

Mary P. Tripp

The writings below are those of my great, great grandmother, Mrs. Mary P. Tripp. I was tempted, for the sake of clarity, to make corrections in grammar and some of the words contained therein. This notion, however, gave way to the importance of preserving the author's understanding of the rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Effort was also made to simulate the publishing style as it appeared in the Paullina Times, (Paullina, Iowa, O'Brien County) in March of 1892.



Mary P. Tripp - seated right/front, Bible in hand, accompanied by her four daughters.

A Short Sketch of My Life.

MARY P. TRIPP

My father, Mr. Solomon Parker, was born near Hartford, Conn., February 15, 1795. At the age of 15 he, with a widowed mother and eight other children, came to Kingston, six miles from Wilkes Barre, on the opposite side of the Susquichanna river, Luzerne county, Pa. My mother, Margaret Courtright, was born September 17, 1800, in Salem, five miles from Berwick, Luzerne county, Pa. They were married February 17, 1820, in the house where mother was born. The following April they moved to Aaronburg, Center county, Pa. Owing to ill health, contracted while in the war of 1812, my father's occupation was school teaching and surveying. My mother was converted at Berwick campmeeting, August 1819, which she retained during her life. Her death occurred April 17, 1851. I was born February 23, 1821, in Aaronsburg, Center county, Pa.; I was the oldest of ten children. My father was the subject of converting grace when I was three years old, in Bellefonte, Center county. His life was one of vital piety. He was a model father, an affectionate husband, and a wise counsellor in the matter of religion; all knew him but to love him. I never heard him speak unkind to my mother; I never saw him angry. My father's house was a house of prayer; the family altar we early learned to love; it was a hallowed spot to each one of us. To see our dear father take the dear old Bible, read to us as none else could, then kneel with us

and ask our Father's blessing to rest on each one of us was a scene we all loved. In the early days of my childhood his house was the class room on the Sabbath, also prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings. I was much in my father's company in my young days, and from him I learned the value of being a true christian. While on a visit to my grand parents with my own parents, I attended camp meeting at Berwick in August 1833, and there I found the pearl of great price. I then loved my father more than ever; ours was a happy family. The same fall I joined the M. E. church in Williamsport, Lycoming county, Pa., which has always been my home at heart. In May, 1837 my parents moved to Williams county, Ohio, then out on the frontier. Our meetings were held in the log cabins, in the summer time quarterly meetings were held in log barns; Jesus met with us and we had happy seasons in the new country. My father died February 25, 1869, being 75 years, 10 days old.

On July 19, 1840, I was married to Mr. Solomon Barber, in Williams county, Ohio, still in a new country. After my marriage, there being no church of my own, I united with the United Brethren, and there I felt quite at home. March 28, 1842, my oldest son was born; a new inspiration arose in my breast, a fond love of a christian mother to train the tender on for life. In July 1842, my husband was converted, oh what joy filled my breast; my prayers were answered; my home was through the woods, carrying our babe, to attend meetings, have a glorious time and go home with glory in our souls. Thus time flew, both living in the assurance of faith. The last day of October, 1843, we left Ohio and started for Illinois and arrived at Dixon, Lee county, November 20th, a journey of three hundred miles with an ox team and got through in twenty days. Arriving at my father's I felt as if in a good place. January 1st our first daughter came to us. In 1846 we bought our first farm at Franklin Grove and lived there three years, then he sold our farm, not having enough land for all purposes. After we came to Illinois my husband, being of a retiring nature, neglected to acknowledge his Savior, and by so doing

