Biography of
Elizabeth Mainwaring Brockbank
Born July 1812 in England
Lost on plains 50 miles west of Laramie, Wyoming
July 1852

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Elizabeth Mainwaring was the daughter of Peter and Jane Molyneux Mainwaring. She was born in July 1812 at Liverpool, Lancashire, England, the oldest of five children - four girls and one boy. She was inclined to be religious and joined the Wesleyan Methodists.

Isaac Brockbank, as a young man, won prizes at the county fairs in plowman ship. After his father died, he became discouraged and went to Liverpool to find work.

He was also a Christian and needing some church to be affiliated with, he joined the Wesleyan Methodists. He was soon invited to be a class leader. This gave him some prestige. It was at this church that Elizabeth Mainwaring met Isaac Brockbank.

She was a very zealous member of this church. Their friendship continued. They learned to love each other and decided to be married. This was about 1836. Isaac was thirty-one years old and Elizabeth was twenty-four years old. She told Isaac that she had been married before to a man named Smith. He had died soon after they were married; she never talked about it or told any of the particulars.

Isaac was employed in a brewery. He had learned the secrets of the manufacture of ale and beer. He liked these drinks and made them for the family use even after he came to America.

He quit the brewery job and found employment as a waterman in the Booth Water Works Company. The young couple lived at Crosby Street on the property owned by the Water Works Company. They kept large cisterns of water and great quantities of iron pipe suitable for conveying water in the streets. Isaac was in charge of this work and this property.

During the day, he was employed around the docks. It was his business to supply all vessels of every grade with fresh water. He was assigned to the Queen's Dock. He went among the ships to ascertain their wants for water; then, he arranged to fill the cargo casks by means of hose and report the amount so furnished to each ship.

Elizabeth and Isaac were well known and well respected. He was still the class leader in his church. He had a responsible position with the Water Works Company. He represented them well and was faithful to them. He and Elizabeth had many friends and were known as leaders and good people.
Elizabeth was very happy and grateful for all the blessings she had. She was a good woman. She was very fond of her children and was a wonderful mother. They had two children, young Isaac and Elizabeth.

In 1840 they had a baby boy named Daniel. He died very young and was buried in Stanhope Street Methodist Chapel Yard. Then in 1812 [1842], they had a baby girl. They named her Susana. She also died very young and was buried beside her brother in the Stanhope Street Methodist Chapel Yard. These deaths were a source of great sorrow to the parents. Isaac was now five years old and Elizabeth was four years old.

Early in the year of 1843, Isaac went with his friend John Lindsay to hear a missionary preach. His friend, John, worked with Isaac at the Booth Water Works Company. The missionary was Parley P. Pratt, a Mormon.

Isaac and John were overwhelmed at the truth of the doctrines he advocated. Isaac knew he had found the true church of Christ. He could no longer teach the Methodist faith in his class.

Isaac Brockbank and John Lindsay were so sure of the truthfulness of the teachings of Brother Pratt that they were baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

But what about Elizabeth Brockbank? She was so happy in her home and as a mother. They lived in a comfortable home, wore nice clothes and had all the comforts of life. She loved the people whom they associated with and did not want to break friendship and separate from her friends nor did she want to leave her church.

Can we blame her? She used every means in her power to influence her husband to be happy with his work and his church. The harder she tried the more closely Isaac became affiliated with the new church. Her Methodist friends called upon her when her husband was away and schemed ways for her to show her indignation toward her husbands new ideas. Isaac too tried. Some of the Mormon Elders came to the house to try to reconcile her to investigate the truths of the new gospel. She would not listen and set her face against it. It was a very sad case and there was a rupture between this couple.

One day young Isaac was to bring his sister Elizabeth home from school to have lunch. As they were going home, a woman came along the street catching the little Elizabeth and took her from her brother. They stripped her of her nice clothes and exchanged them for old ones. She looked so different that it was hard to tell who she was. The strange woman took the little girl to the police station. After some time little Elizabeth was found and brought home. Young Isaac never forgot the frenzy and suspense of that time when his little sister was kidnapped.

