Margaret Adams Farnsworth was born 1 Jan 1840 in Scotland, to David Barclay and Mary Cook Adams. She was number 4 in a family of 7 children, Her brothers and sisters were: James, Adam, Ann, Mary, David, and Ellen. Her father was an expert worker in the iron mines in Scotland, but he was of an adventurous nature and wanted to try his luck at the mines in America. He had heard that the wages and working conditions were much better.

When Margaret was about 2 or 3 years old, she crossed the ocean with her family and settled in Pennsylvania. They hadn’t been there too long until her parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Joseph Clemens baptized them 6 April 1844. As Margaret grew up she loved to have the Mormon Missionaries come to their home. The talk usually centered around their going to the Rocky Mountains or Utah. Finally, early in 1849, her parents did dispose of their belongings and started for Council Bluffs, Iowa, where the Mormons were gathered at that time. However, this was just a temporary place for the saints, because as soon as they could they crossed the plains to Utah.

Margaret enjoyed the train ride over the eastern part of the United States and was real excited when they boarded a river steamer to take them up the Missouri River to Council Bluffs or Kanesville, Iowa. But alas, this experience was one of the saddest of her nine year old life. There was much sickness and death on the boat and her darling mother was not to escape the grim-reaper–death, and died 7 May 1849 of cholera. There was no suitable land to bury the dead in, so the boat was drawn up alongside the shore and her mother, Mary Cook Adams, was buried in the watery, swampy place on the banks of the Missouri River. What a sad time for Margaret, her father and brothers and sisters. Margaret’s father soon remarried and she was a good mother to Margaret and her family.

The Adams family spent the winter of 1851 getting everything ready to make the long trek across the plains. On 8 June 1852 they left Kanesville, with a company of 340 Saints and 32 wagons with John Tidwell as their Captain. They arrived in Great Salt Lake City, 15 Sept. 1852. They didn’t remain there very long. Her father called to Iron County to work in the Iron Mines at Irontown, where his skill as an iron worker was needed badly for this new enterprise. They lived in Cedar City for a couple of years then he was called to go to Beaver, a new settlement some 50 or 60 miles North East. Margaret was 16 years old, a lovely young girl when she took up her residence in this small community. She soon had many friends and was a general favorite among her associates.

All the leaders of the church were counseled and encouraged to take more than one wife, and the young women of the church were counseled, for security to marry older men holding and honoring their priesthood, and to fulfill the measure of their creation. So both Philo and Margaret trying to live the law and the commandment followed this counsel and Philo, 28 years old, and a Bishop, took Margaret, who was 17 years old as his second wife 24 Aug. 1857 at Beaver, Utah. As was the custom with plural marriage, Margaret moved in with Philo and his first wife Margaret Yates. Soon just 6 miles out from the town of Beaver, Philo built Margaret, his new wife, a 2 room log cabin. In reading about the first homes of the pioneers, we find “The First Homes built were log cabins, the cracks between the logs were chinked with wedges of wood and daubed with clay. The roofs were composed of brush covered with dirt, no floors, other than hard-packed earth. Light was received during the daytime through one or 2 small windows.
Gunny sacks hanging over the openings made for windows kept the cold out at night. The cabin door would have a wooden latch and the hinges were made of leather. A fireplace at one end was used for light at night, heat and to cook on. Also rags were put in dishes of oil or fat and lighted for additional light. Then as soon as they could collect mutton tallow they made candles, using the dipping method with a piece of string looped double over a stick. Also making their own matches by cutting box elder wood into small flat strips about 3 inches long and dipping the end of each strip into melted sulphur. Margaret had to learn fast to become a pioneer plural wife, how to cook, sew, make soap, candles, raise & prepare and cure their meat. Just to make her own soap would take hours of time.

This is a description of how they made soap found in “Utah History” book. For months the housekeeper saved scraps of fat not consumed by the family. All rinds from the pork, trimmings from the meat, and even the fat scraps from the table, were stored away to await soap-making time. Then it was melted down and strained.”

It was also necessary to have a good supply of lye. This was obtained from ashes from cottonwood, cedar wood, or corncob fires. These ashes, probably several days savings, were stored in a barrel, and water was added. After repeated stirring and skimming, the waste ashes settled down to the bottom. Then the clear lye water was ready.

Out in the back yard the lye water was heated in a big kettle. The grease was slowly added. For several hours the cooking continued until a rich honey-like syrup formed. Then with saucer and spoon, the skillful woman tested with plain water, then with lye water, until her experienced eye found that the soap was just right. She was happy, indeed, when the spoonful she was testing became firm and white. Carefully the soap was set in tubs to stand overnight and cool. That which was to be used for hand soap was perfumed, for it had to be just as nice as she could possibly make it. The next morning the soap was cut into bars and ready to use.

