HARRIET PAUL WALKER
1848-1897

Harriet Paul, daughter of Nicholas and Harriet May Paul, was born 23 February 1848 at Bissow Hall, Perranarworthal, Cornwall, England. She was the oldest child in a family of 11 brothers and sisters.
Nicholas Paul, Harriet’s father was selected by the British Government to move to Cape Town located in the Union of South Africa. The family left England in 1849 to make their home in the strange land of Africa. Nicholas was twenty-five years old and he was just getting started in business when he and several other well educated men were required to go to South Africa to strengthen the British Colony located on the southern tip of the continent of Africa.

Harriet was less than a year old when her parents loaded their possessions and sailed to South Africa. South Africa at that time could be compared to the western United States. While Cape Town was fairly safe, the outer districts were subject to attacks by the native tribes, Kaffers and Zulus. Also the threat of war with the Dutch settlers, or Boers was always present.

Cape Town became a bustling business center for the colony. Goods poured in from all over South Africa to be shipped to distant ports. Wool, beef, grain, fruit and ostrich feathers were goods that filtered into Cape Town. Warehouses, packing sheds and dock facilities were in great demand. Nicholas Paul soon became the senior partner in a thriving construction company.

Harriet’s father built a home for his family in Mowbray which is located about three miles south of Cape Town. Life in the Cape Town area became quite enjoyable. The Pauls were moderately wealthy. They were well liked, respected and influential in the community.

Harriet gives a look at her home life in South Africa. She remembered the Kaffer salesmen and women who carried large baskets of fruits and vegetables on their heads as they went from door to door selling their wares. The fruit baskets were loaded with pears, grapes and oranges.

The Paul family had servants who brought their meals to them every day at regular times. The meal was brought on heated stones to keep it warm. A second basket was also brought in with additional food for each meal. The family’s dirty clothes were sent out to be washed and ironed. A Kaffer maid was employed to take care of the house.

The family spent many afternoons in the park. Every tree and shrub seemed to have colorful song birds. They also went swimming and played around the lake before a picnic.

The feeding of the ostriches was very interesting to the young children. Harriet said, “We were never willing to leave the park without feeding the ostriches. We always brought a bag of oranges. We had to put the oranges on a stick and shove it through an opening in the fence.”

“Our greatest shock came when we filled one of our good English tea cups with left over food, held it at the opening. The cup was immediately grabbed and the ostrich gulped it down with much the same ease as he had swallowed the oranges. It was fun to see the
oranges go down their gullets, but to see one of our good tea cups go down the same way left us with a moment of consternation."

She also told of watching men on horseback trying to lasso one of these huge birds when they escaped from their pen. When approached the ostrich would hide it’s head in the sand. When cornered he would attack with his powerful legs and razor sharp claws. She mentioned that ostrich feathers sold for as high as $50.00 each.

Harriet also described the scene around Cape Town. She said, “There were massive mountains surrounding the city. The Lion’s Head, Devil’s Peak and Table Mountain. A good road lead to the top of these mountains. The family sometimes traveled to the top during the hot weather. “ We also enjoyed the cool ocean breezes. We could only take these trips when Father could go.” Regretfully this is the extent of Harriet’s writings. If more was written, it has been lost or destroyed.

It is reasonable to assume that the Pauls educated their children either by teaching them themselves or by hiring a tutor. Harriet was a very well educated and intelligent twelve year old by the time the Paul family left Africa. She excelled in the identification of herbs and their use in the treatment of the ill.

A great event took place in the Paul family when her father brought home a Mormon missionary by the name of William Holmes Walker. He taught them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Harriet’s father accepted the new gospel and was baptized by Elder Walker 23 June 1853. He was either the first or second man to be baptized y those having authority in South Africa.

Seven year later the Paul family decided to join the Saints in Salt Lake city, Utah. Harriet was now twelve years old when she and her family boarded the sail ship Mary Pierce which left Cape Town March 7, 1860. The ship made ports of call at St. Helena Island and St. Thomas in the West Indies and ship arrived in New York City 11 June 1860. Harriet and her family left New York City and traveled to Albany. They then went on to Buffalo, New York, St. Louis, Missouri, St. Joseph, Missouri and finally to Florence Nebraska.

In Florence they joined the Stoddard Company. The Stoddard wagon train left Florence 4 July 1860 for Salt Lake City. They arrived in Salt Lake city 24 September 1860. This was the end of an eleven thousand mile trip. The journey took nearly seven months to complete. Ibn all probability this trip was the first time the Paul children had to work and help take care of themselves.