Young Isaac attended a good school. When he was eight years old, he used to help teach the children younger than he.
Elizabeth's mother lived at No. 30 Adlington Street in Liverpool. Her father had passed away. The mother was very sick, her sickness was called "softening of the brain". It had originated from a Cholera Scourge that visited the country in 1835, the year before Isaac and Elizabeth were married. Most of the time she was harmless but other times she possessed super strength.

The youngest daughter, Mary Mainwaring, had cared for her mother since she had taken ill. She had always lived with her mother. It seemed that the mother's condition became worse. Mary could not handle the mother alone. They must have more help to care for her. Isaac consented to leave Crosby Street and move in the home with Elizabeth's mother to help care for her. This was in 1844.

Elizabeth still maintained her membership in the Methodist Church. She could not bring herself to give up her friends and her life was satisfactory.

At one time, she became so upset because her husband went to a Mormon meeting that she took all his literature and books, papers and everything she could find pertaining to the new religion and burned them. Of course, this did not improve the family condition. In fact, Isaac was so angry he took her in hand and began to punish her. He even flogged her. This was permissible around that time if the wife did not obey her husband.

So no comfort or happiness seemed to be in the home any more. They had another baby born in 1815 [1845]. They named him John. He, too, died in infancy and was buried in the Necropolis in Liverpool, England.

At the time they moved to Elizabeth's mother's home, young Isaac was attending school at St. John's Church School. All who attended the day school had to attend the Sunday School and Service. The father, being a convert to Mormonism, was apposed to his son remaining at this school, so Isaac went to the Christ Church School and attended the Mormon service on Sunday.

Elizabeth would not give up her membership with the Methodists. Her husband was very stern. Her friends told her all the stories they heard about the Mormon Elders. She believed them. When Isaac brought the Elders to their home, Elizabeth was harassed. She did not know how she should treat them.

The care of Elizabeth's mother was really more than she should do. Elizabeth's mother owned some houses on Adlington Street. The rent from these homes was the means of support for the mother. Elizabeth had the care of these homes also. Isaac acted as an agent and collected the rent.

After they moved in with Elizabeth's mother, Isaac decided to change his occupation. They had saved some money so he ventured into the butcher business, then known as "The Retail Meat Trade". This market was opened in St. Johns and he did very well. However, he decided the wholesale meat business would be better.
He and Brother Robert Wiley entered into partnership in the wholesale meat business. They used to go to the cattle market early every Monday morning to buy live cattle and sheep. These they took to a slaughterhouse, killed them, cut them up, and sold them to retail merchants. It was a good business, too, but they trusted people to far and bad debts piled up on them.

Young Isaac left school when he was young and worked as an office boy. He copied letters, ran errands and carried mail. They wanted him to be an apprentice and stay with them for five years. His father would not consent to this.

Isaac's father had a delivery cart and horse, which he turned over to young Isaac. On Saturday nights he was to call at the Butcher Shops and get the amount of their bills. Young Isaac soon became familiar with the business.

He used to deliver beef and mutton over a distance of three miles. One day when young Isaac was going down hill in the delivery wagon with a load, the horse became frightened as the load crowded him, so young Isaac turned at a crossroad. He was thrown off the seat as the vehicle turned over, the meat was all upset, the animal ran away and Isaac was left unconscious. Both of his knee joints were knocked out of place and he was badly bruised. He was laid up for several weeks.

There was some disagreement with the Mainwaring and the Brockbank family over the mother and the rent. Because of this, Elizabeth and Isaac moved to Sun Street. Young Isaac went to a mechanics institute for a while as he was recovering from his accident.

The Brockbanks had had a baby boy born May 15, 1848 at Liverpool, England. They named him Joshua.

The father, Isaac, was still faithful to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He began to talk about immigrating to America. Here was a new problem. Elizabeth talked to her children, Isaac fourteen years old and Elizabeth twelve years old. She tried to persuade them to stay with her and let their father go alone to America. She found that Isaac had already secured the consent of these two children to go with him across the ocean.

