

Sarah Hunt Greer

By William N. Greer



Sarah Hunt Greer, named for her maternal grandmother, was born the ninth child of NHG and NAT on 26 February 1836, in the Alabama frontier county of Chambers which borders the Chattahoochee River. Sallie, as she was known, grew up and wed in Texas, lived in Colorado and northern Utah, and finally in Wyoming where she died and was buried. A true pioneer, she not only created a fine family, but also helped build homes, till the soil, herd cattle and raise horses. Much to her sorrow, she never lived near a church or a school.

Sallie was a babe in arms when her family migrated to Texas in the spring of 1837. One of the slaves in this group was Mammy Lucy, who cared for Sallie and the other children. Lucy taught Sallie to sew fine seams and stitches — skills which Sallie ably used throughout her many years.

During the war with Mexico, her brother Thomas Lacy and her favorite cousin Snellen Marion Johnson volunteered for cavalry duty. Both were wounded and decorated for bravery.

Snellen's parents were Willis Snellen Johnson and Nancy Reddick Greer, NHG's sister. As a child, his heavy head of black hair and cute round face reminded Nancy of a cub bear so he was called "Cub" by friends and family.

On January 21, 1851, Sallie and Cub were married in La Grange, TX. In 1852 they moved to Port Sullivan where they soon converted to Mormonism. Here their first son died in infancy and was buried. In 1855 they began the trek to Utah.



In St. Louis, NHG paid \$500 for a rare Italian violin and offered it to the first family member who learned to play it. Cub won and played it for years thereafter.

After the bad winter of 1856, Sallie and Cub returned to TX for a new herd of cattle. On the way back to UT their 2nd son was born at Ryow, NM. Later a 3rd son was born near Denver, but died as an infant. Soon the young family relocated to Springville, UT.

On July 26, 1862, Cub wed a 2nd wife, Lydia Rebecca Baker. The polygamous marriage was a trial for Sallie, but soon each wife grew to love the other and her children. Often they shared the same meals and beds.

In 1864, Cub and his wives settled west of Bear Lake, UT. That winter the lake formed a 15-inch sheet of ice that had to be cut for drinking and cooking water. Each day hours were spent gathering and chopping wood to keep fires burning. A bear was killed; it furnished a pelt for warm cover, tender meat, oil to light the cabin, and grease for chapped skin.

In 1865 they moved to Laketown, UT, where Cub's mother taught the first school. In 1869 they pioneered in Medicine Bow, WY, where a son, Thomas Jefferson, drowned in an open well. After operating a toll bridge at Hanns Fork, Cub brought them back to Bear Lake.

In 1876, a dispute erupted over land ownership and Sallie accidentally shot and killed her adversary whom she had intended to merely threaten with gunfire. Sallie served time for accidental homicide and not long thereafter the family relocated to WY. Later a local historian who knew Sallie, said she was a fine woman whose action was only that of a pioneer woman defending her rights, family, and home.

After Cub's death, Sallie gave up her home at Robertson, WY, and spent her years visiting children and grandchildren eking by on Cub's small Mexican War pension. Sallie was good, kind, and — despite modest means — very charitable to friend and stranger alike. After her daughter, Kate Bullock, died leaving 3 children in need, grandmother Sallie filled in.

In May 1921 while living with her widowed son Willis, Sallie became ill with erysipelas and never fully recovered. Daughter, Mary Bullock cared for her for 4 years in Lone Tree, WY, where Sallie died at the age of 89. She was buried next to her husband, who had been gone 25 years.