

Biography of Anna Sariah Eager Tenney by Luline T Whiting and Rosalia T. Tenney

Name: We have two ways to spell Anna's last name - Eager or Eager.

Biography: **A Short Sketch of the life of Anna Sariah Eager Tenney by Lurline T Whiting and Rosalia T. Tenney.** (Edited by her great grandson ep441, some personal content removed from original.)

Time does not dim the memory of Anna Tenney in the hearts of those she served in the little town of northern Old Mexico she was the only doctor for many years. It is not uncommon to meet someone who will say, "I know your mother saved my life" or maybe it was the life of a loved one. She was their teacher too. She was known almost entirely as Aunt Annie. They would ask, "Aunt Annie how do you make salt rising bread?" or "How do you knit a heel in a sock?" or "how do you make soap?" or maybe it would be "How do you color with weeds?" There were these questions and she was always glad to help.

She was born May 29 1850 in Millcreek, now part of Salt Lake City, Utah. Her father John Eager, joined the church in New York. He traveled by boat around South America and landed at Beuna Yerba - now San Francisco. He soon came to Utah and met and married Sariah Johnson daughter of Joel H. Johnson and Anna Pixley Johnson.

Sariah's sister, Susan writes in her diary, "We arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 3, 1850, took dinner with Uncle Benjamin F. Johnson. My Aunt Sariah went with us to my father's hom in Big Cottonwood, Utah. I found my sister, Sariah there married to John Eager. They had a baby girl about six months old. They seemed very happy together in their one-room log house. They soon moved to Manti, Utah where John Eager was a leader. He held the positions his education made possible. But John was not well, he passed away in 1884 leaving Sariah with eight children.

Naturally she wanted to be near her people, so she sold her lovely home and a farm and moved to Virginia City in southern Utah. Two years later she married Jackson Workman and added four more children to her family.

In that day of hard times everybody worked. Anna being the oldest was the family weaver. She wove nearly everything they wore and even their carpet. Nine miles away in Toquerville, Utah lived a young man, Ammon M. Tenney. Uncle Joel, mother's younger brother tells this story: "In the corner of a very large room called the loom room, had been stored a pile of corn in the form of ears. I was sent to shell the corn. Ammon came and wanted to get rid of me but I wouldn't go. First he asked, I said, "Got to work." Then he offered money, I shook my head, then he was impatient but I still sat. Exasperated he said, "Get out. I'll shell the corn." That was exactly what I wanted and I left! Ammon Shelled corn and Anna wove while they made plans. She was seventeen when she was married on November 6, 1867. Their first home was in Toquerville. Two of their children were born there. Then Ammon was called to Kanah to be nearer his work which was interperter for Jacob Hamblin, three more babies came at this place.

On June 20, 1878 Ammon was called to perside over the Indian Mission in New Mexico and Arizona, so that he would be near his field of labor he moved his family to St. Johns, Arizona. Anna was the family nurse. When any of the children had colds or were otherwise ill, the old wooden wash tub ws brought in and filled half full of hot water and mustard and soda added. The patient was seated and a blanket pinned over his shoulders. A cold cloth folded so there were several thinknesses was laid on his head. Anna knelt by the tub and dipped into the water and poured it over his shoulders until he was thoroughly soaked and real warm. Then he was rubbed dry and given a rubdown with alcohol, dressed in his night clothes, given a liberal dose of bitter aloes tucked into bed. When Ammon cam home Anna would often

say, "See my bed is full, you go and stay with Eliza."

When they were old women both of Aunt Eliza's daughters said they thought it was getting into Aunt Annie's bed that made them well. Eliza wanted to bring her children up in the strict way of her own childhood but Anna went about it real easy. When Eliza went with Ammon on trips or to work, Eliza's two daughters chose to stay with Aunt Annie. Annie was pleased and two more made it nice.

For awhile the family lived in Savoita. This was near the Indians and it seemed to be their favorite pastime to stand just outside the door and look in. One morning two squaws and a very large buck came. Anna gave the children their breakfast, too nervous to sit down with them. She noticed that the squaws were gone but the buck still stayed. One of the children dropped his spoon, Anna gave him another. Then she had to go to the other room and when she returned the spoon was gone. What to do she did not know, but she knew if she let him get away with it then she was in real trouble. She went to the stove and all at once she knew what she had to do, in the woodbox were lengths of wood to feed the fire. She caught up one and took a hurried step or two holding the wood high saying, "Give me that spoon." A slow smile crossed the Indian's face. He put his hand under his blanket and gave her the spoon, saying, "Brave squaw," and then he was gone.