The family was met in Salt Lake city by William Holmes Walker. He and his family enjoyed the opportunity of seeing old friends. After a short time in Salt Lake City, the Paul family was asked by Brigham Young to settle in the community of Fillmore, Utah. Harriet was baptized on 2 April 1863.
When Harriet was seventeen years of age she decided to marry William Holmes Walker although he was 28 years older than she was. William was a polygamist and had three wives. She would be William's fourth wife. Her father and mother were not too happy with her decision.

Harriet and William were married in the endowment House in Salt Lake City 23 April 1865. Needless to say Harriet wasn’t welcomed into the Walker clan by wives, 2 and three. Jealousy raised its ugly head. Here was a seventeen year old woman, pretty, petite an well educated. Although we cannot confirm the following facts we do know she came from small stock. We may assume she stood about five feet in height and weighed 100 pounds. It is sad to note that a picture of Harriet has never surfaced. To make her lot more difficult, he speech was old world English, sprinkled with a South African accent. This combination would have made it difficult for others to understand her.

Wives, number two and three, ridiculed and shunned her. They and their children pulled dirty tricks on her and her family. However they were quick to call on her skills in the use of herbs when one of their family members became ill.

One day Harriet’s father arrived at her home and found some of his grandchildren tied up and put in a rain barrel with only their faces above water. Nicholas also discovered his daughter had been tied up by some of William’s older children were older than she was. Nicholas exploded and when he found William, grabbed him and bluntly told him if he couldn’t straighten things out quickly, he would take his daughter and grandchildren back to Holden Utah. Apparently Harriet never complained to William of the treatment she and her family were receiving from the other families.

Harriet’s first child, Lorin Paul, was born 31 May 1866 in Salt Lake City, Utah. For the next several years the families would live in Oak Creek, Millard County, Utah; Holliday, Salt Lake County and Big Cottonwood, Utah.

William bought the Farr estate was located a little more than nine miles south east of Temple Square. The estate bordered on Cottonwood Creek. William divided the Farr estate into thirds. He built three two story adobe houses. He finished these houses with white stucco. The houses all had panel doors and were also fitted with screen doors. The rooms were plastered throughout. The floors had a good tongue and groove flooring and the shingles were the best grade of white shingles that were brought by team and wagon from Weber Canyon.

The first three families moved into their new homes in December 1872. Harriet and her family moved into the house that Winslow Farr had built for his family.

Elizabeth, Harriet’s sixth child and third daughter wrote somewhat of the family home in Cottonwood. Elizabeth wrote, “ We were much pleased with our home. The surroundings were both interesting and inviting. Father paid $5,500.00 for the property. Much of it had to be cleared. The lower fields had willows, birches and cottonwoods,
both large and small. The bench portion had scrub oak, squaw brush, wild roses and sagebrush.

“Father obtained orchard stock from the east and planted three orchards. (These orchards and farm land were for the three families with children.) The orchards had early and late pears, also winter pears. There were several varieties of peaches, early and late, as well as several varieties of apples.”

“Near the house was the garden spot. Here we raised the finest vegetables, melons and squash. There were strawberries, red rhubarb, big and long; gooseberries, red and white currants and red and black raspberries.”

“We also had some good cows and horses. Father bought new machinery in the spring of 1873 and begin to farm. He had been engaged in cattle raising in Dixie. When he moved to Oak Creek he built a saw mill and a flour mill. He drove his stock there and bought some purebred Durhams. He paid a handsome price for a Red Durham Sire. He also bought a splendid stallion. It was some of this stock we had on our farm at Cottonwood. About this same time Father bought three Singer sewing machines, one for each family.”

Life never runs smooth and so it was with the Walker Family. Shortly after moving his families to Cottonwood Federal Marshals moved into Utah in 1874 to arrest and jail the men that were practicing plural marriage. This effort would continue until 1890 when an amnesty was extended to those who practiced plural marriage before that date.

William was forced to flee his home to avoid being arrested and spent several years avoiding the Federal Marshals by traveling to and from Idaho and Utah. Being on the run, support for his families came to an abrupt end. The older families were not totally dependent on William. These families had children old enough to do the farming and support their families.

Harriet and her family were not so fortunate. Her children were too young to handle the stock and farm. She and her family often went cold and hungry and received very little help from the other families.

Her oldest granddaughter, Laura, related the following story, “If it hadn’t been for the family cat the family would have starved to death. Each day the cat would brig a rabbit into the house to be used by the family.”

In 1878 Lorin became twelve years old and with the help of his brother Charles (about 10) took over the total support of his Mother and the family. In addition to farming the forty acres of land, Lorin supplemented the family income by hauling coal from the Utah coal mines.

Elizabeth states, “Mother had supervision of her own family and charge of her own affairs. She seemed to be endowed with the facility to give each child a responsibility
and so interested each one in the home, in duties both outside and in. Ambition to help with willingness was skillfully created."

