Mary Lula Woolf was born in Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah, 25 April 1877. Her parents were John A. and Mary Lucretia Hyde Woolf, both original pioneers who crossed the plains in 1846 and 1847. Her grandfather Hyde Woolf was a neighbor and close friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Her grandfather was a friend of the Prophet, and responded to several missions call from him. Later, he served as a sergeant in the Mormon Battalion.

Mary Lu was the 6th child in a family of 12 and was given her mother’s name. She had many happy memories of her childhood in Hyde Park, a beautiful town built near the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and founded by her grandfather Hyde. She recalls, “We were quite a colony of happy relatives; brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.”

One outstanding experience she remembers was the time Sister Eliza R. Snow visited Primary with her aunt Jane E. Molen, who was stake Primary president. All the children marched by Sister Snow. “She spoke so kindly to us and let us hold the Prophet Joseph Smith’s watch in our hand—the one he wore when he was martyred. To this day I can see it and hear it tick. It was a large watch, and filled my small hand,” said Mary Lu.

When Mary Lu was 6 years old the family was stricken with typhoid fever, and her oldest sister died. There were 9 in the family bedridden in 4 small rooms. They were stricken in October, and were trying to learn to walk again in May. Her grandmother was in her sixties at the time, and was so ill her spirit left her body, but she was told to return and comfort her daughter and those on earth. Her hair came in black and shining, and she lived to be 102 years old and a comfort to all. (Elizabeth Howe Bullard Hyde).

Mary Lu attended public school in Hyde Park. Her teacher’s name was William Daines.

When she was 10 years old her father left Hyde Park with his family to journey to Canada in Pores. C. O. Card’s company. The wagons were fitted out in true pioneer style. Mary Lu said it was sad parting to leave relatives and friends to go so far away. Her cousins told her she would be a real heroine going to a land where there was nothing but icebergs and Indians.

The 3 months enroute to Canada in covered wagons were full of interest and adventure. There were songs and stories around the camp fires. Sometimes, members of other camps responded to their moonlight serenades. She always imagined they were cowboys, because they sang so sweetly. Cowboys, Mounted Police and nice Indians were great friends of her family. Her 10th birthday was celebrated in Boulder Canyon. She received her first story book, a present from Aunt Zina Card. Her mother promised her a store hat as soon as they reached a store. Her mother had previously made all the hats. She kept her word, and when they reached Helena, Montana, Mary recalls, “I was proud as a peacock, carefully carrying it, so it would not get squashed. But the first time I put it on my head the first Sunday and opened the door to step outside, a Canadian zephyr raised it from my head and it went spinning into the clouds. I never saw my prized hat again.”

A thrilling experience and a test of faith was experienced as they neared the Canadian border. “I shall never forget the first time I saw a Mountie,” she said. “We were forced to camp on account of heavy rains. In the early afternoon, 2 Northwest Mounted Police in their bright scarlet coats rode into camp, talked for some time to President Card, then rode away. I shall never forget the seriousness of the situation. Pres. Card said he was told the St. Mary’s River was so high it would be impossible for us to cross it, and when the snows started to melt it would
be weeks before we could cross. Pores. Card called all members together. We knelt in solemn appeal as he asked our Father in Heaven to subdue the elements and make it possible to reach our destination. He asked the men to make a raft, all the boxes and wood were assembled, and they worked part of the night. The provisions were running low and some members were ill. The next morning the same Mounties rode into campo and said a miracle had happened—the waters had gone down 4 or 5 feet during the night and if we would hurry we could cross the river before the snow melted. The sun was shining warm and bright. We crossed safely and did not use the raft. As soon as we were safe on the other side, the river started to rise, and it was weeks before anyone could cross.”

The party reached Lee’s Creek—now Cardston—late in the afternoon of 3 June 1887, too tired to enjoy the open spaces. They pitched the tents and went to their crude beds to be awakened early by a damp chilly feeling, and looked out upon a deep blanket of snow.

The first Sunday a fast meeting was held in a tent. “To me it was a spiritual feast,” she said, “and many prophecies were uttered. One was that a temple would be built in the town.”

The first settlers were like one large family, helping to build each other’s log houses and plant and harvest their crops. “I look back upon those happy memories, grateful for the experience and spiritual blessings. I witnessed many miracles in my father’s and my home. There were no medical doctors, and many were healed by faith and the prayers of the priesthood.”

“I met Mr. Robert Ibey, a young man from the east who came to make cheese for the community at the request of Pores. Card. He had never seen a Mormon, and the first house he saw as the stage coach neared was my father’s house with its thatched roof. He asked the driver if Indians lived there. Mr. Ibey was converted to the Church and 2 years later we were married by my father, who was a bishop, later going to the Logan Temple to be sealed. 2 daughters and 4 sons blessed our home—2 dying in infancy.”

“Our home was the first in the community to be built with brick, and an upstairs room was fitted up for prayer circle and used by the priesthood every Sunday. Many great and good men and women had been in our home and the home of my parents. My father was Bishop, Mayor, counselor to Pres. Card in the stake, and Patriarch. My mother was a Relief Society president for 35 years in the Alberta Stake. Our home was open house to visitors from Salt Lake. My husband and I served on different stake boards. I have had the pleasure of helping entertain royalty, as my brother, John, was a member of Parliament for 8 years.”

She often said, “Activities in the Church have been my greatest joy. Schooling was limited for a number of years, but when possible I attended the higher grades and night school.”

“My first calling was secretary in the Primary. I was called to the presidency of the YLMIA and served for 9 years. I spent 4 years on the stake Relief Society board in the Taylor Stake; 4 years as president of the Weiser Ward Relief Society; and 2 years on the Weber Stake Relief Society Board. Upon arriving in California, I was president of the Lincoln Acres Relief Society, a teacher in Sunday School, and active on the stake genealogical board. I served on the district Relief Society Board in San Diego and for this I am most grateful to my Heavenly Father.

She had the privilege of being one of Pres. Grant’s party during the exposition, and was chosen to represent the LDS Church on Appreciation Day in the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park, where 150 women of San Diego County were honored. A fusha bearing her name is growing at the door of the tropical garden. She was the San Diego County Captain of the Daughters of Utah
Pioneers and worked hard to help sponsor the Mormon Battalion Monument. She had a great sense of honor and was loved by all who knew her.”

Mary Lu passed away 19 June 1955, following an operation at the Scripps Memorial Hospital, LaJolla, California. She was laid to rest in the Greenwood Memorial Park, San Diego, California, beside her beloved husband, whom she had lost 13 years earlier.

Predominantly from the Autobiography of Mary Lula Woolf Ibey

Typed into the computer 26 Oct 2002 by Kathleen Jardine Woolf Idaho Falls, Idaho
Information from book JOHN ANTHONY FAMILY Publ. 1986