lead. I can remember Emma being present at these military drills.

How well I can remember being very pleased when my mother would let me take father's dinner to him while he worked on the Nauvoo Temple. I seemed to understand the importance and Holiness of that building and father was always so pleased to have us children come with his dinner and would tell us about the Temple of God he was assisting to build. Being a blacksmith, he had a shop nearby where he worked. When necessary he did all kinds of labor.

I can remember my father coming home in the night (having been on guard) to make bullets in our fireplace. In those days we were always in dread of the Mobs. Father occasionally wore a red coat and we children spoke of father as belonging to the red coat company.

I was present when the capstone was placed on the Nauvoo Temple and remember the rejoicing of the people, also the song that was composed for the occasion. In those days we children would work and do anything so as to have the privilege of meeting in the gathering of the Saints. Our very souls were enthused over the Gospel, and we delighted in understanding all that was said and done in the Church.

I was present at the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple, May 1, 1846, the day my brother William and parents received their endowments. On their way home, how happy they were over receiving these blessings. They spoke to me about having my endowments, but I said "No", I will wait until I am married, which I did.

Upon arriving in Salt Lake they were counceled to go to Provo to help settle that section. They took up land and started farming and soon built a little house. She went through all the hardships of pioneer life. Her faith was tested twice when she had to make the sacrifice of dividing her husband as well as material things for the second and third wives.

At the time the Eastern women started the slander about the Mormon women, she was one to sign the reply that was intended to justify the Mormon doctrine.

When the Provo 2nd Ward Relief Society was organized in 1867, she was the first counselor to Sarah Ann Scott and she acted in that capacity until after Sister Scott retired in 1903. After she took charge until a new President was put in, making a period of 37 years of service.

During her active life, she ready to help the sick, lay out the dead and assist the living, was especially good in contagious diseases. Many times she used her sheets to make burial clothes. Her influence for good was felt by every one in the community, and in sickness the saints had implicit faith in her. In cases of poverty she would share her last crust or last cent.

During the years 1858 to 1862, when the Indians were so bad and the big move from the North took place, she assisted in taking care of the Saints in general and, more particularly, opened up her home to two families, by the names of Campbell and Goodman.

She washed and corded wool batts for quilts, and spun cloth for their winter clothing, she assisted her husband in making a living in every way possible. She was not a public woman, but took care of affairs at home so that her husband could put all the time necessary in the affairs which he was interested in. Her husband was active Bishop of the 2nd Ward for over 37 years, as well as being City Councilman and Alderman and road supervisor. He was in both the Walker and Blackhawk wars, was a Captain in the Territorial Militia and served a six months term in the State Penitentiary on account of the Edmunds Tucker Law.

She was a true and faithful companion to her husband, sharing in all trials and hardships of making a home and livelihood for their family. She was a wonderful mother. She gave birth to 10 children, eight daughters and two sons, nine of which to womanhood and manhood, and she taught them the principles of the Gospel, also to become good and useful citizens. Her life was one of sacrifice and she was loved by all. She died March 1, 1909, still retaining faith in the Gospel.