Josephine Lyon Fisher

I was born in February of 1844, and a few months later the Prophet and his brother were martyred at Carthage Jail. But even before that, the people knew that they would be forced to flee from their beloved city. They knew they must go far away to some place that was not wanted by anyone else.

First they rushed to complete their beautiful Temple, so that they could perform the ordinances taught by their beloved Prophet. As soon as any part of the Temple was finished, it was dedicated, and put to use. Endowments began in December 1845. My mother, Sylvia and Grandmother, Patty were called to work there, after they had received their endowments on the 16th of December. They worked day and night frantically helping others to receive their blessings, not knowing how long it would be before another Temple could be built.

My grandparents, David and Patty Sessions, were among the first to leave on the westward trek into the unknown. On February 12th 1844 they bade farewell to their children and crossed the Mississippi by ferry. They were much concerned about the loved ones they had left behind, Perrigrine and Sylvia and their families, and young David. They hoped and prayed they would all follow soon.

About four months later Perrigrine did join his parents at Winter Quarters. But they were disappointed to receive a letter from Sylvia saying that Winsor had decided to go to Iowa City instead of joining the other Saints. His brother, Ethiel had gone to the city the year before and had established a drug business and taken up land in that new town. He had encouraged them to come and join him in the business, and take up extensive land too. This they did.

Before my Grandparents left Winter Quarters, my mother, Sylvia, and I and Uncle David went to visit them one last time. I was very young, so I don’t remember it, but my mother brought back a poem composed for her by her good friend, Eliza R. Snow. She treasured it all of her life.

My memory begins about the time of my Father’s death in January 1849. My mother was left with two very young boys and me to care for. My father’s other wife, Elizee Cee Lyon, also had a small son.

My Uncle Perrigrine came to Iowa City to take us to the Great Salt Lake, but arrived too late as my mother was to marry the prominent banker, Ezekiel Clark, the next day, January 1, 1850. Uncle David decided to go to Utah with his older brother.

Five years later, Uncle Perrigrine came to visit on his way home from a mission to England. He became ill and Mother cared for him. When he was well Ezekiel purchased two “spring wagons”, and teams, and two
cows, so Mother and I, and my two half-sisters and half-brother could go to Utah with Uncle Perrigrine, to visit our grandmother and many cousins. My two brothers had died in Iowa City, leaving me as the only descendant of the union of Dr. Winsor Palmer Lyon and Sylvia Sessions.

I can remember the long journey across the plains, as I was able to drive one of the teams some of the way, when my mother became tired. I thought it was great fun, and was looking forward to our return. But we didn’t return to Iowa City. Instead my mother had a home built in Sessions Settlement, where Uncle David and Aunt Phoebe, and Uncle Perrigrine and families lived.

I met and married John Fisher, when I was very young, and we reared a large family. I have enjoyed my associations with the Church members, and have given my family the teachings that will enable them to attain exaltation, if they will only live the doctrine.

I am very proud of my pioneer heritage.

Josephine Lyon Fisher