he lost his first love, lived in the ways of sin, following the devices of his own nature. Still my earnest prayer and clinging faith took hold of God and would not let him go. In December, 1853, he came to Iowa and bought our farm. March 25, 1854, we got our new home; at the time we had six children, three sons and three daughters. For the first two years we had meetings very regularly, then we were left without until the fall of 1859, when Rev. D. C. Curtis, a Baptist minister, conducted a series of meetings for five weeks, during time Mr. Barber, with a number of others, found peace in believing in Jesus; among them a backslider, an infidel, A. Warren, came to Christ. November 29th was the eventful time when my husband gave all to Christ; December 4th Rev. T. S. Bachelor led Mr. Barber down into the Wapsie in the ordinance of baptism; (both ministers were Free-will Baptists) there he baptised eighteen the same day and thirty were added to the Free-will Baptist church at Buena Vista. I joined with him; I could live any place in any christian church. I had been baptised according to the usages of the M. E. church; as to the mode I never was satisfied; at the time of Mr. Barber's conversion my health was too poor; I was suffering from an attack of palsy. February 17, 1861, I was led into the waters of baptism by Bro. D. C. Curtis; then as never before and always after I have felt as if I was a child of a king; oh how sweetly did our lives glide along. Our house was always a house of prayer; morning and evening the bible was read and we all knelt around the family altar. O, hollowed spot, made doubly dear by the memories of the sainted dead! Thus we lived until the war broke out; at that time we had five children added to our family in Iowa, three of the five passed over and were safely housed in the haven of the blest. We had four sons and four daughters, the youngest was born April 11, 1862. August 12, 1862, Mr. Barber enlisted in the war as a soldier in Co. F, 26 Reg. Iowa Vol. Then was the darkest hour of my life; all the strength I had was from God to endure the trial; tongue can never tell how my poor heart was rent with anguish. September 2nd the 26th regiment was ordered into Camp Kirkwood at Clinton for drill. The night of the 11th he was on duty

as guard, it rained very hard and he took cold which finally resulted in typhoid fever. September 18th I went to the camp, it was thirty miles distant, with my babe five months old; there I watched as his side two dreary nights at the barracks and then got a sick furlough and took him home; then I took all the care of him myself day and night. I employed three doctors but all to no avail; for a few days his mind was filled with doubts as to his preparation. On the fourth Saturday of September was covenant meeting of the Free-will Baptist church at Buena Vista, our christian home, and often that day was my mind there. After meeting Bro. Louie Barrett came to see him; when he came all our hearts blended together for a special blessing, then and there he got the victory, from that time until he was taken to his home over the river not a doubt crossed his mind, and he said often; "All I desire to stay for is for you." Thus he spent the last three weeks of his life, and each evening while he was sick at home after all was done his request was for me to hold prayer around the family altar that had become so dear to us. At the near approach of death his vision of the future grew brighter; he bade each one farewell, then said: "Mary, it is by your counsel, life and prayers that I will fill a christian man's grave." He had clung to my hand an hour, then the last came; his last words were: "I will meet you just beyond the river to part no never." He died on Sunday at 1:25 p.m., October 26, 1862. How often have these parting words cheered my poor bleeding heart as I journeyed along with my five youngest children, God was my help and strength, the three oldest were married before his death.

I still remained on the old home farm trusting in my Father, living by faith, committing all to his keeping; He has always helped me in temporal as well as in spiritual things; I have found from blessed experience He will never leave me unless I first leave Him.

July 10, 1864, I was married to Mr. Nelson Tripp, of Jones county, a Free-will Baptist, and a worth christian man; in him I found a kind christian husband, a noble step-father, a good neighbor and a peaceable citizen. October 23d I left the old home for a time and went to Jones county to his home. His

occupation was miller and he owned a grist mill. There we enjoyed many christian privileges. In June 1870 he sold his property and bought in Marshall county, near Liscomb; in September we were settled there and our religious privileges and blessings increased. In January 1871 the M. E. church held a series of meetings which we attended it lasted five weeks. I was blessed in laboring for Jesus, yet I felt I needed clensing power to clense my heart. I had been an earnest reader of Mrs. Phebe Palmer's work as a guide to holiness; it was truly a guide to my blindness of heart. I had been a constant smoker for twenty-five years, I also wore jewelry; I was asking to be led into the light of Christ; it was my constant cry, my whole being was employed; at a glance Jesus applied the words of I Timothy ii, 9-10; in a moment I laid all my jewelry on the altar and I asked, "what lack I yet my Father?" Feeling no condemnation for smoking I took my pipe, at that moment Paul to II Corinthians, i 2, was applied with mighty power and I looked to see, it was addressed to the heart, but oh how quickly I laid the pipe away; I shouted glory, glory, all night. This great transaction was February 7, 1871. Jesus took the appetite; no desire to use the filthy weed; it has been glory all the way; Jesus has given me the victory; he is mine, I am his; all the way long it is Jesus; I have been satisfied with Christ; no desire to be enthralled with anything that does not become an earnest faithful christian, washed in the blood of the Lamb. As I write, looking back over the years, as Dr. Steel has beautifully said, I have passed the 13th mile stone of a happy, free pilgrim in Christ. Oh wonderful how he has kept me; my heart says bless His holy name. Mr. Tripp could not endorse the doctrine of sanctification; all there was to be obtained until death was when we were converted. The change was so great in me; my life so different, he felt there was greater depths of love than he had found in experience of forty years; he investigated the subject, was in earnest, and the following August 1871, by faith he was enabled to receive Christ as a full Saviour to refine and purify the heart; his life was all sunshine in Jesus during the remainder of life; when death came it found him ready. Mr. Tripp died March 11, 1877; my loss was his gain for he was ready in all these applications I found in Jesus

