

# LIFE HISTORY OF ELIZABETH ISABELLA PARKER ERIKSON

DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH ISABELL BELL

by Blanche Erikson Winn

Elizabeth Isabell Parker was born November 30, 1873 in Middleton in Teesdale, Durham County, England. Her parents were William Parker and Elizabeth Isabell Bell.

In writing from some notes mother had made she says:

"I don't know very much about my grandparents, but will endeavor to write down what I can remember. His family lived at Middleton, Durham County, England. Grandfather's name was **THOMAS PARKER** and he was married twice. His first wife was **MARGARET BRUNSKILL** and their children were: **JANE, JOHN, JOSEPH, THOMAS AND ELIZABETH OR BESSIE.**

After the death of his wife he married her sister **MARY**, who was my grandmother. Their children were **BETTY, WILLIAM**, my father, **MARGARET, JONATHAN, SAMUEL AND DRYDEN.** Grandfather lived on a farm and also worked a lime kiln, employing a number of people, both men and women.

My father, **WILLIAM PARKER** was born about 1834 at Middleton, Durham County, England. He married **ELIZABETH ISABELL BELL** at Middleton being 30 years old at this time. They left England for America soon after their marriage. The Civil War had just ended in the States. To this marriage was born four children. **SAMUEL PARKER**, born July 21, 1868, **EDITH MARY** born February 4, 1870, **LUELLA** born March 6, 1871, and **ELIZABETH ISABELL** born November 30, 1873. (Right here I will say that I sent for a birth certificate and it states the date of November 1872.)

Father, while in the States, lived in Benton, Wisconsin. Three of their children, **SAMUEL, EDITH MARY AND LUELLA** were born in Wisconsin and **SAMUEL** died there. They then returned to England and **ELIZABETH ISABELL** was born soon after they returned."

Some other notes she has states this:

"**WILLIAM BRUNSKILL PARKER**, born about 1834 at Middleton, Durham, England. Married about 1864 and died August 21, 1911.

**EDITH MARY** married May 6, 1890 at Helena, Montana to **JOHN ELWOOD SMITH.**

**LUELLA** married to **IRVING PRICE** about 1897 at Helena, Montana. One child **HENRY** born 1898, but we have him born 12 October, 1900.

**ELIZABETH ISABELL** married to **ALEXANDER ERIKSON**, February 28, 1894 at Bozeman, Montana."

As Mother stated above they returned to England and when mother was eleven months old, her mother died of inflammatory rheumatism. Grandfather had a hard time taking care of these little girls. As stated **SAMUEL** had died while they were living in Wisconsin. Grandfather had a number of housekeepers and part of the time **GRANDMOTHER'S SISTER FRANCIS BELL** kept house for them. They lived in Middleton-in-Teesdale until 1878 or 1879 and then they moved to Shildon, where they lived about four years. **AUNT BESSIE FOSTER** took **AUNT EDITH** into her home for a number of years.

In March, 1883, Grandfather decided to return to America, taking his three girls with him. His father had given him the home my mother was born in and Grandfather sold it to raise money to return to America. They were on the ocean three weeks, sailing from Liverpool, England, to Baltimore, Maryland. Mother said she could not remember the ship they came on. My mother was around 10 years old at this time. It was March when they left England, and April when they landed in America. The ship stopped for a day in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they saw their first colored people. From here they went to Baltimore, Maryland. They then went on to Connelsville, Pennsylvania by train, where grandfather got work in the coal mines at Trotter, Pennsylvania. Trotter was about 3 miles from Connelsville. Here he had a number of friends who had emigrated there from England, one being **JOSEPH BEADLE**, and they stayed with the Beadles until they rented a house.

Joseph had just married a widow with two children, Joe and Mary. They were life long friends to the family, and Mrs. Beadle took them in and was both mother and sister to the little girls. That fall on account of the mines closing due to a strike, they moved to Midway about one hundred miles from Connelsville, but Grandfather failed to get work there, so they only stayed about three weeks, and then left for Helena, Montana.



From here they went by stage coach to Marysville, where the Great Drum Lummore gold mine was located and from there they started by team for Gloster, (not sure of the spelling or where it is) where Grandfather's friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hutchingson were living. This was about 25 miles from Helena. They had only gone about a mile when the snow was so deep the horses could go no farther, so the driver unloaded the three trunks they had and said he could not go on, and he went back leaving them there. There was nothing for father to do, but leave the girls there with the trunks and he walked into Gloster to his friends. He was soon back with some men and they carried the trunks the mile and a half through deep snow into the camp. Grandfather could not find any place for them to live, so mother and her two sisters were left with Mr. & Mrs. Hutchingson and their two children, where they lived until spring. Grandfather went to a boarding house. It was very hard for them all and hard for Grandfather to leave his girls with someone else. It was just a week before Christmas when they arrived in Gloster. Grandfather had been out of work for three months or more when they arrived there and his money was all gone.

When they got settled he gave his girls his last fifty cents to get something for Christmas. He had been promised work, which he got right after New Years in the gold mines. Mother said that they were very happy while living with Grandfather's friends, the Hutchingsons and their children, Johnny and Nellie and that they were really sorry when their house was ready and they moved to themselves. Mother had gone to school two months at Trotter, then she started to school at Gloster after New Years. She also went to school at Gloster the next winter, but this was all the schooling she had after coming to America. From Gloster they moved to Timberline, Montana, where **GRANDFATHER HOMESTEADED A PLACE AND WHERE HE LIVED UNTIL 1898 WHEN HE RETURNED TO ENGLAND.** When they were living on this ranch mother was unable to go to school as it was too far for her to go and the snow was too deep.

*This is a shortened version of the history of Elizabeth Isabell Parker found on Family Search, donated by Robin Carol Grant on 7 July 2013. To read more, go to <https://familysearch.org/tree/person/KWCD-BHW/memories> or to Elizabeth Isabel Parker, PIN #KWCD-BHW on familysearch.org.*