RACHEL MAY HANCEY KIRBY
1881-1942

Rachel May Hancey was born 31 May 1881, at the home of her parents in Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah. She was the first child of James Hancey and his 3rd wife, Annie Marie Christophersen Hancey. On 1 September 1881, she was christened Rachel May by Robert Daines who was the Bishop of the Ward. She always went by the name of May. She was given the name of Rachel after her Father’s 1st wife, Rachel Seamons. This shows the love and respect that existed in this polygamous family as the children always called her “Grandma Rachel.”

Mother was a pretty, petite girl with fine features, dark blue eyes, and beautiful chestnut colored hair that curled easily. As a child, she wore her hair in ringlets.

Her childhood playmates were the neighborhood children of the Perkes and Matkin families. Her supper as a child usually consisted of skim milk and bread. She probably remembered this as she didn’t like milk. A stick of candy was a rare treat for her.

On 6 June 1889, when mother was 8 years old, she was baptized a member of the church, the same day, by Neils Christensen. The baptism took place in a canal that ran through the back yard of the family plot.

Mother went to school in Hyde Park and graduated from the 8th grade. Mary Ann Grant was her first teacher. One of her favorite teachers was J. W. D. Hurrey, whom she admired for his kind and gently disposition. As she was the oldest in the family, there was always a job waiting for her when she got home from school. There was always lots of ironing to do with the heavy stove-heated irons. There were dishes to wash and the house to clean.

When she was older, she was glad to obtain a job doing house work. She worked for a Mrs. Ritter in Logan for one dollar a week. Her work included scrubbing clothes on a washboard, churning milk, ironing with the heavy stove irons, scrubbing floors, carrying water, and many other household duties.

Mother married George S. Kirby on 5 Feb. 1902, in the Logan Temple They were married by Pres. Marriner W. Merrill. She made her garments for her temple marriage of fine white muslin. She made her wedding dress of a dark grey cashmere material. Her trousseau was meager and her weddings presents were few. She cherished the beautiful red and gold rose cup and saucer of bone chine that Sarah H. Seamons gave them for a wedding present. We still have it in the family.

After their marriage they lived in a house built by Grandfather Hancey located at 209 East Center in Hyde Park. This was where they lived the remainder of their lives. They were the parents of 5 children, 3 of whom died in infancy. She often said she was happy to have Aunt Nettie as a baby sister when she was a small child, and she named her first baby girl after Aunt Nettie. However, Nettie died when just a few weeks, old, as did Allan her youngest son. Edna May, her 3rd child died when 2 years old. There were heartbreaking experiences of our parents. Mother loved and enjoyed her 2 children, Ernest and Ruth, who grew to maturity.

Mother was a good cook and we doubt if anyone ever made a better loaf of bread. She was very clean and her house was spotless. Her ambition always exceeded her strength. We remember how proud she was when she got her new Copper Clad wood stove. We doubted there was a stove in town to match it. She often entertained us children by talking in rhyme as she worked about the kitchen. The rhymes were about people and things we knew and made us laugh. She could write good serious poetry as well, and did so for family and friends. She was a careful shopper at the stores. She knew what she wanted and the prices she ought to pay.
wouldn’t settle for anything but quality products.

She was an excellent seamstress and fashioned beautiful clothes for her and her children on her treadle sewing machine. She made beautiful quilts of the log cabin and the wedding ring design. Her quilting was beautiful. Her crocheting and other handiwork won blue ribbons at the Cache County Fairs. We both have the dresses we wore when we were christened. The tiny stitches and fine embroidery reflect the love and skill mother put into them. When Ernest and Rita’s children were young, mother made their winter coats and enjoyed making dresses for the 3 little girls. Mother loved flowers and always had beautiful flowers growing in her yard. They always raised a garden and had an orchard with a variety of fruit trees.

She loved the church and enjoyed going to the temple even when it taxed her health. She taught a religion class to the school children. It was held after school in the school room and was really a challenge as the little ones were restless after having been in school for several hours. She loved the children and devoted her time and energy in making it an enjoyable learning time for them.

Mother and Dad didn’t have many vacations, but they did enjoy going to Salt Lake City to the State Fair and did so on many occasions. Whenever they could, they would take Grandma Hancey and go on the Interurban Street Car to Salt Lake City to the LDS General Conference. One year when Ernest was teaching school in Orderville, Utah, we went to visit him and his wife, Rita, and family. We visited the beautiful parks in the Southern Utah area and Mother truly enjoyed the trip. On another occasion, Dad visited Ernest and family in Kanab, but Mother’s health did not permit her to go with him.

Mother had a very faith-promoting experience when Ernest was very ill with diphtheria. He had been ill from November until February and was growing weaker each day. One day when the family thought he was dying, Dad and Uncle Albert Kirby went and got Bishop Hyde to come and administer to him again. Mother was exhausted and sobbing as she sat at the bedside of her sick son when she felt a strong hand on her shoulder and the voice of Grandfather Kirby saying, “Don’t cry, May, Ernest will live.” This was a message from the spirit world, as Grandfather had died several years before. She could never tell this story without crying. It was always special to her.

She was a kind, sensitive woman who had a keen sense of humor and loved the great outdoors and nature. She was thoughtful of others & enjoyed sending produce from the garden& the orchard to widows & those in need. Ernest would complain at great lengths when he had to carry buckets of sour cherries and pottawatamie plums to a widow who lived down in the other part of town.

After a long struggle with pernicious anemia, Mother passed away 18 Jan. 1942, at her home in Hyde Park, at the age of 60. She was survived by her husband, George S. Kirby, a son Ernest George, a daughter Ruth, and 4 grandchildren, Mary, May, Diana, Sandra, and George Ernest Kirby.