a full supply for all the ills of life. At that time all my children were married except the two youngest. At this time I lived in Calamus and sent my youngest daughter to school. In June 1879 she was married and I was then left alone, the spring before we move to the old home. Oh, how lonely after the youngest and all I had left was gone. She was the joy of my life; all was well when she was near so far as life was concerned; life was a blank to me after she was gone.

March 9, 1880, I married Mr. James Johnson, a local M. E. preacher. He had been for forty years a member of the church so far as any one knew a thorough christian. In June he went to his sons in Jones county and while there he joined the Latter Day Saints or Joe Smith class of Mormons. In July he took me to my daughter's, kept me there and the next week advertised me as leaving him, telling people not to trust me. From that time until now, April 20, 1884, I have lived alone with Jesus; He has been my rod and staff, my comfort; no sorrow has overtaken me that I cannot see Jesus just here to comfort; He pours in the oil of joy for mourning; let the world dispise and leave me, they have left my Saviour too, yet how rich is my condition though art not like them untrue. The reason Mr. Johnson refused to live with me was I would not let him contract my property away from my children. To be revenged on me he went and joined the Joe Smith Mormons. After awhile he wanted me to live with him, I told him no, never. He then applied for a divorce and all the plea I sent in was that my name be returned to Tripp, which was granted at the September term of court at Clinton of September 15, 1884, I was lawfully divorced. March 14, 1889, he died in Crawford county at his daughter's. Now I am a widow indeed, living with my children all the time since he took me to Ida E. Harris'.

The greatest earthly trial was when I sold the old home farm January 17, 1884, loved by the many hallowed scenes that cluster around a home of thirty years; of the sacred memories of the dead, the children married and gone with homes of their own, the oft returning of these loved ones to be forever done. Oh, how this poor aching heart had to cling to the strong for

strength, day and night my cry went up, "Jesus keep me." Bless his holy name, I have been kept close to His bleeding side; today I can say Thy will be done. Three of my sons and two of my daughters are in the western part of Iowa settled down; the other three are in Clinton county. Unless my Father orders otherwise I expect to finish my life work in the west. The language of my heart is, Jesus calls me I am going where He opens up the way to the toiling in the vineyard, stopping not a single day.

If I never should pen any more this is to April 20, 1884.

In Addition to the Sketch Written Five Years Ago.

Some thoughts that intervene in the past 4 years and 10 months.

I left Clinton county, the home hallowed with sacred memories that none can know except a widowed wife and mother; the old home of thirty years made dear by the advent of loved ones, and those who are dearer than any earthly object that has gone home; no trial since I left that dear home has been as hard to bear. At 7 p. m. the day I left I arrived at the home in Paullina, O'Brien county. Two months after, November 20th, I got to the new home I was prostrate with affliction; there I laid with fearful disease, dropsy, part of the time untold suffering so great that I was bereft of reason. Every effort was made by loved children to stay the hand of disease far and near, yet there I hung as by a thread for eleven long weary months, my children worn out and I a wreck of what I was of my former self. Then to the astonishment of all my Father laid under neath his powerful arm and I gradually but surely recovered, reason returned with constant care. In April 1886 I was able to go out doors, since then I have lived praising my dear Heavenly Father, I give Him all the glory, He blessed the means after all human efforts failed; glory to God for His unspeakable goodness to an unworthy child. There is no place so dear to me as the house of worship where I can hear from God out of His word; He has renewed my youth. I am now in my 69th year and I can walk a half mile

to church and go praising my Saviour for that fullness there is in the cleansing and keeping power there is in Jesus' blood. To an old person there are lonely hours; praise the Lord, Jesus fills the heart with praises; I realize He holds me in the hollow of His hand.