A little daughter, Agnes, came to their home on June 5, 1851.

Elizabeth became very indifferent but always cared for her children with great love. She was affectionate with them and never neglected them in any way.

Young Isaac decided to visit his father's relatives before he left England. He had to travel about 60 miles north of Liverpool. He went by rail. The folks were very interested in him. They lived near the beautiful Windemere Lake where the scenery was breath taking. His relatives wanted the young boy to stay with them and not go to America, but young Isaac had promised his father that he would go with him.

The father planned to leave in February for America. Elizabeth asked no questions and
made no preparations. She had at last consented to go with her husband to America for the sake of the children. She told some of her people that if things did not work out in this new country that she would return to England.

The Brockbanks sailed from Victoria Dock **February 11, 1852** on a merchant ship, The **Ellen Maria** that had been fitted up to carry emigrants. Mr. Whitmore was the Captain of this sailing vessel. It was a rough voyage; there were many storms and calms. They were eight weeks and three days crossing and they landed in New Orleans **April 11, 1852**.

Their entire luggage was transferred to another steamer, which then took them up the Mississippi River. In one week they landed at St. Louis. When they reached Kansas City, the President of their company, Brother A. O. Smoot told them he thought it best to remain here for a while and wait for the wagons to come. They were being made in St. Louis and would be sent to them as soon as they were finished.

This was the first company that had traveled overseas under the auspices of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company. The members of the company were to be taken well care of and sheltered and protected.

The people of the company were taken about three quarters of a mile from the river where the land was elevated. They pitched tents and made themselves as comfortable as they were permitted to be. These folks were not in the best of condition due to the effects of the long sea voyage, the food of hard tack and the common food with no vegetables. They had to dig up roots to eat, which they were not acquainted with.

While they were camped here, cholera broke out. People who lived around them grew hostile to the emigrants for they did not want to catch this disease, which was taking the lives of these poor homeless people. They held indignation meetings and the residences around Kansas City were afraid to go near the camp.

It was an especially trying time for the mothers and what they had to endure. Elizabeth Mainwaring was a mother with a small baby and a little boy four years old.

At last the wagons came. The people were anxious to take possession and get away from that awful place. They hired oxen to take the company out on the prairie seven miles west of the city of Kansas.

The people were in a poor fix to take care of the sick. The dead could not be cared for properly and rude boxes were made to bury them in. Isaac Brockbank, the father, rented a small house half a mile from the camp and moved his family in. They knew they had a journey of thirteen hundred miles before fall and winter set in.

Elizabeth seemed indifferent to all of it. She was very good to her children, was affectionate with them, and made them as comfortable as she could. There were four children, **Isaac Jr. - fifteen, Elizabeth - thirteen, Joshua - four, and Agnes, a nursing baby**. Three of
her children lie buried in England.

She was a strong willed woman, and she was most sure that if she were not suited when she came to the end of her journey in Salt Lake City that she would return to England. This she had in her heart as she accompanied them, against her will.

It was about the first of June when they finally began their trek west. They had many troubles along the way. One time they were stuck in the mud. The oxen swung around sharply and broke the wagon tongue in two. It was spliced and wrapped with rope and rawhide and it held together until they reached the Valley.

There were fifty-two wagons in the company. A. C. Smoot was the captain of the company and Chris Layton was the assistant captain. They traveled about 17 miles a day and around 100 miles in a week consisting of six days of travel.

In a short time, the teams learned the routine of work and the drivers soon put themselves in the way of handling the animals. Young Isaac readily learned to handle the three yoke of oxen and drove nearly all the way.

When they were traveling along the Platte River, they met up with a man on a mule who said he had talked with some sheepherders. As he came up to the train, he held up his hands and shouted. He got some of the oxen excited and young Isaac went to the lead oxen on his wagon and was successful in quieting them and saved the rest from stampeding and running away.

