

Simpson, Mrs., R. D. F.

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SAMATHA LAKE BRIMHALL, |

PIONEER WOMAN.  
By her daughter

Samantha T. Brimhall Foley.

The author of this little record arrived on the 22nd day of March, 1858, when she was but two weeks old, word came that Bailey W. Lake had been killed by Indians while in the performance of his duty as a missionary among the Indians on Salmon River, Idaho. These were exciting times, and Johnson's Army was sent to take care of the situation. Feeling he should do so, Noah Brimhall husband of Samantha Lake Brimhall, took his wife and two small children to the larger settlement at Spanish Fork and left them with friends while he went to Echo Canyon and engaged in that military affair so familiar to every one.

The six weeks old baby was so ill her life was despaired of. The young mother was so alarmed, she called from her door for help, and a passing veteran, hearing her call, trudged across the way with aid of her his cane, and together they worked over the child, which was restored to health by their efforts and their prayers.

When peace had been restored and Noah Brimhall returned to Spanish Forks, the young widow of Bailey W. Lake became a member of the family of her sister-in-law Cashie. They all returned to the north and settled in Hiram, <sup>Cashie</sup> Co. Idaho. In the year of 1864 the family moved still farther north some 40 miles away, where there were no families within miles of them. It was a wild, lonely spot. The native verdure had grown in undisturbed splendor since the morning of creation it seemed to these two women so far from human habitation, where everything was so wild it was appalling. The all-prevailing silence of the valley was unbroken except for the rushing mountain streams by day and the roaring wild animals by night and by these two women, who felt this isolation so keenly, set up a wall to be forgotten. But this did not last long for there was a family of children to be cared for. They were soon playing in the tall grass while

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SAMANTHA LOYD BRINHALL. (2)

their father made a quadrangle trench in which to stand upright poles, and fashion a temporary shelter to shield them from the weather. When this was done, hay was gathered for the roof, the floor and the cattle and horses.

An ample stone fireplace soon filled one corner of the somewhat spacious room. Two wagon boxes arranged at opposite sides outside the living room, served as sleeping quarters for the time being. Surplus side-boards from the wagon were fashioned into a long bench with rockers at each end, and soon a group of happy children were crooning merry songs before a glowing fire.

The next thing of importance was the sheltering of domestic animals against the vicissitudes of a threatening Idaho winter, which was accomplished before the very cold weather came upon them. During the months of January and February the snows seemed to fall incessantly. Their road was blocked, and they were indeed alone. To obtain water they had to chop ice in the streams. The weather was sub-zero every day. Much to their surprise and pleasure they saw two friends approaching over the fields of snow one day that winter. After they had satisfied themselves that these, their faraway neighbors were all in good condition, they started on their homeward way, but they encountered a severe storm and were both frozen to death before they could complete the trip to their homes. It was a hard winter, but at length spring appeared, and when the deep snows were melted, people from the settlements below came to look over our location, which resulted in several families settling near us. This gave the two lonely the human companionship which they craved. The new settlement was located near a widened part of the mountain stream where it was shallow enough for the oxen to ford it easily. And they named the settlement just that ---Ox-ford--- or Oxford. A small school was started that summer, by Mrs. Mary Ann Brice, under the willow porch of her home. She had no school books, but among other things, she taught them that there were seven days in a week, twenty hours in a day, and sixty minutes in an hour. Also demanded that each child learn the day of his or her birth.

It was Spring and All the sheep of the settlement were sheared . The wool was washed, dyed, carded and when the longer process of spinning was over the women undertook to weave the wool into cloth . In this art Samantha Lake Brimhall was expert and she did much of the weaving for the settlement, in order to help out in a financial way, and to procure the necessary things of life. She wove many different kinds of cloth. She also became an efficient gardner, and her beautiful rows of cabbage and other well cultivated vegetables were the marvel of the villiage. This she could do without leaving her home. She was strictly a home woman and seldom left her doorstep. She created her own enjoyment and employment within her home, all in service to her family.

The men of the settlement were always hard at work, building houses. digging ditches, making roads, plowing the fields and harvesting the crops. Money was scarce, and the ir only hope of renews was the possible sale of a little wheat or other grain or vegetables. Samantha Lake Brimhall was not slow in realizing this situation, and came to the rescue of her husband in many ways.

At harvest time she stored away an abundance of fine wheat straw, and this she wove, during the <sup>long</sup> winter months, into hats for men, women and children. And she found ready sale for the products of her industry.

The neighboring tribes of Indians came to the new settlement to find a market for their furs and buckskins. These they were pleased to exchange for vegetables, hats, and other articles manufactured by Samantha. She took advantage of the situation and she laid in a goodly store of furs and buckskins.

She then went to Salt Lake City and she learned the glove and the fur trade. From this tome on, so long as she lived, she received some renews from her many branches of industry, for the benefit of her numerous and growing family.

In the spring she made her hats, in the summer she made her garden and spun and wove cloth. And the winters found her in the corner near the fire-place

## SAMANTHA LAKE BRIMHALL. (4)

where a small window had been made for her benefit, working almost incessantly on gloves or fur coats, often filling orders from a distance.

She had one daughter in New Mexico who wrote her of the mild climate there, and she determined to go to the south where she would find life less difficult than in the cold winters of the state of Idaho. So in the year of 1876 finding herself a widow, Samantha Lake Brimhall with her five children, Norman, Clayborn, Alma, Nora, and Willard journeyed to New Mexico, over the open country where there were few if any roads, <sup>no bridges at all</sup> having only a map to follow, finding but few settlements with white people in them, meeting many Indians, wild and unknown on the way but ever keeping in her mind the "land of promise". In about three months time, she arrived in the tiny settlement of Fruitland, New Mexico, where she tarried but a few weeks, for the daughter lived in Ramah, N.M., farther south. Her mother's love was ~~xxxx~~ indeed great, almost sublime, for it was to be of comfort to the daughter, who was sadly in need of her assistance, that was the real reason of this long, hard journey trip. At her journey's end she encountered conditions that could not be overcome, even by this resolute and gifted woman, and she succumbed to that deadly disease, small-pox. It took her on a journey from which no man or woman has ever returned. The little cemetery at Ramah was, by spring, so thickly populated with the victims of small-pox that a new one had to be selected.

Her son, Norman Andrew, laid her to rest beneath the tall pine trees, where, later her sons Clayborn and James Allen raised a tribute to the memory of Mother, Samantha Lake Brimhall, A Pioneer Woman of wonderful courage, endurance and resolution.

Source of information

Record written by Mrs. Samantha T. Brimhall Peley, Daughter of Samantha Lake Brimhall, the subject of this sketch.