After lapse of time I again take up the pen to write the balance of the memories of our home. When I stopped the oldest was in the west; in September 1884 all the children except Horace was in the west, I came with them. In one sense I enjoyed the change, it placed the children in more favorable circumstances of settling themselves for home life; I was placed in religious associations that were pleasant and profitable to me. There time passed until November 20th, the same fall 1884 when I was taken dangerously sick, first lung fever that run into dropsy; I grew worse until I just fluttered on the brink of death; thus I remained, my children, eight in number, gathered by mother's bed; eleven long months my life was despaired of; at that time a Heavenly Father's love was manifest in answer to prayer; I again returned to self possession of my reason. After a few months I became myself although very feeble. All this time I retained my confidence in my blessed Jesus. April 1886 was the first time in seventeen months I was blessed with the privilege of going to church to worship; it was a feast to my poor heart. Since that time to the time of this writing I have attended all the means of grace that I was able to. I have not been sick and my life has been sweet, filled with the fullness of Jesus' love that fills the heart perfect love, holiness to the Lord is my motto. I am trying to live with an eye single to the glory of my dear Lord; I do know by blessed experience that the precious blood of Jesus cleanses from the stain that sin has made; I am now trusting my all to Him moment by moment. It is now twenty years the 7th of February 1892, this present month, since I put all on the altar, everything I had, every idol, and self with all my will to be His for time and eternity, soul and body, time, talent, reputation and voice; now I am only living to do good in the great harvest of souls for Jesus. This is the winter of my 71st year,

health has been given with heaven's richest blessing of holiness to labor twenty days in Correctionville in a great revival for the good of souls, the interest of the cause of Jesus to the conversion of sixty precious souls, they ranged in age from ten years up to 69, I saw twenty-six that found the blessing of sanctification, was enabled to die to the unholy appetite of tobacco, all that were slaves to the weed they are free pilgrims seeking a purer atmosphere to do good. Four years ago Horace, my youngest son, came west and settled in Woodbury county; three of my children are near Paullina, O'Brien county, two in Clay county and three boys in Woodbury county. I have four sons and four daughters, thirty grand children and three great grand children. In all my life I have tried to live an exemplary christian life before my loved ones, setting a Godly mother's example before them all their lives, that not one can appear in the great day and say I did not do my duty, both by precept and example. Of my father's family only four are left, two sons and two daughters, my oldest brother, Horace, will be sixty years old April 14, 1892, Joseph will be fifty-eight in April, Lizzie, the youngest sister, will be fifty-six April 30, 1892; I am the oldest of ten children, my age is seventy-one February 23rd.

There is a very remarkable circumstance I wish to pen to the glory of my all sufficient Saviour and a benefit to my family and any that may read. I had a cancer on my forehead about an inch above my eyes, it had been there for twelve years and grew worse; three times I went to Dixon, Illinois and had it burned out and as often it grew in again. The summer of 1888 it grew very fast and my right eye was nearly closed, the right side of my nose was filled up out on my cheek and gradually grew worse. I expected soon to suffer death from that dreadful affliction. 1888 Christmas morning at 4 o'clock the spirit said to me "this is the day Christ came to earth to save you, He healed the woman that had been afflicted twelve years, He healed her by touching the hem of His garment, why cannot He heal you if you touch him by faith." I took him at His word; I rose from my bed, kneeled before Him, took the widow's place and touched Him by faith; it was done instantly.

The swelling disappeared, sore eyes all gone, all pain left my face. Praise the Lord it has never broke out and no return of it. This statement is founded on the words of Jesus, He said if we believe with all thy heart, whatsoever you ask you shall receive. I praise my blessed Jesus He is such a Saviour, He is all in all to me, clenses, sanctifies and keeps me moment by moment, saves me; glory to God in the highest.

In taking a retrospective view of sixty-five years of my life there has been many changes, many trials, disappointments, sorrows, loss and death of near and dear friends; yet in all the vicissitudes of life I have always found I had a never failing friend in whom I could trust my all; He says I will never leave or forsake you so long as you put your trust in Me; these are the words of the King of Kings.

These are the scattered thoughts of the treasures of earth that have been collected for the benefit of my children; they are as fresh in memory as they were thirty years ago. The object of this is to try to benefit and help others to the haven of eternal rest. The words of the hymn is applied in all this:

"Through my dangers, toils and snares I have already come,
Tis Jesus led me safe thus far, and He will lead me home."

I set my name to this at the age of 71 years.

MRS. MARY P. TRIPP.

Paullina, O'Brien county, Iowa, February 23, 1892.

The original publication appeared March of 1892 in the Paullina Times (Paullina, Iowa, O'Brien County).