Every once in a while, they had to stop to repair broken wagons and harnesses and put things in order again. They enjoyed the beautiful scenery and the trip seemed to be going fine. It was the latter part of July when they passed Fort Laramie and Elizabeth seemed more reconciled. She had not yet weaned little Agnes who was past thirteen months old.

The weather was good but quite hot. Elizabeth had been riding in the wagon all morning. It was quite rough country and about noon there was a steep hill before them to go down. Elizabeth gave the baby to her daughter and proceeded to walk down the hill. There was a nice little stream at the bottom of the hill and quite a lot of currant bushes quite loaded with berries.

Elizabeth dipped a shiny tin cup in the stream and gave little Joshua a drink. He has told me that he could remember the cup and how she held it in her hands for him to drink. Then she told him to get in the wagon and she would pick some berries. That was the last she was seen by anyone of the A. O. Smoot Company.

When they stopped for noon, Elizabeth was not there. She was not in camp. A search party then went to find her. Young Isaac got a mule and rode the two miles back to where they saw her last. They hunted through the bushes, calling her name but all to no avail.

They moved camp to a place where they could stay and the stock could get food and water. The search party continued to look for her. They camped at Horseshoe Creek. The next morning, Isaac Brockbank and Brother Layton took a pair of mules and a light buggy and went back to find her. There were tracks near the spring, which were hers. She had taken the road
back toward the Fort. They expected to overtake her but they did not. They made inquiries but
found no trace of her that was in any way satisfactory.

They met three or four men coming west on horses. They had come from a sheep camp.
They reported seeing a woman traveling alone toward Laramie. She had hidden in the bushes as
they approached. She seemed to be demented by the way she had acted. They did not follow
her. This was the last information of anyone seeing her and no one had found a body.

The company moved on toward Salt Lake City. The authorities at Laramie were notified
to forward any information they might receive about a lost woman.

No one can realize the seriousness of this catastrophe. A little baby living on caresses
and nourishment of a kind indulgent mother and suddenly bereft of these, yearning for them to
the point of sickness and weakness. This mother had always been willing to bear everything for
the sake of her children.

Her son Isaac said he could not think she willfully left them. She may have been tired,
laid down to rest in the bushes and fallen asleep. On awakening, finding the train gone and not
knowing what to do wandered around until fear and despair possessed her. In this condition, she
could have wandered aimlessly, oblivious of herself. She would become weak and soon perish
without human aid.

The baby could not be pacified and cried unceasingly. Little Elizabeth tried to care for
the baby. She had the sympathy of the whole camp. Everyone was willing to help.

Then Father Isaac became very ill. Confined to his bed in the wagon he became so
reduced in flesh that folks said he would not possibly live.

One night they expected him to pass away. Several brethren gathered around the bed in
the wagon and prayed for him. He began to feel a little better and soon could eat a little. He
then became steadily stronger.

It was not long until he was able to walk around again. Captain Smoot too became
desperately ill. They halted the teams to make it easier for him to pass away but the prayers of
his companions gave him the strength to live on. The company was truly blessed. These two
great men were spared.

No one has ever found out what happened to Elizabeth Brockbank. The journey by sea,
the cholera sickness (a nightmare of horror she was so afraid her children would be stricken), the
unstable conditions which kept them waiting for the wagons - were no doubt harder for her than
anyone realized.

She bore everything, never complaining. She kept all these things in her heart. This new
gospel had taken her husbands confidence so she had no one to confide in. She was very
sensitive of this but she was also very intelligent. She had been happy and knew what it was to
be happy. She was willing to make any sacrifice for her children.

Elizabeth Brockbank put her heart and soul into the job of being a good mother. It was the one thing left for her to do. She was gifted with a mother's love. Her children never forgot what a wonderful mother she was to them and they never overcame the loss of her.

Only a strong character could endure what she was called upon to do. She was strong in her belief of what was right and impressed these things upon her children.

We the decedents of this good woman regret that she did not receive an understanding of the gospel.

We are grateful that she did come to America with her family, that we have been privileged to enjoy the freedom and blessings of this great country and the membership in this church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

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