From Savoita they moved to the Windmill Ranch. Anna's sixth child was born there, but they soon moved back to St. John's. Ammon was released and expected to put his family in better conditions financially.

President Wilford Woodruff told Ammon to take his family and go to Old Mexico. Ammon went ahead to prepare the way and in 1890 Anna followed. She and the children traveled 800 miles in a lumber wagon with her young son driving the team. A very poorly kept road led over mountains, through rivers in cold, heat and little children to care for, but Anna never complained. Ammon had been living with the Adams family. They had been very good to him. Ammon leased a sawmill in the Sierra Madre Mountains, built a lart house and all the family lived there. Soon summer was gone and they moved back to Colonia Diaz. Ammon decided to send Anna and the children back to St. John's where they still owned a home and where the children could attend a good school. It was 800 miles there and 800 miles back again in the spring. They spent one more summer at the sawmill and then they moved back to Colonia Diaz. Ammon bought nine acres at the edge of town with a one-room house on it. Covered wagon boxes were lifted from the running gears and placed on timbers for bedrooms. This did very well for a while then Nathan, the second son, came home and built two more rooms.

It was about 1892, all was not going well between Ammon and Anna. He imagined his high place at the head of his family had been challenged. It seemed he was looking for an excuse, so before long he took the others and left. Anna had five children at home, the oldest being sixteen. Her son, Levi found work with a big cattle company for one peso a day or in American money, 50 cents a day. Mother knew he was in the worst environment so she was very thankful when his sister, Alice Curtis invited him to go to Logan, Utah to live with them and go to school. Neighbors seeing Anna alone began to ask questions. Anna would laugh gaily and say, "No I am my own boss." But when the door was closed she would turn with down cast eyes and her children do not forget the look of humiliation and sorrow on her face.

One day, Johnny (John Eager, about nine years old) took very ill. Anna worked with him day and night but to no avail, he passed on and Anna was alone but for the three little girls and friends. They had just come from the cemetery when Ammon jr. and Nathan arrived. Their tenderness with Anna must have been a great comfort. Only a few minutes later Aunt Eliza came and she sat and wept. She had wanted to take Johnny, she thought he could drive the team. When she was gone Anna said, "You see, I would never have had him again."

Anna's sons helped her all they could, but she wanted to help herself so she talked to a carpenter who had seen a loom. With her instructions he built a carpet loom and Anna began to weave. Once just to

show what she could do she wove us each a dress, they were lovely. People stopped us on the street to admire and feel of the material. She usually wove eight yars of carpet a day and charged 25 cents per yard, but in case of neccessity she could weave more.

Anna was a natural doctor. She was called out day and night. She never refused and never complained. Whe she was asked why she didn't charge for her services she said, " They have nothing to pay," so, Anna wove for a living and helped the sick wherever she was called. Anna was getting older so when her youngest daughter, Lurline, finished high school she was given a positiion in a store and Anna had the loom taken down. Still there was not rest. the revolution in Old Mexico was getting worse. The Americans were all driven out. Anna came out with friends and little more than what she stood up in, but in answer to sympathy she said, "The Lord is good."

She went to southern Utah to see her mother. They hadn't seen each other for thirty years and neither recognized the other. Anna stayed about one and one-half years there and then Lurline, who had located in St John's invited her to come and live with her. Anna's friends gave material for a house. Her son-in-law, Fred Whiting, built it and Anna's gradtitude was unbounded. Later she went to Salt Lake City and lived with her daughter, Lois Lemon and spent several very happy years working in the Temple.

She grew gold and tired so, by invitation she went to her daughter, Minnie in Thatcher Arizona where she died on January 19, 1934. Internment was in the Thatcher Cemetary by the side of her husband. She was the mother of ten children. Anna held two positions in her life, she was a councilor in the Relief Society and in later years a faithful Relief Society visiting teacher. Her children tell that some of the sweetest memories of their childhood was their mother's singing. Usually it was after they were all in bed. No matter how tired she wa she never refused. She had a lovely voice, Her special gifts besides singing were mathematices and spelling. She spoke goo English and she was a lady and a saint. Her children hope to be worthy of her.
