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Family histories from the DUP (Daughters of the Utah Pioneers)

MARY ANN HUNTLEY BURNHAM

PIONEER OF 1852

BY MARGARET RUSSELL JENSEN

CAMP NINE

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MARY ANN HUNTLEY  
BURNHAM YOUNG

Delivered at a Meeting of the Daughters of the Pioneers - Camp 11

I feel the urge to bring the mother of Mary A. Freeze in honorable remembrance before the members of Camp 11, because of her long residence and good works.

Mary Ann Huntly married James Lewis Burnham in Vermont, where they were both born. With their one child they emigrated to McHenry County, Illinois. In 1843 they obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mr. Burnham was a Minister of the Gospel called Christians, but after hearing the Elders explain the principles of the Gospel, acknowledged he had no legal authority to preach. Consequently, he joined the L.D.S. church, whose doctrines he advocated and preached faithfully till the day of his death, caused by bleeding of the lung from preaching in the open air.

In 1843 they moved to Nauvoo with their four children. The youngest, a little girl, died there in 1844. Lewis Burnham labored quarrying rock for the

temple as much as his failing health could permit, grew worse, and in 1885 [probably a typo - should read 1845] died four days previous to the birth of Mary, a most trying time for the poor widow, destitute of means, with no relatives near to help her; but the Saints were very kind in her affliction. Her relatives in the East gladly offered to send means for her to return to them, but she had cast her lot with the Saints of God, and preferred to remain with them in the depths of poverty, rather than have the wealth her people could provide her with.

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After the temple in Nauvoo was finished, she partook of the Ordinances therein, and was sealed to Joseph, brother of Brigham Young, he performing this Ordinance in behalf of Lewis L. Burnham,— and was sealed for time to "Uncle Joseph", as he was called. By him she had

two daughters, Myra Y. Russell and Clara Y. Conrad.

In February, 1846, the famous Exodus from Nauvoo began. Mary Ann had no way of going, so had to remain till after the battle took place and the Saints were driven out on pain of losing their lives. She received a wagon for her city property, and was loaned a yoke of oxen, and began her toilsome journey across the plains with four little children. I have heard her relate how the armed mob searched her wagon for arms, the obscene language they used and how terribly she suffered with

fear. She arrived in Winter Quarters late in the fall where she remained one and a half years, living in a dugout, almost starving. She was also very ill and Emeline B. Whitney Wells cared for her as a true sister. They remained in Winter Quarters nearly two years living there also in a dugout and enduring many hardships. The hardest time came when she had to let two boys to the Valley with a family, and she did not see them, Wallace and George, until the others with Luther as a protector also reached Salt Lake City in 1852. The family later moved to Richmond, Cache County, where Mary, in 1863, married James P. Freeze, a school teacher. They moved into the Eleventh Ward in 1864, and sister Burnham made her home after that time with the Freeze family, visiting her other children as occasion required. She was a true mother to all the wives and children, respected and truly beloved. She worked very much in the St. George and Logan Temples redeeming her dead.

When Mary was chosen to work in the Mutual Association from October

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1871, fifteen years in the Eleventh Ward, 22 years on the Salt Lake Stake as President, and until called in to the General Board, where she labored till her death, Jan. 21, 1912, her devoted mother stood by her caring for her family that she might perform her many public duties, for Grandma Burnham was patient, self-sacrificing, modest and retiring, glorying in the useful lives of her children. Two sons were in the Bishopric, Luther a Bishop for 25 years.

After Mary Ann Huntly Burnham was 80 years of age she made eight quilts and lived a useful and helpful life to others till her death, November 1912, leaving a large posterity all in the church she loved so well. She was buried from the Eleventh Ward Meeting House honored and loved by all.

L. T. Freeze