

PREAMBLE

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Victoria Josephine Sandgren Harris

July 5, 1865 there was born to Victor and Christina Larson Sandgren, in the beautiful, quiet city of Ursula, Sweden, a blue-eyed, fair haired daughter, whom they named Victoria Josephine.

Victor and Christina were ambitious, happy and pleasure-loving, and brought their daughters, Victoria and Amanda, up in an atmosphere of sunshine, clear lakes, beautiful flowers and immaculate cleanliness. Victoria loved her parents and sister and especially admired her father in his high black silk hat, white gloves and long-tailed coat which he wore as an Inspector on the feudal estate. She later said of him "I thought of him as one of high position and importance and I was proud" and "I never knew my Mother to wear an apron with a spot of soil on it." She was bewildered by the bewitching waterways of Sweden and the waving of multitudes of handkerchiefs that welcomed the coming and the parting of guests at Swedish homes and festivities. She was taught to be courteous, friendly and charming, to speak only when spoken to, and to love all things God had made.

When Victoria was nine years old, she left the beauty of her beloved Sweden and, with a heart full of hope that everything would be all right and with only a vague idea as to what was ahead, she, with her parents and sister, boarded a screw-propelling, iron-hulled steamer, about 100 feet in length, to cross the vast Atlantic to that land "where, as she had been told, "God was everywhere and He would protect everyone from harm." (To one accustomed to ocean liners of this day, the steamers of that time seem like toys.) Said Victoria: "The voyage was long. I was frightened; afraid of the water; afraid the ship might sink; afraid when the sun went down and darkness came. But we prayed and I listened to people talking and telling about the wonderful opportunities in America -- God's country, with its wide, open spaces and with freedom and justice for all.

As we finally reached New York, my heart stopped pounding and I realized I was a young lady of nine in a great new land and I should be unafraid for a Mormon God was with us and He would protect us in this blessed America."

Soon, her gay, colorful Swedish costumes were replaced by the more simple lines worn by the American girls, and her pigtailed were coiffured into soft, flattering styles. She enjoyed having a good time but was never boisterous nor insistent on having her own way; was immaculately clean and dressed with taste and refinement. Her soulful eyes bespoke the love in her heart.

She attended the public schools in Utah and was fascinated with the American system of learning and the books used. Her Mother, a gracious and lovely lady, spoke only Swedish, and Victoria often translated the Swedish into English for family and friends.

Not far from Pleasant Grove, Utah, was a mining town where a tall, broad-shouldered, dark haired, self-sufficient gentleman worked. His hair was heavy, his eye-brows bushy and he wore a mustache across his lip with the tips of it twirled into tiny endings. Handsome he was and proud. His main social attraction was to dress in his best suit and attend the dancing socials in town. He would sing most any time he felt like singing and dance whenever he felt like dancing.

When Victoria was in her late teens, she attended one of these dancing socials and there was this tall, handsome man, she had formerly met at school, named George Henry Burraston Harris, all dressed up in his party clothes. He saw her from across the room. They talked and danced and fell in love and Victoria knew that those "wide open spaces of America" had a new meaning and a new purpose and that God would be with her all the rest of her life.

The continued lives and destiny of Victoria and George are revealed in their respective Biographies, herein.

the Harris family