

Biography of Emily Crofts Leyshon

By Phoebe Markham



Emily Crofts Leyshon



Emily Crofts Leyshon

Emily Crofts Leyshon was born on October 23, 1859 at Aberdare, Glamorganshire, Wales. Her father was Ezra Crofts and her mother's name was Jane. This couple had one daughter Emily. The Mormon missionaries found this Crofts family, and after hearing the Gospel Message, they joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints. Mrs. Leyshon's father was a coal miner, and while doing this work he was killed. Her mother and she were now left alone.

Later her mother married William Joseph Arnold. Two more children were born to this union, Martha and William. Mr. Arnold was also a member of the Church and the family were anxiously waiting the day when they could join the Saints in America. After they joined the church, it was difficult to find work but their land lady found work for Emily at her daughter's home as a governess for her two children. So was very well-to-do and Emily received good pay.

Now the day had arrived when the mother, Jane, sailed for America. Their plans were that the rest of the family would come later, but before the long, the looked for day arrived, word came from Utah that their mother had taken ill and died. She was buried in the Salt Lake Cemetery. This was a sad day for the family who had worked hard and planned so long that they might join their mother in Utah.

Time passed and later Mr. Arnold married his first wife's sister, she was also named Jane. They did not give up coming to America, and after their father married their Aunt Jane who would care for them, he sailed for America, leaving his wife, Jane, and the three children to follow later. It was a happy day when they, too, were ready to leave Wales and join their step-father in America.

They secured passage on a sailing vessel. It was a long and rough voyage. Their stepmother, or Aunt Jane as they called her, was very ill most of the way. The children were

frightened and fearful that she might die and leave them also. They loved their Aunt Jane, for she was a good mother to them. At last they arrived safely, after six weeks on a rough sea. They came directly to Salt Lake, arriving in 1875, Mrs. Leyshon, (Emily) was sixteen years old.

They came to Spanish Fork and found work in the families of Lehi and Sam Davis. They worked for the Davis families for about two years, when Mr. Williams found them. A man from heaven to them, he was manager or owner of the coal mines at Winter Quarters. Mr. Williams was very good and kind to them. They worked at the boarding house in Schofield for three years. It was while employed by Mr. Williams that Emily found her husband, William Leyshon. They were married in Provo, Utah 15 Jun 1881 by John E. Booth. Mr. Leyshon was also a convert to the Church, and left his native land, Wales, to join the Saints in America.

He was born on March 1, 1849, and came to Utah in 1879. Mr and Mrs. Leyshon now made their home in Utah, where Mr. Leyshon was employed in the coal mines. Two of their children were born to them before they went to the temple to be married for time and all eternity.

While working in the mines, Mr. Leyshon, was injured and his left side became paralyzed. They now had a small family of children to care for, and this left Sister Leyshon with a great responsibility of not only caring for the children, but she must find employment to provide for them as well. Ten children, five boys and five girls were born in Utah. They were: Lewis, Sarah, Lettie, Emily, William, Martha, Hyrum, Ezra, Mary, and Lorenzo.

We can readily imagine the great responsibility that was Sister Leyshon's. The older children were now able to help some, and so she secured the janitorship of three school houses and the church. The Bishop was very helpful to her. Then she also took in washing. She did all the wash for the mining official, clerks at stores, and many others. She wishes she could remember how many shirts she laundered each week.

She also cleaned a store every Saturday night for a Mr. Bob Beatie, who was manager. Mr. Beatie was very kind and good to her and her family. She also went out to the sick and nursed them, also caring for confinement cases.

Mr. and Mrs. Leyshon were active in the Church. Mr. Leyshon baptized the first member in the ward at Schofield. They were both very helpful to the Bishop and Relief Society President, because they were always ready and willing to assist those who were sick.

Then on May 1, 1900, came a terrible disaster. The coal mine exploded, and Sister Leyshon's oldest son, Lewis, was killed. This was a very sad blow to Brother and Sister Leyshon, but brave courageous people as they were, they understood and knew they would be with him again some future day.

In 1901 a flood came in Schofield. A large rock weighing about two tons came down through the roof of their home but no one was hurt. They decided to get away from the coal mines and so they came to Spanish Fork in 1902, and William Hales built their home for them on

the little farm land they had purchased from the insurance they had received by the death of their son Lewis in Schofield.

In 1902, they moved into Leland, and bishop William D. C. Markham welcomed them. Sister Leyshon was ever ready to help the sick and the sisters called on her very often those days. Nephi and Rachel were born after moving to Spanish Fork. On January 16, 1906, their son Ezra, died of pneumonia. Brother Leyshon died on August 6, 1906, shortly after the death of their son Ezra.

Sister Leyshon was now left alone with ten children, some of them married and making homes of their own. But she still must work and struggle to keep the required needs of the home. William and Hryum would work for the farmers. The boys were very good to their mother and were always proud of her. She had been almost a father and mother to them. She taught them by example to be ambitious and do their work well.

Have you ever seen any person more tidy and neat than Mrs. Leyshon? She had raised her daughters to be immaculate housewives. Cleanliness was her motto. Mary and Rachel have both helped me in my home, and things were done just right, so clean and tidy. They were good cooks and so cheerful and pleasant no one could forget them.