Margaret’s life was busy living alone most of the time and having almost complete responsibility of her home and children. 2 years after her marriage their first son was born naming him David Barclay after Margaret’s father. He was born 6 Sep. 1859. Then Francis Marion born 4 June 1861-only lived a month. Laura Ellen born 12 Sep. 1867, Alonzo Martindale born 5 Nov. 1864, Susan Jane born 5 Feb. 1867, then Mary Elizabeth born 3 April 1869.

Margaret’s husband Philo had a big responsibility. By 1869, when her 6th baby was born, he had 4 wives and 22 children. He was kind, busy and loved and respected by all who knew him. How excited Margaret and the children would be, when their father and husband would come to visit, always bringing some groceries and a little extra treat. Groceries would be sugar for their mush, bacon for breakfast, molasses to spread on their homemade bread and freshly churned butter.

Margaret cared for her children being a good mother and with the same sweet spirit of many other pioneer women. She taught her children to live by the gospel principles. Also to be good and agreeable with one another. She was a faithful church member, supported and encouraged her husband in all his Priesthood activities and church work.

Margaret always wanted to go to Salt Lake and take out her own endowments and to be sealed to her husband. Now little Mary Elizabeth was 4 months old. Margaret feeling well and strong enough, Philo took her to the endowment house and Margaret took out her own endowments and was sealed to her husband on 30 Aug. 1869. What a happy time for her. Now she was married for time and eternity to one of the finest men in Beaver.
Soon after Margaret was blessed with another baby girl, Isabella, born 9 May 1871. Margaret didn’t completely regain her strength after this baby. It was a hard time for her. In early spring of 1872 being weak and tired she caught pneumonia becoming very weak. Mary Elizabeth told her daughter, Letha, all she remembered about her mother, was her laying in bed a lot. One day Mary was hungry. She went crying to her mother, Margaret, putting her arms around her and called David, her oldest son, who was 12 years old, to find something for Mary to eat. Then not too long afterwards, she remembers them carrying her mother out of the house and taking her away in a wooden box.

Margaret died 20 June 1872 at the age of 32 in her home, and was buried in the Beaver City Cemetery. This was a sad day for Margaret’s children. Aunt Agnes, Philo’s 3rd wife, took some of the children, others were scattered around. Mary was taken by the Will Robinson family. Margaret believed with all her heart she was doing the Lord’s work in trying to help build a righteous kingdom in Utah and especially in Beaver. In her few short years here they were indeed years of stress and trial, but her faith could not be shaken.

As we read the promise given her in her Patriarchal Blessing “thy children and thy children’s children arising after thee shall administer unto thee and shall call thee blessed. Margaret’s posterity is many and hoping this history can help in some small way for this blessing she was given to be fulfilled, that we too may so live our lives that we with her may enjoy the glory and blessings of the Celestial Kingdom.

Patriarchal Blessing  Given when Margaret was 14 years old  C

Patriarchal Blessing of Elisha M. Groves on the head of Margaret Adams, daughter of David Adams and Mary Cook, son of James, son of Gilbert. Born 1 Jan 1840, Carronbrae, Lanar, Scotland, Given in Cedar City, Utah 17 Jan. 1854

Sister Margaret, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth by virtue of the Holy Priesthood in one invested, I place my hands upon thy head to seal upon thee a patriarchal or father’s blessing. Thou art in the days of thy youth, yet inasmuch as thou will be wise, hearkening to the counsel of thy parents, treasure up wisdom, keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, thou shalt be blessed. The blessings of thy heavenly father shall crown thy days. The spirit of the Lord, thy God, shall rest upon thee as a light to thy path and a guide to thy feet that they slide not. Thou art a daughter of Abraham of the lineage of thy parents, a right to the blessings, privileges and powers which pertain to the fulness of the Holy Priesthood according to thy sex for thou shalt be connected with a man of God and receive thy Priesthood in connection with him.

That thou mayest stand up and assist in the redemption of thy progenitors, thou shalt become a mother in Israel and thy posterity shall be multiplied upon the earth. Thy children and thy children’s children arising after thee shall administer unto thee and shall call thee blessed. Thy name shall be handed down to the latest posterity being numbered with the honorable females in Zion. The Holy Angels shall be with thee, shall deliver thee from the powers of Satan and from all who uphold his work. The powers of darkness shall give way before thee that thou mayest speak with tongues and prophesy as the Spirit shall give utterance.

Peace and joy shall crown thy days, plenty shall be in thy habitation for the set time to favor Zion has come and in thy days the wealth of the Gentiles shall flow into the bosom of the church. Thou shalt return with the saints to Zion, receive thy blessings and privileges in the house of the Lord built therein. Thou shalt receive thy crown, thy Priesthood, thy Kingdom and Dominion, eternal increase in connection with thy husband. These blessings are sure unto thee.
I seal them upon thy head in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, even so, Amen.

As near as anyone knows, Margaret, never had her picture taken. This history was compiled and written by Melba Edwards Carter for her father, Philo T. Edwards, his brothers and sisters, history of their grandma and mother of their mother Mary Elizabeth Farnsworth Edwards.

Typed into computer 7 Oct. 2002 by Kathleen J. Woolf   Idaho Falls, Idaho