

BIOGRAPHY OF MARY AUGUSTA GOODRICH

Mary Augusta Goodrich was the third child born to George Albert Goodrich and Eliza Ann Taggart. She was born on the 4th day of January 1868 at the home of her grandmother, Penelope Randall Gardner Goodrich in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.

In October 1868, the year Mary Augusta was born, her father George Albert Goodrich was called by President Brigham Young to go south to help colonize the Dixie country, so on the 4th day of November 1868 he, with his family left Salt Lake City for their new home in the Dixie country. This was called the Muddy Mission. They were to raise cotton there. Owing to the unproductiveness of the soil in its wild state they were soon reduced to destitution. They were living at St. Joseph, located about one hundred miles below St. George, Utah.

While they stayed there the men built a sawed log meetinghouse. Mr. Goodrich and one other man sawed enough lumber with a whip saw to finish the building and when a survey was made, they discovered they were just over the line into Nevada. Taxes were so high they could not pay them. The Nevada officials seized a good many of their horses and cattle and sold them to pay taxes.

They tried unsuccessfully for three years to raise any worthwhile crop. They planted a garden and the wind blew it away in the night. The men built a large canal, but the wind soon filled it up with sand. They had to haul water even for home use. Food was very scarce. There was no work a man could do for cash. After President Young sent them their release he said they had the privilege of making their homes anywhere they wished, but he would like a company of them to settle in the Long Valley, sometimes called Berry's Valley in Kane County, so the Goodriches went there, arriving 3 March 1870.

On the lot assigned to George was a sort of dugout, built in the side of a hill. It was not provided with a door, window, chimney or floor, but afforded a rude shelter from the storms and they were thankful for it. They planted crops at this place only to lose them to grasshoppers, leaving the ground totally barren of any vegetation.

About 1871 they settled in Morgan on what was called the Stoddard farm, which was an oasis in the desert. It was a beautiful place to live, mostly meadow land. There were trees, birds and a creek running through the farm, which was lined with watercress all summer.

Mr. Goodrich engaged in farming and milling for a period of about sixteen years. Mary Augusta wrote, "Father had quite a bunch of cows and horses, hence we had an abundance of milk, cream, butter and home-made cheese, which was very good. I simply loved the old farm and the beauties of nature. The railroad passed over the farm, so we saw the trains very day. I practically lived out of doors summer and winter. We attended school at North Morgan and had to walk 2 1/2 miles. The teacher's name was Miss

Rhoda Slade. While living on the farm I was baptized by Wyman Park on 13 October 1878. I was confirmed the same day."

Mary Augusta said her church activities began while they lived in Richville. She was called to act as secretary of the YWMIA. She also sang in the choir. About this time Mr. Goodrich became interested in the Ashley Valley and in October 1885 took Eliza, the first wife, and family and started for the Valley. Mary Augusta was then about 17 years of age.

Mr. Goodrich and his first family located in Maeser Ward where he built a rock house, and with the assistance of his and Harriet's son Albert, they operated a grist mill for about three years. The grist mill was owned by Lycurgus Johnson and was run by water power.

Mary Augusta had become acquainted with William Highland Gagon after her family had moved from Morgan to Vernal. He had previously been married to Lydia Ann Taylor who died in May of 1888 at age 29 of typhoid fever, leaving him with three sons. Mary Augusta married Mr. Gagon in the Logan Temple on 20 November 1890. She was nearly 23 years of age. William's sons, Joseph and Ira lived with the couple in their home until they were raised and were old enough to go on their own. Mary was a wonderful mother to his boys. They loved her a great deal.

William Highland and Mary Augusta were blessed with a lovely little daughter on 18 June 1892 in Naples, Uintah Co., Utah. They named her Mamie.

Mr. Gagon filed on a homestead four miles south of Roosevelt, so the family moved from Vernal to Roosevelt 6 April 1907. They had a ranch on the North Myton Bench. They lived in a one-room cabin with a bowery outside. Mr. Gagon went to work in the mercantile store in Roosevelt soon after they were settled. They had about 40 acres of land in the area which was called Hartford. Mrs. Gagon and the children were home alone much of the time.

If past records are correct, it was in August of 1907 that their little cabin in Hartford burned to the ground. Both parents were away. Mr. Gagon was at work in the mercantile store and Mary Augusta was visiting a short distance away. Fannie, Leona, Rae, Earl, Ella and Maude were home. Rae had been popping matches in an old 22 rifle. Clothes were hanging in one end of the room on a wire strung across from one wall to the other.

Rae was in the corner behind the curtain where they had their clothes. The curtain was by the only door there was in the cabin. Rae shot into the clothes and a fire started. Ella thinks they could have put it out if they had not been so frightened.

They all ran out of the house and left their little sister, Maude, who was asleep on the bed. Ella ran back in and rescued her. The father saw the fire from Roosevelt and asked someone to take him home. He jumped in a buggy and whipped up the horses to

their top speed. Who can imagine the anxiety he suffered not knowing just what had happened? On his arrival he leaped from the buggy and shouted, "Is anybody hurt?" On hearing that everyone was safe he threw his hat into the air and yelled, "Hooray. We don't have to worry." The loss of the home and their possessions was a great misfortune, but was nothing to the grief the family would have suffered if a life had been lost or one of the children had been injured. They were able to save a few of the clothes that had been in a box outside the cabin, also a stove. This left the children rather scantily clad.

The fire was very hard on the mother. It occurred just a few weeks before their son Owen was born. After the fire they moved to Joe Gagon's place. Joe put up a tent for some of them to sleep in. The people in the community gathered up baby clothes to see them through, and built another log one-room house for the family to live in.

On 22 February 1910 Maude died of membranous croup.

Mr. Gagon's health began to fail about January 1922. He passed away on 12 February 1923. Mary was left a widow with one unmarried son at home. World War II was declared 7 December 1941. Her son Owen was inducted into the army and reported for active duty at Ft. Douglas on 23 November 1943. He served in Heavy Artillery in Germany. Owen was promoted to 2nd Sgt. in 1945. He was commissioned 2nd Lt. 25 May 1945. Mary was so happy when she received word of his promotion, but she was not as happy about that as when he told her in one of his letters how much he appreciated her as a mother; how he appreciated the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and loved her because she had taught him to pray.

Ella and her daughter Afton moved into town from Hancock Cove about this time to live with Mary Augusta. Afton attended high school while living there. She graduated in May 1945 and went to Salt Lake City to work.

About May 1948 Mary Augusta became ill. Her feet began to swell. She went to the home of her daughter Fannie to be cared for. It was there that she passed away 1 July 1948 at the age of 80 years.

She was buried in the Roosevelt City Cemetery alongside her husband. She was buried 4 July 1948.

Merle Roberts Edward
Kimberly Horrocks Walker