Sister Leyshon and Sister Sarah A. Markham were the first sisters to gather wheat for the Relief Society in our Ward. The wheat was to be stored for future needs. You know what that has been and meant to our Relief Society Organization. Thousands of bushels were sent to Europe for the relief of the people at the time. The money received at the time, part was sold, has today been place back into wheat and the great wheat elevators at Salt lake City Welfare Center are now filled with thousands and thousands of bushels of wheat, to be on hand if people should need it.

Interest from accumulated wheat money has helped to remove tonsils, maternity and child welfare cases throughout the thousands of wards in our church. Much credit is due to these faithful women who pioneered the way for the saving of wheat. Sister Markham and Sister Leyshon would take a canvas of the entire ward with a horse and buggy. When they received a load they would take it to the storing place and back they would go on their mission. Sunday eggs were also gathered at that time to help complete the new church.

When I was asked to preside over the Relief Society on March 17, 1910, Sister Leyshon was an active worker in the organization. No one could have been more faithful than she was to me. She was free with her donations and I am told honest in her tithing.

Interest from accumulated wheat will always be remembered in our Ward and the people Sister Leyshon so graciously gave her time to help out in time of need.

Sister Leyshon was a practical nurse and went among the people when ever she was called. Those who passed away at that time were washed and prepared for burial by the sisters of the Relief Society.

Sister Leyshon was such a help to me. Because of my age I was fearful at times, and needed the help and advice of women with experience. Bishop Larsen would come for me when death occurred, if I was not already there, and he would say "Sister Markham, do you feel nervous?" I would say, "No, I don't thinks so." I am sure Sister Leyshon will help me, and she always did. Any time of day or night she was always ready, quick to go to homes where needed, and slow to leave if there was anything she could do.

She was a Relief Society teacher from the very beginning to the ward organization, and as long as her health permitted she was faithful and trustworthy in that position. During my time as president we had a special group of teachers who made a canvas of the ward every three months for donations. As our donations consisted largely of eggs or grain, it was necessary to go with a horse and buggy.

Sister Emily Leyshon and Sister Mary Stoker was chosen for this job. It was a real one, roads were bad and the horses were slow. Sometimes they were two or three days. They not only helped if anyone was sick, but they visited, gave cheer and comfort. They helped if the hearts of the people were willing. Everyone looked forward to their visits, even if they knew they were after donations. Donations were the minor part of the mission. By teaching as the Savior taught, the kindness, giving love and hope and cheer, they did not fail in their mission. The old buggy would hardly hold the eggs and grain and other articles donated.

After the ward was all visited, they would come to my home and report. I was so glad to see them, and it would make anyone's face beam and one's heart beat faster, just to listen to their experiences. Their faces beamed with the light of heaven. Theirs had been an unselfish experience and service of love and mercy. They taught me many things, above all, that if one wishes to feel the real joy of service that service must come whole-heartedly, unselfishly, and with the spirit of our Father in Heaven.

At the time our baby girl died, Sister Leyshon was the first neighbor to come. She washed and laid her out for burial. When both my boys were down with the flu, the Community doctor called and said they had Bronchial Pneumonia. When he said that, my husband fell to the floor unconscious because of sleepless nights and worry and shock at the boys condition. The Doctor and I put him to bed, and there I was with three cases of flu. The doctor said I was to get help or I would be down. There was no one to get. I feared all were afraid of the disease. I thought I could take care of them, but with a silent prayer that help might come.

I called for Bishops Creer and Andrus, who were counselors to Bishop Markham. They came and administered to all of them. They had just left when the back door opened and who should it be but Sister Leyshon, an angel of Mercy. And she was sent to me in answer to my prayer.

She never left, (although she did not know we were ill when she came) for two days. We carried mustard plasters night and day until the sick were out of danger. For this kindness to our own immediate family and the hours and days of helpfulness to the sick in our ward, she will never be forgotten.

I hope and pray she shall always be cared for as tenderly and kind as she has cared for others when she was able to do so. Her children are making her comfortable and happy as they can. She has had a recent sorrow in the sad death of the daughter, Emily Leyshon Hansen, wife of Peter Oliver Hansen of Palmyra. But Sister Leyshon will still say, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh, Blessed by the name of the Lord."

She has now nine living children and many grandsons and granddaughters. She also has a grandson, William Edward Leyshon, who is serving a mission in the East Central States for the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-Day-Saints. He is the only son and child of her oldest son, William. Sister Leyshon is very proud of him and he is proud of his grandmother.

I would like to say to Hyrum and Myrtle, who are taking care of their mother at this time, you will be blessed and rewarded for the kind and watchful care you are giving her. In her last hours, make them pleasant and happy. She is so deserving of love and all the kindness that can come to her.

October 23, 1942, on your eighty-third birthday, tomorrow, may we say to you:

We love you, we have appreciated our associations with you, we have been strengthened through your lovely life and labors, as dear friends and neighbors, and your sisters true.

We pray that joys shall always last,
That hope shall brighten days to come
And memory gild the past.

That you might be strong as the sentinel hills
When meeting the close of the day.
And still keep your soul as lovely
As the dawn of this Autumn Day.