“Our thrift was soon evident. The increase in our cattle and crops, our fine orchard, berries and our vegetable garden was proof.”

She goes on to say, “In the fall of 1875 Father was confronted with a problem. He had all his children at Cottonwood but there was no school. He fitted up a room and hired Mrs. Martha Moses as the teacher. He put fifteen of his children in school. A number of neighbors desired to enter children in the school. They were accepted. Later in 1876 a school district was formed. A school house was built and it was also used as a ward building.”

Through the years Harriet gave William eleven children. They all grew to maturity. She was a good mother and taught her children well. The boys took their turns supporting the family as the older boys left home, married and started families of their own. Harriet’s posterity have filled many important church callings. It is hard to estimate how many grandsons and granddaughters have filled honorable missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The count still goes on.

Harriet Paul Walker died at the age of 49. Her older children finished raising the younger children. Elizabeth gives us an account of Harriet’s last day, her death and funeral.

Elizabeth was 22 years old when her Mother died, she reports, “Mother took me to school, The University of Utah, Monday morning. She then went shopping and bought material for Laura’s two dresses. She had them nearly completed when she suddenly became very ill.”

“Tuesday after midnight, brother Frank came to bring me home. At one AM mother was in terrible pain. Lorenzo had been for the doctor. The doctor had a bad maternity case and couldn’t come. He sent powders, wrapped in small squares of paper, numbered one, two three. The doctor told Lorenzo, “If she is not better come back for me and I will come.” “After taking a powder she was soon relieved from pain.”

“I stayed on the edge of the bed and held her hand. She talked of the usual things of interest. I had to ask her what made her so violently ill.” She said, “I was sewing sleeves on the last dress when one fell to the floor. I reached to pick it up. A pain cut me through from side to side.” “With her right hand she drew with her finger a line from left to right just below her ribs.” She continued, “I didn’t sew the sleeve. I felt it almost impossible to get to the bedroom. At last Wilford came into the house and heard my distressing call. He hurried to me and then called Charles and Lorenzo. They were with the cattle.

“We were to give her a powder at 8:00 AM. She and I were talking.” Mother said, “I feel rather tired. I think I’ll turn over and get a little rest.”
“I stood up and raised the covers. She seemed to turn with ease. I straightened the covers and place them over her again. I sat on the bed and I could hear her breathe. She seemed to breathing normally. It was now past 8:00 AM when I heard her take a long breath and expel it suddenly. I looked at her face, her lips were parted slightly showing her teeth. Her lips and chin were slightly sagged sideways. I lifted her hand and it was limp. Her eyes were closed and the color was gone from her face.

MOTHER WAS GONE!”

“Our Mother had left us so suddenly that our home truly became a house of mourning. Father was in Lewisville, Idaho and we sent him a telegram. Friends and neighbors did all they could to help us in our distress.”

“Lorenzo met Father at the depot and told him what I had said about buying a white casket and having a white hearse.”

Father said, “We will buy the white coffin and have a white hearse.” “The viewing was held in the home.”

“We all assembled near her. Father was at the head of the casket and spoke saying, “It helps us some to see her looking very nice. I think she is pleased to have these beautiful temple clothes to wear. I’m sure she would have wanted this beautiful white casket. She will always remember the nice things we have done.”

“We all seemed to feel a little better. The white hearse backed to the north end of the house. Two surreys waited in the drive to take us to the chapel.”

The square at the chapel was filled to capacity with vehicles. (Horse drawn surreys, buggies and wagons.) The school yard was also used to park buggies. The chapel was filled to capacity with people filling the isles. Although it was January there was an abundance of flowers.”

“Speakers at the funeral service were close friends of mother and father. Lorin Farr, Winslow Farr, Apostle John henry Smith, (President George Albert Smith’s father) and John Taylor. James Nielson was the soloist. He also conducted the choir with proper songs.”

“At he cemetery, when we saw the casket placed over the grave as they began to lower the casket our feelings were beyond control.”

The cause of Harriet’s death was never determined.

Harriet body was later exhumed an taken to the Lewisville Idaho Cemetery where she was buried. She shares a grave site with the other wives. Their graves are marked with a pentagon shaped tall stone, giving heir names and that of their husband, William Holmes Walker.
Written by Elwood Walker Chambers, Great grandson.

Materials used: Life Sketch of Nicholas Paul by Clifford L. Stott.
Notes by: Elizabeth Piepgrass, daughter
Story by: Laura Jane Walker Morton, granddaughter

Using these very limited sketches and a great deal of inspiration, that came to me faster than I could write, our Grandmother has now become an individual instead of a name on a family group sheet.